

## How to Approach a New LinkedIn Contact

LinkedIn users regularly approach people they do not know to build their contact lists, but writing to a stranger can be tricky. In this activity, you will complete two tasks.

**Task 1.** Read the communication below between a student, Cole Petrov, and an academic author and university instructor, Dr. Louisa Doe. After analyzing the cold message and the exchange that ensued, identify the writer's missteps.

<from Cole Petrov>

Hello, Ms. Doe, I am a graduating student of Ultimate Medical Academy, Looking for professional networks. Looking forward to the future. Best regards Cole Petrov

<from Academic>

Dear Mr. Petrov, searching for a network is not how I would put it or what I would recommend. When we are starting out, we first expand OUR OWN network of acquaintances, friends of friends and such. If you wish to network with people outside this bubble, it's generally frowned upon to ask random people to connect. Or have a hook; do your homework. Look up the person and find something you can ask or discuss with her. And, very importantly, learn about proper forms of address. When we approach someone cold, it's best to maintain formality. In my case, I prefer to be addressed with my academic title and last name when approached by strangers. In most cases I would answer using my first name, offering informal communication. I hope these tips will prove useful to you as you establish yourself on LinkedIn.

<from Cole Petrov>

Hello Louisa, I appreciate any advice whether especially constructive. I am coming out of my shell again for the first time after survival of the worst. Either way the importance of reaching out to you I am looking for the professional advice, one can grow with. I am currently taking a course Essentials of business, and your picture along with your coauthor are in the front of the course materials. I cannot think of professional connections outside of the course work I absorbed myself in the past year. Thank you for reaching out, I will keep your advice in mind as I am connecting to a network.

<from Academic>

Had you led with this information, I would have known where to place you and why you wrote to me, Cole. Do you have a specific question about anything in the book or about careers that I could answer?

**Task 2.** Research a possible contact and then write a cold note to that person, making sure to avoid the poor choices Cole Petrov made. Follow the steps below.

1. Select someone in your field with whom you would like to connect.
2. Read the chosen person's LinkedIn's profile carefully, and if your instructor asks, provide a summary of the contact's profile as well as a link to it.
3. Perform a Google search on the individual to learn more about the potential contact's interests, activities, and background.
4. Find some "hook" on which to center a message (a point to discuss or a question to ask.)

Once you have gathered information on your prospect, compose a cold note asking for an informational meeting. Keep these tips in mind as you write:

- Keep your note short, no more than three paragraphs or under 200 words.
- Use a formal salutation and respectful writing style.
- Begin by introducing yourself as a student requesting information.
- Transition to your request for a short interview to obtain knowledge from the individual.
- Provide only the most critical details linked to your point.
- Close in a third paragraph with a sincere thank you.