

LINKEDIN ALGORITHMS

for Jobseekers

Cracking the Code and Getting
Noticed by Recruiters



ACKNOLEDGMENTS

This book would not be possible without the efforts of key people in my life.

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Introduction

"People you know, talking about things you care about" Pete Davies

In an article written by Pete Davies¹ called *What's In Your LinkedIn Feed*, he states that LinkedIn's algorithm is written with one thought in mind, "people you know, talking about things you care about." LinkedIn changed the way newsfeeds displayed information to give a boost to those who don't have as many followers, with the thought process that people like Richard Branson with \$17M followers and Bill Gates with \$28M followers don't need a boost to engage readers, that will happen organically. However, the average person has 930 connections and could use a little help making sure that the people in their network see what they are posting. In avoiding the "rich get richer" approach to information distribution, LinkedIn decided to make a creator-focused algorithm rather than viewer driven algorithms many other platforms utilize.

The premise was built on driving traffic to content creators who would appreciate the feedback from their connections. Knowing that content creators are more likely to stay engage and keep creating content if people engage with them and provide feedback. To determine who that appreciative crowd is, LinkedIn built a system that ranked content 1) spam 2) low quality or 3) high quality based on a set of automated rules, known as algorithms. As I will explain in great detail throughout this e-book, the system is a bit complicated, but understanding it more ultimately results in more opportunities for more people.

The Power of LinkedIn

LinkedIn is widely considered to be the goto platform for business

¹ What's In Your LinkedIn Feed, Pete Davies, June 25, 2019

professionals. In 2020 it is considered the most powerful social media tool for business professionals, sales teams, and recruiters. It is used by more than 675M users, more than 20M companies, and posts more than 14M jobs each year. 90% of recruiters utilize LinkedIn as a sourcing tool. ² LinkedIn is 277% more effective for lead generation than Facebook and Twitter.³ 70%-86% of companies use LinkedIn to find and screen candidates. More than a 1M posts are made every single week.

You get the gist, it's a REALLY powerful tool. The more I learn about LinkedIn and the way the algorithm works to rank posts and promote engagement, the more I realize that I have barely scratched the surface of all there is to learn. Every expert has differing opinions. I think that is mostly because many experts look at one facet of LinkedIn and specifically teach to that component. For this guide, I have studied many LI experts and referenced numerous people and articles to help guide you.

Most of the strategies that I will discuss in this book are centered

around sales techniques as they relate to jobseekers. As a jobseeker, it may feel like sales strategies are the last thing you



want to hear about, but the truth is, your job search has *a lot* to do with sales. Landing a new job is based on the premise that you are "selling" your ability to solve problems. We had a guest on The Job Father show on June 23rd by the name of <u>Clayton Stockdall</u>, the Chief Operations Officer for DFW Movers & Erectors and Director of the Fort Worth Career Search Network. Clayton may have the best analogy I have ever heard for being a solutions-oriented jobseeker. "You have

² <u>Kinsta Premium Managed WordPress Hosting</u>, Maddy Osman, April 10, 2020

³ <u>Hubspot</u>, Rebecca Corliss, originally published January 30, 2012, updated January 08, 2020

to figure out how you are the Tylenol® for their headache. They have a pain point and you have to be the solution"

Social Selling Index

Sales is *all* about finding solutions to problems, which is why sales strategies work well for finding opportunities... *or creating them,* and for landing jobs. LinkedIn has a powerful tool called the <u>Social Selling Index</u>. The LinkedIn SSI is a score of 0-100 based on four pillars of social selling. Each pillar earns a maximum of 25 points toward the overall score: ⁴ **Ideally, you want a score of 70 or above.

- Establish your professional brand
- Find the right people
- Engage with insight
- Build relationships

Each of these components are ranked equally, and are thus equally important, let's talk about how to improve your score in each category to ensure that you are utilize LinkedIn to its maximum capacity to ensure that you are getting the maximum benefits available to you.

My goal is always to drive traffic to you. I want to you to be at the top of the most elite tier in recruiter searches.

In my own business, when I took my Social Selling Index from a 60 to a 76, I started receiving daily request for resume and job search coaching services. Being ranked in the top 2% of all Talent and Acquisition professionals and the top 1% of my 10k+ network was not one of my original goals. It isn't the numbers that I was going for, but how to stand out against the competition and brand myself as the expert I had studied so had to become.

