

LinkedIn Inbox Management

One of the biggest struggles LinkedIn Sales Navigator users face is the introduction of a second Inbox, dedicated to Sales Navigator. This was a design decision by LinkedIn Corp. and most users feel that it was not a good decision for a variety of reasons. Both will be discussed here and strategies (and workarounds) will be provided.

Nonetheless, that's the way it is and that's what we will teach you.

Recipient Inbox

When messaging others, there is no way to tell what type of account someone else has. You can, however, tell if they have a Premium account and it shows as a gold IN icon in their profile header.



Message Threads

One of the biggest “behind the scenes” LinkedIn changes is the introduction of message THREADS. These are similar to email conversations. There might be dozens of back and forth messages contained in a single thread between you and another direct connection.

Message threads appear in **both** the LinkedIn.com Inbox and the Sales Navigator Inbox.

You might have multiple message threads with another connection or they might be contained in a single thread. Here is a strategy to consider:

1. Stay on topic and start a NEW thread for a new topic.
2. Put a keyword in the message thread so you can search for it later.
3. Include a signature line with phone and/or email at least ONCE in the conversation.

LinkedIn.com Inbox

The LinkedIn.com Inbox contains messages sent to others and those received from your direct LinkedIn connections (1's).

Recently, LinkedIn Corp. started adding accepted invitations as messages in the LinkedIn.com Inbox, so long as there was a CUSTOM invitation sent. This is another big reason to take extra time to write and send a custom invite.

LinkedIn.com Inbox items include:

InMails - Sales Navigator includes a limited number of InMails, which are like special delivery messages sent to people you are NOT connected to (e.g. 2's and 3's). The InMails you receive from *others* will appear here. The InMails you send do not.

Messages - Messages SENT TO your direct connections (1's) from the LinkedIn Inbox appear in the LinkedIn Inbox as you would expect. Messages RECEIVED FROM from other direct connections (1's) appear in the LinkedIn Inbox no matter what LinkedIn platform they were sent from (LinkedIn, Sales Navigator, Recruiter, Mobile).

Sales Navigator Inbox

The Sales Navigator Inbox contains messages only and they must be initiated from Sales Navigator, not from LinkedIn, to appear in this Inbox.

Custom invitations sent from the Sales Navigator side will show up in the LinkedIn Inbox, not in the Sales Navigator Inbox. Generic invitations will not appear in any Inbox.

Sales Navigator Inbox items include:

Messages - Messages SENT TO your direct connections (1's) from the Sales Navigator Inbox appear in the Sales Navigator Inbox. The replies also appear here.

Writing a LinkedIn Message

There are a number of methods to writing a message. If it's a short, one-time, custom message it's OK to write it directly on LinkedIn (or Sales Navigator).

If, on the other hand, it's complex or it may be used again, it may be best to write it elsewhere and copy/paste the message. Use a word processor and store save the message for future use.

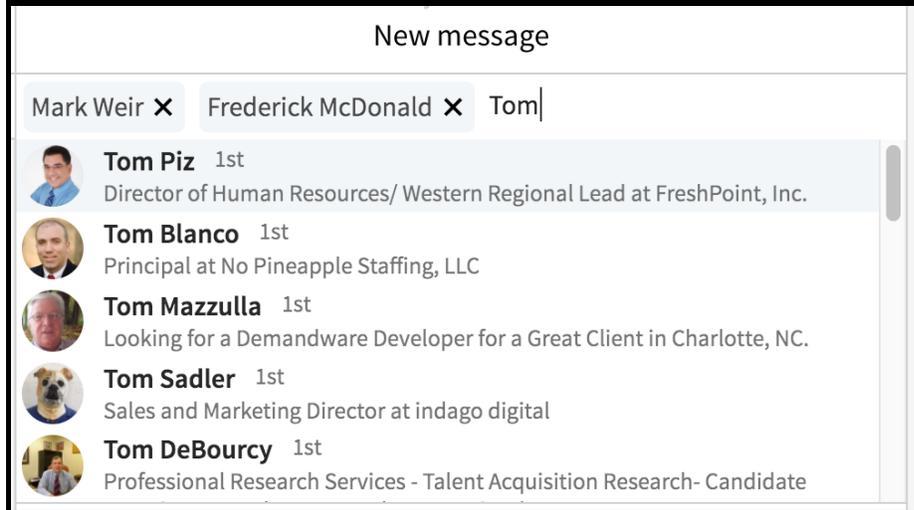
We recommend Google Docs for creating, storing, and collaborating on messages. It's free, it's backed up in real-time and it's easy to collaborate with someone on the text.

