

Chapter 2: LinkedIn Nuts and Bolts

In This Chapter

- ✓ **Expanding your network**
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- ✓ **Sending and receiving messages**
- ✓ **Managing LinkedIn correspondence**
- ✓ **Joining a group**
- ✓ **Creating a group**
- ✓ **Becoming established as an expert**

After you set up your LinkedIn account and get connected, it's time to broaden your base and expand your network. That means getting connected to more professionals. In addition, you can join a group related to your industry. When you join a group, you're networking with more like-minded individuals who may or may not be contacts. When you join a group, it's like any other form of social media: You become part of the conversation. You can also flaunt your expertise within a group and use a group to add new connections to your profile.

When you start networking with people on LinkedIn, you receive messages and invitations to become connected with other professionals. You receive an e-mail notification whenever someone invites you to connect with them, sends you a message via LinkedIn, or posts a note on a group to which you belong.

In this chapter, we show you how to expand your network, join and create a group, and correspond with your contacts as well as manage your correspondence.

Expanding Your LinkedIn Network

After you make your initial connections, it's time to expand your network. Remember that each person to whom you're connected also has connections — connections you may not have. The easiest way to find new connections is to explore the connections you have and see whether they have any connections you should know.

Here are two ways to expand your network:

- ◆ **Ask for an introduction from someone you both know.** If you find an interesting person you don't know but who is connected to one of your connections, send a message to your connection asking for a virtual introduction.
- ◆ **Send a message directly.** Contact directly any contacts of people to whom you're connected — these people are two or three degrees from you. Send a message stating that you want to add him to your LinkedIn network; be sure to also mention the person you both have in common.

When you do the math, you can expand your network quickly by mining the gold that lies in second- and third-degree contacts. If a second- or third-degree contact doesn't accept your invitation, you've given it your best shot, which is better than no shot.



LinkedIn frowns on sending an invite to people you don't have a connection in common with. Be sure, before you send a message, that you have someone in common.

To mine the gold that lies in your second- and third-degree contacts, follow these steps:

1. Log in to LinkedIn.

Your home page appears.

2. Choose My Connections from the Contacts drop-down menu.

A list of your contacts appears with the person's avatar, a description, and the number of contacts he has, as shown in Figure 2-1.

3. Examine the list and look for a contact who has lots of contacts.

First, choose the contacts you know well.

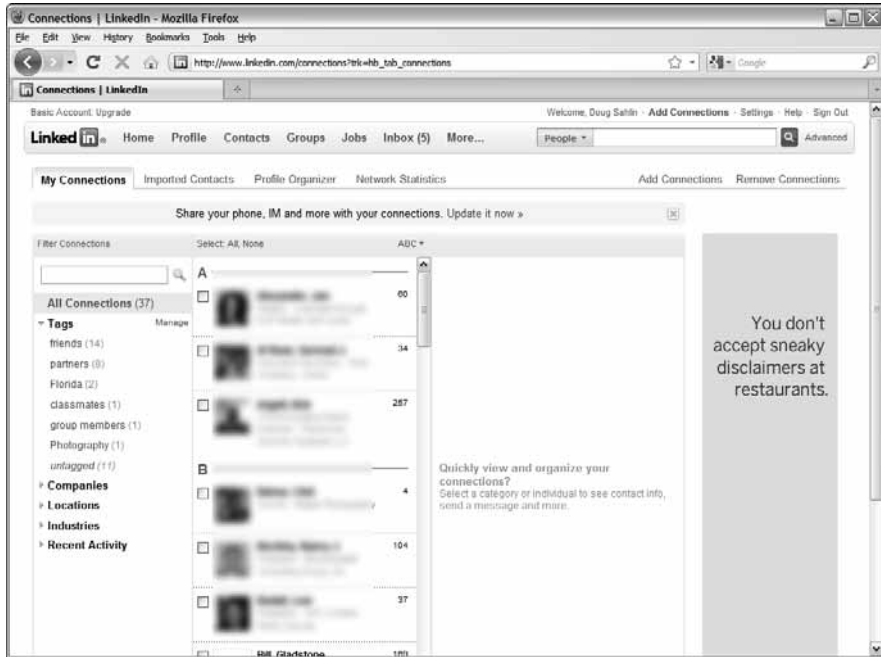
4. Click the person's avatar.

Your contact's information appears on the right side of the browser window. You also see a link with the number of connections your contact has.

5. Click the person's Connections link.

A list of your contact's contacts appears, as shown in Figure 2-2. The connections you share appear in the Shared Connections tab. The group you're interested in is All.

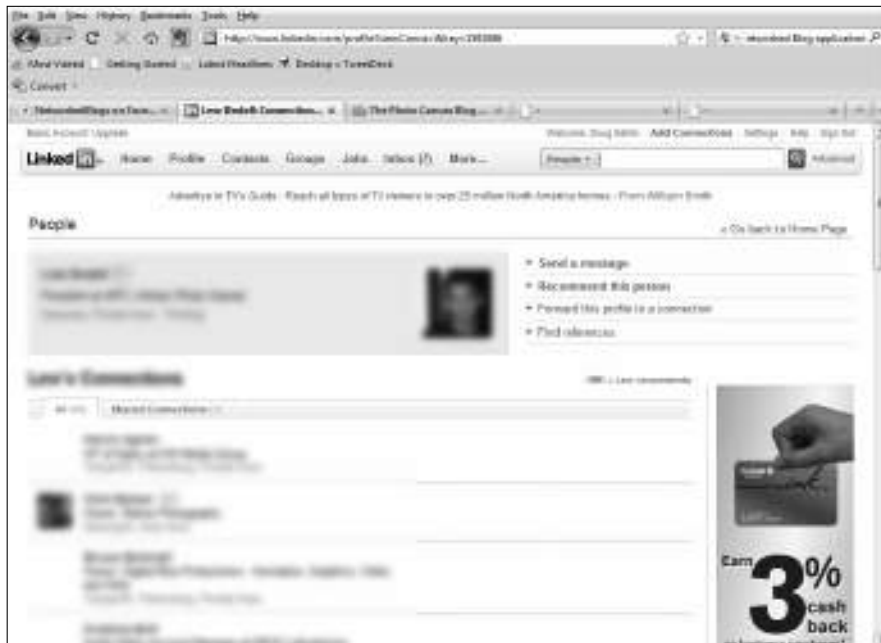
Figure 2-1:
Mining gold
from your
contacts
list.



