



# LinkedIn® Usage within Large Law Firms

Presenting some statistics generated directly from LinkedIn®  
on the usage of LinkedIn by fee-earners at large law firms in the UK and USA

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## Introduction

In recent years - and with unprecedented speed - social networking has transformed the way people interact and communicate. Because the growth and maintenance of strong relationships is widely seen as a key factor for business success within the professional services sector, it should be no surprise that social networking is a hot topic in law firms today. Many firms have either recently introduced or are currently developing social networking policy and guidance for their users to help them move into this new arena in a controlled and effective manner.

Several recent reports (see references section) have used a survey approach to examine attitudes to social networking within law firms, and have also examined how it can be used to assist in building relationships with clients and other key contacts.

Of the major social networks, LinkedIn is specifically and uniquely aimed at professional business users and so is generally seen as the most appropriate social network for law firms and legal professionals to engage with. There are already documented examples of firms generating significant new business directly as a result of activity on LinkedIn.

At Fellsoft we're building new software tools that will enable firms to effectively manage and measure their presence on social networks by leveraging the individual networks of their users and by integrating those networks with their existing CRM (contact relationship management) systems.

As a part of that work, we set out to gather and analyse data on the extent to which employees at the largest law firms in the UK and the USA were already using LinkedIn. This white paper presents the highlights from that analysis.

## Key Findings

### UK Top 150 Firms

- 42% of fee-earners have created a LinkedIn profile.
- 17% of fee-earners (nearly 1 in 5) have built a network of at least 25 connections.

### USA Top 100 Firms

- 60% of fee-earners have created a LinkedIn profile.
- 30% of fee-earners (nearly 1 in 3) have built a network of at least 25 connections.

## Analysis

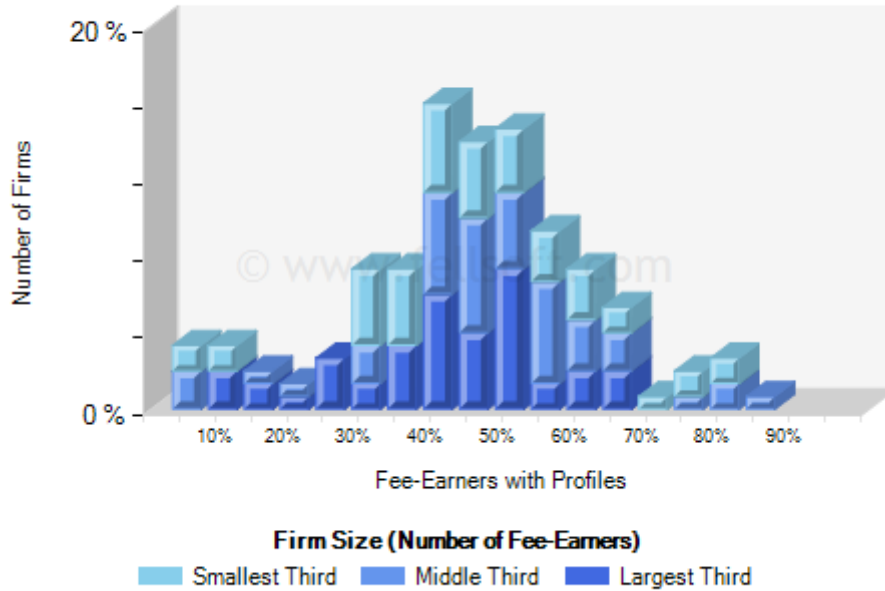
We analysed nearly 50,000 profiles from LinkedIn users currently employed at the largest 150 firms in the UK and the largest 100 firms in the US.

