

# The LinkedIn Edge ---

Is the world getting divided between those who are 'Linked In' and those who are not?

It may seem so. There are the 17 million (and counting) professionals who are on LinkedIn — the hottest professional networking site going around — and then there are the many more who are not. And while a high percentage of those in the former category are enjoying the advantages of being a part of the LinkedIn community, the latter want to know why they should sign up and be active on the site. What will be the returns on the time and effort they put in?

Well, LinkedIn has made the world of business a much smaller place. The word 'access' has taken on a new hue — the site has made it possible to reach out to people in organizations and regions around the world one could not have otherwise. The six degrees of separation are down to one, two or three in most cases. Whoever you want to reach out to may just be an introduction or two away through LinkedIn.

This also means the playing field has leveled out to a remarkable extent. No longer do you need to be a part of those 'ties-only' chambers of industry. You can meet more people relevant to you through LinkedIn than any association can introduce you to. Sitting in the USA, your contacts could help you access markets as far away as India or Russia. The balance is no longer in favour of those who have the inherent advantage of a ground presence in distant territories.

The collective wisdom and knowledge of the community are accessible on the site, allowing for free exchange of ideas and insights. It is like a 24x7 conference you attend sitting on your desk. You also don't have to invest in those expensive consultants as your contacts might give you just the tip or advice you need. And why should you only set-

tle for jobs sent your way by recruiters? Chat up people to find out where your true calling wants to take you. And likewise, find the partner or employee who shares the same passion and vision as you. Not to mention the opportunities to meet VCs who could fund the 'next big thing' you have all figured out.

And since we are all human, and love to gang up, active LinkedIn users have evolved into a kind of a tribe of their own. But there are no chiefs or lords here — nor any stiff upper lips. Everyone is equal here. And doors are always open for new members to come in, enjoy the benefits like others do and have fun doing so. One only needs to take care of the written and unwritten codes of conduct. LinkedIn is about real people having real world interactions. Online leads to offline on the LinkedIn road.

These are just some of the possibilities that LinkedIn offers; what you can achieve is limited only by your imagination and effort. The ingredients are all there to whip up something good for yourself. And it is not rocket science. This book is full of ideas, real cases and suggestions on how to get LinkedIn to work for you.

You could be on a beachside sipping a cooler, BlackBerry in hand, knowing your network is taking care of your professional needs. Because, as you will see, LinkedIn works for you even as you sleep. This is where its real power lies.

Do you want to be 'Linked In' or 'Linked Out'?

The choice is yours.

## About this book ---

**T**his book has been written to help you understand the possibilities offered by LinkedIn. And how to get the best out of it.

This is NOT a primer or a manual on how to use LinkedIn — there is no step-by-step handholding showing you how this site works. The reasons are simple:

- The objective is to show you the bigger picture — the user manual part has been left to others.
- LinkedIn thrives in a highly dynamic environment — just like all other forms of new media. How you navigate the site, its look-and-feel and specific features are constantly undergoing change. What you see today may look very different in a matter of a few weeks. So a LinkedIn manual has every chance of becoming obsolete overnight! But the utility of this book might not go away in a hurry.

This book is all about the principles behind using LinkedIn. While a general guidance has been provided to be able to use the site, the detailed nuts and bolts can easily be figured out on this user-friendly and simple-to-use platform.

This book is for everyone, right from those who may not have even heard of LinkedIn to those who are experienced users. There is always something new and different one can learn on this site, and this book hopes to highlight all of these.

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