

The Business Owner's Guide to LinkedIn

Reach clients, partners, and peers on the world's largest professional network

LinkedIn  for small business



About this guide

The Business Owner's Guide to LinkedIn provides simple steps on ways to meet new clients, get advice, and even improve sales. You'll learn to grow and maintain thriving business connections both on- and offline, and get cost-effective ideas to help you reach your goals. With LinkedIn, the more time you put in, the more you'll get out of it.

Here's how to put LinkedIn to work for you:

- **Start** using LinkedIn to promote yourself and your business
- **Gain momentum** by expanding your network and sharing your story
- **Grow** your reach and influence as a business leader



Table of Contents

- **Introduction**

 - Why LinkedIn? We help small businesses grow.....iii

- **Section 1: Getting started with LinkedIn**

 - How to create a personal profile2

 - Why your profile page matters3

 - How to create a Company Page4

 - Why a Company Page matters5

 - How to add connections6

 - Why connections matter7

 - ✍ **Checklist:** Getting started on LinkedIn.....8

- **Section 2: Gaining momentum**

 - How to gain momentum on LinkedIn10

 - How to create a more robust profile.....11

 - How to make your profile work harder12

 - Find sources to follow13

 - Why following sources matters14

 - How to use LinkedIn Groups.....15

 - How to nurture your network.....16

 - How to find and connect with the right people17

 - Benefits of frequent check-ins18

 - ✍ **Checklist:** Gaining momentum on LinkedIn19

- **Section 3: Growing your reach**

 - How to grow your reach on LinkedIn21

 - How to go beyond your network.....22

 - How to reach out – the good vs. the bad.....23

 - How to curate content.....24

 - Tips for sharing updates on LinkedIn.....25

 - How to publish original content26

 - ✍ **Checklist:** Growing your reach on LinkedIn27

- **Conclusion: Growing your business on LinkedIn**

 - Final overview: three levels of putting LinkedIn to work29

 - Useful resources.....30

Why LinkedIn? We help businesses grow.

Millions of small-business leaders use LinkedIn to tap into a wide-reaching professional network. In one place, you can do all this:



Reach new clients

Showcase your expertise and connect with interested prospects.



Build relationships

Strengthen your professional network to help grow your business.



Get advice

Swap stories with people who've been in your shoes.



Increase credibility

Establish yourself as a business leader and expert in your field.



Start in minutes

All you need is a personal LinkedIn profile and a Company Page.

- Here's how to [get started](#) ›
- Already have an account? [Make the most of it](#) ›



SECTION 1:

Getting started with LinkedIn

- Create a personal profile
- Build a Company Page
- Add connections



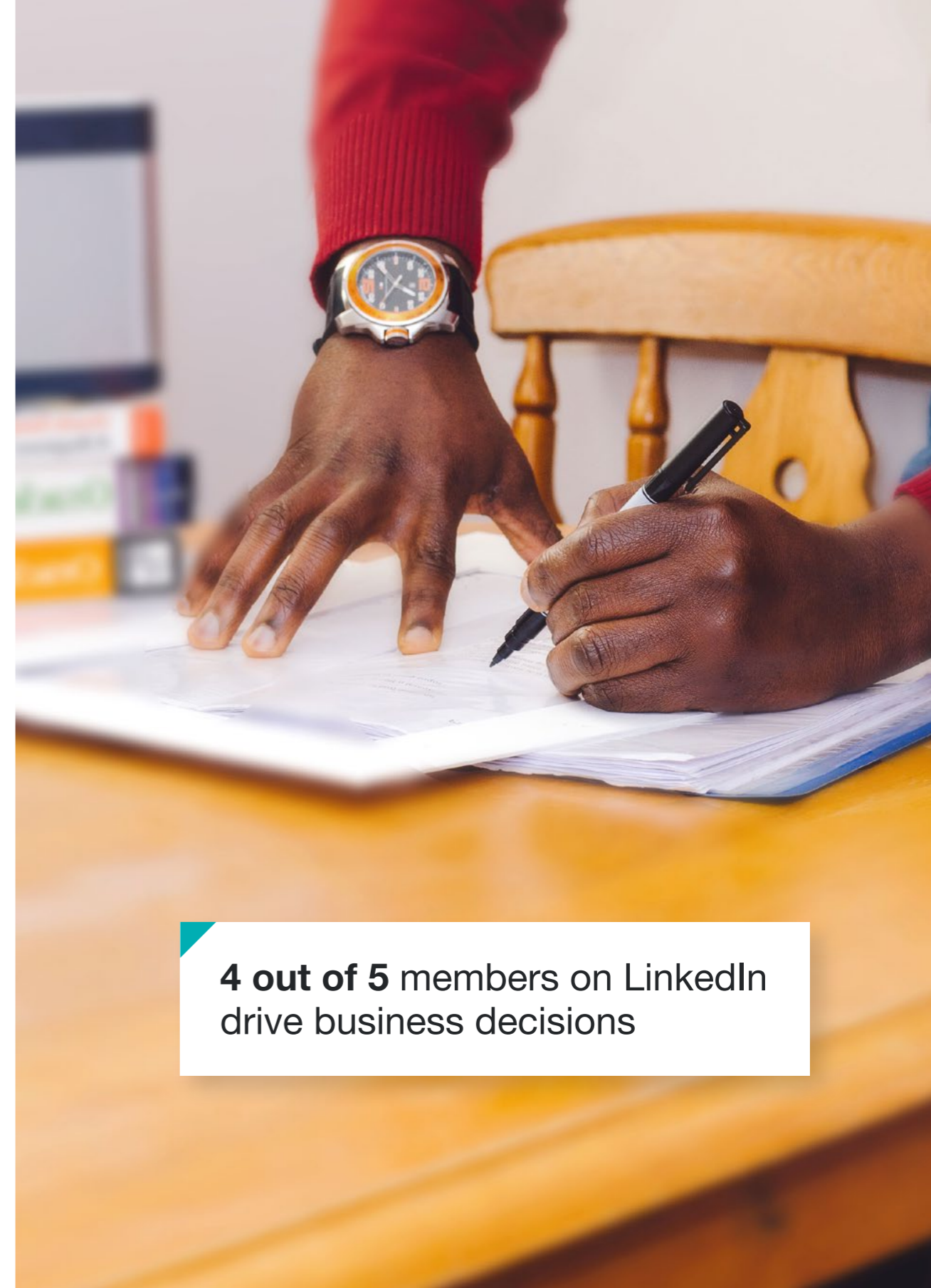
How to create a personal profile

Introduce yourself to a thriving business network

The goal is to create a LinkedIn profile page that folds in the story of your business. If you've already signed up, [skip this step](#) and move on to Section 2.

1. Visit www.linkedin.com and follow the prompts.
2. Enter your **first and last name, professional email address, and password**. (Remember to use your name, not the name of your business.)
3. Click **“Join Now.”**
4. Fill out your profile. Select the **pencil icon** to make edits later.

You'll find tips for strengthening your personal profile on the next page.



4 out of 5 members on LinkedIn drive business decisions

Why your profile page matters

Showcase your professional story

■ Profile picture: Put a face to the name

Adding a photo is one of the most powerful things you can do. Professional headshots are helpful, but a well-composed personal photo works too.

■ Headline: Make it thoughtful

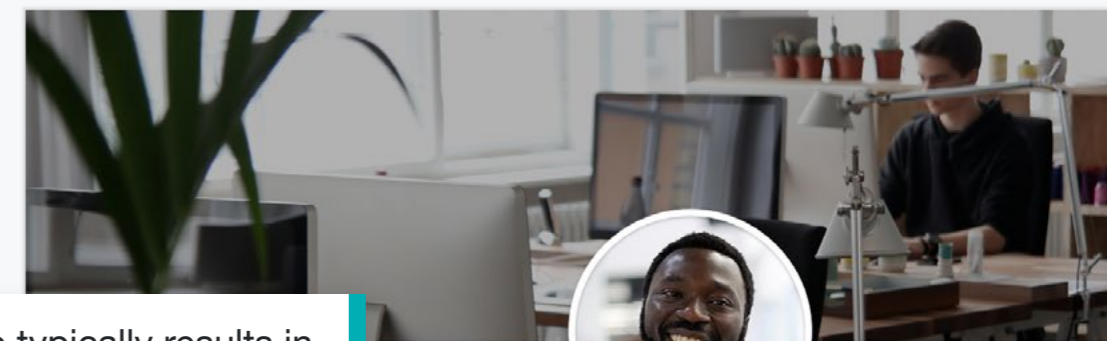
Your headline is the first thing people will read, so clarity is key. Explain what you do and who you do it for. “I help companies drive engagement and deepen loyalty,” for example, or “CEO & Founder of [Your Company Name].”

■ Summary: Write your story, not the company’s

Starting a business is no small task, and your summary is the ideal place to share your mission. Think of this as a place to identify yourself as the person behind your business.