⁴ <u>Tribal Impact</u>, Rachel Ranwell, October 23, 2019

Establish Your Professional Brand



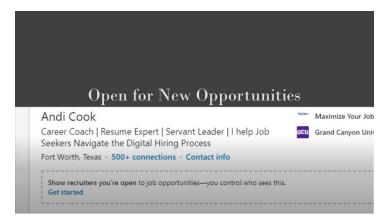
What is your brand? What do you want people to think of when they see you? Hear your name? View your profile? Establishing your professional brand is the most relevant pillar for jobseekers. Not only does it

involve having a complete profile with keyword rich content, but it also drives how your profile looks and serves as the first introduction to you. When a recruiter types in a Boolean search to find a candidate with a specific skillset, the results show up in three main categories. If you have taken a college English class in the last ten years, you were probably taught Boolean searches for research projects. The premise is the same. Recruiters build search strands based on keywords. The operators (AND, OR, NOT, NEAR) and parentheses determine the results that the recruiters see. If I were looking for an HR Business Partner with experience in benefits, employee relations, and M&A, I might start with a search strand that looks like: (HR AND "BUSINESS PARTNER") AND BENEFITS AND ("EMPLOYEE RELATIONS" OR "ER").

The results will show up in LinkedIn Recruiter in three main tabs. The first tab will list all of the LinkedIn profiles that have those key words. LinkedIn scans the entire profile to match the words in the search strand, and ranks the results based on keyword matching and degree of connection.

If someone is the VP of HR currently, but in their past role they were an HR Business Partner, they may still get contacted by a recruiter who didn't go through their profile thoroughly. The same could be true if Employee Relations is listed as a skill, but they never actually worked with it.

The results can be filtered by location, years of experience, degree, open to relocation and many other fields. It can get as specific as filtering by what companies you have worked for.



The second tab shows "open to new opportunities" with results that match the Boolean search strand and also have their profile marked as open for new opportunities. The results are then ranked by degree of connection and key word match.

The third tab is the elite tab, "most likely to respond". This tab is where you want to be. Recruiters have a limited number of InMail that they can send, and they want to maximize the chances for a result with that InMail credit by targeting jobseekers who are most likely to respond and open for new opportunities. Getting your name in that third column aligns with increasing your SSI and the way you utilize LinkedIn. It is based on the amount engagement, keyword matching, and connections. It starts with that first pillar: building your professional brand.

All Star Status



In the image above, you will see a copy of my dashboard, with the symbol "All Star" on the right-hand side. All Star status is awarded to LinkedIn users who have filled out all of the sections in their profile:

- A professional photo
- Completed Headline/Tagline
- Completed About section
- Current position and previous work history
- Skills and expertise
- Education
- Connections

Pictures. When you are building your LI profile, do it with the viewer in mind. Essentially, this will be first introduction to you that a potential hiring manager may have. Your picture does not have to be a professionally headshot, however, your picture does need to be a headshot of you being professional. The picture should not contain any family members or pets. You should be dressed in business professional attire that you would wear on a job interview.



Headline/Tagline. The best template that I have seen for taglines comes from Content Creation Expert Shay Rowbottom, whom I saw on

the Who Ya Know Job Networking Show. The Who Ya Know show is one of my favorite resources for jobseekers and can be seen on LinkedIn, YouTube or Facebook Wednesdays at 3PM CST. The show

is hosted by the dynamic team, <u>Trevor Houston</u>, <u>Mark Elder</u>, and <u>Foster Williams</u>. According to Shay... *and I totally agree*, Your tagline should include what you do and your "I help" statement. "I help (WHO YOU HELP) with (PROBLEM YOU SOLVE) by (HOW YOU SOLVE IT)" For example, "I help jobseekers navigate the digital hiring process."

About. The about section should mirror your resume's summary and core competency statements. It should also include your preferred contact information at the end. You can write the about section in first person narrative, whereas on a resume it is not acceptable to speak in the first person. The text needs to be rich with keywords about what you do and how you do it, as it is a searchable field for recruiters.

