

Network to Work Meeting - December 2020

RESOURCE DOCUMENT

LinkedIn 101- What it is, Creating an Account, and How to Use it for Networking and Job Hunting

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the top online social network site with the specific purpose of *facilitating professional networking* - that is, building a group of contacts to help advance your career. It serves as an online directory of both individuals and organizations, which makes professional networking possible without leaving your home. You can use it for networking, connecting and job searching. Companies use it for recruiting and for sharing company information with prospective employees. Many companies find it cheaper and more effective to look for candidates on LinkedIn rather than posting an advertisement on Indeed.

Why use LinkedIn?

More and more businesses – including blue-collar employers - are now using LinkedIn to screen and recruit potential employees for all types of positions. This is why creating a LinkedIn account can make a difference when searching for your next job. The reason to create a LinkedIn profile is that it lets you present who you are and what you do in a professional manner. Regardless of your field of interest – it could be customer service, health care, administrative, landscaping, warehousing, etc. - by taking the time to write a compelling personal profile and to grow your network, you are also growing your professional reputation.

Once you have a profile on LinkedIn, recruiters who search LinkedIn looking for people with your background, skills and job interests can find you, review your profile, and get in touch with you directly. For the recruiter, this saves advertising on jobs boards that usually draws an unmanageable amount of applications that are often from unsuitable applicants. Doing a quick search on LinkedIn allows a recruiter to find rather quickly two or three potential candidates to present to a hiring manager. You may end up being considered for a position that you didn't even know existed!

How Does LinkedIn Work?

In a nutshell, you use LinkedIn to market yourself, make connections, learn about employers, and look for jobs.

Your **Professional Profile** allows you to share resume type information.

Your **Network of Connections** – people you know and others you would like to meet - lets you to communicate about yourself and the kinds of job you are looking for. You can; call upon your connections for support in your job search. For example, you may find that one of your connections works at an employer or in a field that is of interest to you.

Furthermore, you can **search for employers and available jobs**. Also, your profile makes you available to be found by recruiters searching for qualified candidates.

Finally, you can join one or more **Groups** focused on various companies, industries or occupations. This lets you stay updated on the latest news in the field. You can also find other people who share your professional interests.

Getting Started in LinkedIn *(See the separate handout of visuals called “getting started in linked in” for more information on getting started.)*

First, you need to create a LinkedIn account. The “basic” account is free and this is all you really need. Go to www.linkedin.com.

Once you've signed up for LinkedIn, you start by creating your **profile**, which is a summary of your unique skills and employment history. Your profile serves as your **online resume**. It is like a billboard that announces you to others, making your career-related information public for your connections, prospective employers, and recruiters to see.

After creating your profile, begin to build your network by adding contacts (also known as **connections**) with other LinkedIn users. This is important because through your network of connections, you will be able to get skill endorsements, ask for recommendations, and find new job opportunities.

You can also join **groups** focused on various companies, industries, and occupations. Groups can keep you up to date on the latest news in your field, as well as help you find others who share your professional interests.

Then, when you are ready to search for jobs, you click on the “Jobs” tab in the menu at the top right of your screen.

Searching and Applying for Jobs on LinkedIn

Job seekers can search and apply for jobs directly on LinkedIn. In addition, you can view and contact your LinkedIn connections who may be able to refer you for a job.

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for searching for jobs. It lets employers post job openings to the site (like any online job board), and you can search for these openings using the job search tool. It also lets you use your connections to find new positions and ask for recommendations. Additionally, you can follow companies so you'll always be notified of their latest LinkedIn posts.

To search for jobs, click the Jobs icon, then type what you're looking for in the search box. You can also narrow your search results by using the filters near the top of the window, like company, recent postings, and experience level.

To learn more about a particular job, click the job title. You will see details like the job's location and requirements. You can also see if any of your connections work for that particular company.