■ Experience: Share your work history

Add your company name in manually – it won’t appear in the dropdown list, but we’ll link to your Company Page at a later step. Then fill in your work experience and industry. A current resume will help.



A photo typically results in **21x more profile views**

John Norato

Headline

I collaborate with clients to create purpose-driven design.

Founder of 2X Design • University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, Minnesota • 2 &

As a **creative director**, I believe in **partnership**, **creativity**, and inspiring change. I have **experience** working closely with my clients to deliver emotional, impactful **design solutions**. Through an informed and iterative **process**, we’ll uncover real **insights** into the needs of your company. To find out more about my process and the results, let’s talk. Can’t wait to help your company grow and go further, with **purpose-driven** design.

Incorporate keywords to help **rank higher** in search results

Experience



Founder

2x Design

Jul 2003 - Present • 8 years

Minneapolis, Minnesota



Creative Director

Panda Marketing

Jul 1998 - 2002 • 4 years

Minneapolis, Minnesota

How to create a Company Page

Tell the story of your business

Help new clients find you with a free Company Page. It's quick to set up, and it gives you a place to showcase your leadership and expertise.

1. Select “**Work**” in the top navigation bar
2. Click “**Create a Company Page**”
3. Fill in your company name and an initial URL (you can change it later)
4. Click “**Create page**” to publish and save changes
5. **KEY STEP:** On your personal profile, update your work experience to link to this new Company Page



Business leaders with a Company Page receive **4X MORE** profile views

Why a Company Page matters

Impress clients with a company profile page – it's free

- **Logo and cover image: worth a thousand words**

Adding a company logo and cover image is a powerful way to build a brand. Think about adding pictures of the town you work in, your products, services, or workspace.

- **“About us” section: Share your story (for SEO)**

Why did you start your business? Who are your clients? What's the best way to get in touch with you? Describe your specialties in clear and concise terms – and aim to include keywords that will help your page rank higher in search results.

- **No website? No problem.**

When creating a Company Page, you're required to include a URL for your business. If you don't have a website, fill this in with your LinkedIn profile or other personal site.

GET 6X MORE visits to your Company Page by adding a logo

in Q Search Home My Network Jobs Messaging

2X DESIGN

2X Design
Founder of 2X Design • Minneapolis, Minnesota • 2 followers
See all 2 employees on LinkedIn →
Follow See jobs

About us

Recent update See all

2X Design is a Minneapolis-based design agency that emphasizes collaboration with our clients to inform a purpose-driven design strategy. Whether creating marketing collateral or redesigning a company's website, we partner with our clients to identify their true needs, and come up with an intelligent design solution.

Company details

Website
<http://www.2xdesign.com>

Headquarters
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Year founded
2003

Company type
Privately Held

Company size
1-10 employees

Specialties
Design, marketing, strategy, and identity

3 Steps to Successful Collaboration
2xdesign.com
10 Likes 2w

See less ^

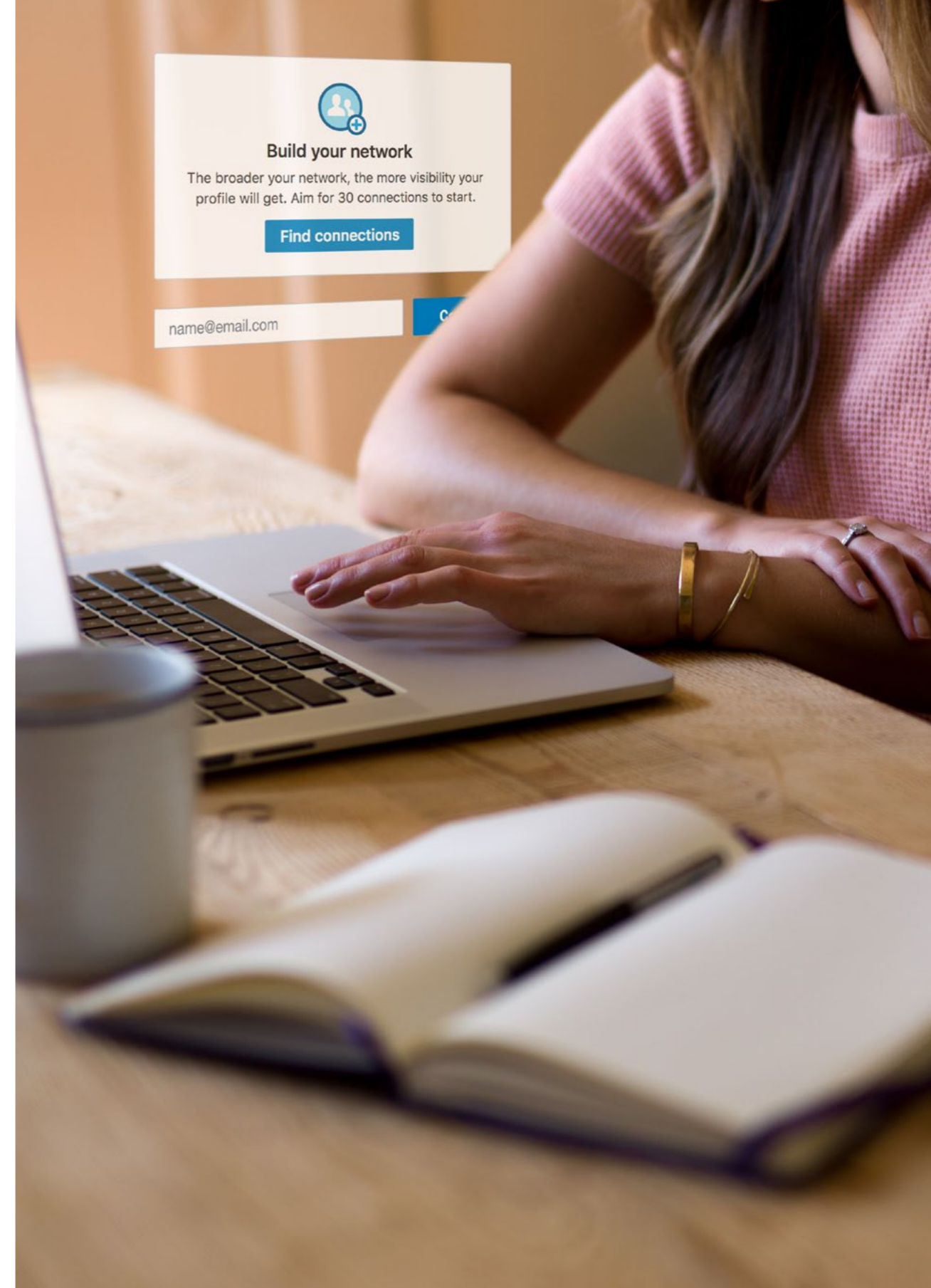
How to add connections

Establish and expand your professional network

Growing your network won't happen all at once, but LinkedIn makes it easy for savvy small-business owners to widen their sphere of influence.

How to make connections

1. Choose “**My Network**” in the LinkedIn navigation bar, or click the “**Find connections**” button
2. Follow the steps to **sync your email address book**
3. To find a certain person, **enter a name** in the search bar
4. Click “**Connect**” to send a networking request



Why connections matter

Every new connection is a chance to grow



Sync and add: Find your community

All you have to do is sync your email address list. You'll discover people you know who are already on LinkedIn, and stay up to date with business contacts, even if they move positions or employers.



Grow your reach: Connect with a wide range

Building out your network can give you an impressive reach of second-degree connections – the people who know your mutual connection, but may not know you (yet).