First, we looked for keywords in the current job title for the profile to determine whether they were a fee-earner or not:

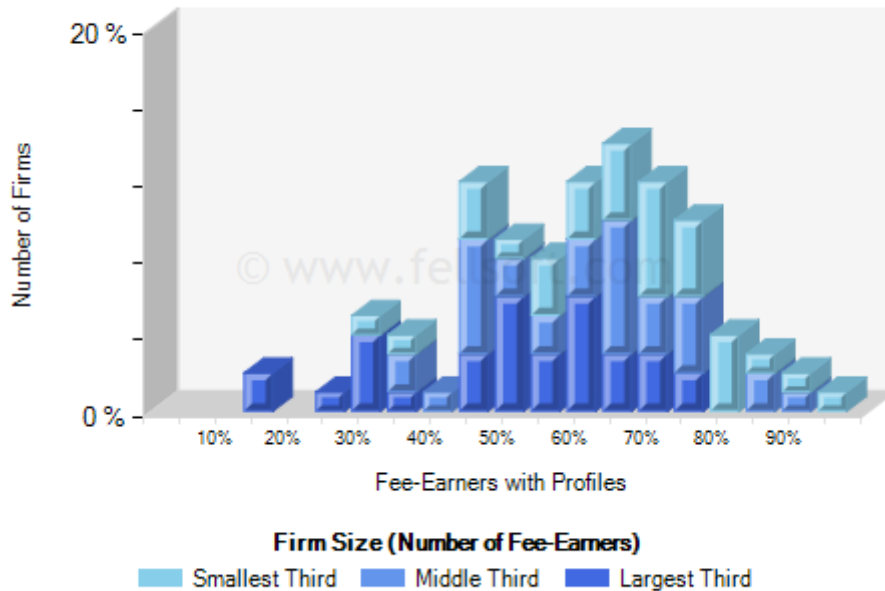
Country	Profiles Examined	Fee-Earner Profiles	% Fee-Earners
UK	22,942	15,170	66%
US	24,868	13,205	53%

Next, we combined these results with information available elsewhere about the number of fee-earners employed at each firm in order to estimate the proportion of fee-earners at each firm who had created a LinkedIn profile. To help visualise this information we created distribution charts, split into three sections for the top, middle and bottom third rankings of the firms examined.