Method 1 - Write a message in the LinkedIn Message Inbox

Creating a new message in the LinkedIn Inbox starts right here:



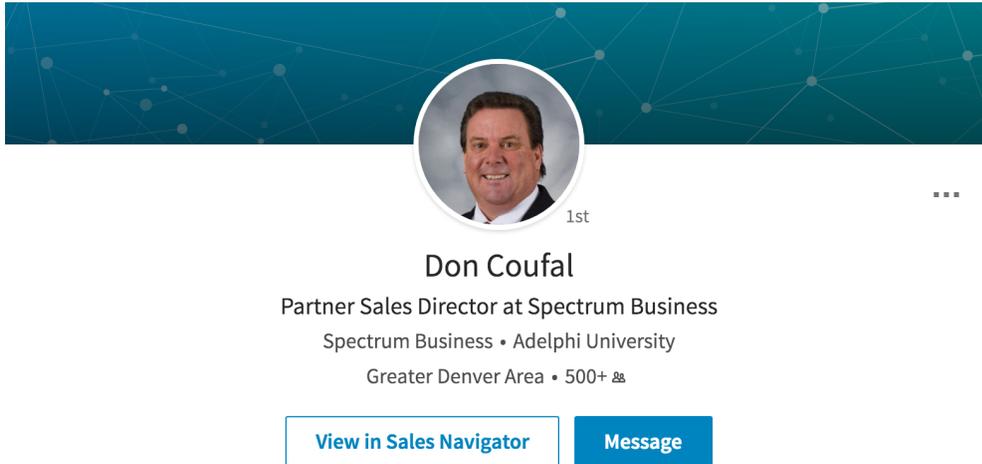
Click on the Icon and a window appears for you to enter who the message is for (direct connections only). Simply start typing and pick from the drop-down list. You can add as many people as you like.



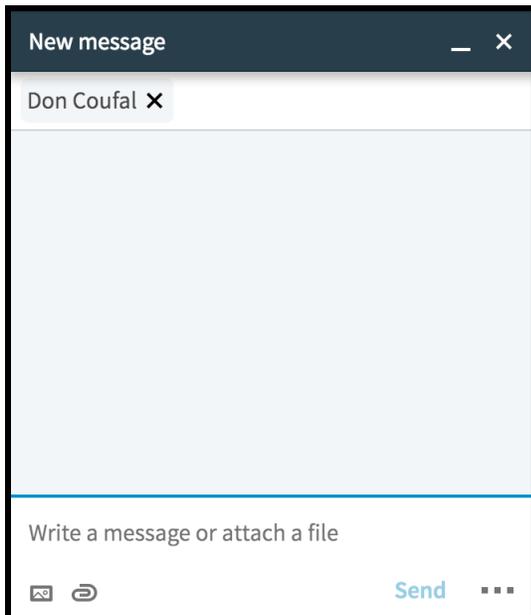
Once you have entered the "recipients", you are ready to enter the message text in the window at the bottom.

Method 1 - Write a message from their Profile

A second method to message someone is to start at their profile. A big blue MESSAGE button will appear in the header area as shown.

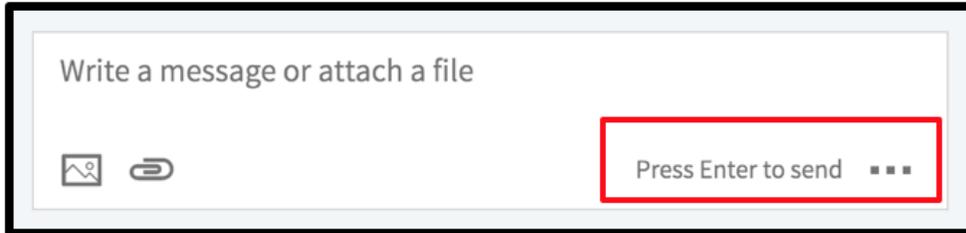


The story is pretty much the same as with Method 1 (Message Inbox). In this case, the recipient is already filled out. You can add more recipients or get on with the process.