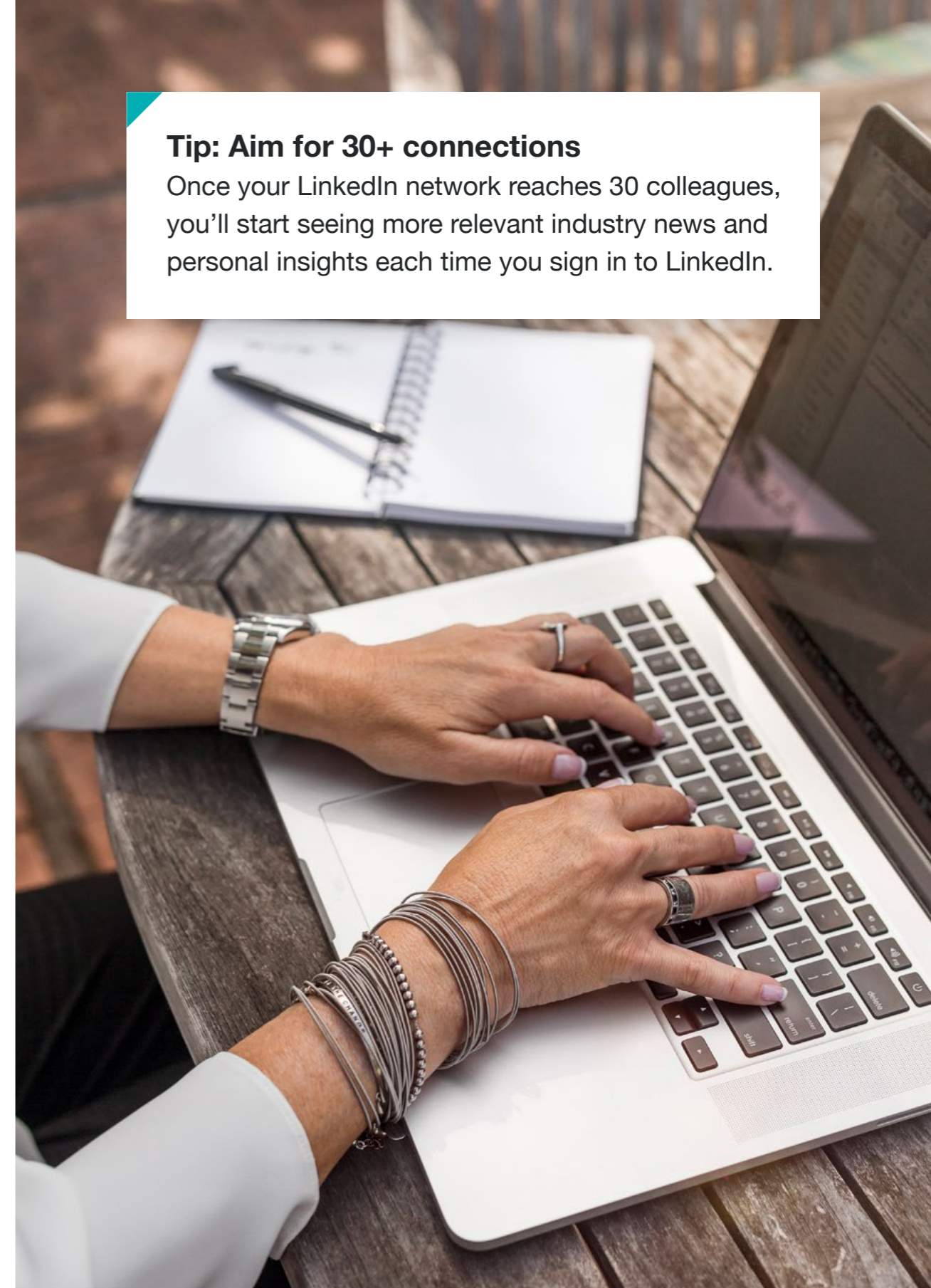


“See alumni” from your alma mater

Broaden your network by connecting with alumni from your places of schooling. Search for your school, “Follow” updates, and choose to “See alumni.” These steps can get you closer to people who can help you achieve your business goals.

Tip: Aim for 30+ connections

Once your LinkedIn network reaches 30 colleagues, you'll start seeing more relevant industry news and personal insights each time you sign in to LinkedIn.



Checklist: Getting started on LinkedIn



Nice work, we covered a lot. Here's a checklist of how to start using LinkedIn to grow your business.

- Create a personal profile**
 - Add a photo
 - Write a headline
 - Fill in a summary
 - Enter your work experience
- Build a Company Page**
 - Upload your logo
 - Write an "About us" section
 - Use keywords for SEO
- Add connections**
 - Sync your email address book

Every element builds on the next

Your profile and Company Page will lead to new connections. And any connection could lead to your next big client, partner, or investor.

Checklist: Getting started on LinkedIn



Nice work, we covered a lot. Here's a checklist of how to start using LinkedIn to grow your business.

- Create a personal profile**
 - Add a photo
 - Write a headline
 - Fill in a summary
 - Enter your work experience
- Build a Company Page**
 - Upload your logo
 - Write an "About us" section
 - Use keywords for SEO
- Add connections**
 - Sync your email address book

SECTION 2:

Gaining momentum

- **Develop your profile**
- **Find and follow sources**
- **Add new connections**
- **Engage with your network**



How to gain momentum on LinkedIn

Tap into a thriving business community

Running a successful business means making smart decisions every day about the best ways to use your limited time, budget, and resources.

That's why millions of small-business leaders tap into LinkedIn's professional community to get advice, share updates, and find industry news.

In this section, we'll give you simple tips to help you:

- **Create** a more robust profile
- **Find and follow** influencers, companies, and LinkedIn Groups
- **Continue** to find and add connections
- **Engage** on LinkedIn in as little as **5 minutes a day**



Completed profiles earn:

21x more profile views

36x more messages

9x more connection requests

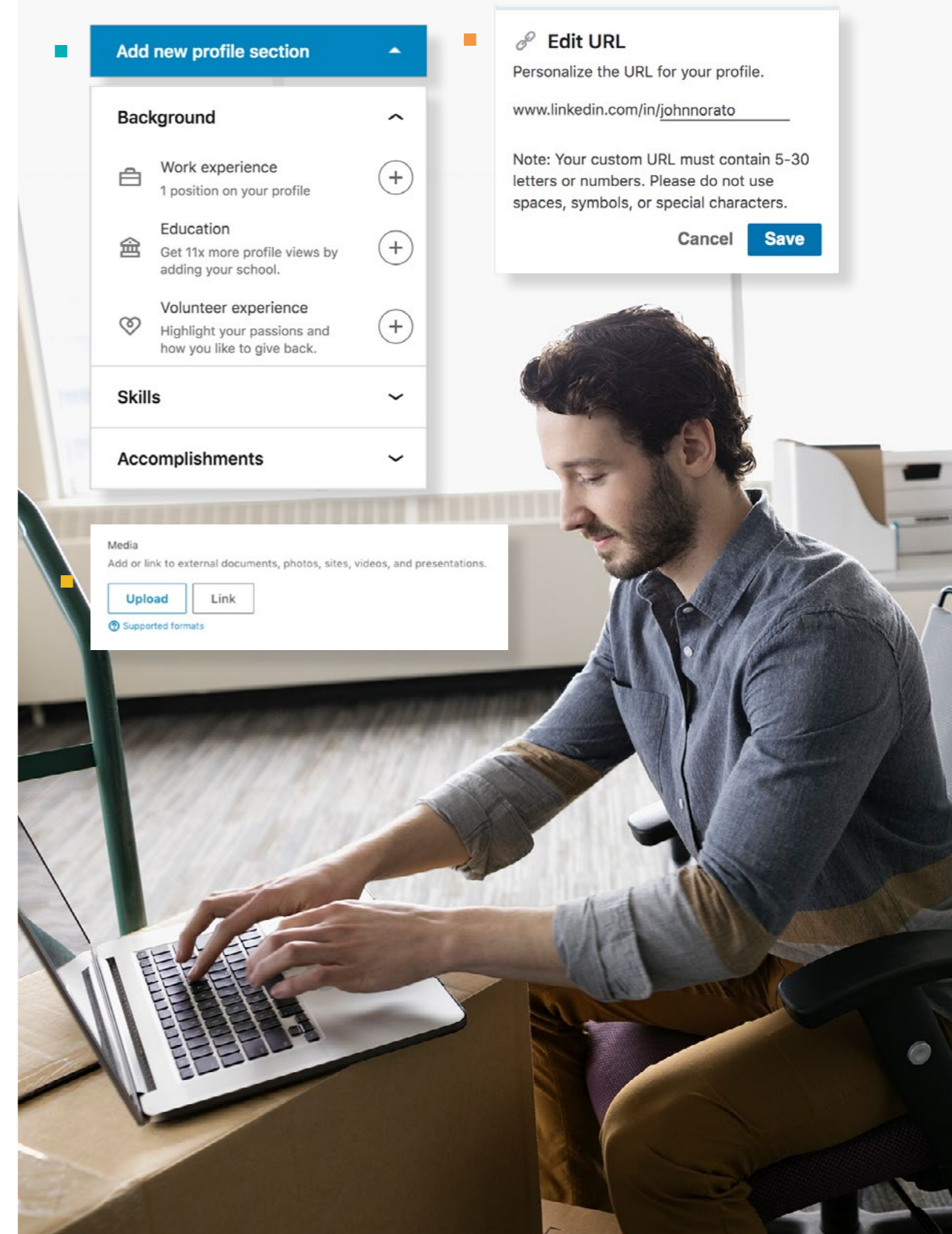
How to create a more robust profile

A compelling business story starts here

The more you add to your personal profile and Company Page, the more likely new clients will notice you and your business. Since this is often the first thing people see, it's in your best interest to craft a well-rounded profile.

Ways to strengthen your profile

- Choose “**Add new profile section**”
- Create a **unique LinkedIn URL** and add your web properties
- Showcase your work
- **Connect** with more colleagues
- **Search** for contacts that might help you achieve your goals



How to make your profile work harder

You've got skills. Show them off.



Skills and background: Prove your expertise

The more details you add to your profile, the easier it becomes to make new connections. You'll earn more profile views just by filling in your education and industry.



Accomplishments: Share awards

List your business certifications or awards in this section, as well as any mentions in a local publication. If you've been named the "Small Business of the Year," don't hesitate to share.