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Figure 2-2:
Looking
for new
contacts.



6. Click the All tab and examine the people on this list.

Look for people you want to be connected to; perhaps people in the same or similar industries. For example, if you're a photographer and you're connected to a person who prints high-quality, fine art canvases, look for other photographers who are connected to her.

7. Click the name of a person to whom you might like to be connected.

The person's profile appears. A blue icon that says 2nd appears next to his name (see Figure 2-3). A list of options appears at the right side of his profile.

8. Choose an option.

You can

- Be introduced to the person by your contact
- Send the person a direct query
- Forward the profile to one of your connections
- Find *references*, or people in your network who have worked with the person whose profile you're perusing
- Save the person's profile

If you choose the option to connect to the person directly, a window opens with several options in it, as shown in Figure 2-4.

This icon identifies a second-degree connection.

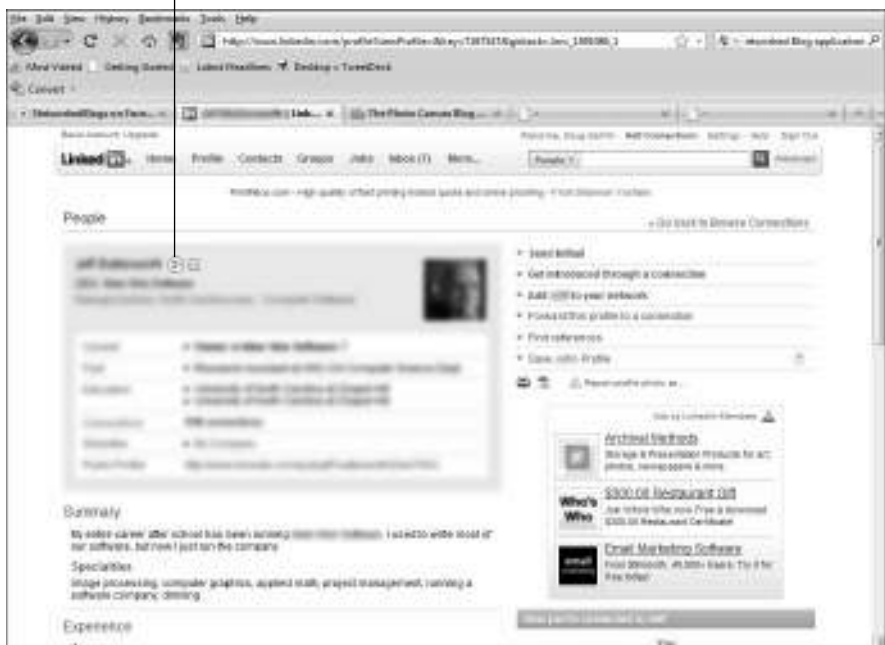


Figure 2-3:
Expanding
your
network.

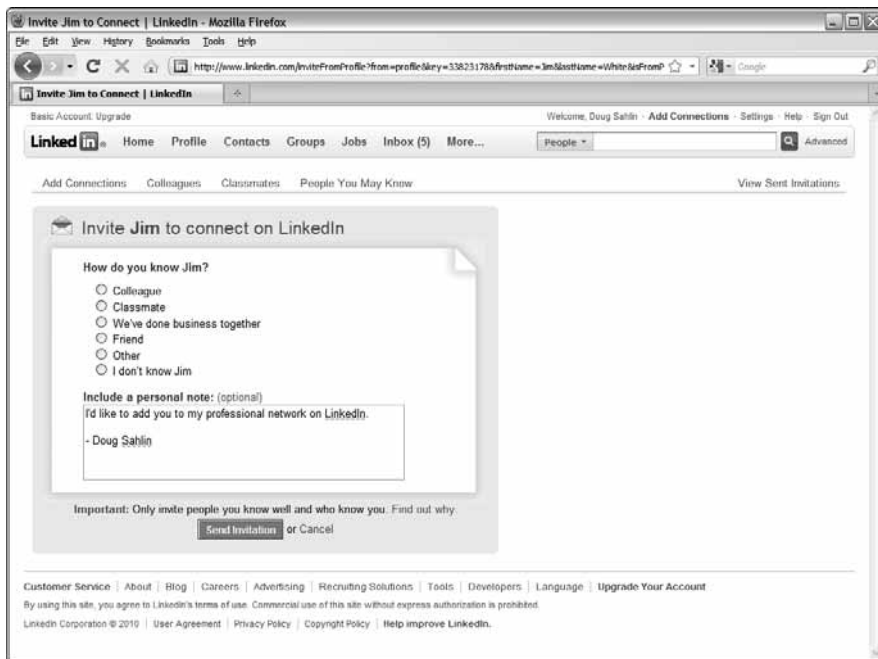


Figure 2-4:
Creating
a new
connection.

9. Choose the option that best describes how you know the person.

If you don't know the person, choose this option and add a brief note. Remember to include the name of the person with whom you're connected.

10. Click the Send Invitation button.

If you send the invitation to someone you don't know, a warning message appears. If you feel confident that your shared connection knows this person well, go ahead with the invitation. If you're at all unsure, however, you probably shouldn't send the connection. LinkedIn frowns on invading its members' privacy.

Interacting with Your LinkedIn Network

In Book VI, Chapter 1, we show you how to get connected to like-minded people. Connections are your lifeblood on LinkedIn. As soon as you make some connections, start communicating with them. The easiest way to start is to post information on your profile. If you're on Facebook, this task is similar to posting on your wall. Remember that you have 140 characters to work with if your account is connected with Twitter.



