



A guide for
nonprofits

How to connect with major donors and supporters on LinkedIn

Tips and best practices for identifying the contacts you need, sending the right message, and getting noticed

LinkedIn for Nonprofits

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Introduction

Reach people who can make a difference on LinkedIn

Connecting with people who can support your nonprofit's work — whether they can share resources, offer their time, or amplify your message — is critical to achieving your mission. Whoever you're looking to connect with, chances are, they're on LinkedIn.

As the world's largest professional network — and the most trusted social media platform in the U.S.¹ — LinkedIn is the perfect place for making connections in a credible, professional environment. If you're a nonprofit professional and you're not sure how to find the right people or the best way to approach them, this guide is for you.

Ready? Let's get started!



¹ 2020 Digital Trust Report, Insider Intelligence

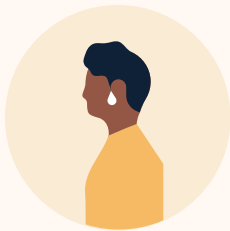
Part one

Who can nonprofits reach on LinkedIn?

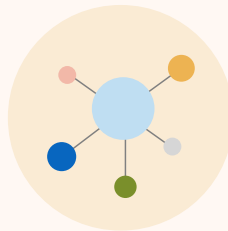


In terms of who you can find on LinkedIn, the sky's the limit! From CEOs of major corporations to foundation leaders to journalists, a wide range of professionals use the platform every day — and they're only one message away.

To inspire your own outreach efforts, here are just a few ways that you can use LinkedIn to make personal connections that matter for your nonprofit:



Identify major donors



Get on grantmakers' radars



Find new board members



Make media contacts



Build corporate partnerships



Engage event speakers and sponsors

If you're hesitant about reaching out to a stranger on LinkedIn, that's understandable. As a representative of your nonprofit, you want to make a great first impression, and cold outreach can sometimes come across as, well, cold. But LinkedIn members, including potential supporters, are open to hearing from you — you just have to send the right message.

² [Why Nonprofits Grow on LinkedIn](#)

56%
more likely
to donate

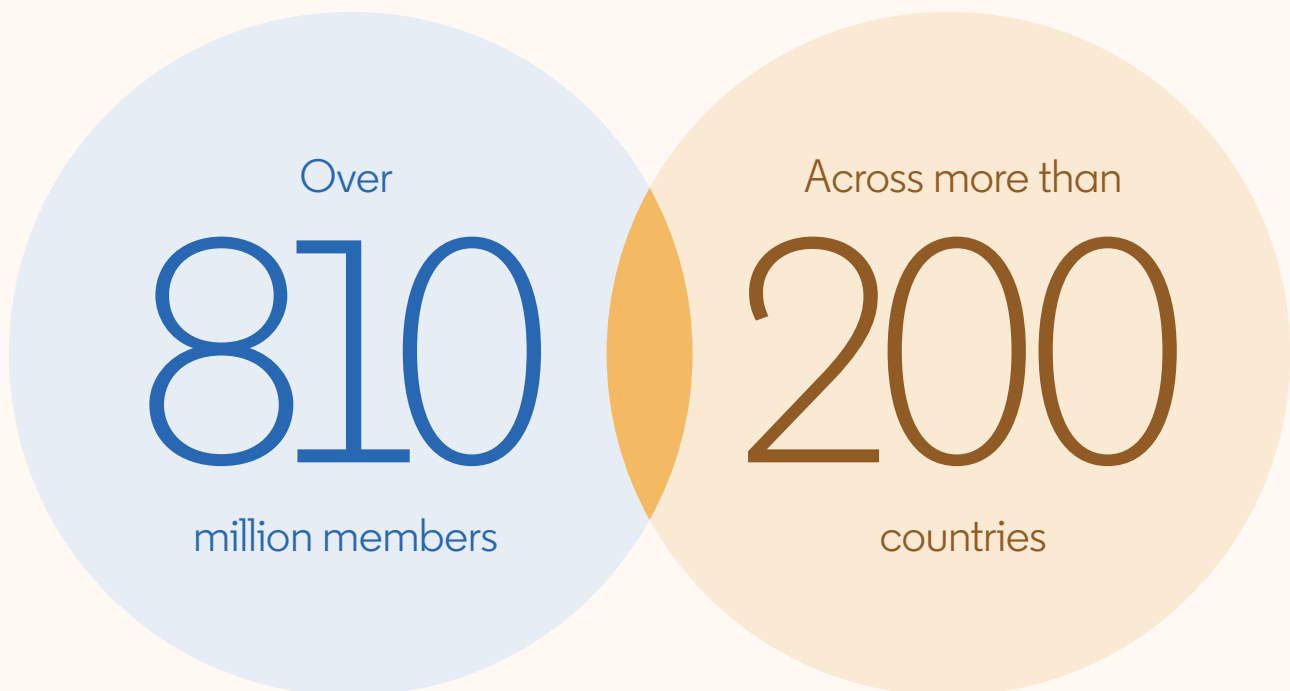
LinkedIn members are 56% more likely than the average internet user to donate to nonprofits²