Media: Link to outside sources

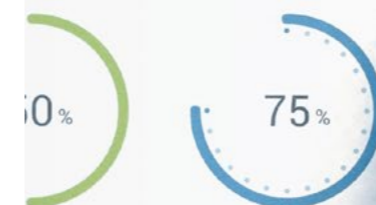
Nothing reveals the quality of your work better than rich, tangible examples. Upload or link to blog posts, presentations, images, and websites. Give people a reason to engage with you.



Recommendations: Ask clients to speak for you

Get endorsements and recommendations from clients who can speak credibly about your abilities and contributions. This will help catch the eye of prospective customers.

Members with 5 or more skills are found up to **27X MORE**



*National SMB Awards
- Chamber of Commerce*



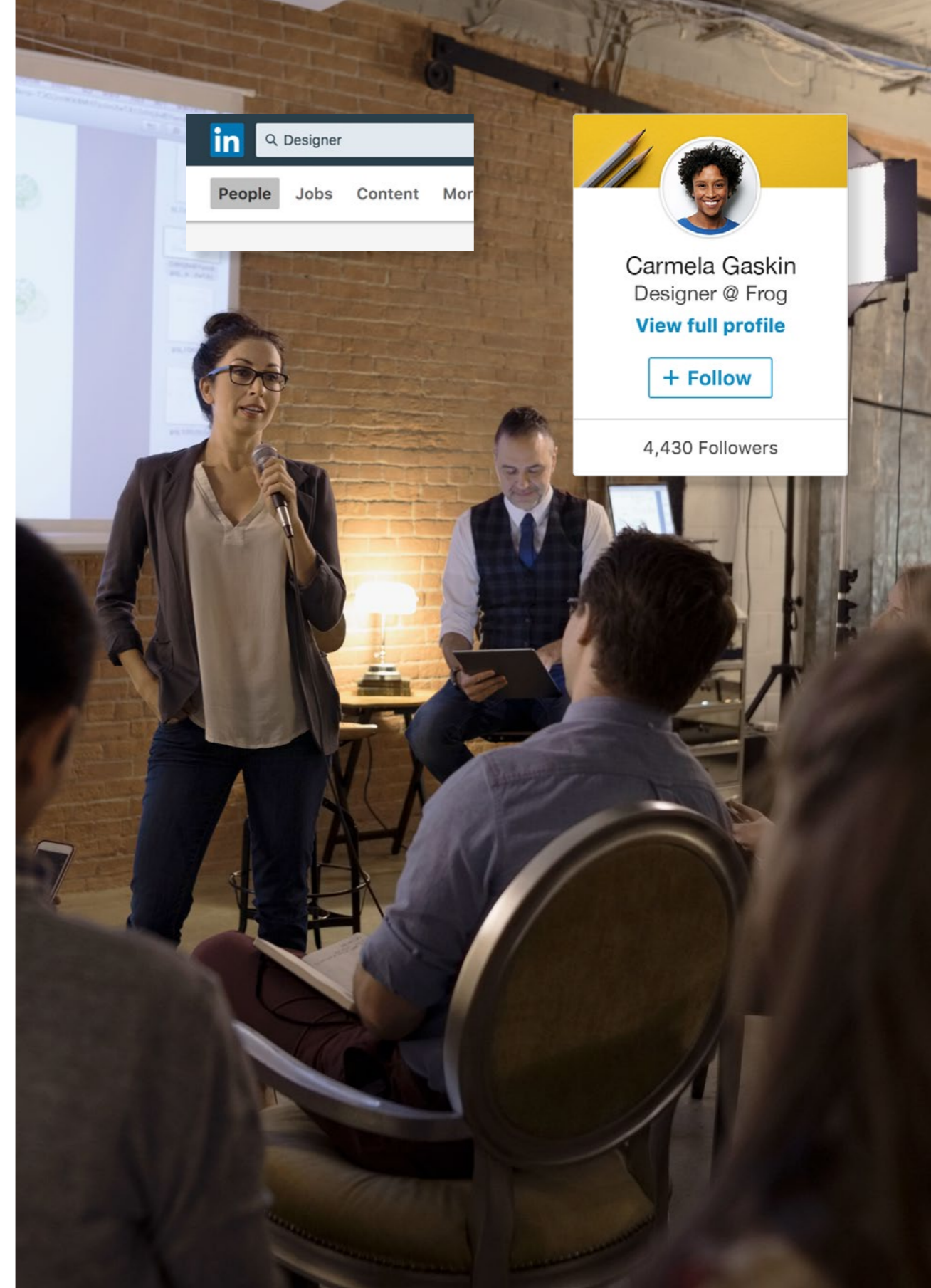
Find sources to follow

Search for sources that speak to your goals

Learn directly from industry leaders by choosing to follow their updates on LinkedIn. You'll see their updates in the feed on your page. If you like something you read, chime in with your point of view.

Steps to follow influencers or companies

1. **Search for experts or leaders** in your industry, or **find companies** you admire
2. Click **“Follow”**
3. **Read, like, and share content** you enjoy; your activity will help make your business stand out



Why following sources matters

Get business advice from multiple voices



Seek out industry leaders

Stay informed by following voices that align with your specialization. Chose a variety of voices and, as you feel comfortable, add comments to their posts. This will help your business start to surface on other people's feeds.



Choose your "follows" wisely

Influencers and companies you follow will begin to fill your LinkedIn feed. Pick the ones most relevant to your business goals, as well as competitive voices. There are small-business associations in many locations; you may want to start there.

Not sure who to follow? Start here.

- National Small Business Association [Follow >](#)
- Small Business Trends [Follow >](#)
- Fast Company [Follow >](#)
- American Express OPEN, small-business services [Follow >](#)
- Entrepreneur Media [Follow >](#)
- Melinda Emerson, SmallBizLady [Follow >](#)
- Martin Zwilling, CEO of StartUp Professionals, Inc. [Follow >](#)
- Jeff Weiner, CEO of LinkedIn [Follow >](#)

How to use LinkedIn Groups

Join a community of small-business leaders



Swap stories in a LinkedIn Group

These private communities are built around a common interest, industry, or job function. They can be a useful resource if you're looking for guidance or feedback. They're also an easy way to meet other small business owners.

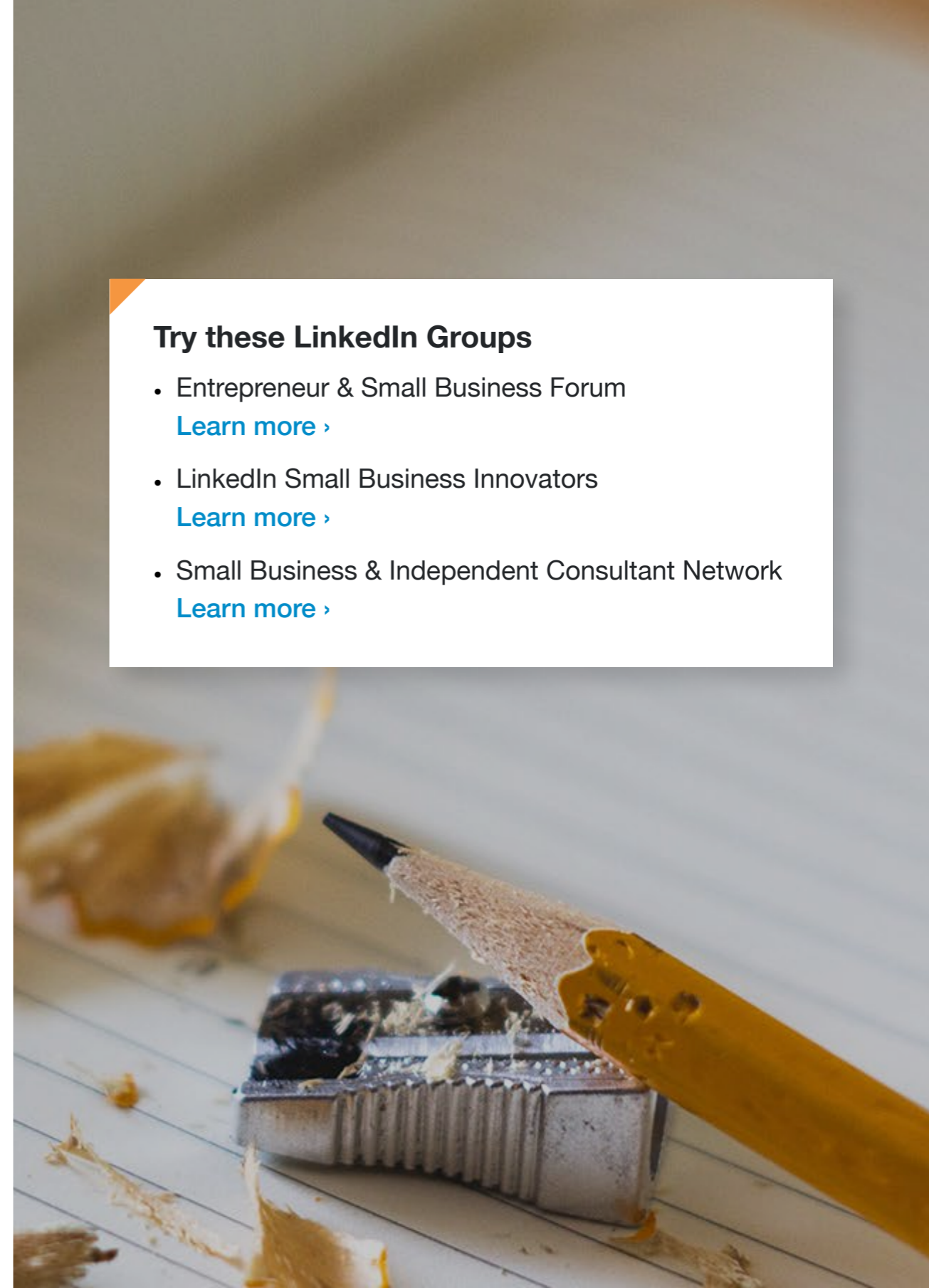


Groups and channels add depth to your profile

The groups you join and channels you follow will appear under "Interests" on your personal profile. This signals what's important to you. At the same time, these added interests will make your LinkedIn experience more tailored.