Because LinkedIn is a professional network, refrain from using too much shorthand when adding your posts. Shorthand is regarded as unprofessional. But shortening URLs is definitely a way to get the most benefit from a LinkedIn status update. Turn to Book II, Chapter 2 to find a URL-shortening service.

To update your status on LinkedIn, simply type your message in the Share an Update text field, just below your profile on your home page, as shown in Figure 2-5. You can write about your most current project or perhaps add some information about a new product or service your company is offering. You can add a link to your message.



When you add a link, using the bit.ly Web site (<http://bit.ly>) to shorten the link lets you track the number of clicks you get.

You may receive messages in return from your contacts regarding your messages. This process is similar to e-mail, but within the LinkedIn network. See the later section “Sending and receiving messages” for more information.

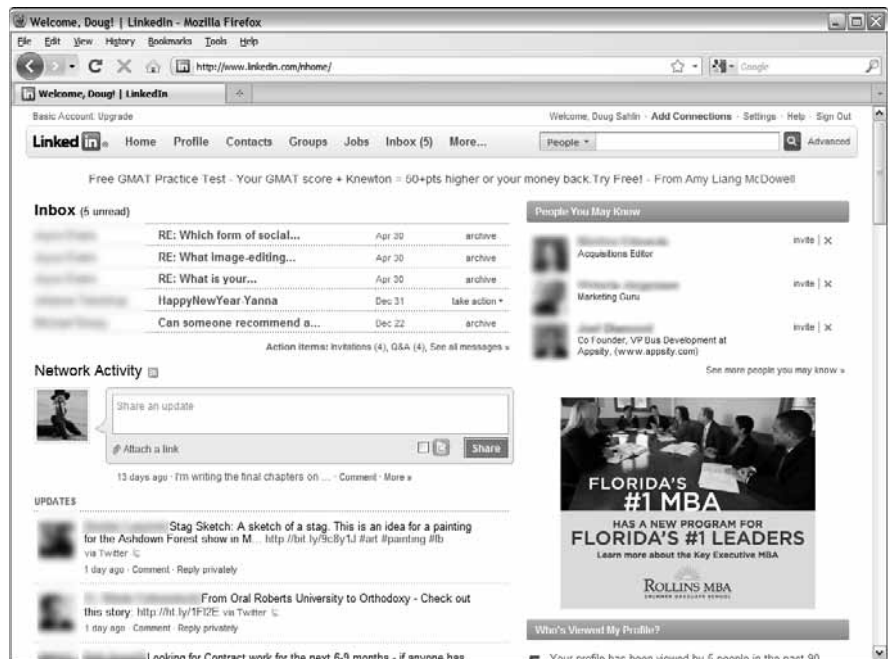


Figure 2-5: Sharing information with your network.

Getting to Know LinkedIn Features

LinkedIn is a useful resource if you want to expand your network of professional contacts. All you need to do is get to know which features are available and use them to promote yourself or your business, or to make new professional contacts. The following sections highlight some of the LinkedIn features you may find useful.

Finding jobs on LinkedIn

You can look for a job on LinkedIn, and LinkedIn members can look for jobs posted by other LinkedIn members. To find a job on LinkedIn, follow these steps:

1. **Log in to LinkedIn.**

Your LinkedIn home page appears.

2. **Choose Find Jobs from the Jobs drop-down menu.**

The Jobs Home page appears, as shown in Figure 2-6.

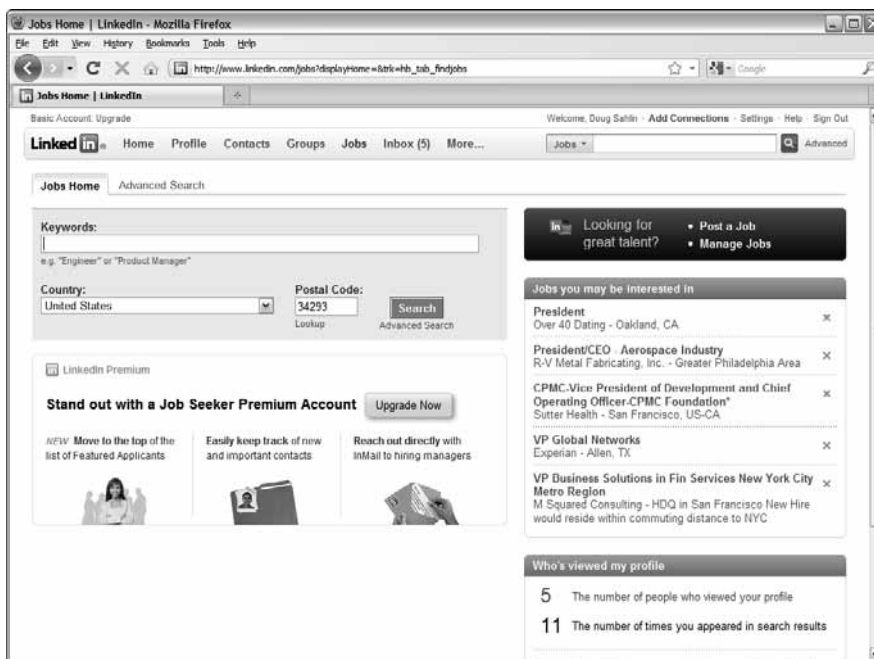


Figure 2-6: Looking for a job on LinkedIn.

3. Enter some text in the Keywords field.

Enter keywords associated with the type of job you're looking for.

4. Accept the default country name and postal code.

The country name and zip code are filled in by default based on your profile information. The default search is within 50 miles of your zip code.

5. Click Search.

The page refreshes and shows results for your search, as shown in Figure 2-7. You find out more about an opportunity by clicking the link, which opens another page that gives you detailed information about the opportunity. You also have the option to apply for the job. If the person who posted the job is in your network, the second- or third-degree icon appears. If you see it, you can request a referral from the person who is your first-degree connection and who is connected to the person who posted the job opportunity.

