



“I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What???” Book Excerpt

A guide to getting the most OUT of
LinkedIn

By Jason Alba

foreword by Bob Burg,
Author of '*Endless Referrals*'
and coauthor of '*The Go-Giver*'

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WHITE PAPER Table of Contents (included here)

- Foreword by Bob Burg, Author of *'Endless Referrals'* and coauthor of *'The Go-Giver'*
- Chapter 1: Introduction
- About the Author
- Getting the book and other books from Happy About

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C o n t e n t s

NOTE: This is the Table of Contents (TOC) from the book for your reference. The eBook TOC (below) differs in page count from the tradebook TOC.

| | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------|
| Foreword | Foreword by Bob Burg | 1 |
| Part I | Getting Started | 5 |
| Chapter 1 | Introduction | 7 |
| Chapter 2 | What is LinkedIn? | 11 |
| Chapter 3 | Your Profile | 23 |
| Chapter 4 | Account and Settings | 31 |
| Chapter 5 | Connecting with Others | 39 |
| Part II | Making it Work for You | 47 |
| Chapter 6 | Searching | 49 |
| Chapter 7 | Understanding Degrees of Separation | 55 |
| Chapter 8 | Recommendations | 59 |
| Chapter 9 | Jobs & Hiring | 65 |
| Chapter 10 | Services | 69 |
| Chapter 11 | LinkedIn Groups | 71 |
| Chapter 12 | LinkedIn Answers | 79 |

| | | |
|-------------------|--|------------|
| Part III | Wrapping it Up | 83 |
| Chapter 13 | LinkedIn for Personal Branding | 85 |
| Chapter 14 | Shady Practices | 89 |
| Chapter 15 | On Netiquette | 93 |
| Chapter 16 | Complementary Tools and Resources | 97 |
| Chapter 17 | Conclusion | 105 |
| Author | About the Author | 109 |
| Books | Other Happy About Books | 111 |

Foreword by Bob Burg

Several years ago I began receiving requests from friends, inviting me to join a new online membership site called LinkedIn. Soon I was getting e-mails from people I barely knew, asking me to "join their LinkedIn network." Although I'd been using the Internet for networking and relationship-building for some time, I really wasn't all that interested in LinkedIn. Still, not wanting to hurt these people's feelings, I accepted.

I went through the process of posting my profile, but didn't do much with the site. As time went on, more and more people sent me invites.

Every so often, I'd be asked for help connecting someone with someone else, who apparently knew someone who knew someone I knew. From time to time, people from specific groups who'd read my book, '*Endless Referrals*'¹, would notice I was a LinkedIn member and ask me to contribute an article for their newsletter. I guess you could say I'd become a part of the LinkedIn community. Yet still, I wasn't really utilizing LinkedIn in any active or significant way.

Why not? No perceived need, and no desire. (You might remember those two reasons from Sales Training 101 as the two most common reasons prospects say "no".) And why didn't I have any perceived need or desire? Because I had frankly no idea what to do or how to make LinkedIn a positive experience for me.

1. Bob Burg, '*Endless Referrals*,' McGraw Hill, 2005

That's exactly where this book comes into play. Jason Alba has done a first-rate job of solving that challenge for me, and he will for you, too.

A former unemployed IT professional and business strategist, Jason found that finding a good job, even in a "job seeker's market," was a pretty daunting task. Today, he runs a career management company, called JibberJobber. In *'I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What???' he presents us with an actual system to tap into the power of the LinkedIn service.*

And that's the key word here: system. That's what I was lacking in my early LinkedIn experiences.

Why is having a system so important? I define a system as, "The process of predictably achieving a goal based on a logical and specific set of how-to principles." In other words, if it's been proven that by doing A you'll achieve B, then you know that all you need to do is follow A and you'll eventually achieve B. As Michael Gerber points out in his classic, *'The E-Myth Revisited'*² (slightly paraphrased): "Systems permit ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results . . . predictably."

Whatever the B is you want to achieve here, *'I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What???' provides you with the A for getting it. After an excellent introduction explaining exactly what LinkedIn is and how it (basically) works, Jason then walks you through a guided tour of clear principles and powerful strategies for getting the most out of your LinkedIn experience.*

While Jason sees LinkedIn as an excellent business-building tool, he also looks at the site with a carefully critical eye. Jason himself began achieving great success utilizing LinkedIn only after floundering with it his first few months, and he does not hold back in pointing out its weaknesses and suggesting areas where LinkedIn could improve and make its service more valuable for its members. And I found especially refreshing those passages where he points out the areas of LinkedIn where he has still not grasped its highest use. Someone that humble, I tend to trust.

