
PLBsearch: Growing with LinkedIn

Friday, August 2, 2012, was a hot summer afternoon in Washington, DC. Pepper Lunsford Binner updated her LinkedIn profile before clearing out the office for a beach vacation. She indicated that her employment as a recruiter at Korn/Ferry International had ended. She entered the name of her new firm: PLBsearch. By Saturday morning, she had four clients. She hadn't even bought her own laptop yet. (See **Exhibit 1** for sample messages.)

Before leaving her previous employer to open her own shop, Binner had prepared several things. She had budgeted for a drop in household income; she had planned for office space and the administrative needs of her own firm; she had also established a corporate identity and paid a marketing company \$900 to prepare an announcement e-mail that she would send to her contacts when she and her family returned from vacation. She never sent the announcement e-mail. By simply updating her own employment status on LinkedIn, Binner had more clients than she was ready to take on. She remembered, "I was building this ship and flying it at the same time."¹ And Binner attributed her ability to open her own boutique recruiting firm to the very tool she used to announce her firm's founding. LinkedIn had transformed the recruiting process for everyone in the industry.

Although Binner was a recruiter, she didn't take advantage of all of the features LinkedIn had designed for search firms. Even after operating her business for a full year, she still hadn't purchased LinkedIn's premium online tools. She had started a niche firm—and, at least so far, LinkedIn was serving her niche very affordably. The sales team contacted Binner at least once every quarter to upsell her, but wasn't having success.

LinkedIn the Platform

While Binner was growing her recruiting firm in 2012 and 2013, Facebook expanded to 1 billion users who spent, on average, 30 minutes on the site every day² and Twitter's monthly active user base was consistently averaging 200 million.³ To augment the ubiquity of social sharing, mobile Internet use was

¹ Case writer interviews with Pepper Binner, president of PLBsearch, August 8, 2013, September 13, 2013, and September 26, 2013; unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent quotations derive from these interviews.

² Hayley Tsukayama, "Facebook Hits Milestone of 1 Billion Users," Washington Post online, October 4, 2012, http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/facebook-reaches-1-billion-users/2012/10/04/5edfefb2-0e14-11e2-bb5e-492c0d30bff6_story.html (accessed October 16, 2013).

³ Twitter post, December 18, 2012, 7:01 a.m., <https://twitter.com/twitter/status/281051652235087872>.

soaring and online video advertising was the fastest-growing segment therein. It took only 10 years for the concept of a social network to change from a handwritten directory next to one's home telephone to an online community of connections, some of whom would never meet in person. LinkedIn Corporation of Mountain View, California, was founded one year before Facebook, in 2003, and had more than 20 million users by 2008.

Most LinkedIn users had a similar experience. Individuals established a unique online profile including a photograph of their choice and information about themselves. Each LinkedIn profile was organized like a résumé, including education, background and experience, and specifics about job titles, dates, and responsibilities. As each person established an online identity, part of his or her member profile included connections to other people. One could have first-degree connections to a person, meaning each member had consented to joining each other's network on LinkedIn and had somehow identified how they knew one another. The LinkedIn system prompted them to do this (e.g., by indicating that they worked or went to school together).

LinkedIn also included second- and third-degree contacts in someone's network, indicating who was essentially an introduction away from being a link. And when a member logged into LinkedIn, he or she was often prompted to engage with this network by growing connections and strengthening his or her member profile. There was a "people you may know" suggestion tool, an algorithm indicating who could be added to one's network based on other first- and second-degree connections a user shared with others. And other tools constantly prompted members to do things such as enhance their profile details and endorse their connections. These tools were intuitive and practical. They kept members returning to the site, increased their connections, and grew the LinkedIn universe to 238 million users by the middle of 2013, placing its subscriber base just above Twitter's at the same time.⁴ And similar to other social networks, members could share updates, which could range from posting a link to a news article they found interesting to writing about anything on their mind at the moment.