If you didn't get the results you were after, you may have to call in the heavy artillery: Advanced Search. To perform an advanced jobs search, follow these steps:

1. Log in to LinkedIn.

Your LinkedIn home page appears.

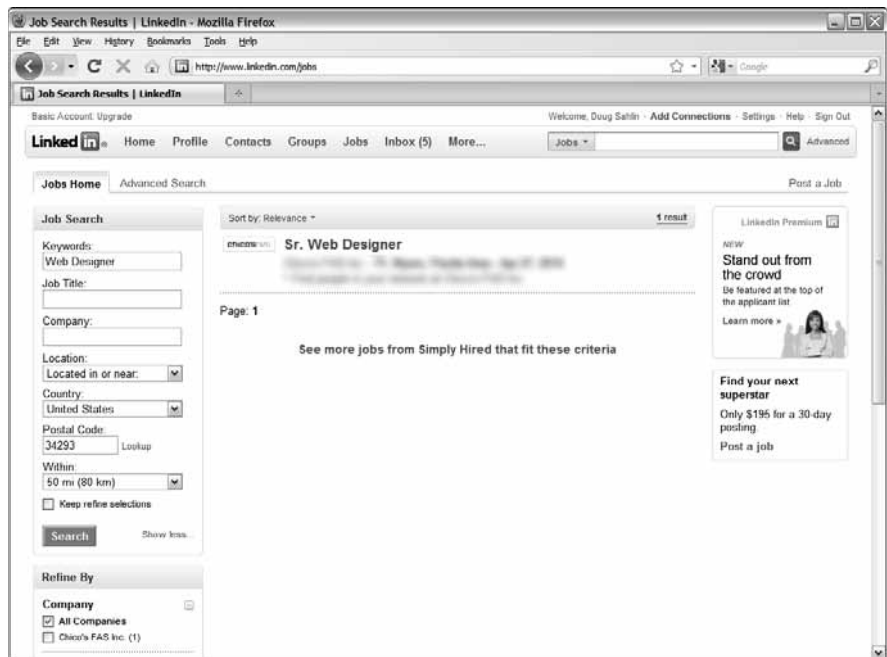


Figure 2-7:
Examining
the search
results.

2. Choose Find Jobs from the Jobs drop-down menu.

The Jobs Home page appears.

3. Click the Advanced Search tab.

The Advanced Search parameters appear.

4. Enter some text in the Keywords field.

Describe the type of job you're looking for.

5. Enter information in the Job Title and Company fields.

Fill in this optional information if you're looking for a specific position with a company. You can fill in both fields or either or none.

6. Choose an option from the Functions list.

This step narrows your choices to a specific function within your field of expertise. For example, if you're a graphic artist, you can choose Art/Creative or Design.

7. Choose an option from the Experience list.

Choose the option that applies to your level of expertise. If you've just finished school for a technical position, Internship may be the proper choice.

8. Choose an option from the Industries list.

If your field of expertise can be used by several industries, you can limit the results to the industry in which you want to work.

9. Choose an option from the When Posted section.

This option lets you choose from the most recent job postings or from older job postings.

10. Click Search.

The page refreshes to show postings based on the parameters you specify.

Sending and receiving messages

LinkedIn helps you easily communicate with your contacts. You can send messages to your contacts and receive messages from them. When you send a message, your intended recipient is notified by e-mail, and you receive an e-mail whenever one of your contacts sends you a message.

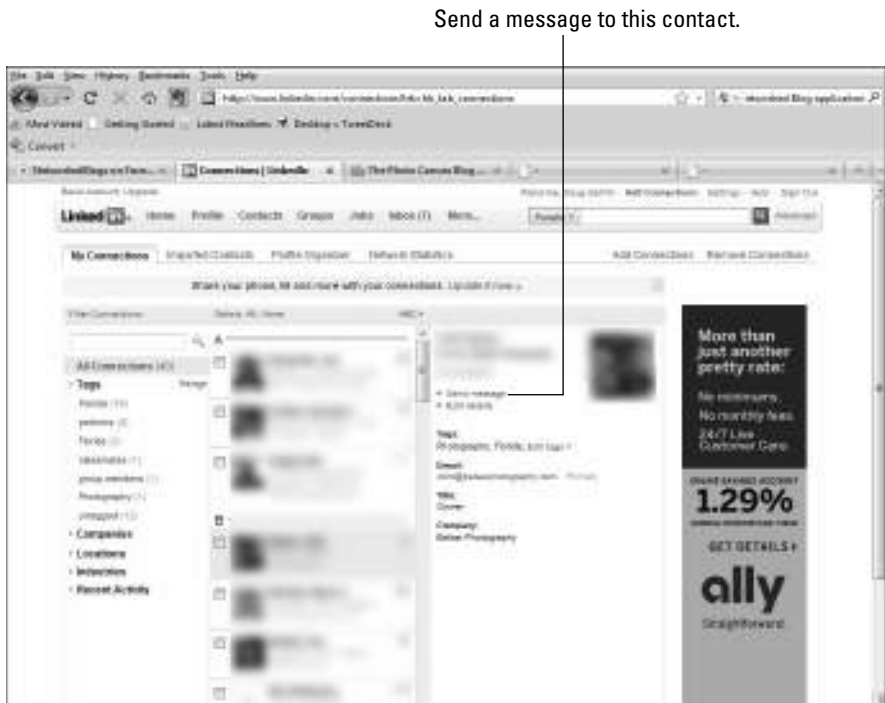
To send a message on LinkedIn, follow these steps:

1. Log in to LinkedIn and then choose My Connections from the Contacts drop-down menu.

A list of your connections appears in a neat little column.

2. Scroll down to the person to whom you want to send a message.
3. Click the person's icon.

The person's contact information appears in the column on the right, as shown in Figure 2-8.