**LinkedIn Profile Distribution : UK Top 150**



**LinkedIn Profile Distribution : US Top 100**

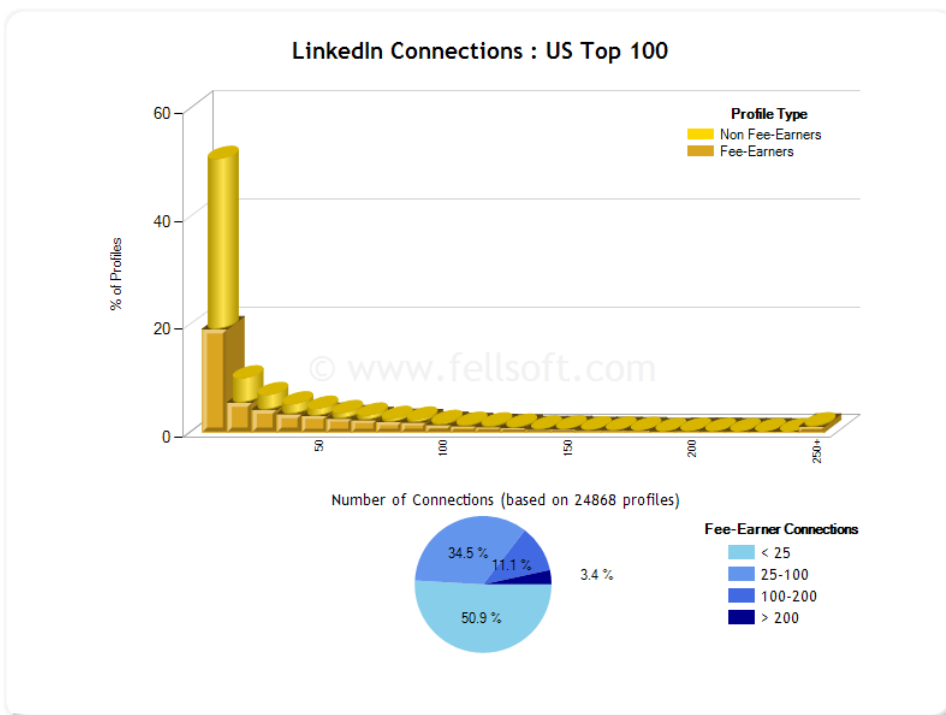
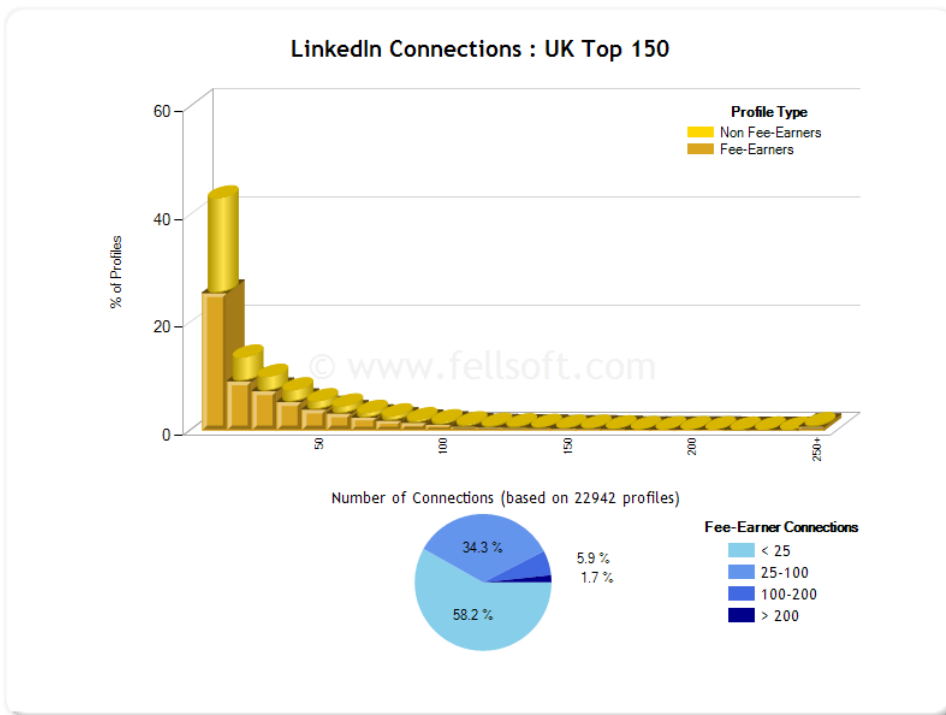


The median figures for the proportion of fee-earners with profiles were 42% for the UK and 60% for the USA.

The distribution also indicates that in both countries smaller firms are more likely to have a higher proportion of fee-earners with LinkedIn profiles than the larger firms.