But LinkedIn was a different platform than Facebook, Twitter, and the other social networks. LinkedIn was unique because it established itself as a place for professional networking. One result of this was that people were less worried about privacy on LinkedIn than on some other social networks.⁵ In fact, on LinkedIn, the purpose was to be discovered: users wanted to tout a recent promotion or make contacts in hopes of landing a better job. (See **Exhibit 2** for examples of LinkedIn user-interface tools.)

In early 2009, Jeff Weiner, hired from Yahoo, became CEO. Weiner established a sales culture, took the company public in 2011, and by 2012, was spending one-third of the company's revenue on sales and marketing.⁶ By the time Pepper Binner established PLBSearch, 45% of open positions in the United States were sourced using LinkedIn.⁷

⁴ Rachel King, "LinkedIn Sweeps Past Q2 Targets as Revenue Climbs 59 Percent," ZDNet, August 1, 2013, <http://www.zdnet.com/linkedin-sweeps-past-q2-targets-as-revenue-climbs-59-percent-7000018811/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

⁵ Eric Savitz, "LinkedIn: Who Needs Ads? How the Anti-Facebook Makes Money," Forbes.com, June 28, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/eric.savitz/2012/06/28/linkedin-who-needs-ads-how-the-anti-facebook-makes-money-video/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

⁶ George Anders, "How LinkedIn Has Turned Your Resume Into A Cash Machine," Forbes.com, June 27, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/georgeanders/2012/06/27/how-linkedin-strategy/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

⁷ Bullhorn Reach, "Using Targeted Searches for LinkedIn Recruiting" e-book advertisement, <http://www.bullhornreach.com/reach/content/using-targeted-searches-linkedin-recruiting#sthash.bcZLv23.dpuf> (accessed October 16, 2013).

LinkedIn's Business Model and Market Performance

By August 2013, when Binner had been in business for herself just one year, LinkedIn was one of the most successful Internet companies, boasting 4,000 employees and a market capitalization of \$25.5 billion. It had a three-year annualized change in operating profit margin of 4.95% in a sector that averaged -0.52% .⁸ And LinkedIn's revenue had grown by 59% in 12 months.⁹

But the 200 million user profiles alone didn't drive LinkedIn's value. Unlike many social media companies, LinkedIn's financial success could be attributed to its business-to-business (B2B) arm. Social media companies that were focused on business-to-consumer (B2C) activities derived most of their revenue from advertising. But LinkedIn had three revenue streams: Talent Solutions (the recruiters), Marketing Solutions (advertising), and Premium Subscriptions (the subscriptions of some B2C users). Its best customers were the 20,000 recruiters who paid for access to the 200 million user profiles. In Q2 2013, these Talent Solutions customers generated \$205 million in revenue: more than 55% of LinkedIn's total revenue for the quarter.¹⁰ By Q3 2013, Premium Subscriptions held steady at 20% of revenue, Marketing Solutions generated 23%, and Talent Solutions was responsible for 57%.¹¹

In 2012, *Forbes* calculated that for every hour a user spent on Facebook, that site grossed 6.2 cents. LinkedIn grossed \$1.30 in that same hour.¹² B2C Internet companies that relied on advertising revenue needed visitors to stay on their site longer, so they could capture more impressions and more clicks. LinkedIn's B2B model created a way for recruiters to pay for LinkedIn members' information instead. And LinkedIn had designed a perfect experience for the majority of its visitors. Most users simply maintained a member profile. A member was prompted to add a graduate-school graduation date when he or she logged in, or a user was encouraged to endorse an previous co-worker for her or his negotiation skills (because, after all, that co-worker had endorsed the user). And every additional link between people, every tiny tidbit of data about each user, helped the real customers of LinkedIn: the recruiters who made up 10% of the customers but more than half of the company's revenue.

LinkedIn Recruiter was the most advanced and most expensive of the Talent Solutions products; LinkedIn charged approximately \$8,000 per user.¹³ It enabled recruiters to run detailed searches, then flag and track people in a way similar to a software sales platform. And recruiters could operate as secret agents, invisible to users who had personal profiles.¹⁴ The tool changed the hiring process by adding speed and flexibility but also by offering a significant cost savings to recruiting companies. More than two-thirds of *Fortune* 100 companies were using LinkedIn to aid in hiring by the end of 2012.¹⁵ The more than 20,000 B2B

⁸ Market cap on August 5, 2013, was \$25.9 billion, per "LinkedIn Corporation," DealBook, <http://dealbook.nytimes.com/public/overview?symbol=LNKD> (accessed October 16, 2013).