4. Click the Send Message button.

The Compose Your Message dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 2-9. Note the icon to the right of the recipient's name. Click the icon to add recipients from your list of connections.

5. Enter a subject and write your message.

The dialog box even has spell-checking. If you misspell a word, a red, squiggly line appears beneath it.

6. Accept the default option to allow recipients to see each other's names and e-mail addresses.

If you deselect this option, you preserve the anonymity of the recipients to whom you send the message.

7. (Optional) Select the Send Me a Copy check box.

You guessed it — this step sends a copy to your inbox.

8. Click Send.

Whoosh! Your message is sent

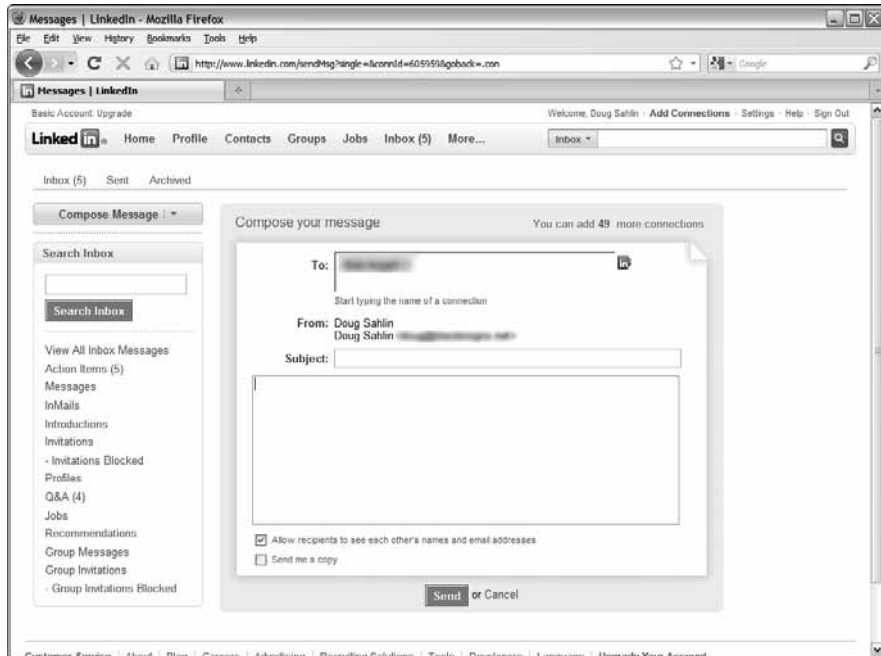


Figure 2-9:
Send me
your answer
and fill in a
form.

Managing invites and messages

LinkedIn lets you easily keep track of invites, introductions, and messages by way of your inbox. You can react to invites and introductions, respond to messages, and more. If you're a member of a group, or the creator of a group, you can respond to messages in your inbox as well.



The tabs you see in your Inbox depend on your recent activity. If you have pending invitations, you'll see a tab for that. You may also see a tab for introductions you have been sent, Q&A if you've posted a question, Jobs, or Group Messages, for example.

To manage your LinkedIn correspondence, follow these steps:

1. Log in to LinkedIn.

Your bright, shiny home page appears.

2. Click Inbox.

Your inbox opens, as shown in Figure 2-10. Notice the links on the left side of the Inbox.

3. Click a link to reveal all correspondence in that category.

4. Click a message.

The full message appears, as shown in Figure 2-11.

5. Click Reply.

If the message you received was sent to multiple recipients, you have the option to respond to the sender or to all. Either option opens the Compose Message dialog box.

6. Fill in the blanks and click Send.

You've replied to your mail.

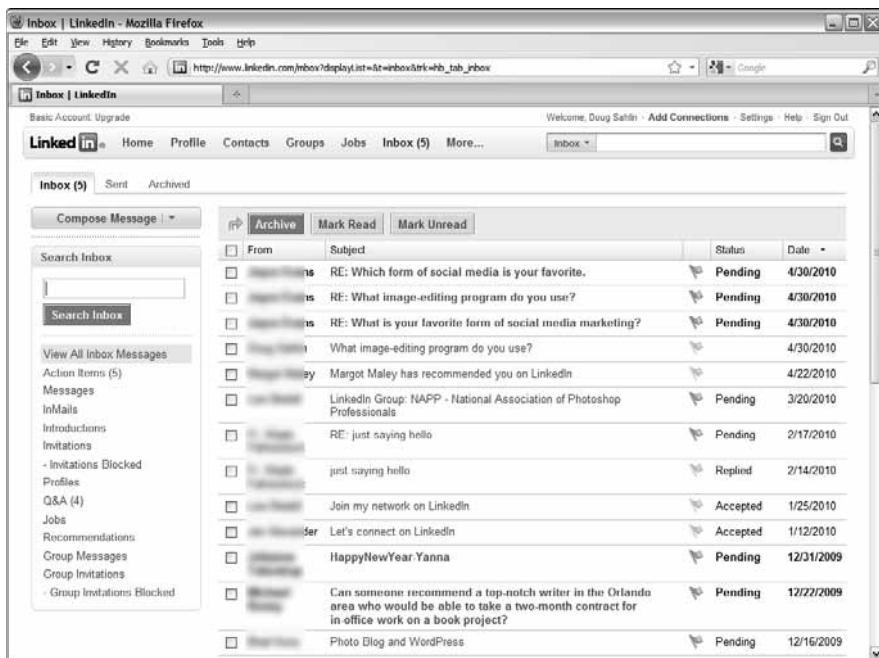


Figure 2-10:
Does your
inbox
floweth
over?