Entering Text

You might copy/paste text from elsewhere (like a template) or you might type it in right here. You may enter up to 2000 characters. It's best to keep your messages short, tight and in the 500-1000 character range if you want the best results.

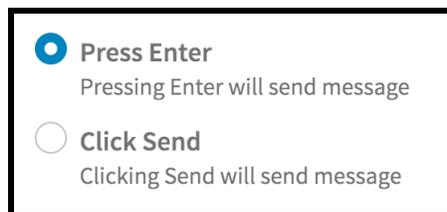


IMPORTANT NOTE

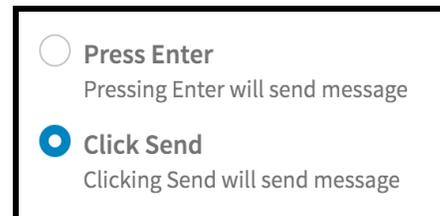
Note how it says "Press Enter to send" above. It is the default set by LinkedIn. That means the message is sent immediately the first time you hit enter. YOU DO NOT WANT THIS.

Change this immediately by clicking on the 3 DOT menu and selecting the "Click Send" option. This need only be done ONCE as it sets the default going forward.

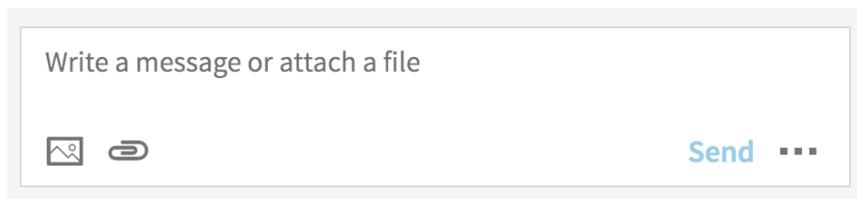
Before



After



The message area now looks like this with a SEND button.



Message Body

The message can contain text, special characters, email addresses, phone numbers, and even a clickable link. LinkedIn allows 2000 characters. Experts feel that 500-750 characters are optimal for many reasons.

URL Tips

Only include the URL parts that are most needed with no trailing information

www.thomasville.com/&EL=auto&trackingInfoJson.contextId=4367590D4F18C014

becomes

www.thomasville.com

Use www.domain.com vs. <http://domain.com> whenever possible to keep it clean and simple looking for message recipients. Both do the same thing, with a few exceptions. Test the link when you are done to be sure the clean, short URL still works as it should.

If the URL is long or ugly, consider getting a nice clean “custom” domain name and setting it up to forward to the original site. They cost about \$10 per year and you might have a handful for such purposes. They are available through many sources, including GoDaddy.

Real Life URL Redirect Example

The “native” link to my online calendar to book a 30-minute call looks like this:

www.calendly.com/michaeloneil/30min

I make it a bit more simple by using a simple URL that is a combination of 3 words - www.schedulewithmike.com.

It forwards to the more complex URL above. It’s shorter, it looks nice and people have a pretty good idea of what it does.

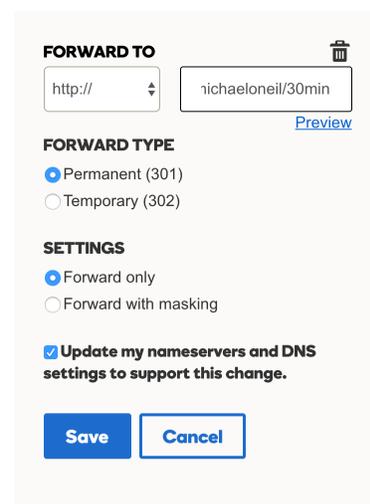
Extra Considerations

There may be a little bit of apprehension from some who might click on the link because you don’t really know where it will take them.