⁹ <http://www.zdnet.com/linkedin-sweeps-past-q2-targets-as-revenue-climbs-59-percent-7000018811/>.

¹⁰ "Of the \$364 million in revenue that LinkedIn reported in the second quarter, \$205 million came from this division." Sarah Halzack, "How LinkedIn Has Changed The Way You Might Get Your Next Job," Washington Post, August 4, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/linkedin-has-changed-the-way-businesses-hunt-talent/2013/08/04/3470860e-c269-11e2-acf3-339619eab080_story.html (accessed October 16, 2013).

¹¹ "LinkedIn Announces Third Quarter 2013 Financial Results," LinkedIn Corporation press release, October 29, 2013, <http://investors.linkedin.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=801343> (accessed Feb. 18, 2015).

¹² <http://www.forbes.com/sites/georgeanders/2012/06/27/how-linkedin-strategy/>.

¹³ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/georgeanders/2012/06/27/how-linkedin-strategy/>.

¹⁴ Alexandra Chang, "The Most Important LinkedIn Page You've Never Seen," Wired.com, April 15, 2013, <http://www.wired.com/business/2013/04/the-real-reason-you-should-care-about-linkedin/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

¹⁵ Alex Klein, "Why Investors—But Not Customers—Love LinkedIn," Daily Beast, August 27, 2012, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/08/27/why-investors-but-not-customers-love-linkedin.html> (accessed October 16, 2013).

clients and companies that paid to use LinkedIn Recruiter in 2013 included Adobe, McDonald's, Facebook, BP, and Unilever.¹⁶

LinkedIn's enterprise solution, LinkedIn Recruiter,¹⁷ served two purposes for sourcing talent: a vehicle for posting jobs and a tool for contacting job prospects. A popular jobs website such as Monster.com enabled employers to post positions for \$200 to \$350 per job.¹⁸ LinkedIn Recruiter used spots, similar to parking spaces, to move jobs in and out of. Companies were charged in a tiered pricing model for these positions. Companies also purchased Recruiter seats—individual licenses that could be used simultaneously—for visibility into the entire LinkedIn network, enabling them to see the complete profile (even parts that weren't public) of anybody in the vast LinkedIn candidate database, and to contact any user via "InMail," LinkedIn's internal e-mail system. This was a key benefit for Recruiter subscribers: they didn't simply have access to their connections, they could also contact anyone on LinkedIn. For executive searches such as the kind Binner conducted, recruiters most often personalized outreach. But if a recruiter needed to source talent for entry-level positions, he or she could send generic InMail to several hundred people in one day, just trying to get leads on some people for a job. Particularly for large companies and large search firms, LinkedIn was an essential candidate-sourcing tool. And for some, it became a customer relationship management tool as well, managing the talent-lead pipeline. Managers could review subordinates' work and collaborate with them through the Recruiter tool.

Historic Recruitment Process and Transformation

Whether they were in-house or hired consultants, recruiters added value to a search process by providing access to companies and individuals. They identified prospects and could find out about them, including both professional qualifications and personal reputations. Historically, recruiters knew other recruiters, knew the top staff at big firms, and spent a lot of time outside the office facilitating relationships. Binner describes the transformation of this process as, "Basic disintermediation. Everyone is on LinkedIn." After the advent of LinkedIn Recruiter, recruiters could use LinkedIn as a way to quickly screen candidates for credibility, look for more connections through past employment relationships, and add insight without leaving their desks. Whether the recruiters were third parties hired as industry specialists, as Binner was, or in-house at a large company client such as Google, LinkedIn had streamlined the process.