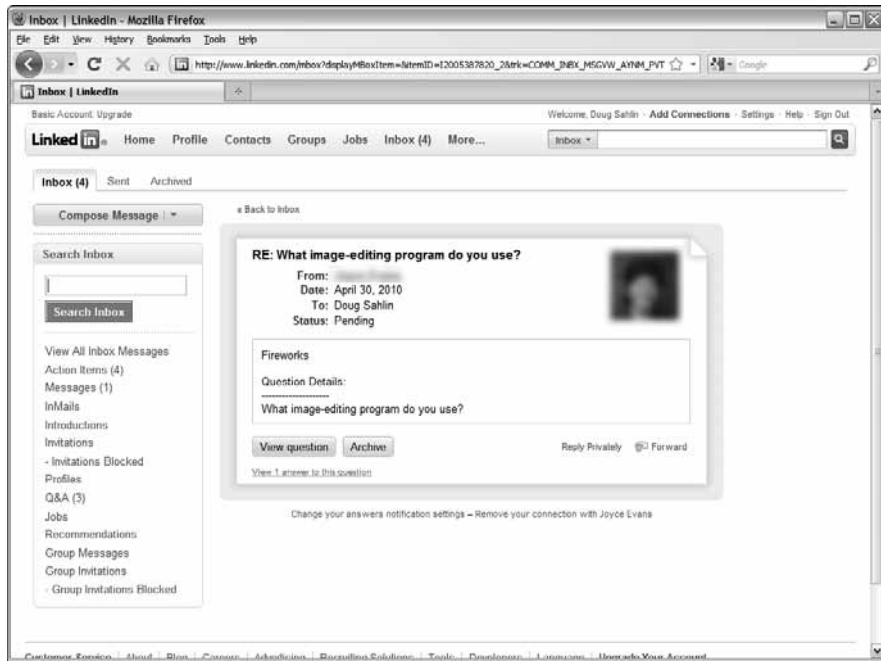


Figure 2-11:
Repondez,
s'il vous
plaît.

About LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn is a diverse group of individuals spanning every possible profession. Many have created groups to discuss their professions or their companies. You also find groups of former alumni, nonprofit organizations, and more. For example, if you're a photographer who uses Canon lenses, you can join the Canon Users group to network with other photographers.

Joining a group

After you create some connections on LinkedIn, it's time to branch out and network with other professionals who have similar interests. A group is an excellent way to find other professionals who have similar interests.

When you decide to branch out and join a group, follow these steps:

1. **Log in to LinkedIn and then choose Groups Directory from the Groups drop-down menu.**

The Groups Directory page appears, listing the featured groups, as shown in Figure 2-12.

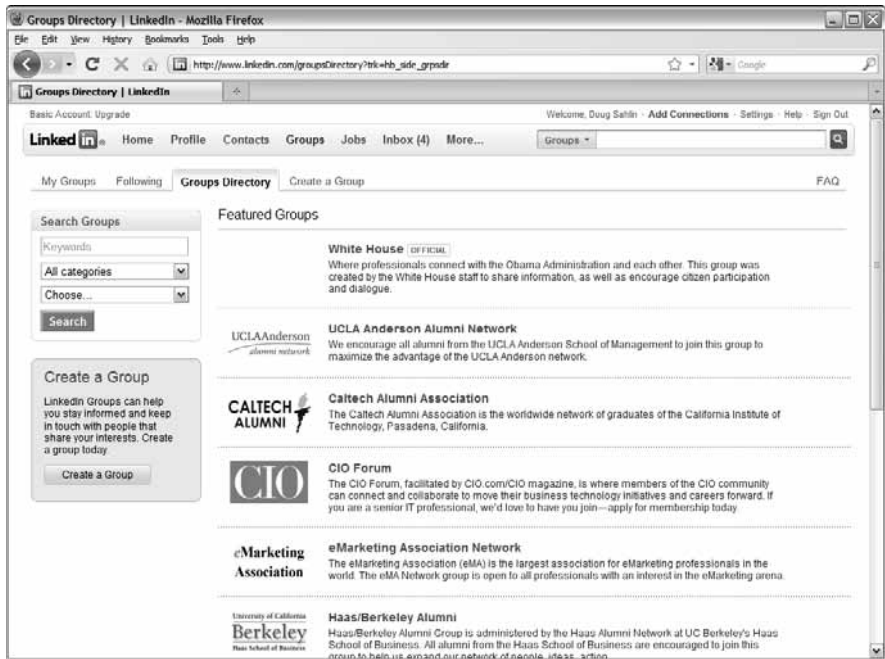


Figure 2-12:
Searching for a group.

2. In the Search Groups directory, enter some keywords in the text field.

Enter logical keywords for the type of group you're searching for.

3. Choose an option from the Categories drop-down list.

You can choose from alumni groups, corporate groups, conference groups, or networking groups, for example.

4. Choose a language from the last drop-down list.

5. Click Search.

In a few seconds, some search results appear, as shown in Figure 2-13.

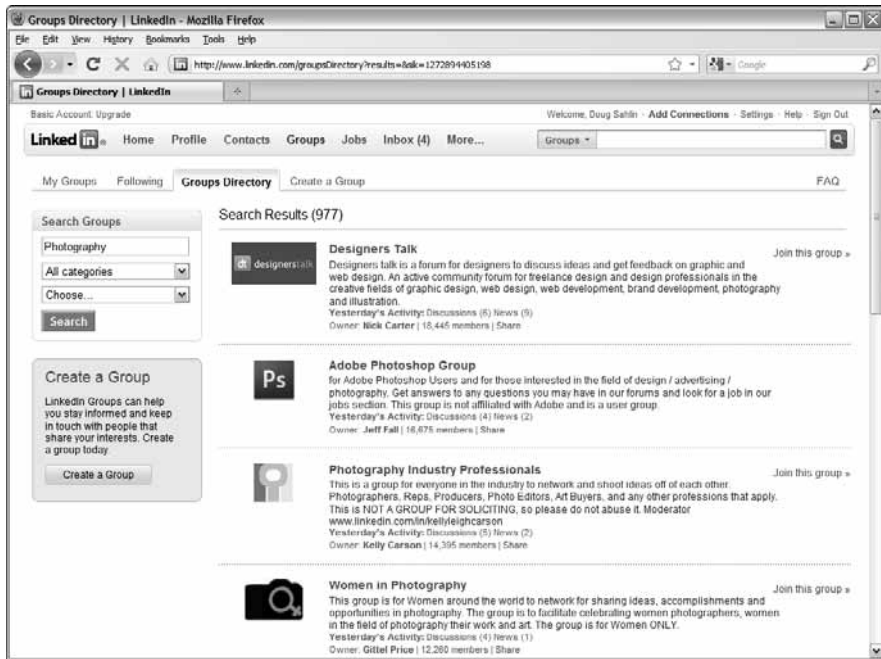
6. Scroll through the groups.

