

How to Use

LinkedIn For

Professional

Networking



Introduction

Now that your personal LinkedIn profile is up to scratch, let's start using it to network.

Networking in real life has always been a huge part of professional life. But with people relying on the digital world for more and more business and personal tasks, it's no wonder that networking has moved online too.

LinkedIn is the world's largest platform for professionals, and one of its key strengths lies in its ability to facilitate people creating strong professional connections between like-minded individuals, thought leaders, and industry peers.

Networking with people online brings plenty benefits:

- If you've got a pressing question, people you build relationships with online are usually only a couple of clicks away...and they will have the answers you're looking for.
- If you have knowledge to share such as industry data, sharing it among your online connections can both help establish you as a thought-leader and attract others who may want to network with you.
- There's also the other side of that, where you can be on the receiving end of new knowledge, data or insights before they're public knowledge.
- If you're on the hunt for a new position, your network is usually the best source of opportunities.
- You can often have the best of discussions online, which often results in surfacing new ideas, collaborations and lifelong industry peers.

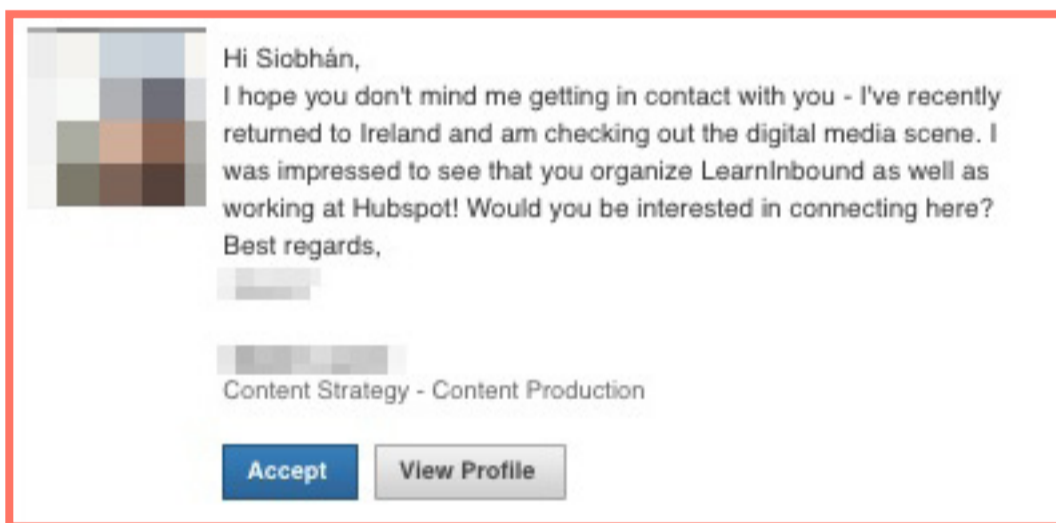
This section details how you can make the most of LinkedIn for professional networking.

1

Use Open Profile to send messages to people you're not connected to.

Aside from [the exception of your fellow group members](#), LinkedIn only allows you to send messages to people with whom you share a first-degree connection with. But did you know some people let you send them messages anyway, even if you're not connected via the Open Profile network? The ability to be part of the Open Profile network is only available to premium account holders, but it allows LinkedIn members to be available for messaging by any other LinkedIn member if they choose to be.

You might wonder: why would you want to message people if you're not connected with?



If you're using LinkedIn to grow your professional network (let's face it, who isn't), and if you have the option to message people before you ask them to connect, you're more likely to get a build connection. Be friendly, and make the reason for connecting clear. Here's a good example of a message I got recently.

I ended up inviting her for coffee after receiving the message, and will happily put her in touch with people who would be interested in hiring her.