A Society for Human Resource Management survey determined that in 2013, 77% of employers were using social networks to recruit employees. Of those 77%, 94% used LinkedIn.¹⁹ But it wasn't only the recruiter side that evolved. The applicant pool also grew by making "passive job seekers" far more accessible. LinkedIn had established that 20% of its user base was actively seeking a new role and another 20% was completely content in its current job and not looking for a change. Therefore, 60% of LinkedIn users were perhaps open to a fantastic new job if it popped up.²⁰ This established a huge universe of potential hires for recruiters and gave them data to encourage new connections at any opportunity.

¹⁶ <http://www.wired.com/business/2013/04/the-real-reason-you-should-care-about-linkedin/>.

¹⁷ Recruiter input in this paragraph was based on case writer interviews with Patrick Gray, managing director of NorthWind Search Partners, and Sloan Baxter, senior director of Asurion. Both interviews were conducted on September 27, 2013.

¹⁸ Monster.com Job Posting site, http://hiring.monster.com/recruitment/Job-Postings.aspx?source=hp_ip_link&intcid=BUY_HP:JP (accessed October 16, 2013).

¹⁹ Society for Human Resource Management, "Social Networking Websites and Recruiting/Selection," April 11, 2013, <http://www.shrm.org/Research/SurveyFindings/Articles/Pages/SHRM-Social-Networking-Websites-Recruiting-Job-Candidates.aspx> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁰ http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/linkedin-has-changed-the-way-businesses-hunt-talent/2013/08/04/3470860e-c269-11e2-ae33-339619eab080_story.html.

Binner's Usage

PLBsearch specialized in senior-PR-staff searches in the Washington, DC, area; clients ranged from PepsiCo to Georgetown University. Binner did not purchase the most expensive tool, LinkedIn Recruiter, because she used another HR database to track contacts and leads. Instead, she used LinkedIn Premium, which gave her the ability to hide herself from people if she chose to, view more details in individuals' profiles even if they weren't connected to her personally, and let her see who had looked at her own profile. Many of her placements were based on referrals, so she did not post positions on LinkedIn—but she did estimate that she logged into her LinkedIn account more than five times every day to gather information.

For example, one of Binner's clients was Ashland Inc., a specialty-chemicals company. An experienced manager could come from only 6 to 10 other relevant companies. Before LinkedIn existed, Binner would call the 6 to 10 companies to figure out who was there and in which positions. Using LinkedIn, Binner was able to perform online searches for people in current positions that required specific skills at industry leaders such as Dow and DuPont in the morning and then check their background profiles the same afternoon. This work would have taken days of meetings and tedious research before the advent of the LinkedIn tools.

The two-way-mirror option of LinkedIn Recruiter was not always a benefit to boutique firms, according to Binner. She rarely hid herself from people when perusing their LinkedIn profiles for two reasons. First, LinkedIn was a professional marketing tool for her as well. It gave visibility to her own new business and established her professional presence. Second, she found it to be the best way to identify passive job seekers. Often, within an hour after she had perused someone's LinkedIn profile, Binner received an e-mail or LinkedIn message from an old friend or distant contact. Some were circuitous—"How are you, I was just thinking about you today..."—and others were completely straightforward, indicating that seeing her on LinkedIn was a good prompt for them to reach out because they were ready for a change.

By the middle of 2013, LinkedIn communicated with PLBsearch primarily via e-mail, encouraging her to try more business-development opportunities through its tools and asking her to participate in its "thought leadership" content (see **Exhibit 3** for a sample message from LinkedIn). Binner ignored those communications. For her, the value of LinkedIn was the data it provided. Thanks to this online tool, she could identify candidates more easily, start building insights about those candidates, and research ways to develop first-degree connections with candidates for personal introductions. Binner maintained a company page on Facebook and had many of the same virtual social connections there, but Facebook didn't have the same "decorum and etiquette" as LinkedIn. LinkedIn was for business communications.