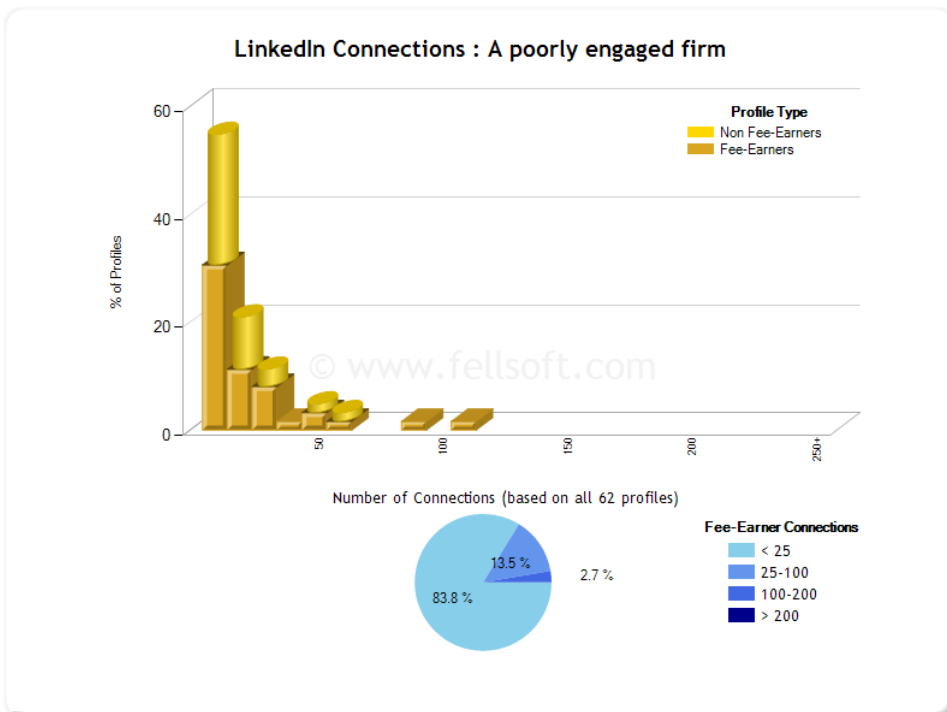
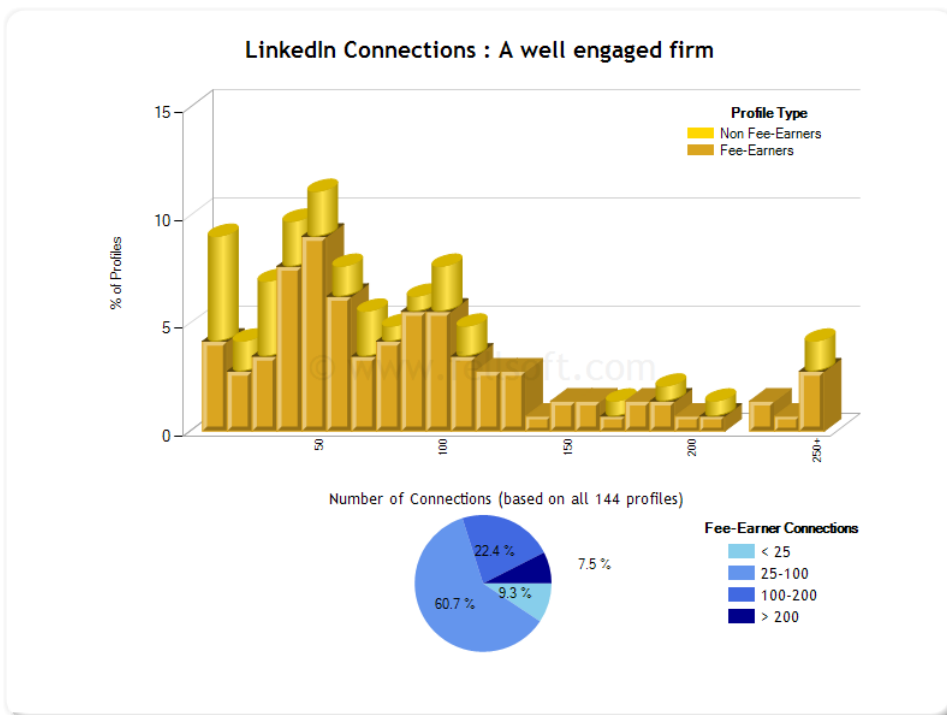
Connections

Next, we wanted to investigate how actively users were engaged with LinkedIn. To do this, we created distribution charts showing the number of connections made by each of the profiles examined. These overall results show a classic power law distribution with those most actively engaged with LinkedIn having the most connections and showing up as the "long tail" on the chart.