Try these LinkedIn Groups

- Entrepreneur & Small Business Forum
[Learn more >](#)
- LinkedIn Small Business Innovators
[Learn more >](#)
- Small Business & Independent Consultant Network
[Learn more >](#)



How to nurture your network

Reach out, add comments, and share updates

Connecting with clients on a personal level is one of the advantages of being a small-business owner. Interacting on LinkedIn is another way to build relationships. This can be done in as little as five minutes a day.

Steps to stay active on LinkedIn:

1. Reach out to contacts to keep in active communication
2. Comment, like, and share articles and news
3. Post updates from both your personal profile and Company Page
4. Promote accomplishments both big and small



How to find and connect with the right people

Continue to establish credibility as a business leader



Use the search bar to find more contacts

Our search bar can open up a world of business connections. Search LinkedIn to find everyone you'd like to work with again. Don't leave out friends, family, or former colleagues.



Reach out with custom messages

Try to write a short, personal message when asking people to join your network – especially if you haven't done business with them recently. It's always appreciated.



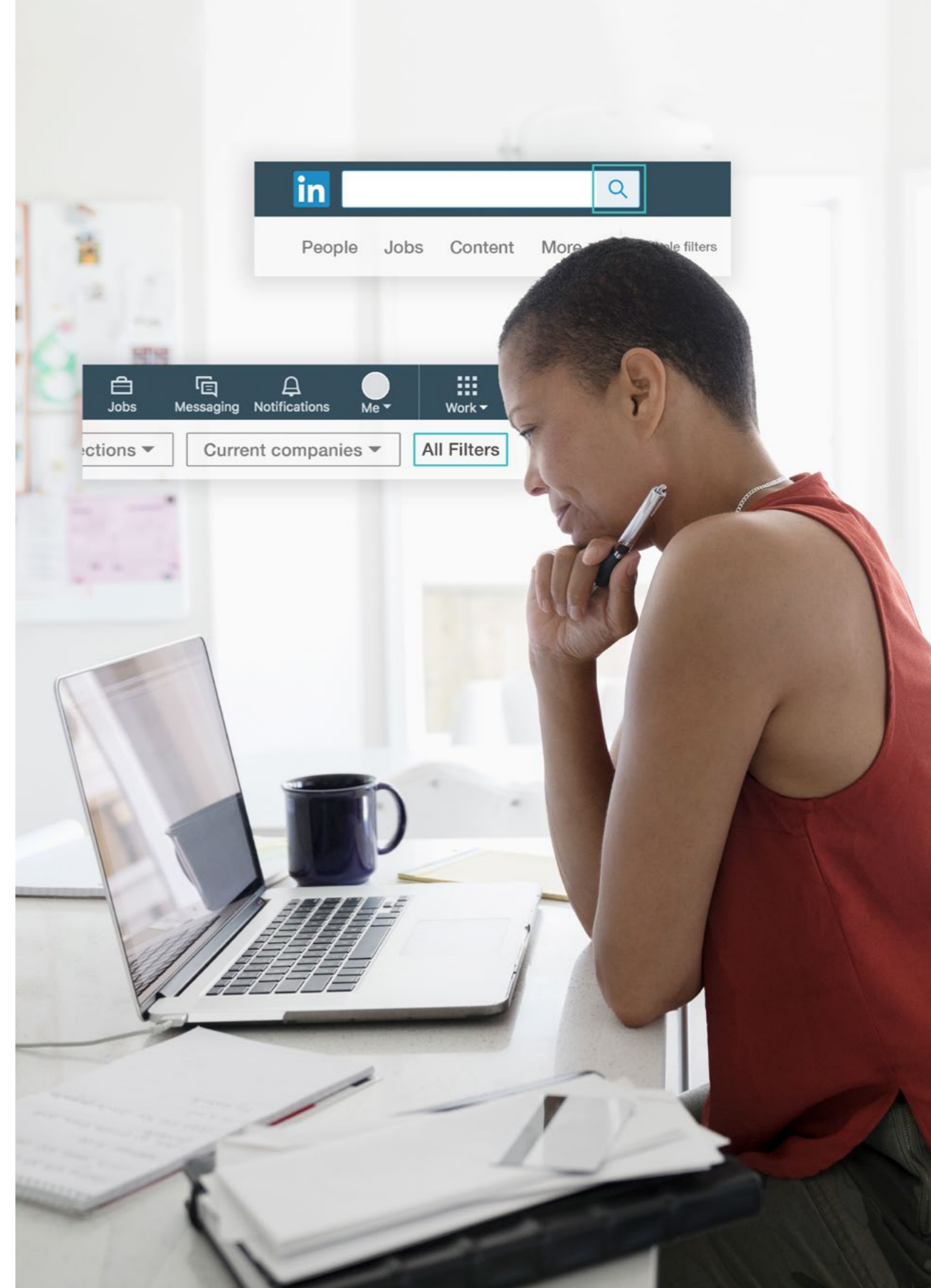
Continue to grow your network

Check the "My Network" tab to see suggestions of people you may know. Continue to invite contacts you meet – in a LinkedIn Group, via a comment, or in real life – to your network.



Refine your search with "All filters"

If you want to find a connection in a particular industry, from a specific school, or with a certain level of experience, open up "All Filters" in the search bar.



Benefits of frequent check-ins

Consistent engagement on LinkedIn helps grow your network



Regular activity is best

Like any community of professionals, your LinkedIn network thrives on interaction. [Download the LinkedIn app](#) to make it easy to connect and share insights – from anywhere.



Take action: Like or add comments

Keep the conversation going by interacting with updates from other companies and LinkedIn members.



Promote accomplishments and awards

Received a great review? Landed a new client? Excited about a new project? Share the good news with your LinkedIn community.