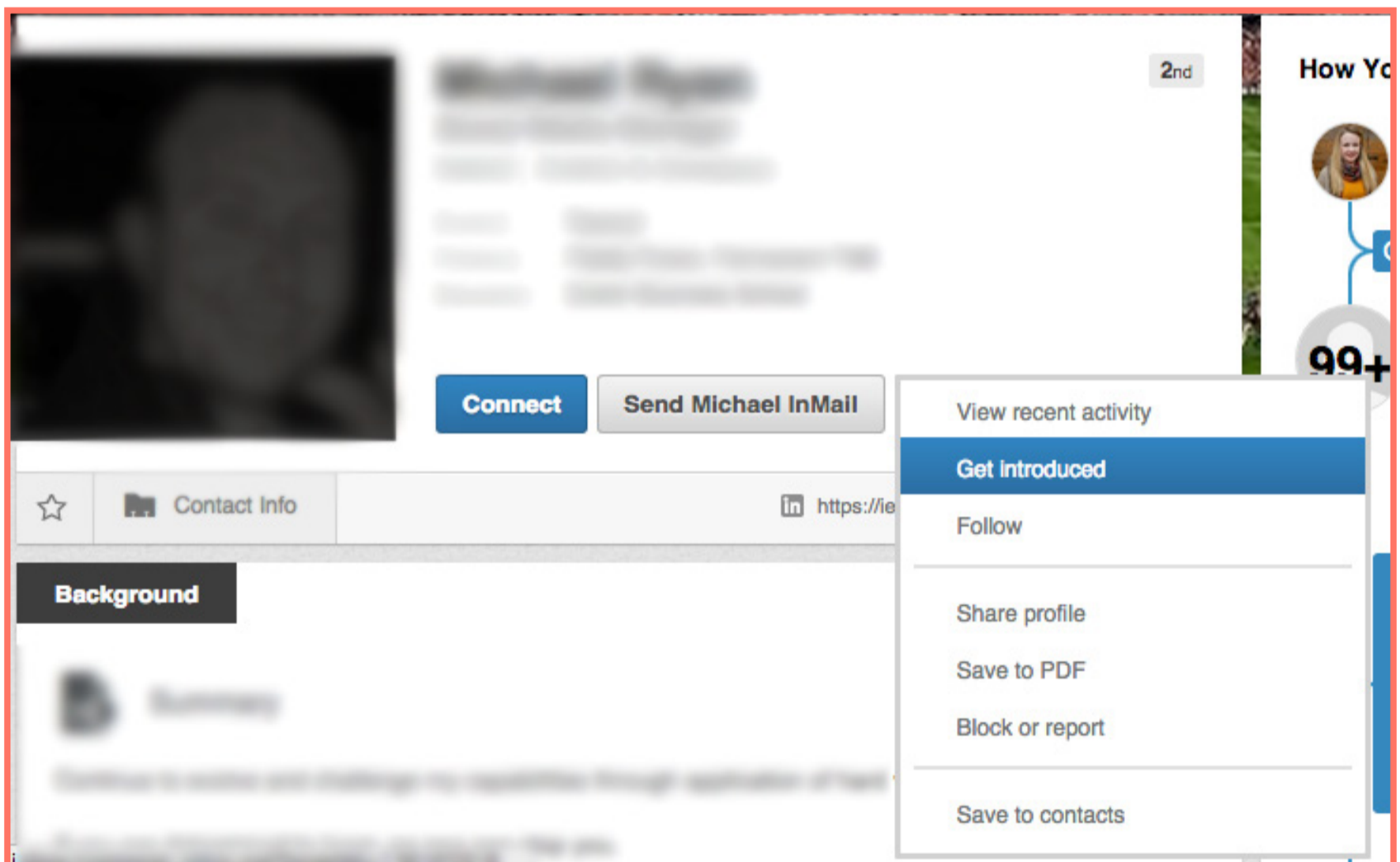
Being part of the Open Profile network can also supercharge your professional presence on LinkedIn as it affords your profile more real estate in the search listings within LinkedIn, with added details such as current and past positions -- see highlighted section below.



2 Request an introduction to someone you're not connected to.

Want to connect with another LinkedIn user but think it would seem too out of the blue? You can request an introduction to contact a 2nd-degree connection from a connection you both have in common.

You should use this feature carefully, and really think about who you want to get introduced to. At HubSpot, we often seek introductions to marketing managers in companies that we'd like to co-marketing with, for example -- something that's mutually beneficial.