LinkedIn Innovations and Recent Growth

The stock market enjoyed a technology boom during 2012 and 2013 that was due in part to companies akin to LinkedIn. Social media, however, was not the most successful category thanks to Facebook, which failed to achieve profitability in its first 18 months as a public company with its B2C online advertising model. When Wall Street did look for critiques of LinkedIn, several items typically came up. Two were related to privacy, which dogged all technology firms during the same period. In June 2012, millions of passwords were reportedly hacked and published on a public website.²¹ Around the same time, many criticized LinkedIn for utilizing profile data inappropriately when it chose to use members' photos in dynamic graphical on-screen

²¹ Colleen Curry, "6.4 Million Passwords Reportedly Stolen From LinkedIn Website," ABC News, June 6, 2012, <http://abcnews.go.com/US/linkedin-hacked-64-million-user-passwords-reportedly-leaked/story?id=16508728> (accessed October 16, 2013).

digital ads. Some people's profile pictures began appearing in banner advertisements for a paying company's open job below the words "picture yourself with this job." Members only saw information about themselves, but the company was still met with angst because users believed their privacy had been violated.²² During this technology boom, some jobs were in high demand, particularly engineers who could develop databases, build server capacity, and the like. These high-paying, high-skill jobs were the kind posted on LinkedIn, but because demand was higher than supply, some of those developers got hounded on LinkedIn. They were approached by LinkedIn Recruiter subscribers so often that it became bothersome, and some, no longer considering it a useful networking tool, abandoned LinkedIn.²³

The company made a series of strategic moves during 2012 and 2013, while Binner was launching her own business. By acquiring SlideShare for \$119 million in May of 2012, it established itself as a content-sharing platform rather than just a networking platform. SlideShare was a credible tool for capturing prospect data with embedded forms, which overnight gave LinkedIn a new way to acquire leads.²⁴ Then in April 2013, LinkedIn acquired Pulse, a content-recommendation mobile application, for \$90 million. Rather than building its own content-curation tool, LinkedIn purchased one that already had a tested platform featuring millions of users.²⁵

In-house during that period, LinkedIn worked hard to enhance its mobile capability. In August 2013, it launched a mobile app that allowed job seekers to apply for positions. For the first time, users didn't have to submit a résumé to companies because their LinkedIn profile was their complete digital package for a potential employer to see.²⁶ On their desktops and laptops, those users were becoming familiar with LinkedIn Today, which launched in November 2012 as a customizable news feature. When users logged in, they could see business headlines in addition to updates about their connections.²⁷ The system curated content for them based on their LinkedIn connections. Over the next 18 months, LinkedIn Today grew to include the industry-specific Channels and, eventually, Influencers, a blogging platform featuring high-profile businesspeople such as Meg Whitman and Richard Branson.²⁸

Within the LinkedIn Recruiter platform, LinkedIn launched a new Recruiter homepage in the spring of 2013 to operate more like a dashboard. Users could perform unlimited searches (which were only enabled for Recruiter-level customers), track particular jobs, and customize the layout to monitor individual candidates.²⁹

²² Kashmir Hill, "LinkedIn's Spin on Putting Your Face in Ads," *Forbes.com*, June 27, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kashmirhill/2012/06/27/linkedin-spin-on-putting-your-face-in-its-ads/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²³ Sarah Halzack, "LinkedIn Connects Big Data, Human Resources," *Washington Post*, August 9, 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/at-linkedin-big-data-meets-human-resources/2013/08/09/7326ac44-f569-11e2-a2f1-a7ac9bd5d3a_story_3.html (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁴ Leena Rao, "LinkedIn Acquires Professional Content Sharing Platform SlideShare For \$119M," *Techcrunch.com*, May 3, 2012, <http://techcrunch.com/2012/05/03/linkedin-acquires-professional-content-sharing-platform-slideshare-for-119m/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁵ Timothy Stenovec, "LinkedIn, With Pulse Acquisition, Moves Closer To Becoming Your Homepage," *Huffington Post*, April 23, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/23/linkedin-pulse-iphone-app_n_3134819.html (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁶ Ingrid Lunden, "LinkedIn Now Lets Jobseekers Apply For Positions Directly Via Its Mobile App," *Techcrunch.com*, August 5, 2013, <http://techcrunch.com/2013/08/05/linkedin-now-lets-jobseekers-apply-for-positions-directly-via-its-mobile-apps/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁷ Kamelia Angelova, "How LinkedIn Chooses What News Stories You See," *Business Insider*, November 21, 2012, <http://www.businessinsider.com/how-linkedin-today-works-2012-11> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁸ Ingrid Lunden, "LinkedIn, On The Lookout For More Stickiness, Adds Channels With Curated Content On LinkedIn Today," *Techcrunch.com*, May 7, 2013, <http://techcrunch.com/2013/05/07/linkedin-on-the-lookout-for-more-stickiness-adds-curated-content-channels-on-linkedin-today/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