Checklist: Gaining momentum on LinkedIn

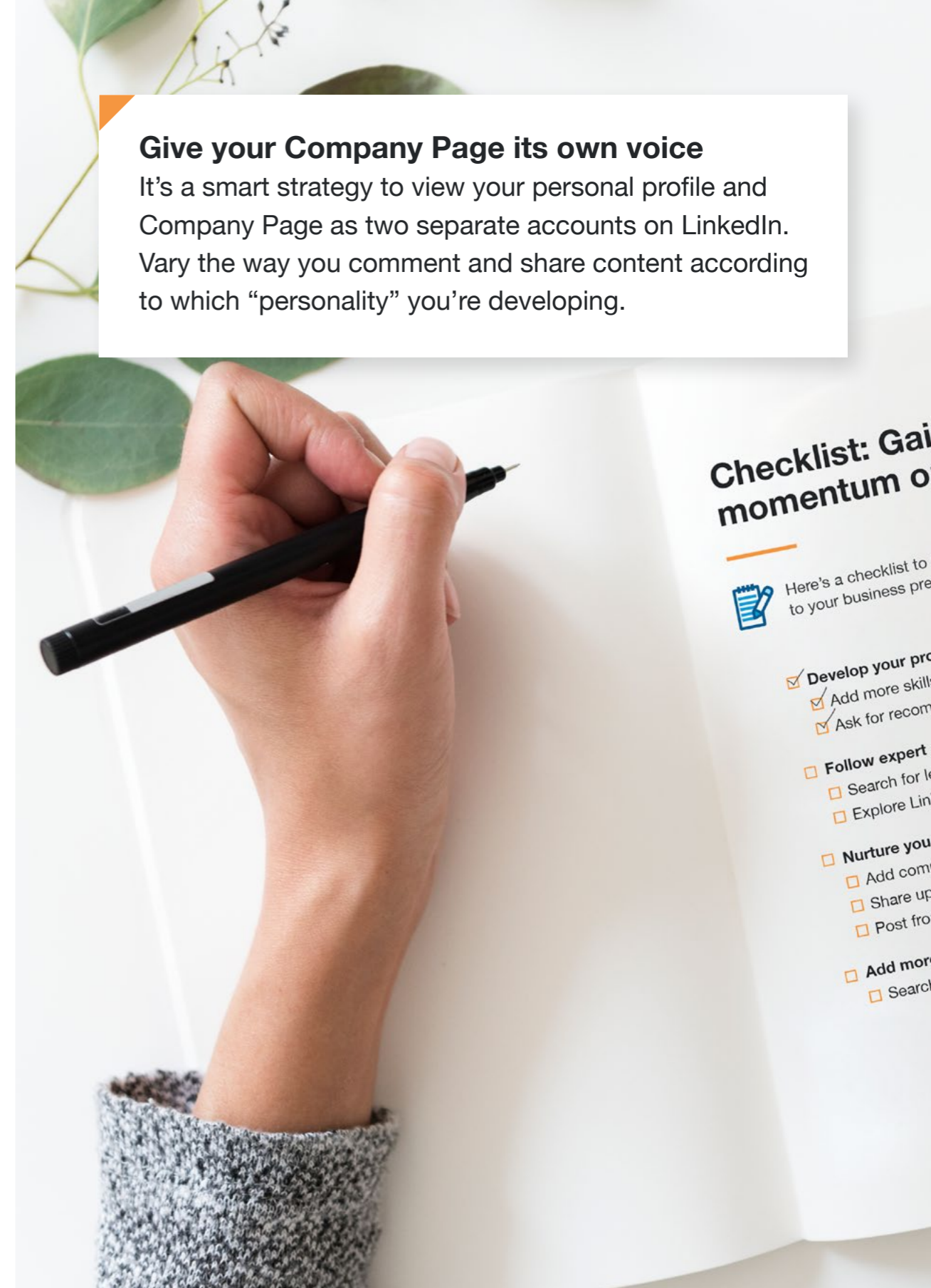


Here's a checklist to help you add momentum to your business presence on LinkedIn:

- Develop your profile**
 - Add more skills, background, media
 - Ask for recommendations
- Follow expert sources**
 - Search for leaders, companies, schools
 - Explore LinkedIn Groups
- Nurture your network**
 - Add comments
 - Share updates
 - Post from your profile *and* Company Page
- Add more connections**
 - Search beyond your network

Give your Company Page its own voice

It's a smart strategy to view your personal profile and Company Page as two separate accounts on LinkedIn. Vary the way you comment and share content according to which "personality" you're developing.



SECTION 3:

Growing your reach

- Reach professionals
- Curate content
- Publish original articles



How to grow your reach on LinkedIn

Use your influence to propel your business success

LinkedIn is a place to start conversations with people who show interest in your business, and to differentiate yourself from the competition. Sound like work? Maybe it is, a little. But it's also fun to watch your influence spread.

You've already created a strong, interesting presence for yourself and your business. Now it's time to use that credibility to attract new clients.

In this section, you'll find tips on how to:

- **Reach professionals** with connections that matter
- **Curate content** on LinkedIn to expand your influence
- **Write and publish** original thoughts and stories



How to go beyond your network

Reach out to potential mentors, partners, and clients

With 530+ million professionals on LinkedIn, someone is bound to lead you to your next big project. That's why it's essential to continue to reach out to new, bigger connections.

Steps to grow your reach

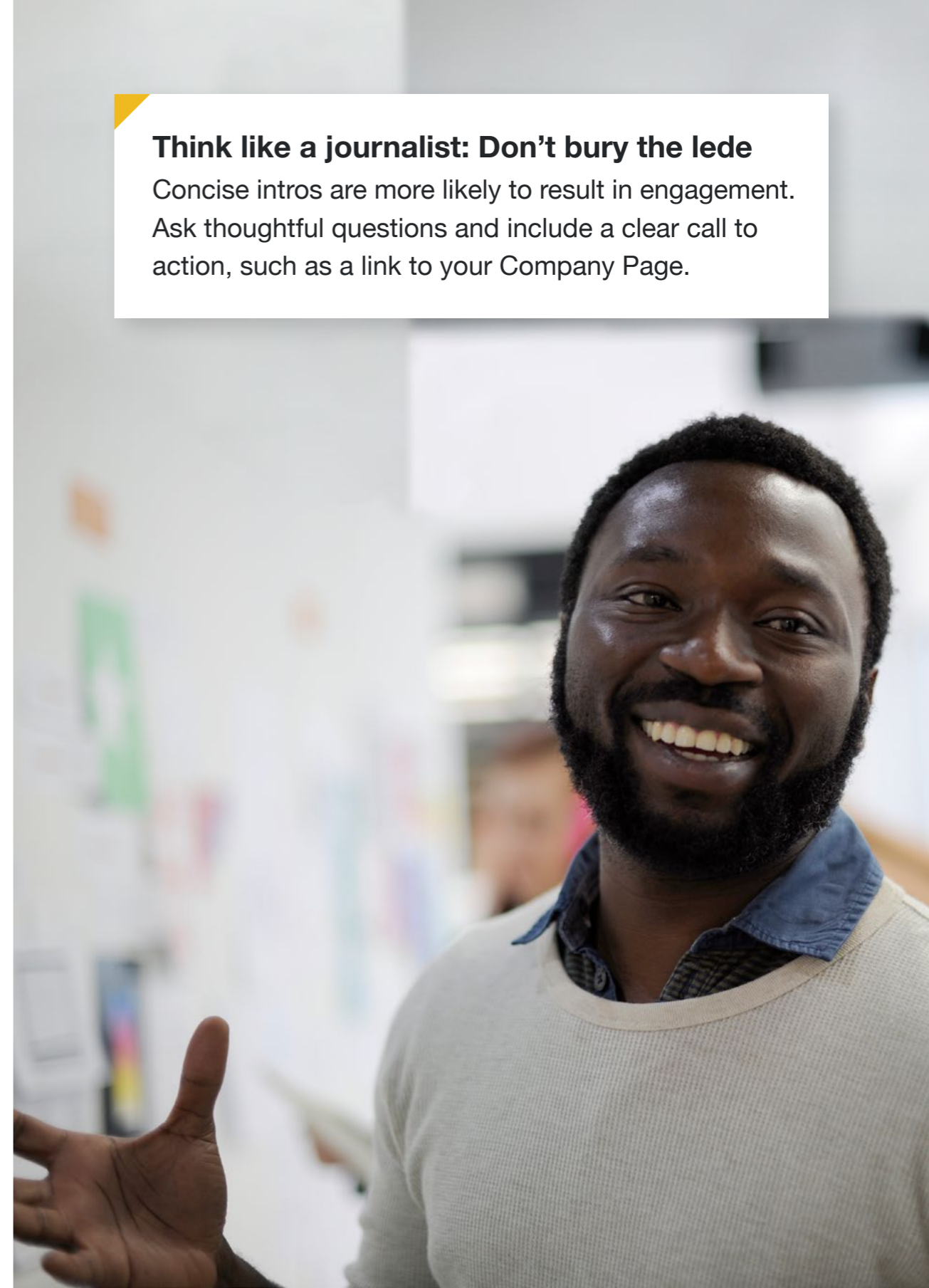
1. **Interact** with potential mentors, partners, and clients
2. Once a relationship has been established, **connect with them**
3. **Reach out to mentors** of varying degrees of celebrity and influence

Be helpful and friendly, not salesy

Don't send overly promotional messages when reaching out to a new connection. Aim to be straightforward – for example, "I'd like to find out if someone you know can use my services."

Think like a journalist: Don't bury the lede

Concise intros are more likely to result in engagement. Ask thoughtful questions and include a clear call to action, such as a link to your Company Page.



How to reach out – the good vs. the bad

Add a personal message, and make it genuine

When you invite someone you don't know to join your network, it's essential that you include a personal note that explains why you're reaching out.

Good outreach message



Hi, Julia! My name is John. I came across your article on Quora and found it truly inspiring. As a small-business owner, I found your insights to be very helpful. I'd love to connect and learn more from you.

John Norato

Business Owner at 2X Design
Minneapolis, Minnesota

View profile

Accept

- Personalizes the message
- Feels sincere and personal
- Includes commonalities
- Uses the "Small Business" card

Bad outreach message



I'd like to connect. It seems like there's a lot I could learn from you.
Thanks.

John Norato

Business Owner at 2X Design
Minneapolis, Minnesota

View profile

Accept

- Seeks a new connection with no context
- Tries to sell the idea without a believable rationale
- Feels impersonal

How to curate content

Read, like, share, comment – and repeat

Every page you follow will show up on your feed, giving you an opportunity to add comments or re-share thoughts. Your additions will show up across the small-business community.