Each group has a description.

7. When you see a group you want to join, click the Join This Group link.

The Join Group page appears, as shown in Figure 2-14. This page has several options: Display the group logo on your profile, choose the e-mail address you use for contact from the group, or choose whether to receive a group digest, for example.

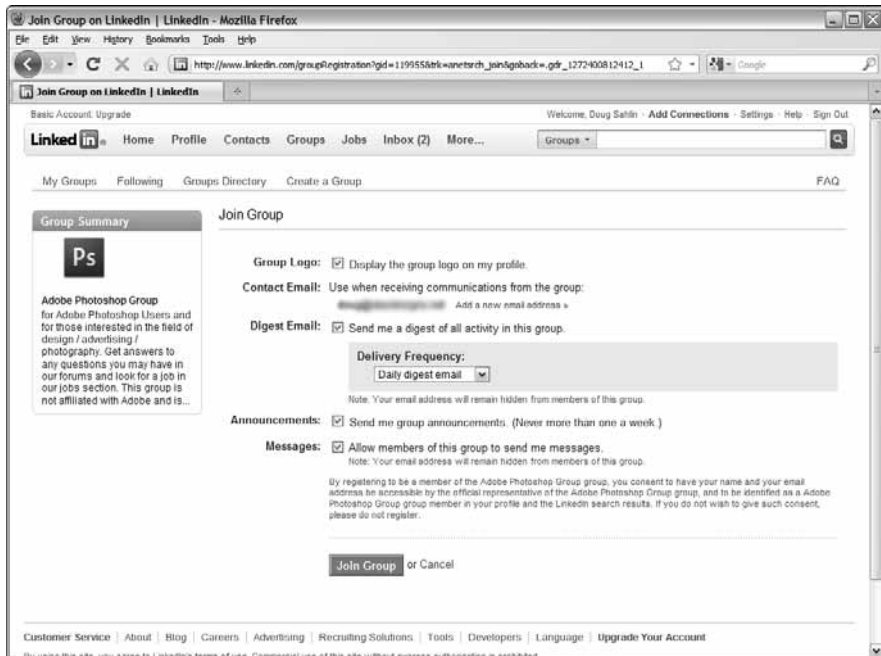
Figure 2-13:
Hmmm.
It's like
looking for a
needle in a
haystack.



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Figure 2-14:
Sign me up.



8. Accept the default options, or change them to suit your preference.

9. Click the Join Group button.

The group is added to the My Groups section of your profile. Note that most LinkedIn groups require approval from the group owner. To send to the group owner a message explaining why you feel you would be an asset to the group, click the link that appears beneath the group in your My Groups section.

If you join more than one group, you can access all groups from the Groups tab. You can follow discussion threads and much more. Interacting with a group is a wonderful way to gain new contacts and learn more about your profession.

Creating a group

If you don't find a group you like, create one. As group owner, you have control over who joins the group, the type of group, and the logo that's displayed for the group, for example. You can also have a link to an external Web site for your group.

To create a group, follow these steps:

1. Log in to LinkedIn.

2. Choose Create a Group from the Groups drop-down menu.

The Create a Group page appears, as shown in Figure 2-15.

3. Click Browse.

The File Upload dialog box opens. Follow the prompts to upload an image from your hard drive to use as your group logo. You can upload an image with a file size of less than 100KB in the file formats GIF, JPEG, or PNG.

4. Fill in the rest of the blanks.

This stuff is self-explanatory. The only thing you can't do is use LinkedIn as part of the group name. A red asterisk precedes required fields.

5. Click the Create Group button.

Your group is created.



Here are some issues to consider when creating a group:

- ◆ **The name is important.** Make sure that your group name has keywords that potential members would use to find your group.

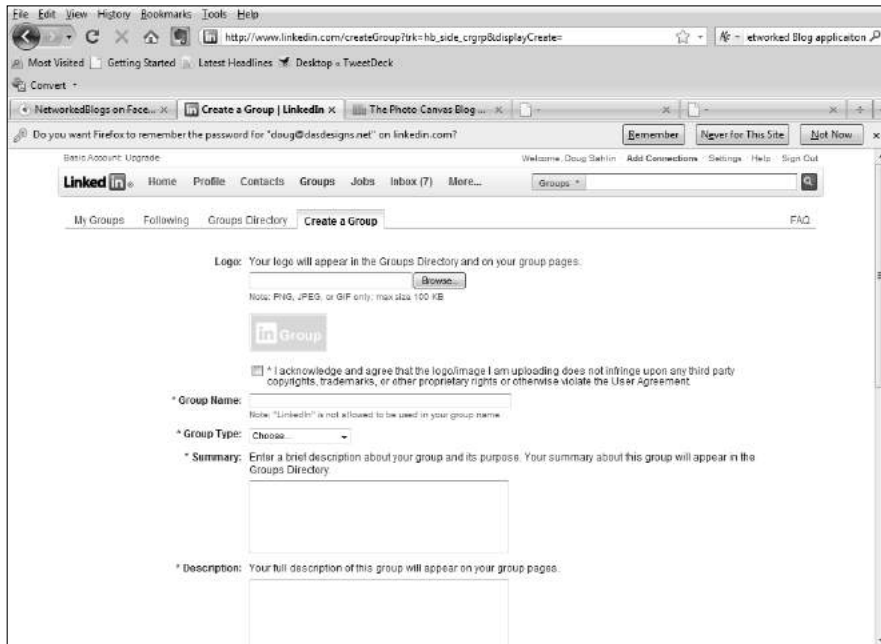


Figure 2-15:
Creating a
group.

