LinkedIn for SDRs: How Social Selling Actually Works

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SUMMARY

Most SDRs are overlooking the potential of LinkedIn for social selling, which can significantly enhance their visibility, generate inbound conversations, and expedite promotions to Account Executive roles. The video outlines a systematic approach to building an internal brand, leveraging LinkedIn for external connections, and optimizing daily workflows to maximize effectiveness.

- *Building an internal brand on LinkedIn is crucial for SDRs to gain visibility within their organization and get noticed by leadership.*
- *Consistent posting (2-3 times a week) about industry insights or company updates helps establish professionalism and market awareness.*
- *Engaging with AE managers and leadership through likes and comments can create familiarity that aids in promotion opportunities.*
- *For external branding, connecting with ideal customer profiles (ICPs) and posting relevant insights can generate inbound leads over time.*
- *LinkedIn Sales Navigator offers powerful tools like persona filters and account uploads to streamline prospecting efforts.*
- *Avoid automation and excessive InMail; focus on genuine, relevant connection requests and personalized messaging.*
- *Optimize your LinkedIn profile to highlight outcomes rather than just job titles, making it more appealing to prospects.*
- *Use LinkedIn during off-hours to avoid overlap with peak cold calling and emailing times, maximizing outreach effectiveness.*

Most SDRs are completely missing the biggest opportunity sitting right in front of them when it comes to LinkedIn and social selling. Because right now, especially with AI, it's easier than ever to build visibility, generate inbound conversations, and separate yourself from just about every other STR on your team. So, in this video, I'm going to be showing you exactly how social selling works, and how it can help you stand out, book more meetings, and also get promoted to AE faster. So, first, we're going to build your brand, then we're going to turn it into meetings, and finally, I'm going to show you how to systemize it all into your workflow. So, let's get into it. All right, so first things first, let's talk about that slept on opportunity when it comes to LinkedIn, and that is actually using it to build your internal brand.

So, we're going to get to external and setting meetings, but this is what most SDRs don't realize is their biggest opportunity. And the reason building your internal brand at your own organization matters is because LinkedIn isn't just about prospecting. It can help you build visibility inside your company. It can help you, your name, and your work show up in front of the people that you want seeing it. So, consistent posting, we're not talking about every day, twice a day. We're talking one, two, three times per week will keep you on top of mind with leadership. Some of you may have noticed this that a lot of the people you know at your company and your organization are simply the ones that are slightly more visible on LinkedIn. And I want to caveat this.

What I'm not talking about is posting cringy sales content unless you sell sales software. If you work in the HR space, post about HR. If you work in the marketing space, post about what you're seeing in the marketing space. Familiarity is what builds trust. And we're going to get to why this is important in a second. So, the bigger opportunity here with LinkedIn is one to two. I think two to three is the sweet spot. Posts per week puts you ahead of most employees. And I'm going to show you what good posts look like and how to easily do this in less than 5 minutes per week because it signals professionalism, market awareness, and simply that you care. Just the fact that you're showing up on the feed, making an effort to those AE managers or the other leadership within your company, they're going to recognize that and it's such a small thing that goes a long way with a lot of the important people whose radar you want to be on within your company.

So, you will be seen as someone who understands buyers, especially when it comes time to promote to AE, which I know is top of a lot of your minds. So, let's get to that. how to use this internally when you're new as an SDR or start now if you're not new is connect with all the AE managers, the directors, the VPs and all the different groups that you would potentially want to join. Just connect with them on LinkedIn.

Start engaging with their own posts like either just like their stuff, comment on it, get your name on their feed so that when promotion time comes, they know who you are. you're both engaging with their stuff and you're posting your own stuff so that they have something to judge you off of and they see, oh, this person cares. They work hard, they're learning, they're getting better. It's a huge advantage. So, you're not scrambling in month nine after, you know, you've performed well for three quarters, but you not a single AE manager even really knows your name yet. So, when roles open, you're already familiar and you're not a stranger to them. This makes a huge difference. You talk about the value of LinkedIn and setting meetings and hitting quota. We're going to get to that. But for most of you, your long-term goal here is to promote to account executive, SMB, mid-market, enterprise, beyond. The way you do that is building a brand internally at your company. So, some things what to post and ways to do this without overthinking it. I'm not asking you to spend an hour per week. I spend about less than five minutes per week doing this. Is simply repost content from your company's primary LinkedIn page. If your company has a LinkedIn page, go onto it, repost it, and add an insight or commentary to it. Two or three sentences is all that's necessary. It could be from your website. So, new case studies from win stories that come out. Either a lot of times companies have the option to repost it to social media, or you can just copy the link and add some commentary to it and tell people to check out the story or lessons from customer conversations. You can highlight product features or updates you believe customers should know about.