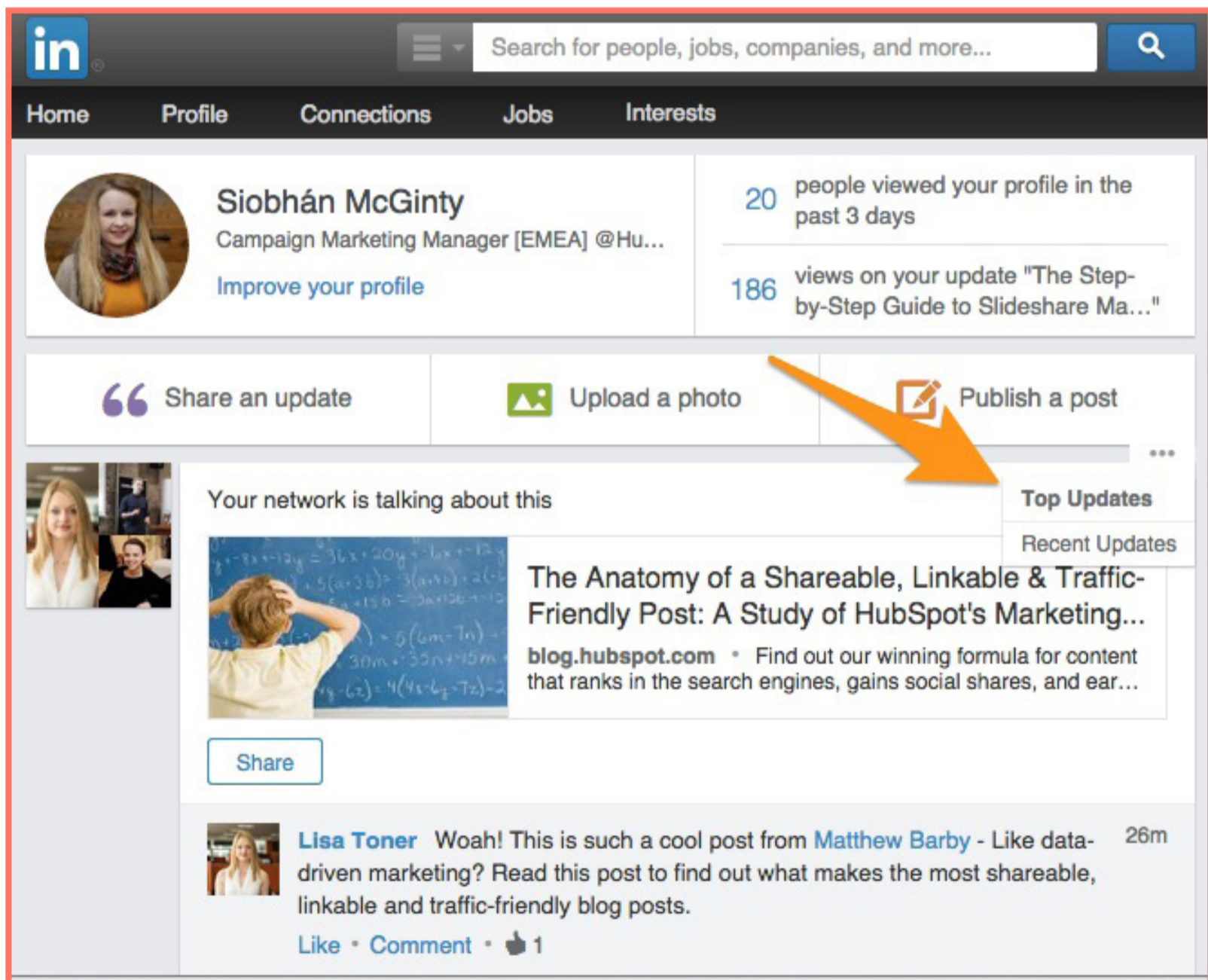


3

Check in on Network Updates.

Found on your [LinkedIn homepage](#), Network Updates are essentially LinkedIn's version of the Facebook News Feed. Check this feed periodically for a quick snapshot of what your connections are up to and sharing. You can also sort by Top Updates or Recent Updates to filter your feed in one way or the other.

But what benefit is there in just looking at what's happening in your activity feed? Make an effort to engage with interesting posts via Likes, Comments and Shares. By doing this, your network will become more familiar with your name and are likely to share your content in the future. It's also a way of proving that you're a valuable connection to have.