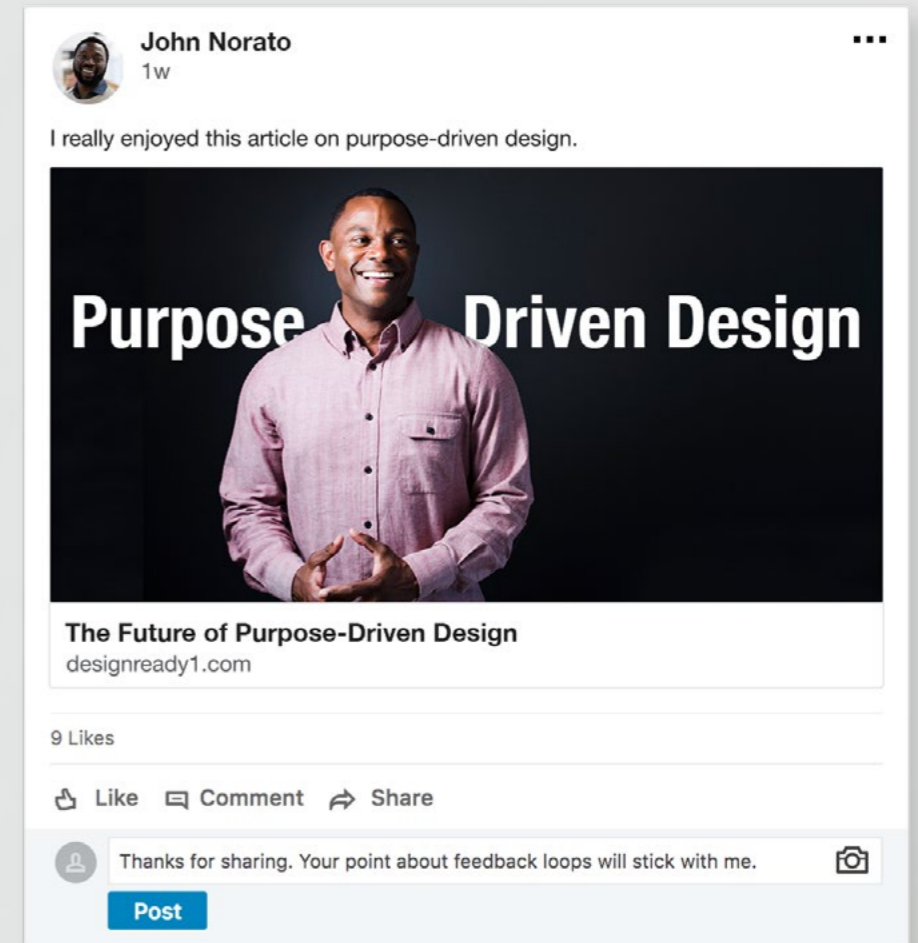
You can comment on or share updates to curate content – and grow your business presence – on LinkedIn.

Steps to curate content

1. Find and share articles and updates relevant to you and your network
2. Add your own commentary

Example comment:

“This is a great point, [writer’s name]. Have you considered how automation will affect small businesses?”



Tips for sharing updates on LinkedIn

Find and highlight a benefit for your followers



Post often (biweekly or monthly if possible)

Updates posted in the morning usually earn the highest engagement, with a slight bump occurring again after business hours. Experiment to see what works best for your company.



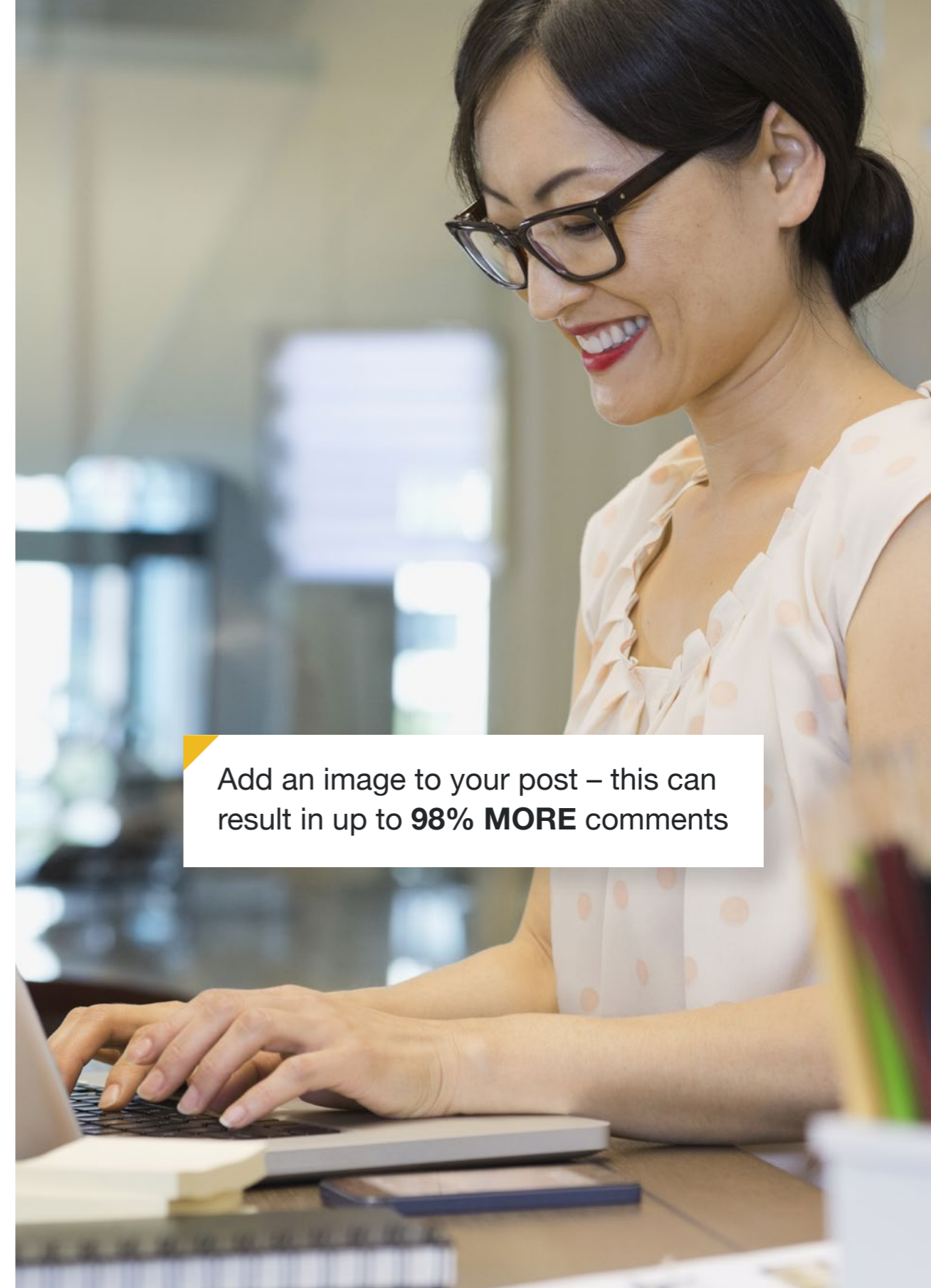
Re-share, tag, and add comments

If you attend a conference, share an article about the event and include a comment about your favorite session. Share photos from events, and tag other attendees. Ask them to share their highlights.



Start conversations, not sales pitches

People tune out overly promotional updates. When posting company-related news or product announcements, make sure they deliver a specific benefit to your followers.



Add an image to your post – this can result in up to **98% MORE** comments

How to publish original content

LinkedIn makes it simple to share your thoughts and stories

LinkedIn provides a huge platform where you can share professional expertise, experiences, and anecdotes. Many times, the most interesting stories will combine a personal life lesson with your unique business perspective.

