

Steps to Curating & Communicating with Your Network

from the Intelligent Networking webinar and workshop

CURATING

Who Do You Know?

1. Look at all your 1st degree connections on LinkedIn; download them into a CSV file. **You can do this in the Privacy & Settings section of LI under the Privacy section titled “Getting A Copy of Your Data.”** Select the option to download your connections.
2. Scrub your contacts using the favor test. Quality over quantity.
3. Add any missing connections using these buckets: family/friends, shared work experiences (colleagues, vendors, clients, peers in industry), alumni network, and volunteer/community connections. **Your most powerful connections typically come from these buckets.**
4. When requesting to connect, add a personal note! (e.g., *I hope this finds you well! I’m still at WeWork, doing M & A strategy. One of my goals this year is to refine my LI profile and network, so I wanted to reach out and connect with you. Thanks and I would love an update from you.* End by inserting a question unique to your connection – *How are things going at Salesforce?*)
5. Once you have a handle on your 1st degree connections, categorize your connections based on your targets and what you’ve identified as a result of your groundwork (see *Navigating Your Career at Any Age & Stage* webinar for more information). Perhaps you organize them with an emphasis on geography, or industry, or company, or role. The groundwork piece is essential to do first in order to clarify your objectives.

Who Do They Know?

1. **Use the Advanced People Search filters on LinkedIn** to see those people your 1st degree connections know. Click in the main search bar and you’ll see the option to filter by “People.” Use the advanced filters to search 2nd degree connections, and then drill down on fields like location, industry, company, etc.
2. **Your 2nd degree connections are the people you have the potential to meet.** In fact, 2nd degree connections are arguably more helpful than your 1st degree connections - they don’t have any preconceived ideas about your abilities, skills and talents – all they know is that you came to them from someone they trust (which is why your 1st degree connections should pass the favor test).

How Will You Track Your Contacts?

1. Prioritize your outreach to your 1st and 2nd degree connections. Start by first reaching out to those you know well, with whom you have closer ties or those connections you deem to be low-hanging fruit, before you progress to those 1st degree connections that you’re not in close contact with or who might be “heavy hitters” that you want to save for later in your search.
2. Create a system to manage your contacts, track them, and stay organized. Tools include Excel, Google Docs, JibberJobber, Airtable, or HubSpot’s free CRM tool (adapt it for a job search).

COMMUNICATING

Intelligent Networking supposes that at some point, you may reach out to every 1st degree connection you have. **Here are the three types of messages you'll create** to start lining up networking conversations and meetings. Refer to themuse.com (in particular, [28 Key Email templates for 2018](#)) for structure and content of these and many other career management email templates. It is important for the email to be genuine and “in your voice.”

General Update: This typically goes to family and friends, or those with no known ties to your targets. **The purpose of this is to give an update on you and let them know what you're planning to do next in your career. Use elements of the narrative you've created from your groundwork,** and ask them to keep you in mind if they know of anyone who might be a resource in your search.

E.g., I'm starting to explore new ways to leverage my product management expertise in a smaller, more nimble tech company in the Bay area. I would appreciate any advice or suggestions you have of contacts who could aid my research. Thank you in advance for any contacts you may know who can help me move further towards this goal. If I can ever be of any help to you, don't hesitate to ask.

The reason you'll send these general update emails to those with no known ties to your target is because **you should never assume someone you know and trust is unable to help** – someone could give you a vital piece of information that could transform your job search. And most people will not be carefully curating their LI networks as you're going to do, so you never know who someone really knows.

Meeting Request: This goes to 1st degree connections related to your targets. In this case, **the purpose is to ask for some time to meet with you for information and advice.**

E.g., I'm starting to explore new ways to leverage my product management expertise in a smaller, more nimble tech company in the Bay area. Would you be willing to meet with me in the next few weeks so I can learn about your experience in X industry, and specifically at CompanyX? I'll have no more than five questions and won't take more than 20 minutes of your time. Thanks for your consideration, and know that I am always happy to return the favor and help you in any way I can.

Introduction to 2nd Degree Connection: This goes to the 1st degree contacts where you've found a 2nd degree connection who you want to meet in your target industry/function/location or company, but there is not a need to talk or meet with your 1st degree connection first (although you could, and it may make sense to do so). **The purpose of your email is to ask for an introduction to their connection.** Remember, these people have passed the favor test so this should not be a stretch!

E.g., I'm starting to explore new ways to leverage my product management expertise in a smaller, more nimble tech company in the Bay area. I noticed you have a first-degree connection on LinkedIn with Mary Pat, who is working in the industry I'm interested in pursuing. Would you consider asking if she'd be willing to do a short informational meeting with me, and perhaps teeing up an introduction? I've got an efficient, five-step agenda that should take no more than 20 minutes of her time. Thank you for your consideration and assistance as I begin to research my next professional steps. I'm always more than happy to return the favor.