

Networking Tips 4: Top 5 Suggestions for an Upgraded LinkedIn Account

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If you're reading this, you're probably already set up with a functioning, basic LinkedIn account, and are trying to decide whether a paid upgrade is worth the cost. Upgrading your account certainly adds functionality and efficiency to your networking and marketing efforts, but many of the tasks can be achieved with a free account; they just require a bit more effort on the user side. Here we present some of the benefits of a Job Seeker upgrade; it's up to you to decide if the \$30/month fee (or more) is worth the expense.

1. **Contact anyone directly with InMail:** With a free account, you can only message connections ("cold calling" without connecting is not possible). With InMail, you can message anyone directly and you're "guaranteed" a response (you get credited back for one of your monthly messages if you don't get a response within 7 days). This is a handy feature if there are specific people you want to message and you want to avoid the delay and effort of being introduced by someone else. When using InMail messaging, establish some common ground by mentioning activities, interests, groups or connections you share, and be specific about what you want.

If you're patient and don't upgrade, you can work your way through existing contacts and referrals to get access to the person you want to connect with, with a similar end result. It takes a little more time, but you also have the benefit of not going in "cold."

Joining groups can also be a good way to connect directly with target individuals. If you're members of the same group, you can "Reply Privately" to them when they participate in discussion threads. You can also find new networking opportunities when you respond privately to individuals you haven't targeted, but who show expertise and whose opinions and ideas resonate with you.

2. **See who viewed your profile:** This is a handy feature if you want to know who's viewed your profile. This information can be useful in a couple of ways. If you've just applied for a job and see someone from that organization has looked you up, it indicates that you're being considered for the role. If a manager or recruiter you don't know has shown interest in you, it may be because they're looking for someone with your skill set to fill a vacant position.

With a free account, you only see the last 5 visitors, but with a paid account you can see them all, and also get information on how they found you. If you check your LinkedIn frequently, seeing the last 5 visitors may be good enough for this purpose.

3. **Get detailed salary information on job pages:** Many companies are posting job ads directly on LinkedIn these days. This feature provides information on typical salaries for the position type on the same page as the job posting. You can find this information on your own on other websites (like [Glassdoor](#) or [ALIS](#)), but you may find it convenient having the information right there without having to link elsewhere for it.
4. **Get noticed with a Job Seeker badge:** The job seeker badge (a small suitcase logo) shows on your profile and next to your name in search results, allowing recruiters and hiring managers to notice you easily when they search for prospects. This feature is optional, and can be hidden if you'd prefer that your boss or colleagues not know you're looking for work.
5. **Let recruiters message you:** By using the optional OpenLink feature, you can open up your profile to allow anyone (including recruiters and hiring managers) to message you or send you job information without first purchasing InMails.

While the features listed here are indeed convenient, you may not need all of them, and you may decide that the benefits are not worth the expense. Whether you select the easy option or choose to save some money and do the grunt-work yourself, LinkedIn provides a great tool to improve your networking and job search.