



Includes  
5 templates

# The art of outreach: How to message potential donors on LinkedIn

Strategies to help you connect with and steward  
nonprofit donors

**LinkedIn** for Nonprofits

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## Introduction

# Reach people who can make a difference on LinkedIn

Building an engaged community of supporters is key to any nonprofit's success. Together, the right people can propel an organization forward — accelerating its impact and bringing its mission to life.

With over 850 million members across more than 200 countries and territories, **LinkedIn is the perfect place for nonprofit fundraisers to connect with potential donors and steward meaningful relationships.** And one of the best ways to get the conversation started is via a LinkedIn message.

If you're a nonprofit professional wondering how to craft the perfect outreach message on LinkedIn, then this guide is for you. You'll find tips, best practices, and templates to help you optimize your outreach on LinkedIn, so you can better connect with donors to bring your nonprofit a step forward.

### Ready? Let's get started!

#### Did you know?

LinkedIn members are 56% more likely than the average internet user to donate to nonprofits.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> [Why Nonprofits Grow on LinkedIn](#), LinkedIn for Nonprofits

## Step 1

# Research, prepare, and personalize

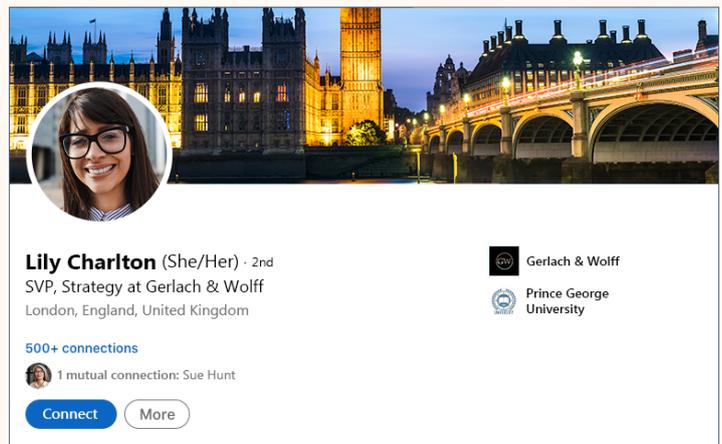
Bulk messages can be useful for sharing information at scale, but when you're asking someone to make a substantial donation to your nonprofit, it's important to make them feel special. That's why one of the keys to an irresistible outreach message is personalization.

You can find all the information you need to send a thoughtful, personalized message to potential donors by reviewing their LinkedIn profile. Here are some things to look out for:

## Intro section

**Take note of:** Basic information about your prospect, including their name and where they live and work.

**Look out for:** Mutual connections — these people may be willing to introduce you to your prospect.



### Top tip:

Some LinkedIn members include their pronouns and a recording of how to pronounce their name in their intro section. Make a note of this information — it may come in handy if you later meet or set up a call.

# About section

**Look out for:** References to things they're passionate about, especially if they relate to your cause.

**About**

I'm a dedicated business professional with 14+ years' experience leading multinational teams. As SVP of Strategy at one of the UK's largest and most dynamic marketing agencies, I work closely with the CEO to develop our strategic plan and ensure we meet our fiscal targets.

Outside of work, I'm a passionate scuba diver. I've dived in Belize, Australia, Egypt, and Hawaii, as well as off the UK's beautiful coastlines.

**Featured**

Article



**Marketing agency wins workplaces award**  
*London Jobs Daily*  
London-based marketing agency Gerlach & Wolff has been recognised as one of the top places to work for...

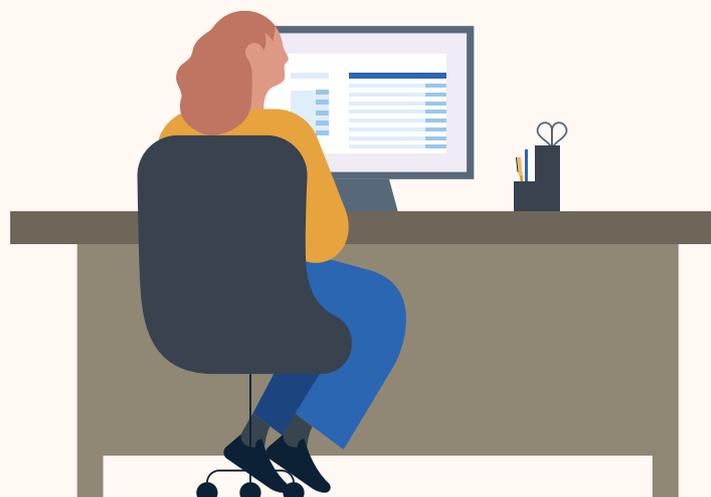
Article



**Staying on target during turbulent times**  
*Lily Charton on LinkedIn*  
What does "strategy" mean when the ground below your feet is constantly shifting?

