



Supercharge Your Social Proof & Credibility

6 **POINT** **RECOMMENDATIONS** **STRATEGY THAT** **WINS YOU WORK**



“The #1 B2B Lead Generation Expert”

SARAH HUGHES



WELCOME TO THE 'WHY, WHO, WHAT, HOW AND WHEN' OF TESTIMONIALS THAT TRANSFORM YOUR SALES PIPELINE AND CONVERSIONS!

I've written this guide for you from a lead generation viewpoint, rather than a job hunting/recruitment perspective.

While the focus is on using LinkedIn's recommendations feature, this guide is also packed with nuggets that you can apply widely to your marketing and social proof activity.

Happy Linking!

Sarah Hughes



Connect with me on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/thesarahhughes/>

POINT # **1** WHY RECOMMENDATIONS?

**“WHEN YOU SAY IT, IT’S MARKETING.
WHEN YOUR CUSTOMER SAYS IT, IT’S PROOF.”**

57% of every buying decision is already made before any sales rep involvement

Source: Corporate Executive Board Report (2012)

**A warm referral increases the odds of a sales success 2x-4
– LinkedIn makes referrals easier**

Source: CustomerThink

6 reasons why it's a wise to request and secure recommendations

1. When you ask for a testimonial, it gives the recommender an opportunity to consider the wonderful things about you/your offer!
2. It's useful market research to find out what clients like about your service/product/approach
3. 81% of shoppers research user reviews to make buying decisions – B2B buyers aren't that different
4. When you're renegotiating an extension or new service offering with a client, consider putting their testimonial within the proposal - if appropriate to the current situation
5. If you ask for a recommendation from a client and they don't give one (after you've gently reminded them), it's a possible indicator that they may be about to jettison – and gives you a useful warning to investigate and remedy any potential problems
6. If you're having a down day, it's a great mood lifter and confidence booster to take a few minutes to read them!

8 benefits of being recommended via LinkedIn

1. With LinkedIn recommendations you're always in control – it means that unlike with Yelp, Amazon and Google, you can always have 5-Star reviews!

You can either not publish a received recommendation, or ask for it to be edited – only your 1st degree connections can write you recommendations

2. You as the individual will always have the recommendation linked to your personal profile, even if you leave the role to which the recommendation was attached

3. When an individual receives a recommendation, the good news is that it's in the public realm, so can also be used (with the recipient's consent) on the company website etc.

4. 25 million LinkedIn profiles are viewed daily.

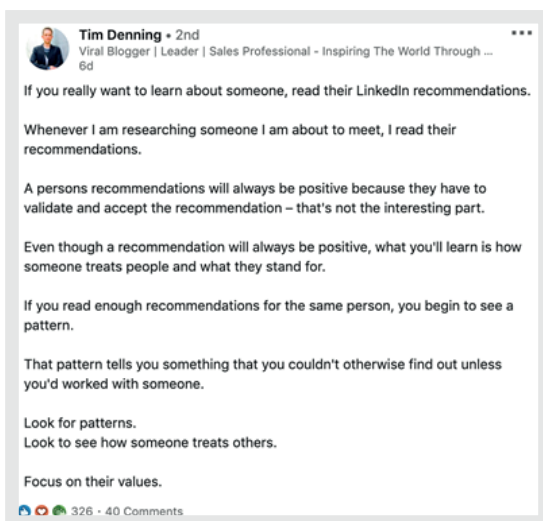
When prospects are considering whether to use yourself or competitors, seeing lots of recommendations given to you could be the winning factor

5. 91% of executives rate LinkedIn as their 1st choice for professionally relevant content (Source: Sophisticated Marketers' Guide to LinkedIn 2019)

6. 80% of B2B leads generated on social media come from LinkedIn (Source: Sophisticated Marketers' Guide to LinkedIn 2019)

7. 7 out of 10 professionals describe LinkedIn as a trustworthy source of professional content (Source: Social Pilot (2019))

8. 90 million LinkedIn users are senior level influencers and 63 million are in decision-making positions (Source: Omnicore (2019))



Tim Denning • 2nd
Viral Blogger | Leader | Sales Professional - Inspiring The World Through ...
6d

If you really want to learn about someone, read their LinkedIn recommendations.

Whenever I am researching someone I am about to meet, I read their recommendations.

A persons recommendations will always be positive because they have to validate and accept the recommendation – that's not the interesting part.


Even though a recommendation will always be positive, what you'll learn is how someone treats people and what they stand for.

If you read enough recommendations for the same person, you begin to see a pattern.