²⁹ Ingrid Lunden, "LinkedIn's New Recruiter Homepage Gives Headhunters Better Search, Status and News," *Techcrunch.com*, April 10, 2013, <http://techcrunch.com/2013/04/10/linkedin-doubles-down-on-job-hunting-with-a-redesigned-recruiter-page-that-is-closer-to-linkedins-new-look/> (accessed October 16, 2013).

It also offered analytics on the social content a company posted—for example, how many people viewed a story that you shared on LinkedIn, and what industries that audience came from.³⁰

The Future for PLBsearch on LinkedIn

The company offered great tools for Binner, for larger search firms, and for in-house talent scouts to find and contact leads for open positions. Because Pepper Binner was a user who logged into LinkedIn 10 times on some days, LinkedIn had a lot of data on her usage patterns. LinkedIn knew Binner was a recruiter, but also that she didn't need LinkedIn Recruiter. LinkedIn needed to discover opportunities to upgrade search professionals such as Binner if they didn't need its enterprise solution.

One avenue was to eventually replace the in-house software so many search firms used to track progress of candidates and keep in long-term touch with leads. One year into business for herself, Binner remained skeptical. She had so much more information on people she ended up placing in positions—from cell phone numbers and names of spouses to salary information—than what she got from LinkedIn. It would be tough for LinkedIn to convince Binner to enter more information into the LinkedIn system than what it already delivered to her. She wondered if that data was secure. She worried that she could be violating some privacy rules—implied or otherwise—with her clients and recruits.

LinkedIn's interface was also frequently changing to encourage all users to engage with LinkedIn Today content—and also to post their own. Binner primarily considered this a distraction from recruiters' real research happening on the website. She occasionally found an Influencer article that was worth a click, but believed that members who frequently posted articles or wrote commentary were typically active job seekers hoping to get noticed. In her experience, busy people with good jobs didn't have time to post updates or read a lot of articles on LinkedIn. For her, it was a tool.

LinkedIn sent various e-mails to Binner tempting her with phrases such as “Did you know you can increase your market share?” and “Be part of our thought leadership.” She continued to disregard them. LinkedIn had not yet found the right way to engage Binner for more than research. And she couldn't justify an \$8,000 expenditure to purchase LinkedIn Recruiter because she already had access to the information and contacts she needed, plus her own third-party database to track it all. LinkedIn needed a way to upsell Binner.

³⁰ Matt Owen, “How Good Are LinkedIn's New Analytics?” Econsultancy.com, August 7, 2013, http://econsultancy.com/us/blog/63192-how-good-are-linkedin-s-new-analytics?dm_i=LQI%2C1R9EE%2C9O6NMI%2C69F18%2C1&utm_campaign=2951510_833-daily-pulse-us-2013-08-07&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Econsultancy (accessed October 16, 2013).

Exhibit 1

PLBsearch: Growing with LinkedIn

Sample of InMail

Below is a sample of LinkedIn InMail, the LinkedIn internal e-mail system. The exchange is between Pepper Binner and a colleague who noticed Binner's LinkedIn status change on August 3, 2012, communicated with her, and became a PLBsearch client. The string begins at the bottom and runs in reverse chronological order.

Pepper - Good morning - Delighted to hear back!

Wanted to make you aware - we'll soon make some fairly significant internal changes at NRG. Of course, this is confidential but I wanted to talk about a potential need I anticipate.

Being dropped at airport right now so must scoot but let me know if you might have some time Weds or Thurs of this week to talk.