If you think this might be the case and it’s important enough, consider using the native URL in its simplest form instead.

Forwarding

DOMAIN



The screenshot shows a domain forwarding configuration interface. At the top, it says "DOMAIN". Below that, there are three sections: "FORWARD TO", "FORWARD TYPE", and "SETTINGS".

- FORWARD TO:** A dropdown menu is set to "http://". To its right is a text input field containing "michaeloneil/30min". A trash icon is in the top right corner of this section. A "Preview" link is located below the input field.
- FORWARD TYPE:** Two radio buttons are present: "Permanent (301)" (which is selected) and "Temporary (302)".
- SETTINGS:** Two radio buttons are present: "Forward only" (which is selected) and "Forward with masking".

At the bottom, there is a checked checkbox labeled "Update my nameservers and DNS settings to support this change." Below the settings are two buttons: "Save" and "Cancel".

Images and Attachments

Besides text, LinkedIn.com and Sales Navigator messages can include certain types of Images and Attachments. This should be done carefully.

Warning - It may not be the best idea to be sending attachments to others unless they are expecting it. You won't get in trouble with LinkedIn, but don't expect many people to open the attachment if you do this.

Images

You can "insert" an image in JPG, PNG, or GIF format - up to 4Mb in size. This is similar to an image in an email except it can't be "inserted". They will see the image at the bottom of your message. It's best to crop your image and/or clean it up a bit if you want the best results.

Attachments

You may also Attach a file as you would with an email. Add a Word file, Powerpoint, or PDF file - up to 4Mb in size. Images cannot be used as Attachments. Use the Images option above instead.

Message Testing

Think of your message as a "layout project". A nicely laid out message will attract the reader, a big clunky message will drive them away.

You can only "estimate" how a message will look on LinkedIn before it's sent. The narrow width of LinkedIn messages has a profound effect on how they look in the Inbox.

If you are doing a series of messages, and they are long or complex, test them on a friend or coworker beforehand. This extra step will help you craft the best possible messages both on LinkedIn.com and in Sales Navigator.

Make sure that the message 1) looks good 2) has working links and 3) is sent from the right Inbox. If a paragraph looks too big, simply cut it in half.

Inbox Strategies

The two LinkedIn inboxes call for an Inbox strategy or a series of strategies. Without this, you may find that your Inbox situation is a mess, getting worse by the day.

Strategy 1 - Message Templates

Messages that will be sent often should be made into a template in a word processor and labeled appropriately. Here are some examples of template names for invitations:

- Telecom Invite - Owner
- Telecom Invite - VP
- Telecom Invite - Channels

These are example template names for messages to be sent to connections:

- Telecom Call Request Message - Owner
- Telecom Call Request Message - VP
- Telecom Call Request Message - Channels

These are the types of messages that might be used in systematic LinkedIn campaigns.

Strategy 2 - Which Inbox to Use

The LinkedIn.com Inbox will always be with you as long as you have a LinkedIn account of any kind. It's a permanent fixture. For this reason, it's best to keep as much of your communications in the LinkedIn.com Inbox as possible.

The Sales Navigator Inbox is used more for complex, bulk sending operations, like in a campaign that uses Sales Navigator Tags.

Let's say that you have Leads saved and tagged. You want to send messages to everyone that has a certain tag like "Denver DMs". The tagging system is so powerful that it coaxes you into using the Sales Navigator Inbox to deliver these messages.

These tagged Leads in Sales Navigator CAN be sent messages using the LinkedIn.com Inbox, but it takes 3-4 extra clicks and the process is rather awkward.

Large-scale sending to Saved Leads is a natural Sales Navigator Inbox function.

Strategy 3 - Existing Threads vs New Threads

With some of your message recipients, you might already have a message thread set up. You might have an existing conversation going on.

If the message you are about to send is already covered in an existing message thread, you should continue the conversation there, where the other messages are in clear view. You simply REPLY at the bottom of the thread.

If, on the other hand, it's a NEW topic, you should consider starting up a NEW message thread. This can happen in the Inbox or from their LinkedIn.com profile. Do not start up a new thread like this in the Sales Navigator Inbox.