

## I'm Happy to Connect but Don't Try Selling Me Stuff

*Shôn Ellerton, January 22, 2020*

*Does my LinkedIn profile scream to you that I need heavy-duty commercial-grade cutting machinery for making kitchen cabinets?*



If you know about and been on LinkedIn for some time, you will know that out there, somewhere, a little person with his 'virtual' briefcase wants to sell you crap that you don't want.

We all like to get something in return for doing something but when it comes to making connections in LinkedIn, I'm sick to death of those who send you an invite to connect stating how interesting your profile is or how many things you have in common with them and how lovely it would be to connect with you. And when you do accept the invitation, they feel that they have the go-ahead to start spamming you with messages on what they can sell to you.

They may entice you by endorsing you by randomly selecting a skill from your endorsement list. You've probably never worked with them, but to be polite, I say thanks, and, in turn, I endorse them by randomly choosing something from their endorsement list.

I have no problems with accepting invitations to connect with others because it can help others expand their own networks. To me, it's of no consequence. We may both benefit from that connection.

With Medium, if someone follows me, I tend to follow them back if they have material which I am interested in. It works both ways.

Unlike Facebook of which I have less than a hundred friends, I have many thousands of LinkedIn connections, most of those being total strangers, and quite a few interested followers on Medium. To be honest, when I first started making connections on LinkedIn, I didn't know about the 'Following' option!

Being a *connection* rather than a *follower* does have some advantages. You may be able to access the connections of those who you just connected to. I personally don't allow this, however. But most importantly, you can message your connections freely. The problem is, too many take advantage of this for their own personal gain; certainly not for yours.

What annoys me is when, as soon as I accept an invitation to connect, I get a message asking me if I'd like to,

**purchase commercial cabinet cutting machinery, or**

**take up on an offer for some useless SEO software service to improve my website ratings,**

or worse still, **invite me to some dubious Ponzi shareholding scheme.**

If I ignore the message for a couple of days, I might get a reminder message,

**'Following up on my message the other day, I thought I'd take the opportunity...'**

If I choose 'No', I'll usually get another message like,

**'That's fine. What about looking at our other product which...?'**

These days, if I get messaged asking me if I want to buy something just after connecting, it's time to press the

**'Disconnect'** button!

For those not familiar with the difference between *followers* and *connections*, LinkedIn allows you up to a maximum of 30,000 connections; however, you can as many *followers* as you like. When a person's profile is viewed, you don't know how many of those *followers* are, in fact, *connections*, unless you are a connection yourself.

I tend to be quite flexible in accepting invites for connections as I am not at my 30,000-limit, and should that occasion ever arise, I may have to make some sacrifices on who to disconnect to make space for another connection.

Before accepting invitations to connect, I look over the profile of the person who is trying to connect.

**These days, I accept invitations if some or any of the below criteria is met:**

- 1) Careers and interests are aligned;
- 2) Profile is interesting, including being wacky or opinionated;
- 3) Lots of self-written articles (because I do the same);
- 4) Being local to where I live;
- 5) Works for a company which I follow;
- 6) Someone I know.

**I do not accept invitations if I see this happening in their profiles:**

- 1) Name all in lowercase or uppercase (trivial but I just don't like it);
- 2) No profile picture or having an image other than the person connecting;
- 3) It is a company using a personal profile;
- 4) Incomplete names (e.g. P. Smith, George M.);
- 5) Loads of hashtags in profile;
- 6) In a language other than English (because I speak English);
- 7) SEO, crypto, fund management, stock trading or other so-called gurus and experts.

**Back to selling me stuff I don't want.**

I totally understand that some out there are trying to make a living by selling goods or services through the LinkedIn network. I don't have a problem with this, but what tends to happen is that many of those selling services or goods send out standard messages from a template with the occasional buzzword thrown in taken from parts of your profile to make it stand out as being all personal and sincere.

Recently, I got a message saying that my business website is very comprehensive, informative and interesting.

Really?

Believe me, it's not that great. Have a look for yourself [here](#)!

See? Told you so!

If someone actually read my profile with the intent on selling me something, I'd be certain that they wouldn't be trying to sell me industry-grade cutting machinery for making kitchen cabinets.

But then again, there are those who are talented enough to sell refrigerators to Eskimos!