One striking finding was the great variation in connection distribution between different firms. Some firms appear to have taken a collective decision to encourage activity on LinkedIn, whilst

others appear to be actively discouraging their employees from engaging. The two contrasting UK firms whose individual charts are shown below actually have about the same total number of fee-earners:





### Profile Summaries

LinkedIn profiles allow each user to provide a summary of their abilities and experience on their profile - this is separate from information about their current and past job descriptions and is one of the most visible and important parts of a profile. *However, a relatively small proportion of fee-earner profiles we examined included a summary - 17% of those from the UK, and just 10% from those in the US.*

To identify the most common themes in the summaries users had created, we created tag clouds from their aggregated contents.

#### *UK (generated from around 2,500 fee-earner summaries)*

2010 acquisitions act advice advising agreements areas aspects assisting associates  
banking based business case claims clients commercial companies construction  
contentious contract corporate court dealing department development disputes  
employment estate experience family finance financial firm funding generates  
group head high house include individuals industrial institutions insurance intellectual  
interest internal investment involved issues joined large law lawyer lead legal  
litigation llp london managing market matters member number office partner  
personal planning practice private professional projects property providing public  
qualified ranging real relations resolution sale sector senior services solicitor  
specialising specialist support tax teams technology training transactions uk university  
variety wide working years

#### *USA (generated from around 1,300 fee-earner summaries)*

acquisitions act action administration advised agreements areas assistance association  
attorney bar business case claims clients commercial committees communicator  
companies complex compliance contract corporations counseling court departments  
developments dispute district employment energy equity executive experience extensive  
federal finance financial firm focuses funds general governments group including  
industry insurance intellectual international investments investigations involving issues law  
lawyers legal licensing litigation managing market matters member mergers negotiated  
offices organization partner patents planning practice private products professional project  
property public range real estate regulatory relating represented school security served  
services skills states tax technology trade trademark transactions trial united university  
variety venture worked years york

### Company Pages

We found that all but a handful of the firms examined had a corresponding company page on LinkedIn. However, it was not possible for us to determine whether these were actively being managed by the firm centrally, or had simply been "claimed" by an individual user at the firm.



### Next Steps

If you'd like to see the individual charts for your firm (at no cost) just send us a request by email to [linkedin@fellsoft.com](mailto:linkedin@fellsoft.com).

We'll be repeating the analysis presented in this paper at intervals, to monitor how usage levels are changing over time.

Look out for further white papers from us relating to law firms' presence on LinkedIn, and for details of our forthcoming integration product for LinkedIn. You can sign up for our newsletter on our web site at [www.fellsoft.com](http://www.fellsoft.com).

### Notes on Methodology

The top 150 UK firms were identified using data from the Insider UK 250 maintained by the Legal Technology Insider at [www.legaltechnology.com](http://www.legaltechnology.com) (ranking based on number of UK fee-earners).

The top 100 US firms were identified from the AmLaw 100 for 2010 (ranking based on gross revenue).

Profiles were obtained by searches on LinkedIn specifying the firm name as the current employer, a location in the US or UK as appropriate, and employment in the legal services sector.

We were able to obtain the total number of LinkedIn profiles that matched any given search, but could only examine in detail a maximum 250 profiles for each firm. In order to calculate the percentage of fee-earners with a LinkedIn profile for the larger firms when not all of the employee profiles could be examined (i.e., for firms with over 250 profiles on LinkedIn), we made an assumption that the proportion of fee-earners to non fee-earners in the profiles that could not be examined was the same as the proportion in the 250 profiles that were examined.

Calculating the average number of fee-earners who have created LinkedIn profiles at each firm also required a figure for the total number of fee-earners at the firm. For the UK, we used the figures for UK fee-earners from the Legal Technology Insider 250. For the US, we used the figure for total fee-earners from the AmLaw 100 2010, which also include fee-earners based outside the US for international firms.

### References

- Social Media and Relationship Development in Professional Services (Kim Tasso & Econsultancy, Feb 2011) - [Link](#)
- Social Media & Law Firms (theknowlist.com, Mar 2011) - [Link](#)
- Amy Campbell's guide to LinkedIn for Lawyers - [Link](#)
- Conscious Solutions case study with Higgs & Sons - [Link](#)

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