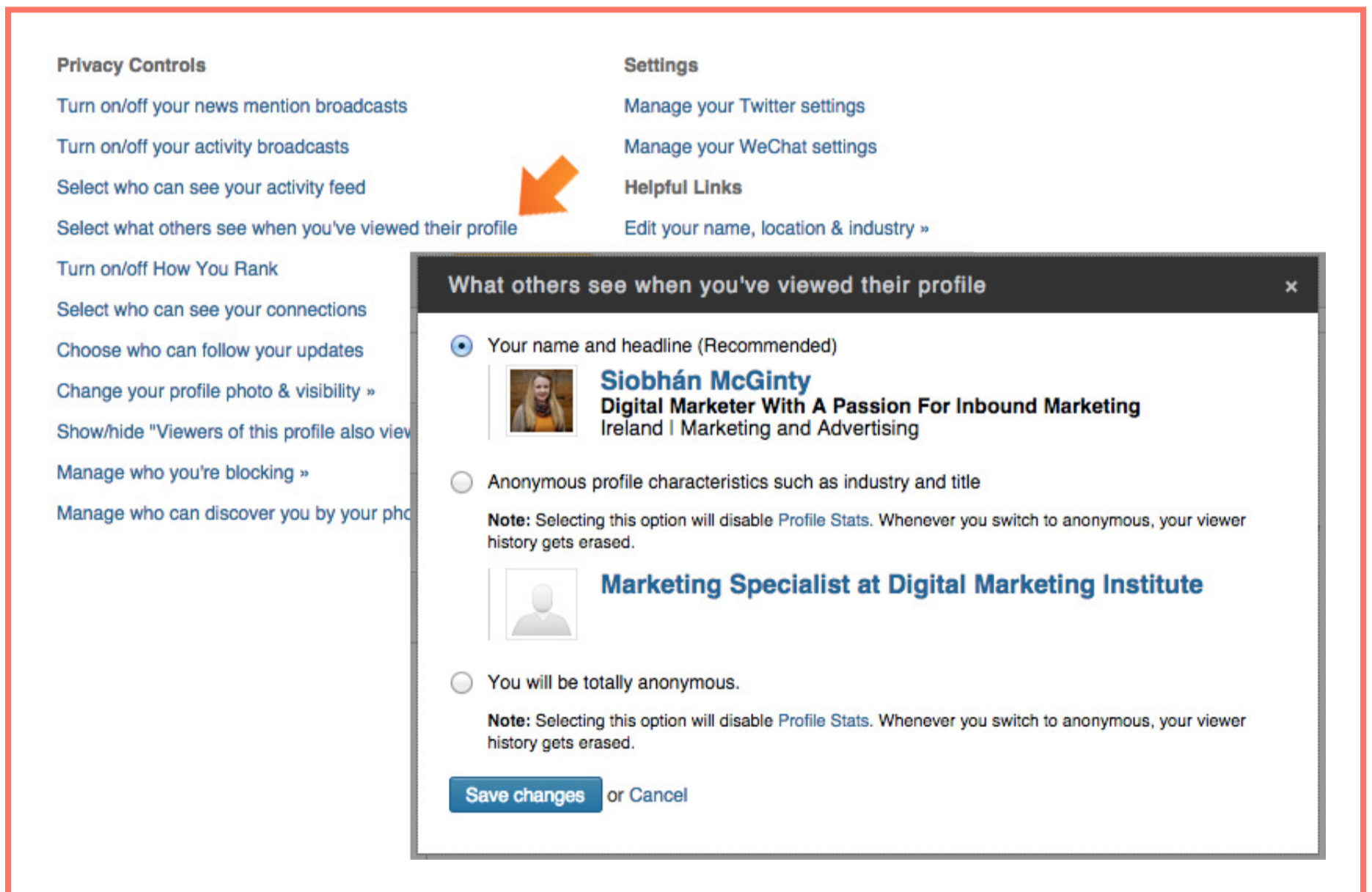


4

Be identifiable.

If you want to use LinkedIn to network, it's wise to allow others to see who you are if you view their profile. It's a great way to let people know that you're interested in connecting, without making the connection right away -- and they may even request to connect before you do. Being identifiable won't suit everyone's needs, but if you want to network, don't be anonymous!

To make yourself identifiable, go into your Settings (click your thumbnail image in the top right and choose Privacy & Settings) and click Select what others see when you've viewed their profile. Make sure you check off the "Your name and headline (Recommended)" option. This allows you to take advantage of the next feature on our list ...



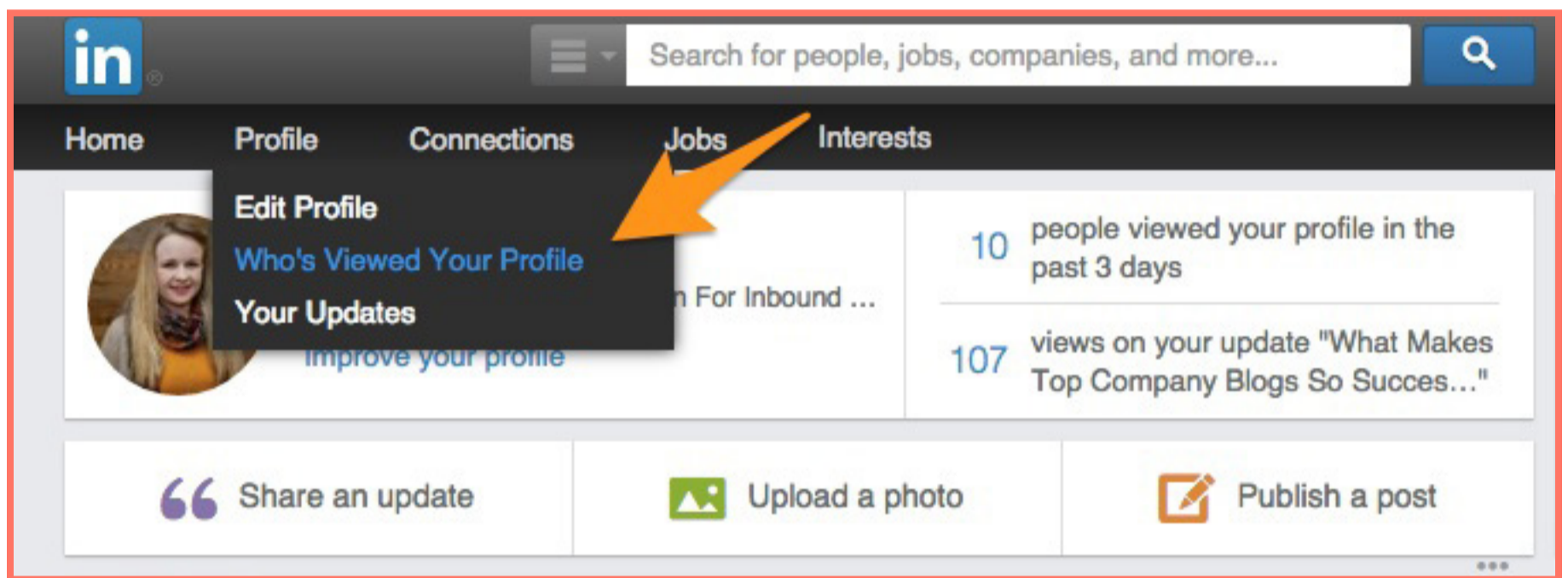
The image shows a screenshot of the LinkedIn Privacy Controls and Settings interface. On the left, under "Privacy Controls", the option "Select what others see when you've viewed their profile" is highlighted with an orange arrow. On the right, under "Settings", the option "Edit your name, location & industry »" is visible. A modal dialog titled "What others see when you've viewed their profile" is open in the foreground, showing three radio button options:

- Your name and headline (Recommended)
Siobhán McGinty
Digital Marketer With A Passion For Inbound Marketing
Ireland | Marketing and Advertising
- Anonymous profile characteristics such as industry and title
Note: Selecting this option will disable Profile Stats. Whenever you switch to anonymous, your viewer history gets erased.
- You will be totally anonymous.
Note: Selecting this option will disable Profile Stats. Whenever you switch to anonymous, your viewer history gets erased.

At the bottom of the modal, there are buttons for "Save changes" and "or Cancel".

5

Check out who's viewed your LinkedIn profile.



This tool enables you to drill down into which other LinkedIn users have visited your profile page. You can also see how you stack up against the profile views for your connections, people in your company, and other professionals like you.

Has someone been checking out your profile that you might want to connect with? This might be the “in” you’ve been waiting for. (Note: if you don’t make yourself identifiable as per the previous tip, you won’t have access to this feature. It’s a two-way street.)

Top Tip: If you’re interested in trying to boost the number of views to your own LinkedIn profile, we wrote a little tutorial about how to do it [here](#).

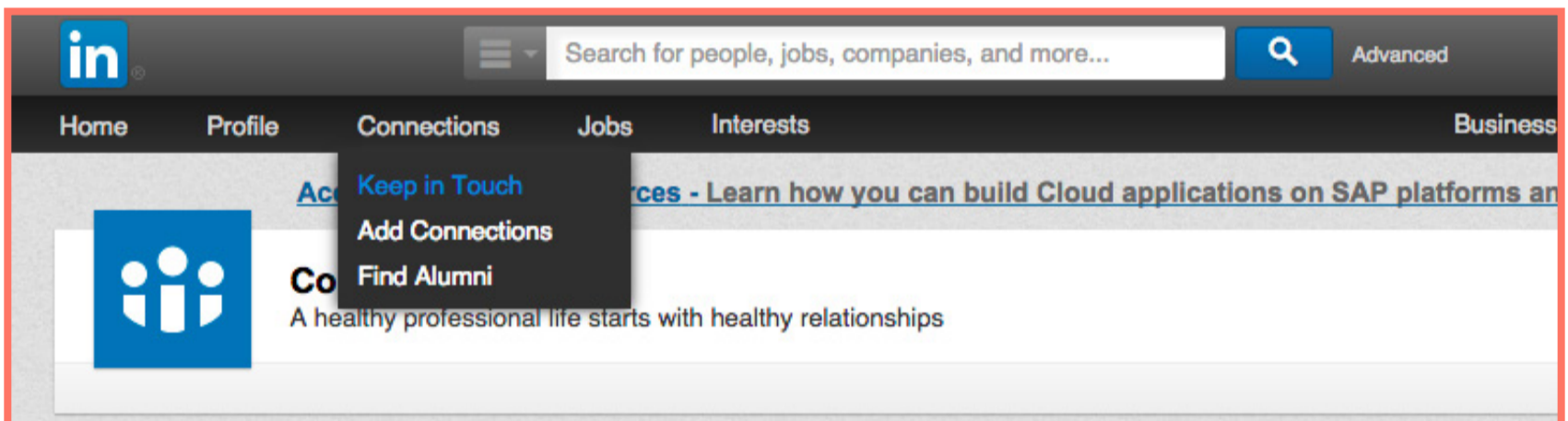
6

Easily find new connections -- or connect with old ones!

Networking is all about growing and nurturing your connections, right? You cannot just expect to connect with people you've never met, and expect them to be a cornerstone of your professional network. You need to work at connecting with the right people, and keeping in touch and growing your relationship with them.