Work History. Work history should mirror the companies, job titles, and dates listed on your resume. Include the bullet points from your resume for each job to add key words to your profile. If you aren't currently working, there is a trick of the trade I learned from world-renowned resume expert, <u>Kirsty Bonner</u>. List your current employment as "Seeking (JOB TITLE)" with the company #ONO. ONO is a commonly recognized phrase used to indicate that a LI user is **open to new opportunities**.

Skills and Expertise. When selecting skills to list on your LI profile, be strategic. Think about skills that a recruiter would search for to find you. You could be the Olympic champion of filing, but if you're applying for director level roles and filing won't be part of your job responsibilities in your target role, it shouldn't be listed in your skills section. Also, side note, but help your connections out by endorsing them for skills and giving genuine recommendations!

Education. List your education for all degrees you have finished, if you didn't not complete your degree, then under the degree title, list "Coursework towards (DEGREE NAME) degree".

Connections. I encourage all of my clients to get in the habit of connecting with everyone they interact with professionally. Connect with past employers, colleagues, people you meet while volunteering or networking, and even acquaintances.

LinkedIn Banners

Linked In banners is one of the easiest ways to create a professional brand that appeals to target companies. I recommend using a royalty-free picture that represents your industry and including your name, job title, and contact information. Some people are more comfortable only including their email address, which is certainly a viable option. I prefer clean images that are free from too much text or a lot of graphics. Quotes are good as long as they link back to your brand, scenery is not the best option if it is not branded. Banners need to be size to 1584 x 396.

Here is an example of the banner that I created for my amazing assistant, <u>Paula Jacob</u>:



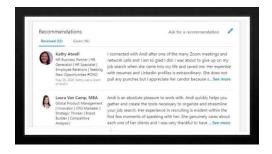
Custom URLs



I believe that people put more weight on this part of branding than they should. The primary purpose of a customized, cleaner version of your LinkedIn name is for marketing. LinkedIn defaults to a longer web address that includes your name and a bunch of letters and numbers that just don't read well on business cards, banners, or resumes. On your main profile, you have the option of customizing your web address, which I do highly recommend. Try linkedin.com/in/firstname-lastname if it is available, if you have a popular name and have to find another identifier, try including a middle initial: linkedin.com/in/john-r-smith or try using the type of job you are looking for: linkedin.com/in/andi-cook-coach.

Recommendations

Recommendations are like LinkedIn gold. They equate to endorsements and certify that you are who you say you are and that you can do what you say you can



do. Giving and receiving recommendations are equally important. I pay a lot of attention to the recommendations that candidates give others because it tells me how they talk to and about people, and how they build up their team members. Don't hesitate to request recommendations or offer to exchange recommendations from past colleagues. You can get recommendations from managers, coworkers, clients, vendors, or people you network with.

Featured Content

The most amazing and relevant post that you have, the one that gets the most engagement, or the post that you're most proud of should be marked as a featured posts and displayed proudly on your main page under "Featured Content". Make sure that you have that profile section turned on in your settings so that you can support your professional brand with engaging content that makes a difference.

Connect with the Right People

The title of this section is a bit misleading because it's not enough to



connect with the right people, you have to connect with the right people in the right way. LinkedIn built powerful search tools that are Boolean Search

friendly, and they reward the use of those tools. The LI platform was never intended for random connections, it was intended to build an expanding networking of people who have mutual interests or goals.

Use Advanced Connection Strategies

- Identify better prospective connections by using searches like (JOB TITLE) AND RECRUITER or (COMPANY NAME) AND RECRUITER. This search strategy can work for identifying hiring manager, experts, and industry leaders.
- Searches also score higher if you view the LinkedIn profile before sending a connection request instead of just connecting from the results screen or suggested connections.
- Rate of connection request acceptance is also factored in, so avoid sending invites without details on why you want to connect or how you know that person. Invitations with notes are much more likely to get a positive response.
- View the profiles of the people who have viewed you. This feature is available only to Premium users, but it does help your score. People who view your profile are prospective

business partners, recruiters and hiring managers. Don't be afraid to introduce yourself.

Another factor that comes into play in this section is the **number of active days** you spend on LinkedIn each month. The more active you, the higher LinkedIn ranks you as a quality connection, well, at least in that category.

Best practices

There are a few rules of engagement, or best practices to keep in mind when looking to make new connections.