- ◆ **Create a group about your industry.** People are less likely to join a group that's devoted to your company.
- ◆ **Create a custom logo for your group.** The area in which your logo is displayed is quite small. If your logo has too many objects, it's hard to see. If you aren't adept at using graphic design software, find someone who is and ask him to create your log.
- ◆ **Create a Web page devoted to your group.** Web space is cheap. You can either create a page on an existing Web site or reserve a domain name and create a site. If you create a site for the group, make sure to optimize it for search engines and include the URL to your LinkedIn group.
- ◆ **Display the group in the group directory and ask each member who joins to accept the option to display the group on their profile.** The added visibility helps your group stand out in the crowd.

After you create a group, it's time to find some members. Here are a few tips for promoting your group:

- ◆ **Spread the word by sending to all your connections a message inviting them to join your new group.** If you're a member of other groups, post a message to the other group members announcing your new group. Ask your contacts and fellow group members to spread the word as well.
- ◆ **Promote the group with your other social media.** Create a blog post announcing your new group and post a link on your Web site.
- ◆ **Invite industry experts to join your group and engage in the discussion.** If potential members see names they recognize, they're more likely to join your group.
- ◆ **Promote your group during any speaking engagements or webinars you participate in.**

Creating a discussion

After you join or create a group, you can peruse it to see any current discussions. If you see a discussion that piques your interest, you can add your two cents to the conversation by logging in to your group and clicking the Discussions tab. Click a discussion link to follow the discussion thread. You can choose to add your comment to the discussion and follow it.

Another alternative is to create your own discussion by following these steps:

1. **Log in to LinkedIn and choose My Groups from the Groups drop-down menu.**

A list of your groups appears.

2. **Click the icon of the group in which you want to start a discussion.**

The group's home page appears, as shown in Figure 2-16.

3. **Click the Start a Discussion link.**

The Start a Discussion page appears, as shown in Figure 2-17.

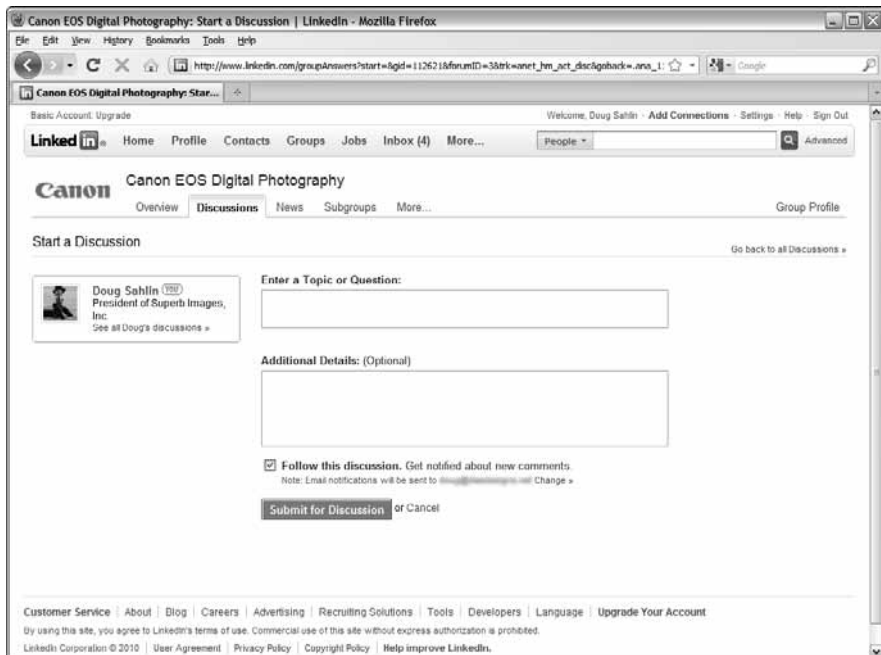
Figure 2-16:
This group is your group, this group is my group. . .



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Figure 2-17:
Starting a discussion.





4. Enter a topic or question in the first text box.

Be as concise as possible. Don't ask a general question. The more specific you can be, the livelier the discussion is.

5. (Optional) Add details.

The devil is in the details, as they say. In this case, details direct the discussion and keep it on track. If you're unsure what type of information to enter here, review discussions in the group to which you want to post the discussion.

6. Accept the default option to follow the discussion.

When you choose this option, you receive an e-mail notification whenever a group member adds a comment to the discussion.

7. Click the Submit for Discussion button.

Your topic or question is submitted for discussion.

Establishing Yourself As an Expert

Let's face it: Social media is work. If you join a social media group and do next to nothing, you're wasting your time. Social media is all about the conversation. But you don't have to take a backseat in the conversation. Take the bull by the horns: Engage with your connections and group members.

Here's how to make the most of LinkedIn:

- ◆ **Start interesting conversation threads in any group you belong to.** If you own a group, make sure to post frequently and create posts that show your expertise. You can also create a discussion, as outlined in the earlier section "Creating a discussion."
- ◆ **Respond to questions sent directly to you.** When a connection sends a question to you, supply him with as much information as you can. If you have a blog post about the topic, send the link as part of your answer.
- ◆ **When you update your status on your LinkedIn home page, create compelling posts about interesting projects or new blog posts you've created.** Use the Update section of your home page similar to how you update your status on Twitter. Create a couple of compelling posts a couple of times a week. Your connections will appreciate the information and may join you in the conversation. Go out of your way to be a part of the conversation and to establish yourself as an expert.
- ◆ **Answer questions posted by other LinkedIn members.** If your answer is selected as the best by the person who asked the question, you gain a point of expertise in the question's category. We show you how to ask and answer questions in Book VI, Chapter 3.