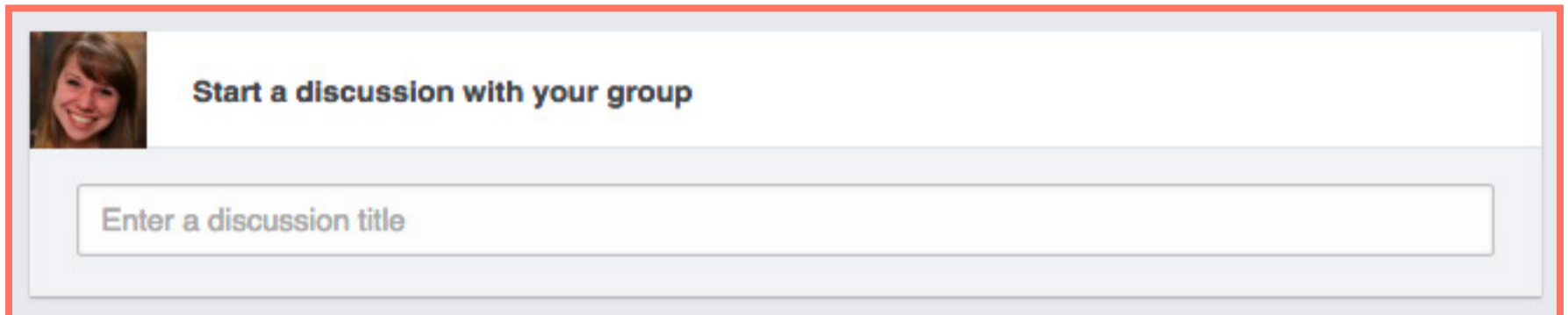
The Connections tab in the top navigation offers a variety of other tools to grow and connect with contacts in your professional network. Here's just a few:

- Click Add Connections in the drop-down menu to import contacts from your email accounts and get suggestions for other connections.
- Connect with other alumni from your alma mater using the Find Alumni section.
- Use the Keep in Touch section to stay in touch with current connections, keep track of your communications, and get notifications when contacts in your network change jobs, have birthdays, or when you haven't chatted with them in a while -- either on desktop or in the [Connected mobile app](#).



7

Leverage the perks of LinkedIn Groups.



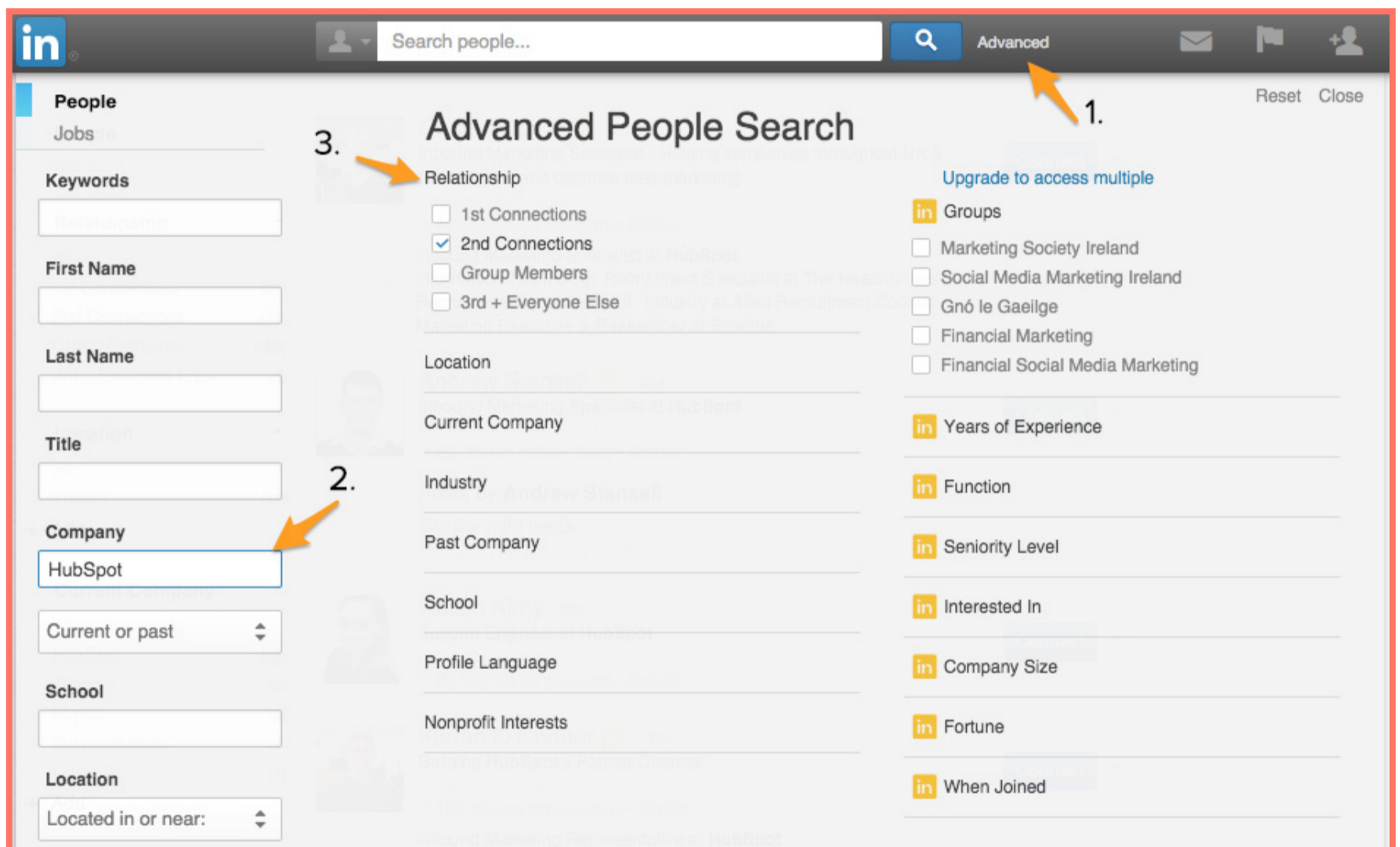
In B2B marketing, [creating and managing your own LinkedIn group](#) for your brand is a great lead generation strategy. LinkedIn groups draw prospects to you in several ways:

1. Establish yourself as a thought leader in your industry. By engaging in the discussions your group members have and answering questions, you show how you're a resource.
2. Grow a community of advocates. Hosting valuable, industry-centric conversations is helpful to your current and potential customers. Because of the group, they will advocate for the content you share and develop a connection to your message and brand.
3. Get ideas for content. This one isn't as obvious, but it's huge! Get a sense of the conversations people are post and questions they are asking. Use that as inspiration for your blog posts.

Did you know that if you're a member of the same group as another user, [you can bypass the need to be a first-degree connection in order to message them](#)? In addition, group members are also able to view the profiles of other members of the same group without being connected. Join more groups to enable more messaging and profile viewership capabilities. But don't forget to contribute value to those groups where possible.

8 Take advantage of Advanced Search options.

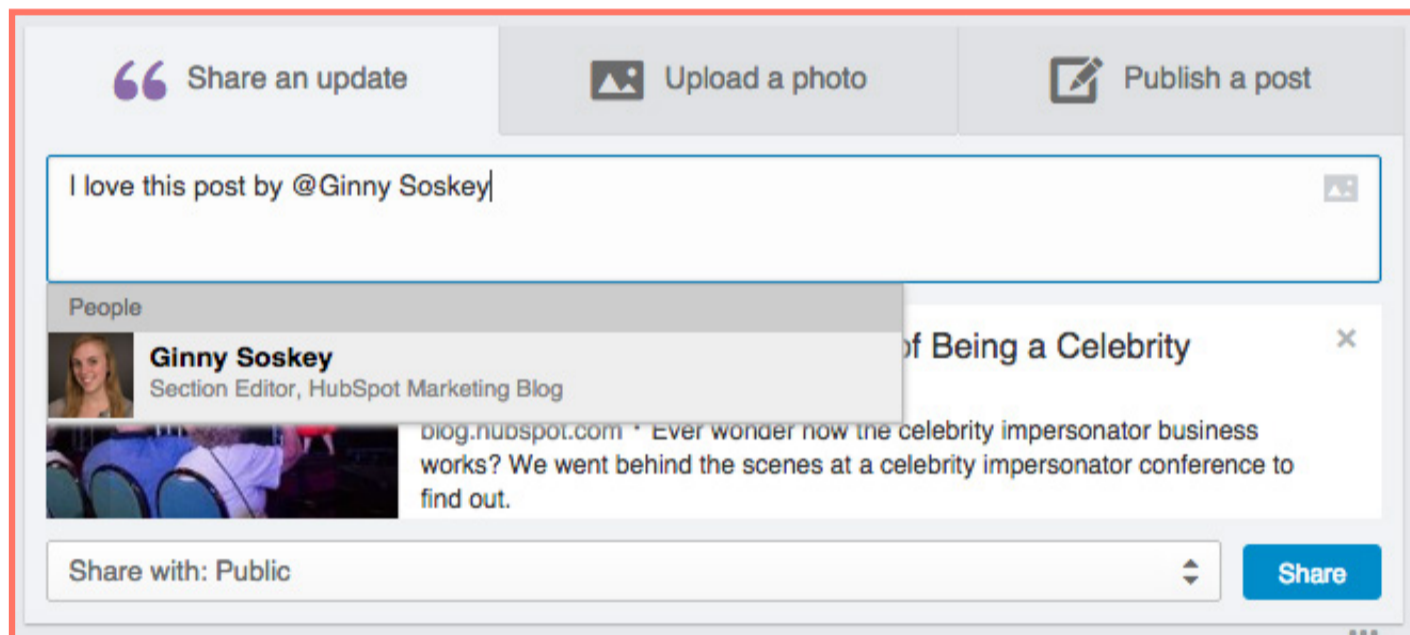
LinkedIn's Advanced Search feature provides a much richer search experience. For example, say you want to find out if you're connected to anyone who works at a specific company. Type the company name in the company field in Advanced Search, then filter the results by "Relationship" to see if you have any first- or second-degree connections to any employees.



9 Leverage @mentions in your status updates.

In 2013, LinkedIn rolled out the ability to tag or @mention other users and companies in status updates -- much like the way it works on Facebook and Twitter. To mention another user or company in your update, use the “@” symbol immediately followed by the user’s/company’s name in your status update. As a result, that user/company will get alerted that you mentioned them, and their name will also link to their profile/page in the status update itself.