You can just share something industry trends or market triggers that are going on in the industry. It could be competitors, competitor updates. Maybe a competitor increased their price or is charging a lot of customers big uplifts upon renewal. It could be YouTube videos from SCO, from company events, keynote speeches from your leadership, earnings calls, reports, conference calls if your company's public in chat GPT, Gemini, whatever you use make makes this easier than ever. Here's some basic prompts that you can take. And look, you can build your own and you should, but summarize this company LinkedIn post in two or three sentences and then add my perspective as an SDR explaining why this matters to buyers in the retail industry. Keep it conversational, insight driven, under 150 words. You can read the other two examples. What I want to note here is put in a little effort.

Don't just take what chat GPT or Gemini spits out. It's usually going to read like AI. It's going to have the green emojis and the check marks. Delete that stuff. You don't want it to read like your post was generated by AI. take it as a strong starting point and make it sound natural like you actually wrote it and not that you just copy pasted something from chatpt or AI. Now let's get into LinkedIn for your external brand. So this is building a brand with the ICPs that you go after. So again if you sell HR software you're going to be connecting with payroll analysts, recruiters, directors and VPs of HR, directors of learning and rewards. And over time, this isn't going to be immediate gratification in the first 1 to two months. But if you do this consistently over time, this is how you can start to generate inbound leads for yourself. Because just like internally, your name is coming up on these people's radar so that when priorities in the areas you focus on come apparent or come to the forefront in their organization, you are someone they know they can reach out to. So the long-term play here is connect consistently with your ICPs, the people you set meeting meetings with, etc. Post insights around their real problems. Stay visible even when they are not in the market. And then when the timing shifts, you're one of the first people they think about. I've done this myself. I never really call out my LinkedIn that much, but if you go search my LinkedIn, you will see that I'm consistently posting about my space and it is helping me generate inbound conversations. It didn't the first few months, but after some consistency, it is now starting to. And what's this creates is inbound messages from your prospects rather than you having to go sole outbound. Warmer outbound conversations, stronger credibility on sales cycles, too. This is more relevant for account executives. But if you're running sales cycles and you're connecting with the people that you're working with, you can be posting about what you want them to see and it's a good way to make sure that you're staying on their radar and that you're they're actually seeing things you want them to see. And then you can also send it to them directly as well and then it will just create leverage in your niche over time. I get it. Sometimes you might go from the HR space to the marketing to finance and sometimes you have to start over. But if you end up saying stay staying in the same niche over a few years, this is really going to compound and make LinkedIn a very fruitful channel for yourself. So now let's get into how to tactically use LinkedIn and LinkedIn sales nav. There's a lot of capabilities baked in. I want to talk about some of the most important ones I think every rep should be using. So one is persona filters. Every rep should be doing this. You can build I think you can do five at a time. You can build save searches for your ICP. So let's say you sell a financial management and HR platform. It does both. You can create a persona in sales nav and add as many job titles as you want. CFOs, VPs of FPNA, controllers, and that will be your finance persona. And then you can do the same thing for HR. Now, every time you look up a company, you can click on one of your personas and it will automatically filter the people who fall into one of those job titles. You could also do finance leadership, finance end users, HR leadership, HR end users.

There's limitless ways to apply this, but this makes it really easy for anytime you look up a certain industry, a company, you can just click your top persona filters and immediately filter on to who you need to be reaching out to. You also want to be taking advantage of account uploads. This might not be doable if you have some massive territory that covers the entire country and you have thousands and thousands of accounts. But if you have a territory of a hundred accounts or less or even if you have more than that but you want to h segment down to your top 100, you can upload those accounts so that sales nav has those as context and then you can filter by persona industry. From there, you can easily filter. I want all my software engineers that work in higher ed and it will give you all 753 people that fall within that criteria rather than that being hours and hours of work.

The other thing I want to quickly call out is that LinkedIn is the best B2B contact database on the planet. There's so many contact databases out there, but LinkedIn is slept on because in general it is the most accurate. People generally keep their LinkedIn updated. It's in real time. Other platforms like Zoom Info or Apollo, there's plenty of them. They're great. They have additional capabilities, but the information is not always accurate. LinkedIn is the most accurate contact B2B database. The only problem is there's usually no emails or phone numbers. So that's why an integration becomes very important. So an example is if you're using LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you want to have some sort of contact enrichment platform like Zoom Info as an example so that you can build lists of leads, buy your persona filters in SalesNav, export them into Zoom Info with a click of a button and then from there into your CRM like Salesforce. So you can sync LinkedIn lists into your CRM or your SEP platform and you can pull verified contact info, organized lists, prospect info, etc. So, this shouldn't be some process that takes you hours and hours and hours to do. It should be clicks of a button. And then the last thing I want to quickly touch on are trigger-based filters. So, you can look in and filter for signals that generally indicate a higher likelihood for timing and readiness. This is something you want to be learning about in your organization. It can look different depending upon what you sell and who you sell to, but some common ones people look for are job changers. A lot of time when a new leader gets hired, like if you sell to HR personas and a new VP of HR gets hired, they're coming in to make an impact, make a name for themselves, and they're often times open to meeting with vendors and taking on new projects. It could be headcount growth, could be previous work history, like you can you can create lists of people who used to work at current customers of your company. So you can have a list in sales nav of your current customers or as many of them as you can fit in there and then anyone in your territory who used to work at one of those companies you can add to a list.