That pattern tells you something that you couldn't otherwise find out unless you'd worked with someone.

Look for patterns.
Look to see how someone treats others.

Focus on their values.

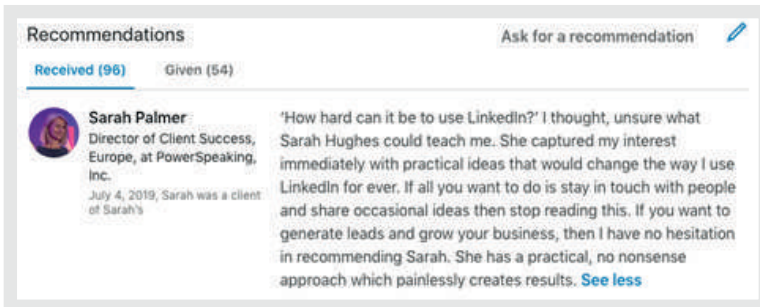
 326 · 40 Comments

POINT # 2 WHO (OR WHAT) CAN BE RECOMMENDED?

RECOMMENDATIONS ON LINKEDIN CAN ONLY BE GIVEN BY LINKEDIN MEMBERS TO THOSE THEY'RE CONNECTED WITH.

They're attributed to a role within a personal LinkedIn account, rather than to 'LinkedIn Pages' (or LinkedIn Company Pages as they were formerly known).

Here's an example of one within my LinkedIn profile:



Consider what you want to be recommended for. Decide whether it's for:

You as an individual?

A product or service?

If the recommendation is for you as a person...

- What character or trait would you like mentioned?
- Is it about your ethos or what you're like to work with?
- What quantifiable proof points or tangible examples of how you helped could be included?
- What difference did your input make to the outcome or experience?

If the recommendation is for a product or service...

You will still seek the recommendation from your personal account.

It's not always possible that one recommender can incorporate everything about your product or service.

Constructing a matrix ensures that you've got everything listed in one place.

Group the features, benefits and proof points of your product or service to create a matrix.

Here's an example relating to Prospect Booster - The LinkedIn Lead Gen Done for You Service I offer:

Example Feature	Example Benefit	Example Proof Point
Reach and connectivity	Identifies and grows your network of ideal prospects for you on LinkedIn	1,000 personalised invitations to your ideal prospects, with 250-500 of these connecting every month. Guaranteed.

Consider which of the features, benefits and proof points you'd like each referrer to potentially mention - and specify this in your request to the referrer.

The idea is that your recommendations, as a whole, cover the spectrum of the identified features, benefits and proof points.

TOP TIP!

Ensure the service or product, company name (or your name if relevant), are name checked within the recommendation to help to embed and reinforce it.



POINT # **3** WHO TO ASK

OBVIOUSLY, PEOPLE YOU PERSONALLY KNOW AND HAVE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH...

Remember too that you need to be 1st degree connected on LinkedIn to receive or give them a recommendation.

Clients (of course!)

So that your prospects can relate to them, choose those that match your ideal avatar as closely as possible in terms of e.g.:

- Role
- Sector
- Location
- Company size
- Challenges
- Opportunities.

TOP TIP!

If the relationship remains good, consider asking lapsed customers - it's a wonderful reason to get back in touch.



Other possible recommenders

- Peers
- Influencers e.g. professional association teams, the media/bloggers/vloggers
- Suppliers
- Colleagues (bear in mind, colleagues recommending you will have less impact with prospective customers, more impact with prospective employers).

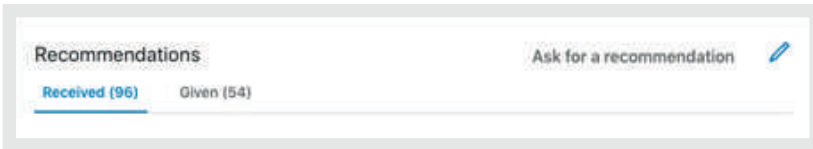
POINT # 4 HOW TO ASK

If you know the recommender well and you've checked via phone or message that they're happy to recommend you and for you to draft some text for them, write and email it to them or message it to them within LinkedIn.

