

A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting Referrals From Your LinkedIn Connections

LinkedIn has lots of great ways to find the right people in its half a billion person database, but the one that seems to have the biggest wow factor is using the “Connections of” feature to search. Whether I share this technique with individuals or huge audiences, I find that most people don’t know they can do this nor can they believe it’s available on the free LinkedIn account.

If you’re like me and really appreciate receiving referrals from people in your network, you’ll find this feature to be extremely valuable.

However, it’s not easy to ask the open-ended question, “Who in your network could help me find a job, customer, etc.?” So, rather than putting all the pressure on your connection to come up with the right people, why not use LinkedIn’s “Connections of” feature to find the right people all by yourself.

How to Search Your Connection’s Network

Follow these simple steps, and you’ll quickly discover who might be able to help you achieve your goal.

Put your cursor in the big, white search box in the top toolbar and select *Search for People* from the drop-down menu.

Then select *All Filters* in the white toolbar that appears. Next, go to the “Connections of” box and type in your connection’s name. When his/her name appears in the drop-down menu, choose that entry, and then click the blue *Apply* button.

Now use any of the other available filters to narrow the search to people at the right company, location, school attended, title, etc.

Caveat: If your connection has chosen to hide their first-level network from their connections, you’ll only be able to see people to whom both of you are connected. But if they are willing to change their “Who can see your connections” setting to “Your connections,” you will be able to perform this search. They could then change their setting back to “Only you” when you have completed your search.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation bar with icons for Home, My Network, Jobs, Messaging, Notifications, Me, and Sales Nav. Below the navigation bar is the 'All people filters' section. It includes a search box, a 'Search with Sales Navigator' button, and several filter categories: 'All people filters' (with Clear, Cancel, and Apply buttons), 'Connections of' (with a dropdown menu showing 'John' selected), 'Locations' (with a text input and checkboxes for United States, India, Greater Milwaukee Area, United Kingdom, and Greater New York City Area), and 'Current companies' (with a text input and checkboxes for LinkedIn, EY, Amazon, Johnson Controls, and Microsoft). Red arrows point to the search box and the 'Connections of' dropdown menu.

What to do with the Search Results

Review the list that LinkedIn provides for you. If you find people who look interesting to you, check out their profile, and then ask your connection how best to approach the people (through a LinkedIn connection request, phone call, email, in-person meeting, etc.).

The three questions I would ask my connection about the people on the list are:

- Do you know them? (Not everyone knows the people in their network well enough to refer you)
- Do you think they would be interested in hearing about how I might be able to help them? (You're trying to find out if your connection knows them well enough to know their level of interest in what you do)
- Can I use your name and our relationship when I reach out to them? (This is getting their permission to name drop)

If you get “Yes” or “You bet” to all three questions, then go ahead, reach out and try to start a new relationship by referring to your mutual connection. The reach-out could take place in the form of a LinkedIn connection request, but you could also use more traditional methods, like a phone call, email, or stopping by for a visit.

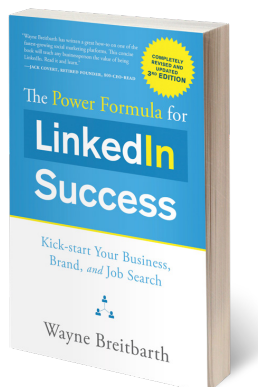
If you're like most people, once they learn of this feature, they can't wait to get started and put it to use. What are YOU waiting for? Get started NOW.

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