To apply for the job, click Apply, and you'll be taken to the company's website to fill out an application. If there is an Easy Apply option, use this; it lets you apply with just a few clicks by submitting the information in your LinkedIn profile. ***If you use Easy Apply, be sure to send a personalized cover letter every time.***

You can also set up preferences for your job search through the Career Interests function, found in Your Dashboard. LinkedIn will then give you relevant recommendations and search results, giving you a better chance of seeing jobs you're actually interested in.

Searching Company Profiles and Following Companies

LinkedIn company profiles are a good way to find more information on companies in which you have an interest. In these you can see if you have any connections there, new hires, promotions, jobs posted, related companies, and company statistics.

If you want to learn more about companies that interest you, you can follow them on LinkedIn. This is similar to following someone on Twitter or Instagram. Whenever that company posts something to its LinkedIn page, it will appear on your homepage. Following a company is also a potential way to meet people who work there, including recruiters who might be posting jobs.

Use the Search Box to find companies on LinkedIn or browse the recommendations on the My Network page. If you see a company you're interested in, select Follow. You will then see posts from that company on your homepage. You'll also be able to see other information about the company, such as what LinkedIn users work there and how you might be connected to them.

Common LinkedIn terms

- **Homepage**

Whenever you sign into LinkedIn, the first page you see will be your home page. Here you see recent posts and updates from your connections. In addition, this is where you can post your own status updates to share information with your connections.

- **Profile**

Your profile is what other people see when they find or research you on LinkedIn. You can think of your profile as a **resume**, where you can add information about your employment history, education, and skills. You can also add things you might not include on a traditional resume, like a profile picture and personal summary. This is also where the endorsements and recommendations you receive from others will appear. Three to five short paragraphs is a good way to begin.

You know that it is important to tailor your resume and its professional profile to include keywords that applicant tracking software – and employers – look for. Likewise, you should include these keywords in your LinkedIn profile.

When you set up a LinkedIn account and profile, LinkedIn will assign you a “**Profile Address**”. This is a link (URL) that you can put on your resume or email to employers and others. Clicking on the link takes others directly to your profile where they can learn all about you. The usual profile address is a rather long link. However, you can create a custom URL using your name or other words. If you have a LinkedIn profile address, be sure to include it on your resume in the heading area where your email address, phone number and other contact information is found. Many individuals leave off of their resume the street address, using the profile address instead.

Finally, when setting up your account, be sure to use all email addresses you have had in the past. This will allow all of your past connections to find you.

Your Profile is usually the first impression you make on others, so keep building on it and updating it throughout your career.

- **Connection**

A connection is a **person you’ve added to your LinkedIn network**, similar to having a friend on Facebook. Connecting with people lets you send them messages, see their profile updates, and ask for recommendations. When deciding when to ask someone to connect with you on LinkedIn, you should first consider this question: *‘Would this person talk to me about a job or recommend me to an employer?’* If yes, add this connection.

You want to show that your intent is to truly build your network, NOT simply to network for networking's sake. Therefore, do not try to connect with everyone you know. Also, be sure to include a personal message with your invitations to connect.

Tips when adding connections:

Use your existing network. When you first create a LinkedIn profile, make sure to connect with the people you already know. Try syncing your email contacts and using LinkedIn's search bar to find friends and coworkers.

Ask for introductions. If you are trying to connect with someone you have never met, you should look to see if you have any mutual connections. If so, ask your connections for an introduction. Be polite and explain why you are requesting the introduction, and give your connection an opportunity to decline your request.

Maintain your connection. After connecting with someone, keep engaging with that person on LinkedIn. Leave thoughtful comments on their posts. If they ask for recommendations or endorsements, fulfill their request in a timely manner. The stronger connection you have, the greater likelihood of new opportunities coming your way. Remember, networking is relationship building, and it goes both ways.

- **Recommendation**

A recommendation is a short paragraph found in your profile that one of your connections has written about your professional strengths and skills. You can ask your connections to write a recommendation, and you should offer to write them for others. Positive recommendations written by previous employers, clients or colleagues can show a hiring manager the kind of employee you are and the strengths you have.