By sharing other people’s content and mentioning them in the associated LinkedIn update, the person who created the content will know that you shared it, be appreciative, and is more than likely going to return the favour if you have anything to share in the future. It will also reinforce your place as an important member of their professional network.

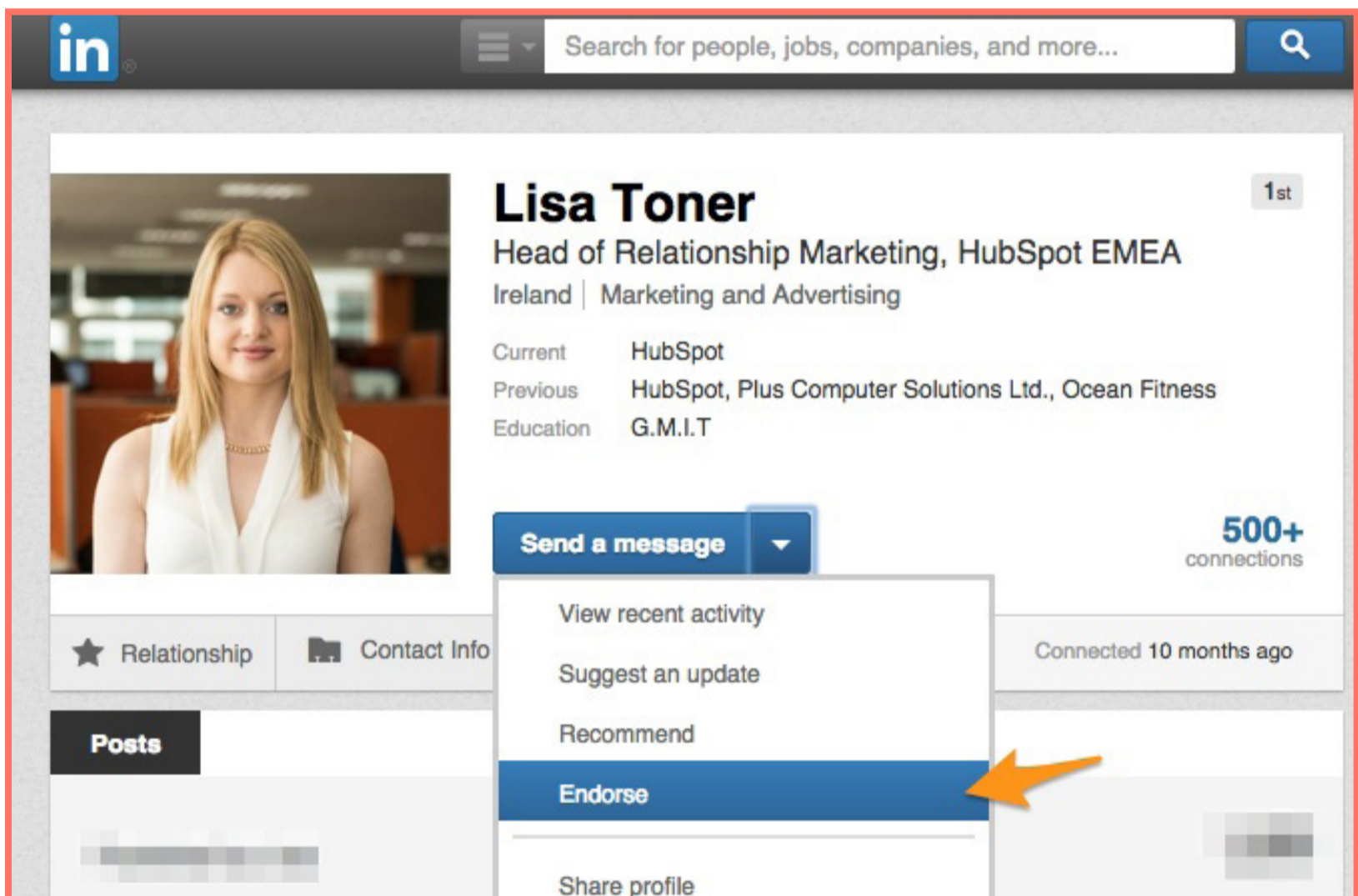


10

Endorse people.

We already mentioned endorsements in our earlier section on optimising your personal LinkedIn profile. Endorsements can also come in useful when nurturing your professional network.

If you've worked with somebody in the past, and you've found them easy and effective to work with, why not endorse them for their skills? This is a great way of cementing relationships.



Top Tip: You don't need to ask for a skill endorsement to receive one -- you can add some in yourself and reorder them by dragging and dropping. However, receiving a high number of endorsements adds credibility to your profile, and shows that your professional network recognises you have that skill -- making people more likely to want to network with you.

NEXT UP:

How to Use

LinkedIn

For Your

Business