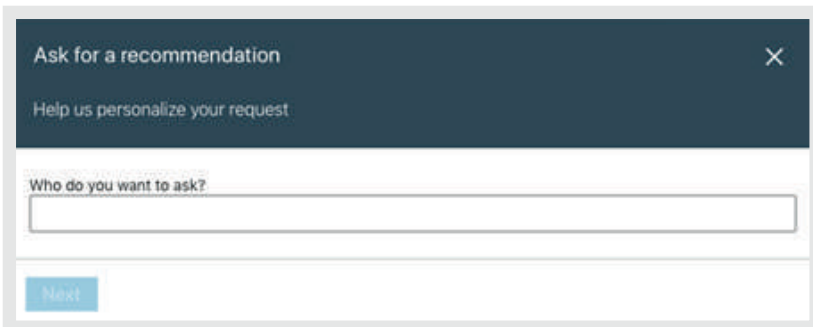
They'll need to post the recommendation to your LinkedIn profile.

Here's how.

- Scroll down to recommendations on your LinkedIn home page and click 'Ask for a recommendation'



- Type the person's name in and then click next



➤ Fill in your relationship with them and your position at the time, then click next

Ask Kim to recommend you

Help us personalize your request

How do you know Kim?

Relationship

Select relationship

Position at the time

Select your position at the time

Next

➤ You can now write your personalised message to your connection asking them to recommend you.

Ask Kim to recommend you

Include a personalized message with your request

Kim Todd
You were a client of Kim's

Hi Kim, can you write me a recommendation?

Send

➤ Click send, and you will be notified that your request has been sent.

Request sent

When writing and sending the recommendation request within LinkedIn, if the recommender is drafting the copy themselves, it's a good idea to:

- Always personalise the message
- Remind them of what you'd like to be recommended for
- Remind them of the results you achieved
- Thank them in advance for their help.

TOP TIPS!

Based on Cialdini's Principle of Reciprocation, if you recommend or help someone first, they're more likely to help you in return.

So, once you've identified your recommender, can you endorse or recommend them first?

Only do so if you actually do rate them highly.

Recommending someone undeserving tarnishes your own reputation.

Also, when you're conversing with a prospect or new client, set the scene for them to commit to a recommendation – this is using Cialdini's Commitment and Consistency Principle:

For example, say "By the way, when we've successfully finished this project for you, would you be willing to write a testimonial, or recommendation for me on LinkedIn?"



Golden Rules when Drafting Recommendations

When recommending a fellow LinkedIn member, or drafting a recommendation for your nominated referrer to post to your LinkedIn profile, here are the golden rules to follow:

#1 Primacy

- If don't have someone's attention, you have nothing, so create a punchy opening.

#2 Chunking

- The longer the sentences/paragraphs, the less they're read. Making it 20 words max per sentence will help to keep the reader reading.

#3 Banish buzzwords

- Avoid buzzwords like the plague (words that are so overused they have lost their power)
- Examples of buzzwords we no longer see or hear, include: efficiency, efficient, effective, better, reduced
- While we're on this theme, superlatives can stand down too: e.g. amazing, superb. Keep it factual.

#4 Be specific

- Some testimonials are so woolly you could knit a jumper from them
- Numbers & tangible examples are far more powerful than vague statements. If exact amounts can't be revealed e.g. sales of £xx, use percentages. Which of these two examples do you find more compelling?

Example 1:

"Boost helped us to sell more. We were really pleased with the results."

Example 2:

"For every £1 invested with Boost, sales of £31 of our Financial Intelligence Toolkit have been generated, resulting in a 79% uplift to £430,000 - with figures still rising."

- Details and context help - remember though, the recommendation shouldn't be a novel.

#5 Keywords and hashtags

- Your prospects are looking for instant visual confirmation that your expertise and service is relevant to them
- The use of keywords at the end of the recommendation will do this. For example, I might use: #linkedinleadgeneration #b2bleadgeneration #b2bmarketing

#6 Sprinkle with humanity!

- It can be so easy to go into 'official' writing mode, with the result that you might sound professional, but also wooden and cold
- The balance is to be professional while writing like a real person.
- A good tip is to just speak what you feel first, so it sounds natural and as you would speak - you can always use voice notes or dictate it first and edit after.

#7 Immediacy

- Immediacy is the close – the last thing read, so you'll want to finish your recommendation with a clear directive e.g.:

"If you don't want to burn sales opportunities that could cost your business or job, book Sarah now for your LinkedIn coaching call."

Template Recommendation: Focussed 5 Formula

5 steps, 5 lines, 5 minutes!

Here's an example of a recommendation - see below for how it's broken down step-by-step.

"It's rare that you come across a mortgage professional like Scott. Scott worked diligently with clear instructions on every step of the process to help us close the purchase of our new home. His ability to communicate with us throughout the transaction put us at ease from start to finish.

When the home inspection uncovered hidden problems, the sellers were unaware that could have prevented our closing. Scott made sure everyone left happy. Any homebuyer would be lucky to have Scott and [company name] as their mortgage provider."