- LinkedIn flags posts with #follow, #connect, #comment, or #like in the spam filter
- 2) LinkedIn pods are used by many people to promote engagement on their posts while building a network. It is important to know the truth about pods, and why they are banned on LinkedIn so you can make an informed decision about whether or not they are the right avenue for you. There is a great article by Darragh Grove-White called Common LinkedIn Engagement Pod False Beliefs Explained that I'd recommend to help you make you decision. 5
- 3) LinkedIn spam filters go on high alert when you tag more than 6 people in a post
- 4) LinkedIn spam filters go on high alert when you use more than 5 hashtags, and they strongly recommend only 3, more on that in a later section
- 5) Users can report you for sending unwelcomed connection requests, it doesn't happen often but when it does, LinkedIn takes it seriously
- 6) Searching for and connecting with people who have LION or L.I.O.N. in their tagline is a great way to build your network. These are open networkers and they are happy to connect with anyone. I technically am a LION but I don't advertise it

⁵ <u>Common LinkedIn Engagement Pods False Beliefs Explained</u>, Darragh Grove-White, February 6, 2020

on my tagline most of the time...mostly because of character limits

Managing Connections

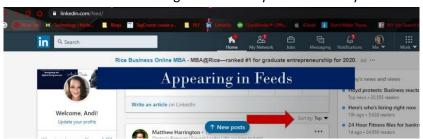
After you connect with a new person, start engaging with them immediately – it matters! New connections are more likely to see your content than connections you have had for an extended period of time, and if you can get them to engage in your content, they will continue to see what you post.

Periodically reach out to connections you haven't spoken to in a while to engage them in new conversations and see how you can be mutually beneficial to each other's efforts.

Engage with Insight

Engaging with insight is not only about what you post but how you engage with others. This includes content you create, content you share, and how you interact with what others share. The premise is that LinkedIn rewards content that is conversation-worthy and grows relationships. It also rewards those who engage in content. That elite "most likely to respond" group is built on engagement.

This is where the LinkedIn Algorithm is a key factor. When you create



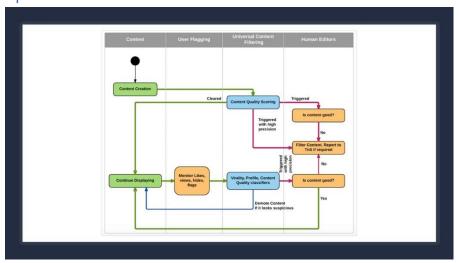
content, LinkedIn automated system ranks the quality of the post as spam, low quality or high quality. If a post is flagged as spam, then it removed from the algorithm and potentially removed from LinkedIn altogether. Low quality posts are moved to the bottom of the feeds for your connections.

If a post is ranked as high quality, it is distributed to a sample audience from your network, it is unclear how that audience is selected. Based on the engagement during the Golden Hour, the hour following the initial post, that post is re-ranked as high quality or low quality. Ideally, a post would receive at least 10 likes in the first hour.

If a post is performing well, it is then reviewed by a LinkedIn Editor who will make the final determination about the fate of the post. It could be promoted to the top of feeds, promoted outside of your network, or even demoted if the Editor deems the post as low quality.



Spam Filters



There is a very clear list as to what triggers the spam filter, besides actual spam.

 Use good grammar in your posts, that includes capitalization, punctuation, word usage, and spelling. There are apps like Grammerly out there that can assist you. You can even type your post into Microsoft Word or Google Docs

- to run a grammar check on it before copying it back into LinkedIn and clicking that post button.
- 2) Don't use external links. If you have an external link to post, then post it in the comments section of the post. LinkedIn wants to keep members on their own site, so they frown upon links that take members to outside sources. As a compromise and in an attempt to play well with others, the LI engineers have suggested that you include links in the comments.
- 3) **Don't post multiple links**. If you have multiple sources to post, do that in the comments. Driving people to external sources using multiple links triggers the spam filters.
- 4) Don't tag more than 5 people. This is a big one! Strategic tagging is critical. You can usually get away with tagging 6 people if all six engage with the post, but as a general rule of thumb, don't spam people by tagging a ton of people on post and flooding their notifications every time someone likes or comments on the post they were tagged in. If you tag a person and they don't engage with the post, it is a red flag for the spam filter. If you tag someone and they interact with the post, it validates that post and suggests higher quality.
- 5) **Don't post more than every three hours**. This is another critical component. Many experts say not to post more than 20 times per month, I have not seen that play out. I have seen how posting multiple times per day triggers a negative response.