Part two

How can nonprofits use LinkedIn to connect with major donors, supporters, and others who can help advance their mission?

On LinkedIn today, there are over 810 million members across more than 200 countries. By leveraging LinkedIn's features and a few best practices, you can quickly zero in on people who can help — and get them interested in your organization's important work.

Use the four-step framework on the following pages to build your nonprofit's network and unlock the power of your connections.

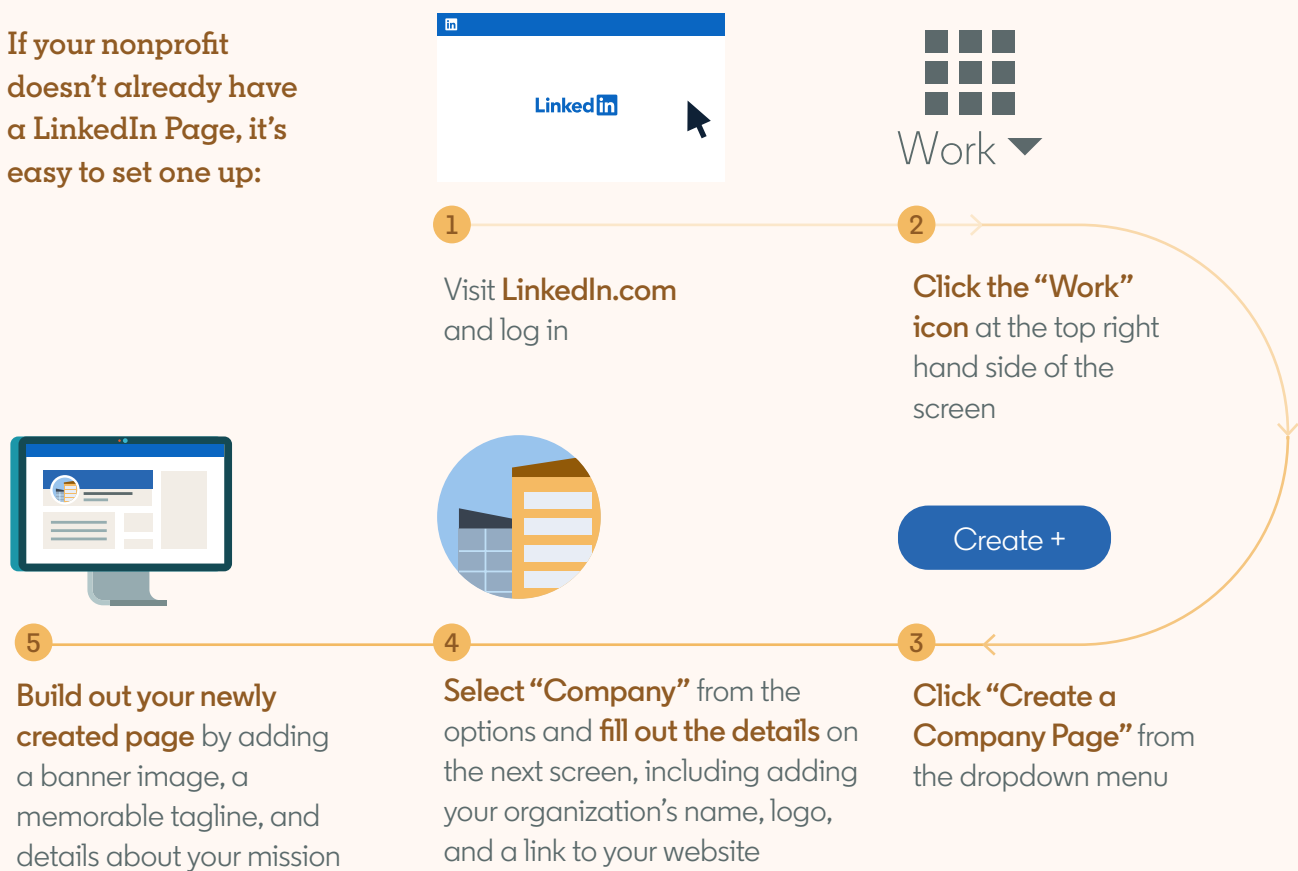


Step 1:

Make sure your organization has an up-to-date LinkedIn Page

Before reaching out to potential donors or supporters on LinkedIn, establishing credibility is essential. By creating a LinkedIn Page for your organization, you can clearly show where you work on your own LinkedIn profile, giving people an easy way to research you when they get your message.

If your nonprofit doesn't already have a LinkedIn Page, it's easy to set one up:



Once you've created your nonprofit's LinkedIn Page, encourage all employees to update their LinkedIn profiles to showcase where they work. Now, if they click "Edit experience" and type in the name of your organization, LinkedIn will automatically surface the appropriate page for them to select — adding your nonprofit's logo and a link to the page directly on their profiles. Make sure you update your profile, too!

Top tip:

Set aside 30 minutes each month to review your organization's LinkedIn Page and ensure it's up to date.

An old logo or other outdated information may confuse potential donors and supporters, hurting your credibility.

Step 2:

Search for affinity to find potential supporters