Steps to publish original content

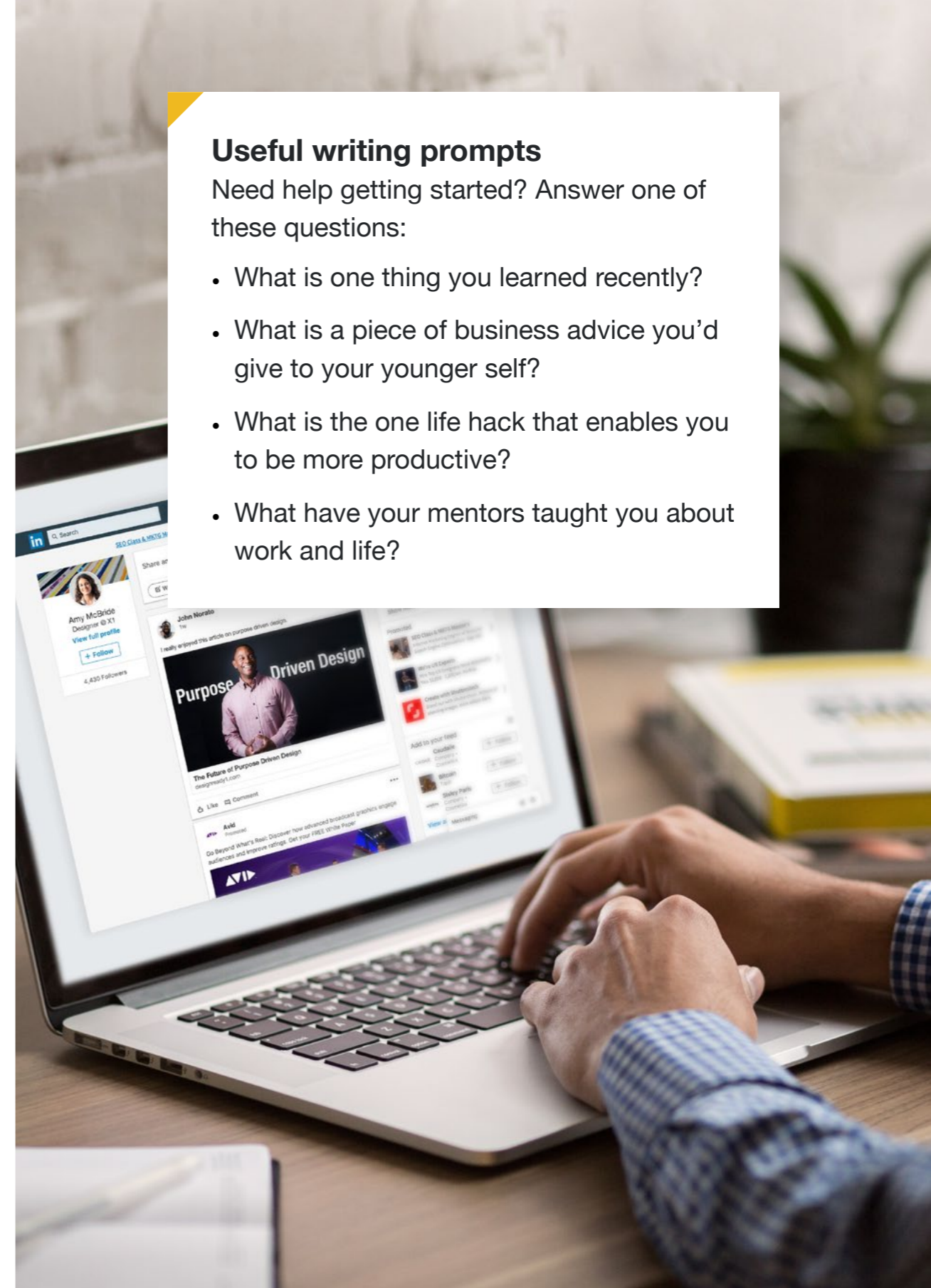
1. Click **“Write an article”** at the top of your LinkedIn feed
2. Create a **headline** and compose your **story**
3. Add **images** or a video
4. **Review your draft** and make edits
5. Click **“Publish”**

Share an article, photo, video or idea

Useful writing prompts

Need help getting started? Answer one of these questions:

- What is one thing you learned recently?
- What is a piece of business advice you'd give to your younger self?
- What is the one life hack that enables you to be more productive?
- What have your mentors taught you about work and life?

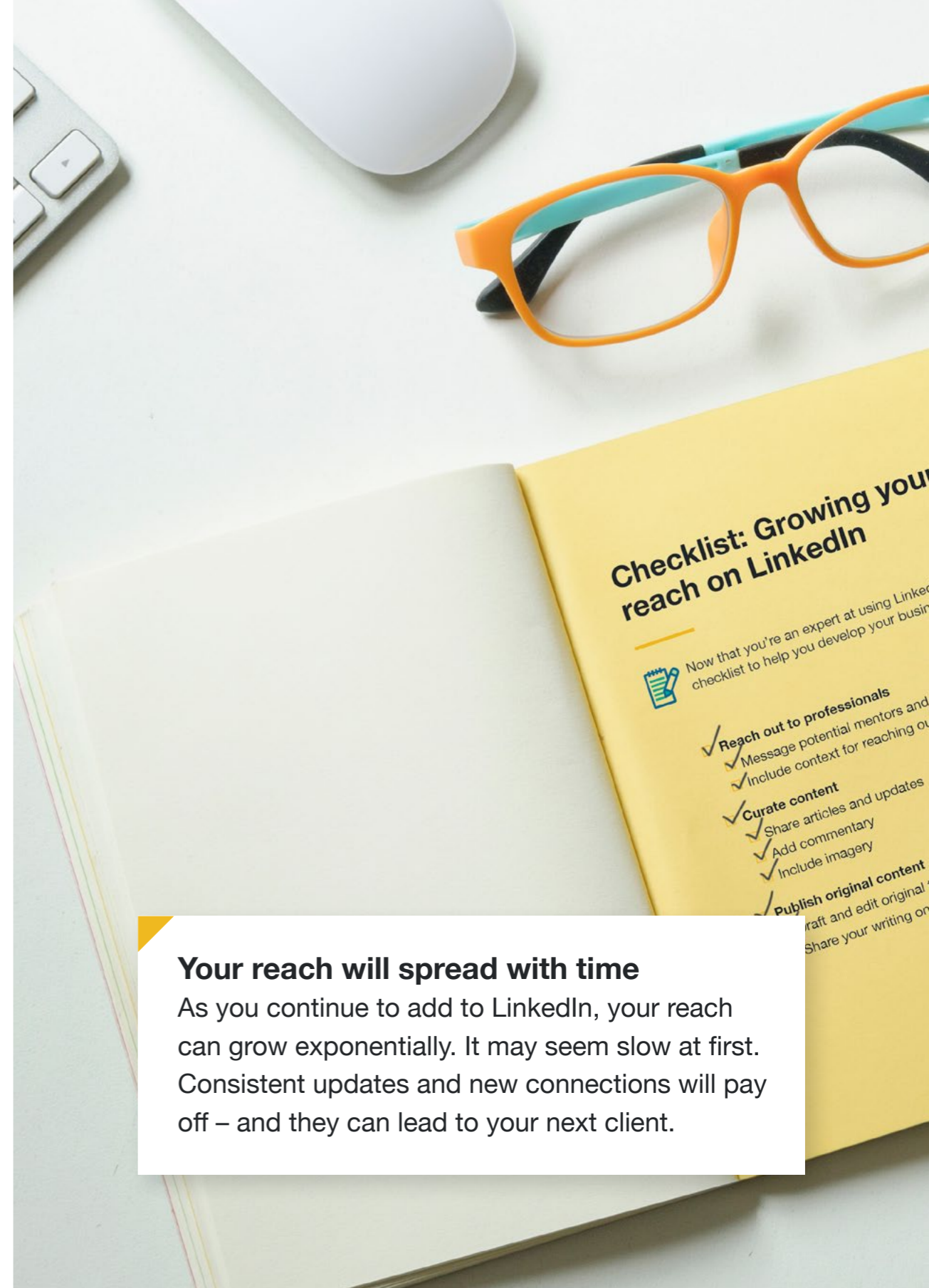


Checklist: Growing your reach on LinkedIn



Now that you're an expert at using LinkedIn, here's a checklist to help you develop your business influence:

- Reach out to professionals**
 - Message potential mentors and clients
 - Include context for reaching out
- Curate content**
 - Share articles and updates
 - Add commentary
 - Include imagery
- Publish original content**
 - Draft and edit original thoughts or stories
 - Share your writing on LinkedIn



Your reach will spread with time

As you continue to add to LinkedIn, your reach can grow exponentially. It may seem slow at first. Consistent updates and new connections will pay off – and they can lead to your next client.

CONCLUSION:

Growing your business on LinkedIn

- Final overview
- Useful resources

Final overview: three levels of putting LinkedIn to work

There are many ways LinkedIn can help grow your small business, and several different paths that can get you there.

	Start	Gain momentum	Grow
Timing	10–15 minutes (one time)	10 minutes (one time) + 5 minutes a day	30–60 minutes a week
Action steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up your profile • Create a Company Page for your business • Connect with colleagues, partners, and friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely fill out your profile and Company Page • Continue to build your network • Read and share business-related content on your feed • Engage with connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and follow potential mentors and partners • Start conversations with people who show interest in your products and services • Continue to read, like, and share content
Impact	Your personal profile and Company Page are the foundation of everything that happens on LinkedIn. This is where you'll shape your brand. Start here >	As you become more active on LinkedIn, your business will appear more credible (and interesting) to clients. Start here >	Maintaining key relationships and building a strong presence on LinkedIn will help you attract new clients and increase sales. Start here >

Start, gain momentum, and grow your business

Useful resources for your journey

LinkedIn is a place where the business contacts you meet in real life can grow to include a world of other professionals, from companies of all sizes. The range of experience you can tap into is virtually limitless.

One key thing to remember is that your growth on LinkedIn may take some time. Everything you do on LinkedIn helps grow your reach, and sets your business up for success.

Here are a few final resources to help you make the most of LinkedIn:

- [LinkedIn Help Center](#) ›
- [LinkedIn Marketing Solutions](#) ›
- [LinkedIn for small business](#) ›