FAQ - How Often Should I Post

LinkedIn wants to see a lot of content from a lot of people, rather than flooding feeds with heavy hitters while ignoring everyday people. Post one goes through the algorithms as normal. Posting a second time in the same day will work only if it has a huge amount of engagement. It takes 3x the amount of engagement on a second post for it rank as high as the first post of the day. The caveat to that is that if the first two posts are at least 3 hours apart, they are

treated the same by the algorithm. A third post is completely ignored by the algorithm.

FAQ – When are the Best Times of Day to Post

According to Hootsuite, the best times of day include 7:45 AM EST,



10:45 AM EST, 12:45 PM EST, and 4:45 PM EST. Many experts disagree with the time zone preference and say that these times are most effective in any time zone, and

that the time zone for posting should be based on where the audience is, not where the creator is.

It is widely accepted that the noon hour is the highest traffic time on LinkedIn, and that posts between 11 AM - 1 PM will experience the greatest chance for engagement during the Golden Hour period.

FAQ – What Type of Content Gets the Most

1	DATE	DAY	# PER DAY	CONTENT	VIEWS	COMMENTS	ENGAGEMENT
2	7/1/2020	Thursday	2	picture	933	5	14
3	7/1/2020	Thursday	1	share	119	1	2
4	6/30/2020	Wednesday	1	video	308	5	13
5	6/29/2020	Tuesday	2	video	905	9	18
6	6/29/2020	Tuesday	1	LI link	5362	63	44
7	6/29/2020	Monday	1	text	1452	14	19
8	6/27/2020	Saturday	1	share	324	1	4
9	6/26/2020	Friday	1	text	1766	29	27
10	6/25/2020	Thursday	1	share	549	3	9
11	6/24/2020	Wednesday	1	LI update	5100	44	90
12	6/23/2020	Tuesday	4	JSTD	771	2	11
13	6/23/2020	Tuesday	3	share	147	0	1
14	6/23/2020	Tuesday	2	text	1321	8	12
15	6/23/2020	Tuesday	1	share	261	0	5
16	6/22/2020	Monday	1	text	2238	20	24
17	6/21/2020	Sunday	1	text	1389	1	19
18	6/19/2020	Friday	2	picture	935	5	17
19	06/192020	Friday	1	celebration	5154	28	96
20	6/18/2020	Thursday	4	celebration	2053	8	31

Engagement

This is another area where experts disagree with one another. I believe part of that is that LinkedIn is still piloting LinkedIn Live and there is are different factors for video content by LinkedIn live users, but for the general population, text only posts get 3X more engagement than posts with pictures or videos. However, since experts disagree on so many factors, I conducted an analysis of my own posts, and noticed some interesting conclusions. After researching it further, I have come up with a few strategies that have increased engagement and visibility for my post.

- Post that promote LinkedIn engagement or loop back to a LinkedIn service will always rank higher and receive and algorithm boost. I try to work these in at least once a week.
- If I use the title "Job Seeker Tip of the Day" before my daily, text only job seeker post, it gets 2X more engagement than if I do not label it
- If I post Job Seeker Tips of the Day consistently then my job seeker network knows to watch for them every day and the engagement goes up.

- Algorithm boosts do not factor in previous post success, every post must hold its own merit
- If I post more than twice in a day, the LinkedIn spam filters ignore my 3rd posts.
- If I share a post, it will get much higher views if a state why I am sharing it and tag the original content creator.
- Re-shares are completely ignored by the algorithm, it is better to go to the original post, share it and tag both the creator and the person whose feed you saw it on.
- External links rank lower and should be saved for the comments section of the post.
- Embedded links are picked up in the algorithm, and are ranked higher than external links (where you have to leave LinkedIn to view them) but are not ranked as high as content that originates and stays on LinkedIn to view the content.
- Post engagement in the first hour determines *a lot* about the algorithm.

FAQ - What is the Golden Hour?

The Golden Hour

- DO:
- Post at a time when your followers are
- Ask a question to spark engagement.
- Interact with other posts while your post is in its first hour.
- Follow a consistent posting schedule so your followers know when to check for new posts.
- Respond to anyone who engages.