# Featured section

**Look out for:** Conversation starters, like articles they've written or mentions of awards they or their company have won.



## Activity section

**Take note of:** How active your prospect has been and what they've posted recently. Is now the right time to approach, or will your message go unread?

**Activity**  
773 followers

Lily Charlton posted this · 2w

Looking forward to completely disconnecting for three weeks as I take my daughter to Paris for the first time. I'm proud to work at a company that prioritises taking time for yourself to recharge your batteries... [show more](#)

 35 7 comments

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Lily Charlton reshared a post · 3w

Gerlach & Wolff is hiring! If you're looking to grow your skills at one of the UK's most exciting marketing agencies and work with world-renowned brands, we welcome you to apply for one of the four open... [show more](#)

 1,278 22 comments · 39 shares

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[Show all activity →](#)



### Top tip:

Follow prospects and their companies on LinkedIn. This makes it easier to keep track of their activity, including any mentions in the news, so you can spot optimal moments to reach out.

## Experience section

**Take note of:** Signs that the prospect is in a strong position to make a gift or provide the support you're looking for, such as job seniority or area of expertise.

**Experience**

 **Gerlach & Wolff**  
Full-time 14 yrs · 3 mos  
London, England, United Kingdom

- **Senior Vice President, Strategy**  
July 2021 - Present · 1 yr 2 mos  
  
Define, develop, and execute strategies to grow our business
- **VP Strategy & Business Development**  
Dec 2018 - July 2021 · 2 yrs 8 mos
- **Senior Strategic Planner**  
Oct 2016 - Dec 2018 · 2 yrs 2 mos

[Show all 8 experiences →](#)

# Volunteering section

**Look out for:** Prior volunteering experience at an organization with a similar focus to your own.

## Volunteering



### Strategy Consultant

Clean Oceans Today

Aug 2021 - Present • 1 yr 1 mo

Environment

I provide pro-bono strategy consultations to the leadership team at Clean Oceans Today.



### Clean-up Crew Volunteer

Litter-Free Beaches Alliance

Jan 2008 - Jan 2011 • 3 yrs 1mo

Environment

I spent the last Sunday of every month volunteering to help pick up litter at my local beach in Sussex.



## Top tip:

Some members also list volunteer experience under the Education section of their profile. Just look for “Activities and societies.”

# Interests section

**Take note of:** The “Companies” tab — does the prospect follow your nonprofit’s LinkedIn Page already, suggesting familiarity?

**Look out for:** Membership in LinkedIn Groups related to your cause.

**Interests**

Influencers      Companies      Groups      Schools

---

 **Scuba Enthusiasts**  
142 members

 **Ocean Clean-up Solutions**  
1,278 members

# Causes section

**Look out for:** Your nonprofit’s cause listed as a cause they care about.

**Causes**

Disaster and Humanitarian Relief • Environment

**Did you know?**

Some LinkedIn profile sections are optional, and people can choose to make profile information private. However, since many LinkedIn members use the platform to network and find new opportunities, they often present a thorough picture of their professional life.

## Step 2

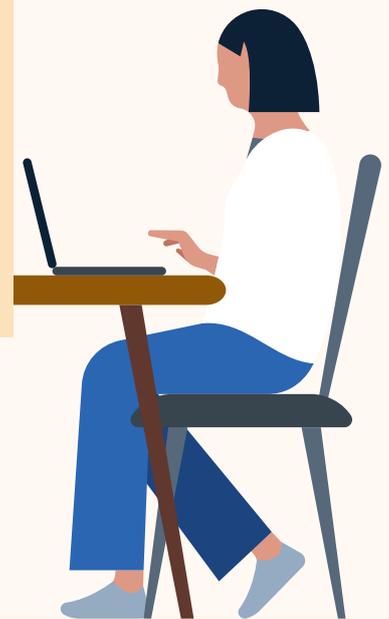
# Identify the best approach

Once you've done your research and feel prepared to send a compelling, personalized message to a potential donor, the next step is reaching out to them. There are a few different ways that you can do this. The right approach will depend on what type of account you have and whether you share mutual connections with the prospect.

### **Approach #1:** Message

**Best for:** Existing connections

**How to use this approach:** If you're already connected with a prospect on LinkedIn, you can message them directly by hitting the "Message" button on their profile.