While you can reach out to anyone on LinkedIn, potential donors and supporters who are already interested in your nonprofit's cause are more likely to be receptive to hearing from you. This increases your chances of a response — and of a positive outcome.

Here's how to use the LinkedIn platform to identify members who show affinity:

- 1 **Build a list of keywords** related to your cause
- 2 Type one or more of these **keywords** into the search bar and hit return
- 3 **Select “People”** from the options under the search bar to generate a list of members who mention your keyword(s) on their profile
- 4 **Select “All filters”** to refine your list based on factors like location, industry, job title, and current or past employer, depending on your needs
- 5 **Review members' profiles** to see if they're a good fit before reaching out

What should you look for when reviewing potential donors' and supporters' LinkedIn profiles? Some signs of affinity include:



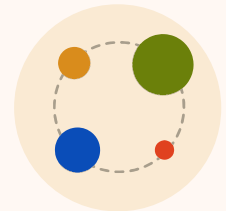
Relevant volunteer or board experience



Similar nonprofits listed under “Interests”



Mentions of issues they care about in their “Causes” section



Membership to LinkedIn Groups related to your cause

For more powerful search capabilities, consider investing in LinkedIn Sales Navigator.

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can:

- **Rapidly identify potential donors and supporters** with advanced search filters, lead recommendations, and more
- **Map your network** in seconds to understand who you know and find warm introductions
- **Stay up to date** about prospects' activity on LinkedIn to spot the right moment to reach out

[Learn more](#)

Step 3:

Make a compelling introduction

Once you've found potential prospects you're interested in talking to, the next step is reaching out. Depending on what type of LinkedIn account you have, they may have to approve your connection request before you can send them a message.