So if they liked your solution at the last company they can potentially be a champion for what you sell as well. Technology stack. So looking at people who own or work at companies that own a competitor of yours or if there's inferior solutions that you tend to seek out and replace. That can be a filter that you set. Team expansion, hiring spikes, funding rounds, people who follow your company. These are all very specific trigger-based filters that you can create lists and have in your sales nav. Again, send them into Zoom info, send them into your CRM, and you can have nice, neat, organized lists of new leadership hires in the last 90 days.

But now, let's keep moving on to what do we actually say to these people and how to actually use LinkedIn tactically. So, some common FAQ, some frequently asked questions are generally from my experience and what I've learned is keep invites to 20 to 30 per day. Don't overdo it. LinkedIn can restrict your account if you consistently push beyond 30. They're getting more strict about this. This is going to be a hot a bit of a hot take. My opinion, avoid inmail entirely. It used to be very effective and come across as professional. Now, it comes across the exact opposite. It's it's pretty saturated. Most people ignore it. Most people know you're paying to almost get in their inbox now and it actually just comes across as salesy and puts puts you through a salesy lens and it reads like a sales pitch. It used to work well, but not as much anymore. Also, do not generally do not automate anything in LinkedIn.

Automation tools get flagged. Your account can be at risk of getting banned. It can tank your deliverability. LinkedIn again is becoming pretty good at identifying this. I'm sure there's some workarounds, but when you're just starting out, don't try and automate every little thing. 20 to 30 per day. Stick to the basics. And then don't send, this is another one there, it's debated, but from my experience, when you connect with these people, don't send a message in the connection request unless you are extremely confident that it's going to be something that's that's relevant to them. So, don't just do it for every LinkedIn request, only if it's hyper relevant because again, it can look salesy. It actually lowers acceptance rates from my experience and it kind of signals you have an agenda here. So connect first and then message later from a stronger position. So now let's get into the LinkedIn messaging framework. And I will be the first to admit I am a call first, email second, LinkedIn third kind of person. I've always found LinkedIn tough because I try and replicate what I do in my emails and just use them for LinkedIn. I've found that to be not a good use of time and you're better off just sending more emails than doing that. So with LinkedIn, you usually have to have a little bit of back and forth before you're able to book a meeting with the person. So the very simple framework that I found gets the most responses is something natural, confirm their relevance, and then just ask a simple question. So tie what you do to something they likely care about and then ask a simple, light, low pressure conversational question. So again, you can use lists. In this example, if I was selling fleet management software into the construction space, I created those persona filters. I have a 100 people in a row who all from my best judgment are focused on fleet visibility. I like to do it by use case. It can sound something simple like, "Hey, John, I work with a lot of construction companies on cleaning up job site visibility and reducing the back and forth around where trucks and equipment are throughout the day. Is that something your team is focused on right now?" Or if it was more a persona that was focused on maintenance, I would say something like, "Alex, I work with construction ops teams to cut down on unplanned downtime and make maintenance schedules easier to track across vehicles and heavy equipment. Is that something you're working on at the moment?" It comes across as natural and genuine. What I don't like are LinkedIn messages that don't give enough context at all where it's just like, "Hey, we're in the CRM space. Have you heard of us?"

or where it comes across as that salesy like fake personalization observation problem statement here's how we did the same thing for a different company open to a chat I don't even want to ask them for a meeting in that first message I literally just want to frontload the value and just say here's who I work with and what we do for them is that important to you and the better you get at it and the the more you listen out for what phrases and what use cases and challenges resonate most with what personas and what industries, the more effective that you will get at this and getting responses. And one thing I left a little note, I haven't I haven't tested this out yet. In the past, I've been against voice notes, especially when I was a manager, because I was always able to get more than enough results from calling, emailing, and I wanted my reps focused on that, and I viewed voice notes as a distraction.

However, because LinkedIn and email is getting so saturate saturated, I am open to the idea of almost delivering a value statement like 20 to 30 seconds saying the same thing to a 100 people in a row again that work in the fleet visibility part of the construction industry and saying delivering some sort of 20 to 30 second value statement that cuts through the noise and lets them know who I am, that I'm a real person and I'm credible.