- **Endorsement**

An endorsement is made when your connections vouch for your skills on your LinkedIn profile. Having others endorse your skills adds credibility to your profile and makes a good impression on recruiters and potential employers.

Staying Connected on LinkedIn

Even though LinkedIn is about one's professional life, it is also a social networking site and it revolves around communicating. You can communicate with your connections by sending them messages, by posting status updates, and by participating in groups.

- **Messages**

You can send private messages to any of your LinkedIn connections. This is an easy way to keep up with your connections, even if they change jobs or acquire a new email address. You can also read messages sent to you. Click on the “Messages” tab in the menu at the top of your screen.

- **Status updates**

You can post status updates to share information quickly with your connections. This might be a status update about a new job or a link to an article that's relevant to your field. Don't post anything too personal or you will come across as unprofessional.

To post a status update, go to your Homepage. Click “Start a post”, found to the right of your profile photo. You can add text, photos, and links; then click “Post” when done. You can also choose who can see your update. Once you're done, click Post.

- **Groups**

LinkedIn has over 1 million groups. Joining one will help you make new connections with people in your field. Consider groups related to your career field or area of interest. There may also be a group for alumni of your school or college. Groups let you exchange ideas, stay current on what is happening in your field, and make new connections.

Top LinkedIn Tips for Job Seekers

1. Be proactive.

Don't just set up your profile and wait for an opportunity to come along. You need to be proactive by making connections and staying in contact; by posting information; by researching opportunities; and by ensure your profile is well written and up to date.

2. Make your online network reflects your offline connections.

Connecting with people from all aspects of your life: current and former colleagues, past employers, people in your industry, neighbors, family, friends, former classmates and others.

3. Make your Profile headline read like a newspaper headline.

Under your Profile photo, add a “headline” that describes you well. Some people list their current job. You want to make sure it summarizes you and the benefits you bring to the table. Much like a newspaper headline, it should make people want to read your profile.

4. Write a compelling background summary.

Your summary should include some of your personality and be written in a way that makes you stand out from the other people competing for the same job. One way to do this is to tell a story. Be sure to talk about past and current job responsibilities, achievements, problems solved and passions. That said, be as concise as possible and don't use long paragraphs.

5. Mention quantifiable achievements.

Whenever possible, use numbers to demonstrate your work-related achievements. If you worked in customer service, how many people did you serve in a day? If you worked in retail, did you increase sales by a measurable amount? If you served or delivered meals, how many people did you help?

6. Deflect Age-Related Bias

- **Don't list jobs held over 20 years ago.**

Showcase your career but don't focus on listing every single job. You don't want to accentuate your age by listing your jobs from a long time ago.

- Also, show you are digitally fluent by building a solid online presence with strong LinkedIn profile.

7. Add your contact info.

Not everyone likes to use LinkedIn's email system, so it is good to include your email address and phone number in your Profile.

8. Endorse and recommend others; they'll likely reciprocate.

Your LinkedIn profile should include endorsements as well as recommendations of [your skills](#). Giving them to others is a good way to receive them in return. Endorsements are easier to give and so don't hold as much influence as a recommendation.

9. Look professional.

It is important to post a photo of yourself, and make sure it looks professional. A professional headshot is ideal, or at least a photo that shows you in a professional context.

10. Pay it forward.

Remember, professional networking is about building relationships. How can you help others in your LinkedIn network? Make endorsements. Offer to write recommendations. Offer tips and job leads. Facilitate connections with others.

11. Periodically check out your contacts' profiles.

You might have missed the LinkedIn email in your box announcing that a contact of yours has a new job at a company where you want to work. So it pays to read your friends' LinkedIn profiles occasionally to see what they're up to.

12. Be authentic.

If you were laid off from a job, you don't have to say so on LinkedIn. You also don't need to hide the fact you're no longer at your last job. Don't be deceitful; transparency, honesty and authenticity are crucial.

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