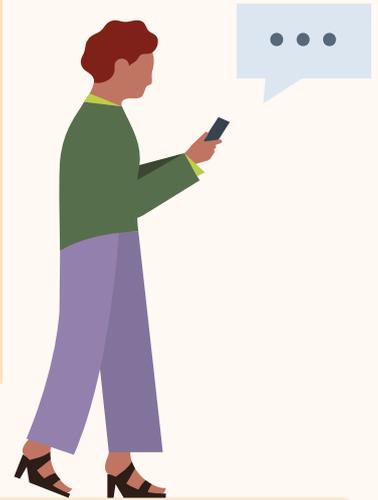
### **Top tip:**

If you're planning to connect with a prospect before reaching out, select "Add a note" when sending your connection request. This allows you to provide a little context and get their attention. However, don't make the ask here — wait until they've accepted your request, then send a message.

## **Approach #2:** Warm introduction

**Best for:** Prospects with whom you share a mutual connection

**How to use this approach:** Check the prospect's LinkedIn profile to see if you share a mutual connection, then message that person to ask them to make an introduction for you. This could take place on LinkedIn using the [Group Chat feature](#), or offline.



### **Top tip:**

If you share multiple mutual connections, consider factors like credibility when deciding who to ask for a warm introduction. For example, if one of your board members is the CEO at a company the prospect follows on LinkedIn, their word will likely hold a lot of weight — helping you earn the prospect's interest and trust.



## **Approach #3:** InMail

**Best for:** Prospects with whom you don't share a direct or mutual connection

**How to use this approach:** If you have a LinkedIn Premium account, or if your organization uses LinkedIn Sales Navigator for donor cultivation, you'll get an allocation of InMail credits every month. These allow you to message almost anyone on LinkedIn, even if you're not connected. Just click the "Message" button on a prospect's profile to use one of your credits. If they respond, you'll get the credit back.



### **Top tip:**

Unlike with other LinkedIn messages, you have the option to add a subject line of up to 200 characters to your InMails. Write an intriguing subject line — such as one referencing any personal connection they have to your nonprofit — to catch your prospect's attention and boost your chances of hearing back.

## Step 3

# Craft a compelling message

While personalization is the key to establishing strong connections with donors, you don't always have to start from scratch. Save time by creating templates that your team can quickly copy, paste, and personalize when contacting new and existing donors alike.

To help you get started, we've put together five customizable templates you can use the next time you're ready to reach out.



## Template #1: Request for a warm introduction

**Use it when:** You want to leverage a mutual connection.

Hi [connection's name],

Hope you're doing well! I wanted to reach out and see if you would be willing to connect me with someone in your network: [prospect's name].

I'm hoping to speak to them about ways they could support [your nonprofit's name] but I'm not currently connected with them. Could you introduce us? You can do this on LinkedIn by creating a new message, then adding both our names.

Thank you in advance,

[your name]

Send

## Template #2: Initial message

**Use it when:** You're first reaching out to a prospect.

Hi [prospect's name],

I saw on your LinkedIn profile that [reference their connection to your nonprofit's cause]. Given your interest in [cause], I thought you might be interested in what we're doing at [your nonprofit's name].

At [your nonprofit's name], we [briefly outline your nonprofit's mission and impact].

I'd love to set up time to chat about ways you could get involved with our organization, whether that's making a donation or joining our board. Do you have time for a 20-minute call next week?

Looking forward to hearing from you,

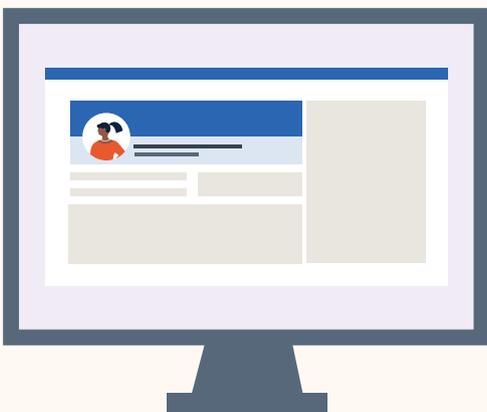
[your name]

Send



### Top tip:

Prospects may look at your LinkedIn profile when deciding whether or not to reply to you. Build credibility and trust by ensuring your profile is complete and up to date. If you don't have a profile picture, consider adding one to put a friendly face to the name.



### Did you know?

LinkedIn members with profile photos receive 21x more profile views than those without.<sup>2</sup>

## Template #3: Follow-up message

**Use it when:** A promising prospect doesn't respond.

Hi [prospect's name],

Hope your week is going well! I wanted to follow up and see if you have any interest in discussing ways that you could get involved with [your nonprofit's name].