2. Michael Gerber, *'The E-Myth Revisited,'* HarperCollins, 1995

Jason tells us that LinkedIn is not a replacement for your networking efforts (online or offline); rather, it is an excellent tool for facilitating some facets of your networking strategy. I absolutely concur. The creed of my Endless Referrals System®³ is that, "All things being equal, people will do business with, and refer business to, those people they know, like and trust." And no computer or online medium is going to replace that personal connection—but it certainly can enhance it and provide potential networking contacts with more opportunities to connect. In this book, you'll learn how to do exactly that, whether it's for direct business, resources you need, helpful information, finding joint venture partners, hiring a new employee, or getting hired for a new job.

Something I particularly appreciate about Jason's approach is that he shows us not only how we can gain value from LinkedIn but, just as importantly, how we can utilize LinkedIn to provide value to others. As any true networker knows, this is not only immensely satisfying in its own right, but it is also the best way to receive even more value oneself.

As you travel through this excellent guide, be prepared to learn from a man who has done his homework. Jason has learned what he knows the hard way, through trial and error, both his own and many other peoples', and put it all between the covers of a book so that you and I can learn it all the easy way!

Best wishes for great success,

Bob Burg

Author of *'Endless Referrals'* and coauthor of *'The Go-Giver'*

3. <http://www.burg.com>

Introduction

I remember when I was first introduced to LinkedIn. It was February 2006 and I was walking out of a networking meeting with a guy who came to tell us he had just landed a new job. As we were walking out, he recommended I create an account on LinkedIn. Of course, I didn't want to because I already had too many accounts with other websites and wasn't quite sure what value this would add to my job search.

I did get an account, and found LinkedIn to be a very lonely place. For the first few months I had only six connections. Searching for valuable contacts (there were about eight million users in LinkedIn when I signed up) produced no results, which led me to believe the search function was broken. I didn't find anyone whom I was interested in contacting and never received any communication from a recruiter or hiring manager.

LinkedIn just wasn't working for me. I knew that if I could figure out what all the buzz was about, and learn how professionals were using LinkedIn to improve their business and careers, I could benefit. But at first I just didn't understand what I needed to do.

And so I began to learn what LinkedIn is all about - how to use it, how to benefit from it and what its limits were. Once I began to understand how it was intended to be used, it became much more valuable to me in my personal career management.

As I was learning the how's and why's of LinkedIn I found that a lot of people were still confused. It's obvious why you would use LinkedIn if you are a recruiter (The first book⁴ dedicated entirely to LinkedIn is written specifically for recruiters), but I find people regularly scratching their heads wondering how to use it!

I hope this book can serve as a reference on how you can get the best out of LinkedIn. I'm on LinkedIn - Now What??? is not a comprehensive book on networking, nor is it a general book on social networking - there are already some great books on these subjects. I'll talk about networking and social networking, borrowing from the experts and using examples from my contacts, many of whom I've met through LinkedIn. By the time you finish this book you should have a solid understanding of what LinkedIn is, how to use it and why things on LinkedIn work the way they do.

Before we jump in, a quick word on why this book is dedicated to just LinkedIn. I'll admit that I'm not a social networking expert, and I don't spend all of my time learning about, using and optimizing social networks. There are just too many, with too many differences, and things change too rapidly. For example, as of July 2007, Ning, the social networking site that allows you to create your own social networks for free, had over 70,000 different social networks⁵! This book is meant to go deeper into just one of the options available to you, and help you get more out of LinkedIn than I did in my first few months.

Perhaps this book will teach you how to use LinkedIn more effectively. Perhaps you will implement some of this learning to find new business, new customers, new employers or new friends. While there are no guarantees, I know that many people have had their professional and personal lives enriched because of the LinkedIn environment, and hope that you can, too!

4. Bill Vick with Des Walsh, *Happy About LinkedIn For Recruiting*, Happy About, 2006

5. <http://tinyurl.com/39uwnp>

Now, let's get started!

Chapter Summary

- This book came about because of my own confusion with using LinkedIn.
- LinkedIn is not the only online networking tool you should use, but it is definitely one of the most powerful.

About the Author



Jason Alba is the job seeker and networking advocate. He got laid off in January 2006, just a few weeks after Christmas. Even though he had great credentials and it was a job-seeker's market, Jason could hardly get a job interview. Finally he decided to step back and figure out the job search process, including trying to understand all of the available resources. Within a few months he had designed a personal job search tool, JibberJobber.com, which helps professionals manage career and job search activities the same way a salesman manages prospects and customer data.

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