- ODN'T:
- Just post and forget. You need to come back to the post and interact with any comments.
- Tag people unless you know at least one of them will respond within an hour.
- Go back and edit your post. In my experience, this weakens the reach.

The Golden Hour starts as soon as you click post on LinkedIn and runs for the 60 minutes following the post. Engagement during the Golden Hour is crucial to the success of the post.

The most important rule is "don't post and ghost". Don't just post something quickly and then leave the post without engaging with those who engage with you. Add a comment to your post that provides a link to your website, portfolio, an article, or another LinkedIn profile. Then, when viewers engage with your post, engage back with them. Meaningful engagement (at least 8 words per comment).

- Post at critical peak times: 7:45 AM, 10:45 AM, 12:45 PM,
 4:45 PM.
- Ask questions that spark engagement at the end of your post.
- Follow a consistent (not rigid) posting schedule so followers know when to check for content.
- Respond to anyone who engage. Go back and check your post.
- Strategically tag people in the comments who you feel will engage with your post.
- Tag one industry professional or influencer in the post or comments.
- Don't tag people on your post unless you know they will respond quickly. Use comments to tag people you aren't sure about and tell them why you are tagging them. Don't mass tag people.
- Don't go back and edit your post, it will weaken the reach.

FAQ - How Often Should I Post?

Goals

Remember, LinkedIn rewards engagement, so share one
post per day, or at a bare minimum, three per week. Your
post can be original content, a shared article, a quote, a
memory, a summary of what you learned in a webinar or

- conference call, a celebration of success, a celebration of someone else's success, a change in status.
- Update your LinkedIn profile at least once per week. This can be a Sunday habit, so you appear on Mondays in searches, but keep your profile up to date. Log on and tweak wording, change the banner, update contact information, or rephrase a line on that about section.
- Engage with 8-10 posts per day by clicking on a reaction button such like, insightful, or clapping.
- Comment on 4-6 posts per day from your feed. Your comment should be at least 8 words per comment. Make your comment sincere and engaging. Not only is great for your engagement, but it is also helpful for the content creator. "Thanks for sharing this post, it was really insightful! It made me think about"

Build Relationships



Building relationships with influencers and decision makers on LinkedIn is the fourth pillar of the Social Selling Index. This score is derived from the connections you have and their influence. It is also derived from meaningful

engagement with your active connections.

LinkedIn looks beyond just how many connections you have, although that is definitely a factor, but it also looks at the level of influence your connections have, how many of your connections are part of your internal network, and the acceptance rate for the connection requests you send.

- ✓ Make a habit of labeling your internal connections as coworkers, managers, of director reports.
- ✓ Connect with influencers, decision makers, thought leaders and executives.
- ✓ Connect with people who have a large following and are more likely to connect with you.
- ✓ Add a note to connection request to let them know why you want to connect. If you met them at event, let them know what event, and what date that event occurred.
- ✓ Engage with the connection after they accept your request.
- ✓ Actively participate with others. Endorse their skills, give recommendations when they are deserved. If you would send a thank you note, why not drop that thank you note on their profile as a way to say you appreciate and respect them?

In Conclusion

I am hoping that you feel equipped with strategies and habits to integrate into your LinkedIn daily hygiene that will increase the number of people looking for you. I want to drive your ranking in search appearances to the top by using keyword rich content and the strategies above. It is my hope that recruiters find you, connect with you and engage with you.

LinkedIn has proven to be a remarkable tool for success in building a network and creating long-term mutually beneficial connections. Learning to maximize its enormous capabilities in your job search is as simple as creating healthy habits.

Please reach out to us at Maximize Your Job Search (www.maximizeyourjobsearch.com) to schedule a consultation and see how we can you navigate the digital hiring process.

About the Author



After years of successfully navigating the recruiting industry, Andi focused her efforts on learning the latest hiring trends to better serve the job seeker community. She studied resume trends, application trends, and the patterns that led to candidates getting the jobs they wanted and used that knowledge to launch a rapidly growing business,

Maximize Your Job Search.

Andi is a published author, blogger, radio show host and job search expert. As a Certified Life Coach, she is most passionate about helping others achieve their dreams.

Andi is highly skilled in helping job seekers to set career goals, identify roadblocks and successfully navigate the path to achieving success.