Given [mention their connection to your nonprofit's cause], I'd love to set up a quick call to tell you more about our organization and how you can get involved. If this is not a good time, I'm also happy to loop back around in a few weeks if that would be better for you.

Best,

[your name]

Send



### Top tip:

It's fine to send a follow-up or two, but wait several days between messages to avoid coming across as pushy.

## Template #4: Thank-you message

**Use it when:** A donor you've cultivated makes their first gift to your nonprofit.

Hi [donor's name],

I wanted to personally reach out to thank you for your generous donation to [your nonprofit's name]. Your donation will [include specific details of what their money will be used for and the impact it will have].

If you're open to it, I'd love to stay in touch to keep you up to date about the impact your donation has made and share news about our organization that you might be interested in.

With gratitude,

[your name]

Send

## Template #5: Update message

**Use it when:** You're ready to nurture a relationship with an existing donor and have some news to share with them.

Hi [donor name],

How are you? I hope you've been keeping well! I wanted to share an exciting update about [your nonprofit's name] with you.

[Share a short, compelling update about your nonprofit, e.g. the launch of a new program or partnership, an award nomination, or a new executive hire]

I'd love to schedule a call to tell you more about this news and discuss opportunities for you to get more involved with our organization.

Do you have any availability next week?

Best,

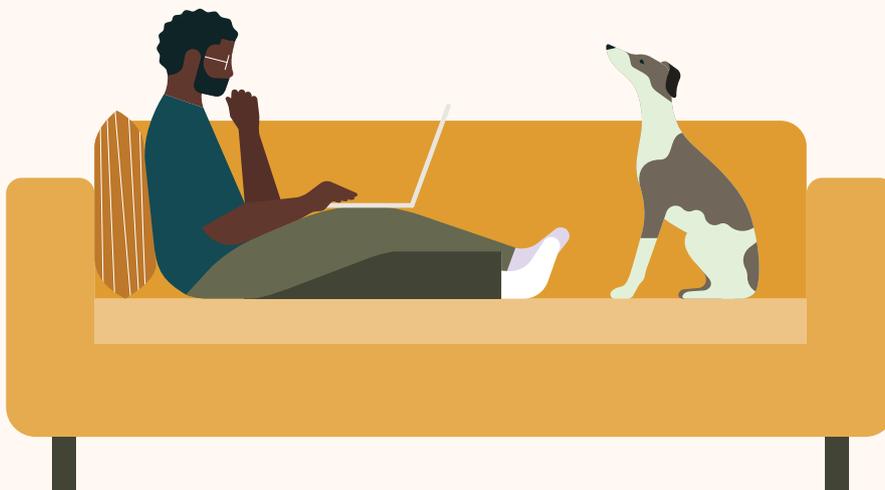
[your name]

Send



### Top tip:

Templates can save you time — but if you forgot to fill out sections, the message may come across as impersonal. Always review your message before hitting send to make sure you've used the correct name and included all relevant information.



## Conclusion

# Nurture stronger relationships with LinkedIn

Sending the right message to the right person can have a huge impact — establishing a relationship that benefits your nonprofit for years to come.

To take your donor cultivation and outreach strategy to the next level, explore LinkedIn Sales Navigator. This solution is available at a 50% discount for eligible nonprofits, giving you access to:

- 1 **Advanced search filters, lead recommendations, and network mapping** — so you can rapidly identify high-potential prospects and spot the best path forward.
- 2 **Saved leads & accounts, alerts, and notes** — so you can easily keep track of prospects and donors and grow relationships over time.
- 3 **InMails** — so you can quickly establish a connection with prospects and stay in touch.

To find out more, contact us today:

[nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise/contact-us](https://nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise/contact-us)



## LinkedIn for Nonprofits

For more tips and advice on optimizing your donor outreach on LinkedIn, check out the resources below:

### Blog posts

- [5 LinkedIn Profile Tips for Nonprofit Professionals](#)
- [How to Approach Corporate Donors on LinkedIn: 3 Tips for Nonprofits](#)
- [How to Nurture Stronger Relationships with Major Donors Using LinkedIn](#)

### Guides

- [Fundraising and development on LinkedIn: A guide for nonprofits](#)
- [How to connect with major donors and supporters on LinkedIn: A guide for nonprofits](#)

### Webinar

- [Leveraging LinkedIn to Elevate Your Donor Outreach](#)

[Learn more](#)

[Visit nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise](https://nonprofit.linkedin.com/fundraise)