Who can I message on LinkedIn?

Basic LinkedIn account

Reach out to anyone you're connected with, no contact details required. If you're not connected, send a connection request and select "Add a note" to share a few details about why you're interested in connecting. Don't bombard new potential supporters with a call to action right away — wait until they accept your connection request before making your ask. **Free**

LinkedIn Premium subscription or Sales Navigator seat

Send InMails (direct messages) to anyone on LinkedIn. You'll receive between 5 and 20 InMail credits per month — and when someone responds, you get the credit back. **Paid**

As with any platform, there's no guarantee that people will respond to your outreach on LinkedIn. But there are steps you can take to improve your chances of hearing back — and get the answer you hope for. Here are a few best practices to follow:

- Identify mutual connections and ask for warm introductions whenever possible
- Address the recipient by name
- Highlight any connection they have to your cause
- Mention multiple ways they could help
- Include a clear call to action at the end
- Review for typos before hitting send
- Don't be afraid to follow up

Top tip:

Create templates that you can quickly copy, paste, and personalize to save time.



Step 4:

Maintain an active LinkedIn presence

Another good way to increase the likelihood of a potential donor or supporter responding to your messages is to ensure that your nonprofit has an active presence on LinkedIn.

This helps to:

- **Increase prospects' awareness of your nonprofit.** If potential supporters have already seen and interacted with your content before you reach out, they'll remember your organization and be primed to respond.
- **Make it easy for prospects to research your nonprofit.** If potential supporters have never heard of your organization when they get your message, they can learn more about your mission via your nonprofits' LinkedIn Page without needing to leave the platform.
- **Help people find YOU!** If prospects discover your nonprofit through content on their LinkedIn feed, they may proactively reach out about opportunities to get involved.

Your nonprofit doesn't need a huge marketing department or even a dedicated social media manager to stay active on LinkedIn. You can assign a few people to be [admins](#) of your LinkedIn Page, then together take these steps to boost your nonprofit's presence on the platform:

- 1 **Post regularly** from your nonprofit's LinkedIn Page (once per day is best practice)
- 2 **Strike the right balance** with your mix of content (for every **five posts**, we recommend **sharing two** that are informative, **two** that are powerful or uplifting, and **one** call to action)
- 3 Include between one and five **relevant hashtags** on your posts

- 4 Encourage employees to **share and engage** with your nonprofit's content
- 5 **Tag** LinkedIn members and other organizations in relevant posts
- 6 **Respond as your organization** when someone tags your nonprofit in a post

Top tip:

Members are most active on LinkedIn during working hours, so aim to post during peak hours (Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m).



Conclusion

Make more of the connections that matter

It takes a village to create real change. Your nonprofit does incredible work already — but with the right connections, it can achieve even more.

As you start reaching out to people on LinkedIn, you'll get a sense of the types of messages that your audience responds to best.

Apply your learnings as you go and you'll soon have a thriving network of engaged professionals who are ready to help you move your mission forward.

Ready to take your fundraising and development efforts to the next level?

Contact our Fundraising Solutions team today to learn more about how LinkedIn Sales Navigator can help:

nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise/contact-us



LinkedIn for Nonprofits

For more tips and advice about using LinkedIn for fundraising, check out the resources below:

Blog posts

- [4 Tips for Making Your Nonprofit's LinkedIn Page Stand Out](#)
- [How to Unlock the Full Power of Your Nonprofit's Network on LinkedIn](#)

Webinars

- [Master Your Professional Brand to Drive Fundraising](#)
- [5 Steps to Optimize Your Corporate Fundraising Strategy on LinkedIn](#)

PDF

- [Introducing LinkedIn Sales Navigator for Nonprofits](#)

Case study

- [Positive Coaching Alliance \(PCA\) finds people passionate about its cause with LinkedIn for Nonprofits](#)

Learn more

Visit nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise