

Bridging skills & network gaps:

How LinkedIn is using its data and platform to help professionals overcome barriers to employment

Case study

At-a-Glance

Company: LinkedIn

Industry: Technology; social networking

Challenge: Ensuring that professionals overcoming barriers have access to the skills & resources they need to navigate the new world of work where skill requirements are rapidly evolving.

Asset-driven solution: Providing accessible upskilling, learning, and career development opportunities to job seekers — particularly those facing barriers — to help them gain the skills and networks needed to connect to economic opportunity.

Impact: 125,000 professionals overcoming barriers receive free LinkedIn Learning access annually through nonprofit partners; 94% of these users use the tool every week; 2.9 million learning sessions recorded among beneficiaries in the first half of 2025 — a 14.5% increase YOY.



The challenge: Helping professionals overcoming barriers navigate a new, AI-powered world of work

“

“How do we make sure that communities who are facing barriers are brought along and have access to the skills and networks they need to connect to the jobs they want?”

Cammie Erickson,

Senior Director of Social Impact, LinkedIn

The world of work is rapidly evolving. According to LinkedIn's data, [70% of the skills](#) needed for most jobs will have changed by the year 2030, creating an urgent and widening skills gap in today's workforce. As swift technological advancements continue to reshape entire industries, this transformed landscape will be felt most acutely by those from underserved communities or backgrounds who already face barriers to professional development or upskilling opportunities.

In furtherance of the company's mission to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce, LinkedIn's social impact team works with professionals overcoming barriers to provide them with yearlong gratis memberships to LinkedIn Premium, which includes access to LinkedIn Learning's catalog of nearly 25,000 courses. By focusing on getting LinkedIn Learning into the hands of the communities who most lack access to upskilling opportunities, LinkedIn hopes to close the skills gap and provide professionals with the tools and training they need to level the playing field.

LinkedIn's asset-driven approach

Through strategic partnerships with nonprofit workforce development organizations around the world, LinkedIn provides job seekers with pro-bono LinkedIn Premium subscriptions — which includes access to LinkedIn Learning, as well as tools that support networking, profile building, and job applications. .

LinkedIn Learning offers digital training and skills development in four key categories: business, technology, creative, and credentials. Taught by industry experts, its courses are developed using the real-time skill and career insights that LinkedIn gathers from its 1.2 billion member user base and are intentionally designed to support job seekers in acquiring the skills that will be most relevant to their career advancement. Learners can choose individual courses or embark on learning paths to earn one of the platform's 190+ professional certificates (e.g., "Human Skills in the Age of AI by LinkedIn and Microsoft").

LinkedIn's social impact team works closely with the LinkedIn Learning content team to shape the creation of new courses, tailoring the curricula based on feedback from nonprofit partners and the platform's own proprietary data on in-demand skills and roles, compiled by LinkedIn's [Economic Graph](#) research team. They also curate specific courses that are most relevant to the communities that partner organizations serve.

In addition to working through nonprofit partners, LinkedIn developed a microsite, [opportunity.Linkedin.com](#), to allow individuals who are not already working with a workforce development organization to access a portion of LinkedIn Learning's catalog. These access points help to connect a diverse market of job seekers to e-learning and certification courses designed to prepare them for an evolving job market.

LinkedIn also provides opportunities for all employees globally to support this work through their signature volunteer program, LinkedIn Coaches, where employees meet with professionals overcoming barriers for 1:1 sessions about how to make the most of their LinkedIn Premium tools, build their own profiles, and create effective professional networks.

“

Even if you're not changing your job, your job is changing on you.”

Cammie Erickson,

Senior Director of Social Impact, LinkedIn

Key components

Diverse catalog of learning assets. LinkedIn Learning aims to address a wide range of skill and development needs, allowing learners to filter by asset type, skill classification, difficulty level, language, and region. Learners can choose individual courses or embark on learning paths to earn one of the platform's 190+ professional certificates (e.g., "Human Skills in the Age of AI by LinkedIn and Microsoft").

Adaptability and innovation under constraint. Through its partnership with a nonprofit called Edovo, LinkedIn worked to provide platform access to incarcerated learners. Because of a lack of widespread internet access in prisons, LinkedIn Learning is available to download in an offline format, significantly increasing accessibility.

Bespoke curricula for partner organizations. LinkedIn is able to bundle learning paths for individual partners in order to spotlight the content that might be most relevant to the constituency that organization serves.

Key components

Curated partnerships. In sourcing the nonprofits and workforce development organizations it works with — mostly across the U.S., Europe, and Asia — LinkedIn seeks partners with strong career outcomes metrics and a strong thought leadership presence in its area of focus.

Accessibility and intentional design. Through its partnership with Microsoft, LinkedIn created [opportunity.Linkedin.com](https://opportunity.linkedin.com) — a microsite for individuals who may not already be working with a workforce development organization to more easily allow them to sidestep the paywall and access a portion of LinkedIn Learning's catalog.

Dashboard to track platform engagement. Dashboards with data science support allow LinkedIn to more easily understand how users who access Premium through partner programs are engaging with the platform.

Use of proxy metrics: With the help of its dashboards, LinkedIn tracks metrics that, while not direct outcomes, provide good evidence of how beneficiaries are growing their skills and strengthening their networks. Some of the proxy metrics LinkedIn is tracking include:

- Network growth (via connections)
- Skill development (via learning sessions)
- Job search momentum (via job applications)
- Network strength (variety of connections, second-degree access)

Impact highlights

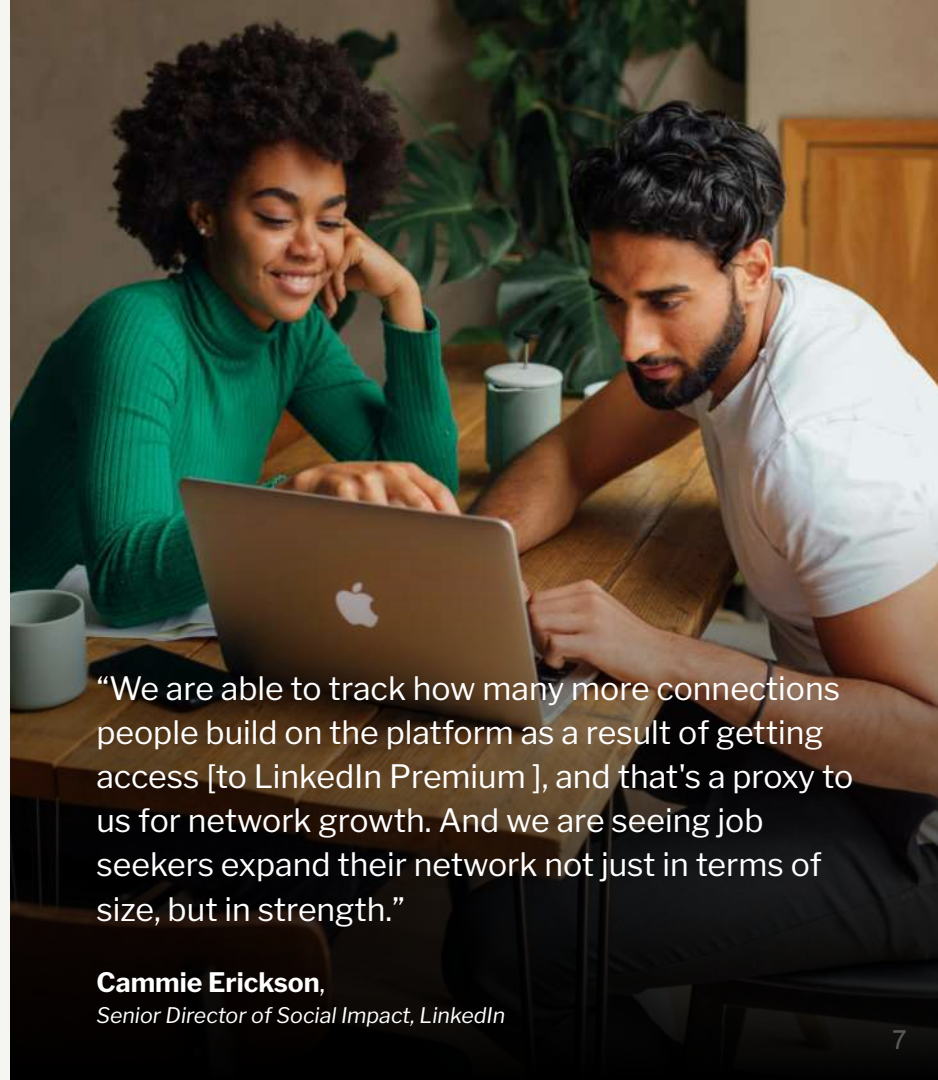
Roughly 125,000 free LinkedIn Premium subscriptions are gifted annually through LinkedIn's nonprofit partners.

Professionals overcoming barriers who received LinkedIn Premium through **LinkedIn's social impact programs made 11.3 million total connections and engaged in 2.9 million learning sessions** in the first half of 2025 — a 14.5% increase year over year.

94% of professionals overcoming barriers who receive a complimentary LinkedIn Premium subscription use the tool every week.

LinkedIn partnered with the learning platform Edovo on a two-year pilot program that reached over **37.9% of the total addressable market** of learners in prisons and jails across the country and, in the first year, ultimately engaged 354,000 incarcerated learners.

In year 1 of the pilot, **349,000 of the incarcerated learners** completed courses with a score of 70% or higher.



“We are able to track how many more connections people build on the platform as a result of getting access [to LinkedIn Premium], and that's a proxy to us for network growth. And we are seeing job seekers expand their network not just in terms of size, but in strength.”

Cammie Erickson,
Senior Director of Social Impact, LinkedIn

Why the program is good for LinkedIn

Directly supports LinkedIn's vision to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce.

Offering learning and upskilling opportunities makes LinkedIn more attractive to new users and helps retain existing members.

LinkedIn's partnership model helps to create and strengthen relationships with other organizations and nonprofits interested in upskilling and closing economic gaps through hiring.

Dashboards tracking engagement on LinkedIn Premium and LinkedIn Learning offer hints about what users are finding most valuable that inform the platform's broader marketing strategy.

The vast majority of professionals overcoming barriers who receive a complimentary LinkedIn Premium are **active and engaging on the platform every week** — a key metric for any social networking platform.

Although the program is impact-focused and users are not directly asked to subscribe after their gratis memberships have expired, **LinkedIn Learning does help to drive revenue through both enterprise sales and conversions** on individual Premium subscriptions.

Lessons and implications for other businesses

Make impact part of your business model. LinkedIn's strategy works because upskilling aligns with both its mission and business, from network effects to talent insights. The closer your impact effort sits to your core value proposition, the more staying power it'll have.

Build a data muscle and use it to tell your story. LinkedIn didn't stop at distributing access; they built custom dashboards to track how learners engage — using network growth, skills engagement, and second-degree connections as impact metrics.

Choose partners who raise your game. Rather than casting a wide net, LinkedIn sought out workforce development orgs with scale, placement track records, and thought leadership chops to distribute LinkedIn Premium licenses. Partnerships should be symbiotic.

Design for constraint. The Edovo pilot reengineered delivery to work offline in prison settings. This is the kind of adaptability impact leaders need in order to overcome access and resourcing barriers.

Collaborate with other organizations, nonprofits, and experts in order to leverage complementary strengths and achieve greater impact. Collaboration and partnerships are key to addressing complex social issues.