#mortgageprovider #happyhomeowner

Step 1: Start with a Knockout Line

"It's rare that you come across a mortgage professional like Scott."

Step 2: Describe your relationship

"Scott worked diligently with clear instructions on every step of the process to help us close the purchase of our new home."

Step 3: Share a standout trait

"Scott's ability to communicate with us throughout the transaction put us at ease from start to finish."

Step 4: Add a touch of personality

"When the home inspection uncovered hidden problems, the sellers were unaware that could have prevented our closing. Scott made sure everyone left happy."

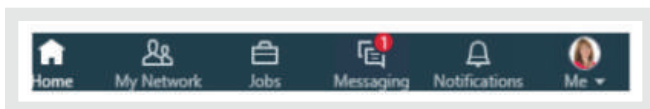
Step 5: End with your Solid Recommendation and keywords

Any homebuyer would be lucky to have Scott and his company as their mortgage provider." #mortgageprovider #happyhomeowner

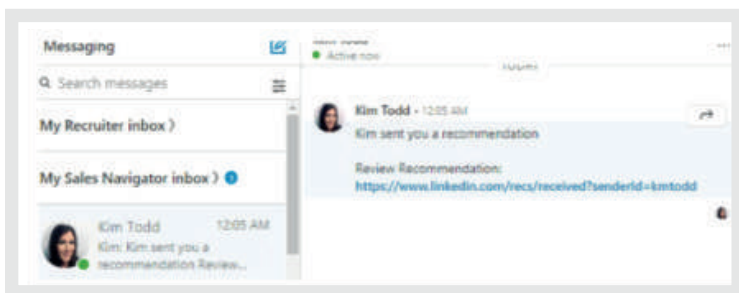
How to Accept and Display Recommendations

Once your connection has written and sent the recommendation back to you, it will be delivered to your inbox.

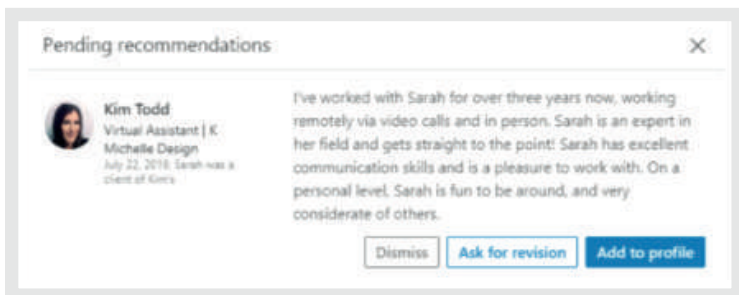
- Enter your inbox by clicking 'messaging' in the navigation bar at the top of your LinkedIn homepage



- Click on the message from the person who sent you the recommendation, then the link to review it



- Read the recommendation, dismiss it, ask for a revision, or add it to your profile



10 Capabilities of LinkedIn Recommendations

1. Recommend someone
2. Request a recommendation
3. Accept and display a recommendation on your profile
4. Hide or unhide a recommendation on your profile
5. Request a revision of a recommendation you've received
6. Revise a recommendation you've given
7. Delete a recommendation you've given
8. Move a recommendation you received
9. Who can see recommendations on your profile
10. Declining a requested recommendation

The good news is that there's no limit to the number of recommendations you can give or receive.

Connecting on LinkedIn

Because only 1st degree connections can recommend you, here's how to invite your recommender to connect.

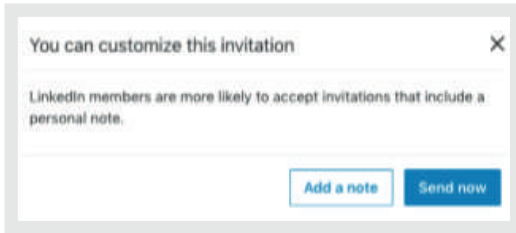
- Find your recommender on LinkedIn using the white search bar, click on their name.
 Tip: If you're having trouble finding them, ask them to send you their LinkedIn 'url'



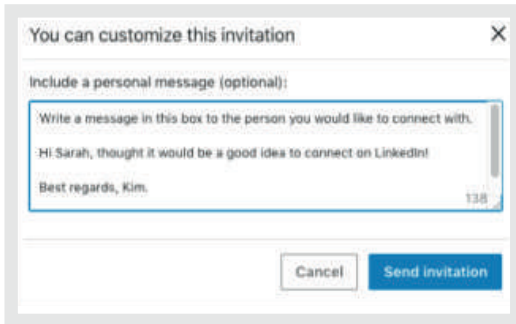
- Click on 'More...' and then 'Connect'



- It's always a good idea to 'Add a note' - there are examples in this Guide of how to best do this.