So, I'll report back on that. I get a lot of questions about it, but in general, if you're just getting started, this is more than enough. Now, let's briefly touch on your LinkedIn profile and how to optimize it. So, I'll caveat this by saying this applies if you're allin on your company and you're not like looking for a new job or a new position or anything because if you are, you want to make your profile much more experience, results, and outcome focused on your sales experience. But if you're using it to try and book meetings, what you want to avoid, particularly for STRs is what I'm talking about is sales at fleet core, SDR at fleet core, things like that, because you're just putting yourself in the same category as the other thousands of STRs that are probably reaching out to them, which is fair. It's part of the game. like once you promote and you're an account manager or an enterprise AE or something, you can use that as your title because it's a little more consultative and people kind of know what those titles are, but most people don't want to feel like they're falling into the trap of taking a meeting with a sales rep. So some examples instead of saying sales at fleet core would be fleet visibility for construction teams like if that was the vertical that you played in fleet visibility for construction teams fleet core construction fleet operations support fleet core job site visibility and equipment tracking fleet visibility or fleet efficiency and fuel management for construction just as some examples that are more outcome focused and then your about me section because a lot of times when these people see your messages and they're like Oh, their title looks pretty good. What they said in that last message I was showing you an example of is pretty relevant. They'll click on your page. And you want to have something here where it's I support construction, fleet, and operations teams by helping them improve job site visibility, reduce downtime, and cut back on unnecessary unnecessary fuel spend. Most of the customers I work with want simpler ways to keep track of vehicles and equipment without adding more manual work. If you're navigating any of that, let's connect and discuss how we can support your team. super consultative. It tells them who you are and the use cases you focus on, the pain points that you tend to solve for customers, and kind of offering your expertise and resources to them going forward. Now, let's get into where LinkedIn can fit into your daily workflow. So, I've had a lot of requests to make a video on LinkedIn, and I just want to say, is LinkedIn required to be a top performing STR? In my opinion, no.

There's a lot of people out there who crush it on LinkedIn and would probably tell you differently. I just think the that you can get more than enough results even today through cold calling, which I still view as the number one primary best outbound channel, and email. And I more treat LinkedIn like a cherry on top, not the main course. So, it's a nice way to pick off some extra meetings. And honestly, it's way more valuable for building that internal brand and helping you get promoted than hitting your quota. from my experience.

So, I don't think you should be relying on it as your primary channel to book meetings. It's one of the most crowded spaces. Most people are too afraid to pick up the phone and as a result, they like to hide behind LinkedIn. I also don't think you should have it overlap with your call and email cadences. This is a very important nuance. I think you should be using LinkedIn to hit new people you're not currently calling and emailing in a sequence. The reason is it can actually lower your reply rates and results. If you are making assumptive cold calls and emails, I don't want when you introduce that third channel. It sounds like you're trying too hard now.

It kind of dilutes the assumptive nature of your email where you're kind of saying you're expecting this meeting to be happening. Now they go on your LinkedIn and they're like, "Oh, wow. This person's trying really hard." They see that SDR title and they're like, "Oh, it's one of those." So, if you're using LinkedIn, just use it for new people you're currently not in a call or email sequence with. And then the other thing about LinkedIn is I don't think you should let it overlap with peak hours for cold calling and emailing, which is generally early morning before people have gotten their day started and late afternoon when people are generally done. They're wrapping up their day.

Those are where the answer rates are highest and the reply rates to emails are highest. So, you want to be using those times for cold calling and emailing. And frankly throughout most of the workday, how I use LinkedIn is usually in my off hours. So it'll literally be in the evening, I'll be watching sports or something and literally just pull up my LinkedIn and casually send out some messages. Because the thing about LinkedIn is it's not like email. If you send an email to someone at 8:30 p.m. their time, it's going to kind of piss them off. But if you send a LinkedIn message, that's totally fair game. Those can just sit and people will reply to them the next day. So, if you're trying to maximize your time windows, use the 9 to5, in my opinion, for calls, emails, and only do LinkedIn in the downtime between meetings, stuff like that. And then use any extra time you have left over, whether it's lunch before your day starts or in the evening. That's when you can be sending out and getting some extra shots on net with LinkedIn from my perspective. So, I hope this helped and gave you something you can tactically get started with on LinkedIn. I don't think you need to overthink it. I think the branding piece both internally and externally will become more important over time. If you have a brand that out external customers recognize you for in your space, when you talk about fears of being replaced by AI, that is something that will be very valuable to companies that AI can't replicate. If you have a brand that you've built that people trust and they know you're a real person, that is something they can't take away from you and that you can take to whatever organization you end up moving to. So, hope this helped. If it did, subscribe. Hope you got value and I will see you on the next