Treat scale as a responsibility. With 1B+ users, LinkedIn used its reach to open doors to individuals who have traditionally been left behind in the workforce.

Related resources

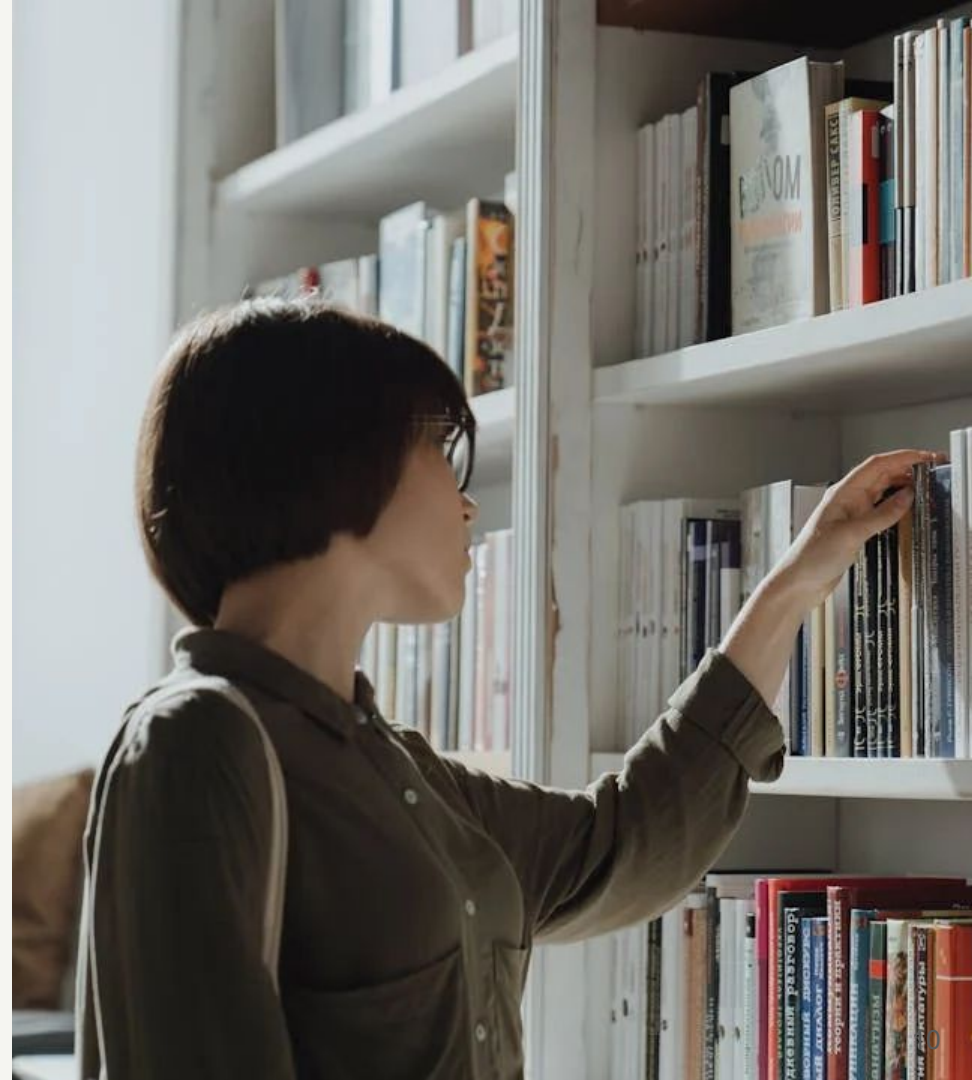
[LinkedIn Social Impact](#)

[LinkedIn's Economic Graph](#)

[LinkedIn Learning](#)

[Career Development Resources](#)

[Edovo](#)



NATION
SWELL

**Please don't hesitate to
reach out if you have
questions or feedback!**

insights@nationswell.com