- Write your message, click 'Send invitation'. LinkedIn will message your inbox when they recommend you.



POINT # 5 WHEN TO ASK

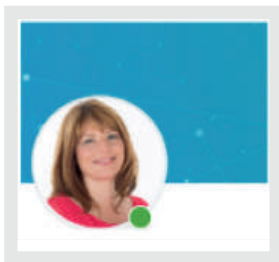
The best time is when you've just helped a client achieve their desired result!

It's best to ask when members are more likely to be on LinkedIn. Here are the busiest times.

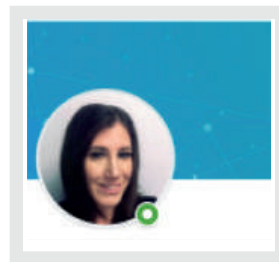


Active Status gives the green light (literally!)

With LinkedIn's active status feature reveals if your referrer is live on LinkedIn at that very moment.



A green circle displayed by your connection's profile picture means they are currently on LinkedIn, and will receive message notifications instantly



A hollowed out green circle means that they are not currently on LinkedIn but do have push notifications enabled on the LinkedIn app on their mobile phone

TOP TIP!

If you're giving a talk or a presentation or training – ask the audience to recommend you – and put your LinkedIn url up for them to see with a screen grab of your profile

Give and request at least one recommendation a week.



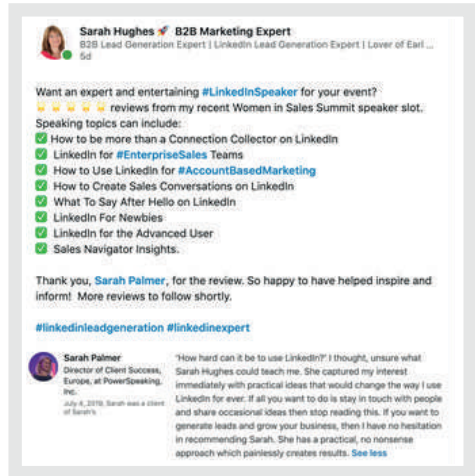
POINT #

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11 WAYS TO
FURTHER LEVERAGE
THE LINKEDIN RECOMMENDATION

Here’s the first.

Once someone has recommended you on LinkedIn and you’ve published it, take a screen grab and post the screengrab to your social media platforms - here’s an example ➔



Here are just 10 of the many other places you/your company can use the recommendation - with the permission of the person that’s recommended of course.

1. Within your email signature
2. On your website
3. In your brochures/leaflets etc.
4. On the digital screen in your waiting room/reception
5. Within exhibition graphics
6. On your invoices and other stationery e.g. business cards
7. In proposals/estimates
8. Within credential presentations
9. Within recorded messages while your customers are waiting to be answered
10. On vehicle livery.

PHEW, THAT'S IT! FOUND THIS GUIDE USEFUL?

Then please recommend me here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/thesarahhughes/>
Thank you in advance.

READY TO FURTHER BOOST YOUR RESULTS?

All set to shine in your role and succeed in life? Imagine having an expert by your side doing just that. Other ways I can help you achieve more focus, more sales, more profit, include:

Business to Business Lead Generation Done For You with Prospect Booster

So that connections and leads are delivered to your inbox

LinkedIn Personal Profile Optimisation Done For You

So that your personal brand sings and shines

Automated Marketing

So that you can focus on conversion

Content Marketing

Producing creative ideas for content that compels action and results

Speaking/Training/Coaching by Sarah

Equip your teams or professional organisation members to work efficiently and win opportunities ahead of your competitors!

Topics include:

- Leveraging LinkedIn as your Lead Gen and Biz Dev Secret Weapon
- Powering Your Personal and Professional Brand on LinkedIn
- How Extroverts and Introverts Succeed at Face-to-Face Networking
- How to Hold Meetings That Convert
- How to Equip the 4 Main Buyer Personalities to Say Yes
- Sales and Persuasion Skills that Give You the Steps to Sell
- Visioning Workshop that Inspires and Excites


Practical content, (like this guide) is also available on the above topics that can be white labelled or over-branded for your use and for distribution.

To discuss how we might work together, call **0121 363 0077**, email sarah@boostbusinessgrowth.co.uk or book a chat with me at <https://boostbusinessgrowth.as.me/15minswithSarah>

Sarah Hughes



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