Thanks much.....speak soon,
Jerianne

Sent from LinkedIn for iPad

Thank you so much Jerianne! I sincerely appreciate your taking the time to reach out. The support has been amazing thus far. I look forward to connecting again and hopefully working with you in the near future!

Please check out my website (www.plbsearch.com) which should be up and running shortly.

All the best,
Pepper

On 08/07/12 4:58 PM, Jerianne Thomas wrote:

Pepper,

Congrats on this new chapter...and adventure! Thrilled for you.....And certainly hope to cross paths soon! All best wishes for this next step.....look forward to learning more.

Speak soon,
Jerianne

Sent from LinkedIn for iPad

Source: Pepper Binner.

Exhibit 2**PLBsearch: Growing with LinkedIn**

Examples of LinkedIn User-Interface Tools

Your LinkedIn Network

This tool essentially gave users a “box score,” showing high-level stats of his or her identity on LinkedIn (e.g., “___ Connections link you to ___ People”). A “connection” was a first-degree link to the logged-in user, but all of those connections had first-degree connections of their own, which made up second-degree connections for that initial logged-in user. One of LinkedIn’s value propositions was that a user was only an introduction away from one of their connection’s connections, which was the “people” number. For example, 477 first-degree connections could quickly make over 5.8 million when third-degree connections were added up.

Who’s Viewed Your Profile

In this tool, a box displayed “Your Profile has been viewed by ___ people in the past ___ days.” The feature often showed you the photo and name of one of these people, but the other faces were not visible and the names were hidden. It was interesting for a user to know that others were viewing his or her profile, and also compelling to consider that he or she could learn the identities of those other people. A link below the number of people who have viewed a user’s profile invited the user to “Unlock the Full List with LinkedIn Premium”—in other words, to click the link, learn about LinkedIn Premium, and—LinkedIn hoped—pay to subscribe and view more.

People You May Want to Connect With

Throughout the LinkedIn site, via users’ home screens, the Invitations tab, and the Network section, there were widgets titled “People You May Know” and “People You May Want to Connect With.” These tools displayed the photos, names, and companies of the second- and third-degree connections of the logged-in user. In most cases, they also indicated how many connections a user and a given connection had in common, as well as the connection’s job title. And there was always a button or link to “connect” in some way. The user could send an electronic request inside the LinkedIn platform to add the connection to the user’s network, and once the request was accepted, the requester was notified. Both users could then view more profile details about and send InMail to their new connections.

Source: Case writer and Pepper Binner.

Exhibit 3

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Sample of Personalized Communication

Below are samples of personalized communication from LinkedIn to Binner encouraging her to engage with the LinkedIn sales team.

LinkedIn InMail:

On 05/13/13 8:30 AM, [LinkedIn Employee] wrote:

Hi Pepper,

I'm reaching out today to introduce myself as your new LinkedIn point of contact.

I work exclusively with small to medium-sized Search & Staffing firms to introduce them to our platform built specifically for recruiting and business development.

I wanted to see if you have time for a quick phone call to discuss your 2013 LinkedIn recruiting strategy.

Please let me know what date/times work best for you, or if there is someone else in your organization that I should be speaking with.

LinkedIn E-mail to Binner:

From: [LinkedIn Employee]
Date: October 3, 2013 at 4:24:47 PM EDT
Subject: Scheduling a call with LinkedIn - Q4 Initiatives

Hi Pepper,

With summer time officially transitioning into what is expected to be a productive Q4, I thought it was a good time to reach back out to you.

Since your consultant and I work with search firms on a daily basis, 100% of the time there is something we identify that they can be doing better on LinkedIn, whether from a paid solution or a free resource on LinkedIn. If you think you have already maximized your potential on LinkedIn to suit your current needs, then all the best for the remainder of 2013.

But if you agree that there is something that could make a strong impact to your business during these crucial few months, then please reach out to me directly or let me know some times that would work for us to chat. Even if you think you've seen it all, I bet you can identify a number of strategies you can implement now and in the future.

Thank you,
[LinkedIn Employee]
Sales Development Specialist