



LinkedIn for Beginners

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a social networking website that helps you to develop a professional network of contacts, no matter what your field. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form connections by searching for professional acquaintances on LinkedIn or by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections' connections, and the people they know, linking you to a vast number of coworkers, references, professionals, and/or experts. Through your network you can:

- Manage the information that's publicly available about you as professional
- Join professional and organizational groups
- Find and be introduced to potential clients, service providers, and subject experts
- Create and collaborate on projects, gather data, share files and solve problems
- Find business opportunities or potential partners
- Gain new insights from discussions with like-minded professionals in private group settings
- Discover inside connections that can help you land jobs and close deals
- Post and distribute job listings to find the best talent for your company
- Research job seekers

The Profile

One of the most important parts of LinkedIn is your profile. That's what you use to connect with people in your network and your profile is how you get found on LinkedIn by potential employers. In addition, your LinkedIn profile can increase your visibility online and help you build your professional brand.

That's why it's important to make sure that your LinkedIn profile is complete and detailed. In fact, you can consider your LinkedIn profile your online resume. It should have the same information that is on your resume and, if you're looking for a new job, you will want prospective employers to be able to review your credentials for employment, including your qualifications, your experience, and your skills. Profiles can be customized.

How to Build a Professional Profile

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive business card. It's a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching for you online like potential employers, networking contacts, and other professionals in your field. So let's get started...

1. Craft an informative profile headline

Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as

“Student, National University” or “Recent honors grad seeking marketing position.” Check out the profiles of students and recent alums you admire for ideas and inspiration.

2. Display an appropriate photo

Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook or Twitter. If you choose to post a photograph — you probably should — select a current professional, high-quality headshot of you alone.

3. Show off your education

Be sure to include information about all institutions you’ve attended. Include your major and minor if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. It’s also appropriate to include study abroad programs and summer institutes. Don’t be shy — your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to list classes you took, show off your strong GPA, and detail any honors or awards you’ve won.

4. Develop a professional summary statement

Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter — concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Remember to include relevant internships, volunteer work, and extra curriculars. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great, too.

5. Fill your “Skills & Expertise” section with keywords

“Skills & Expertise” is the place to include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

6. Update your status

A great way to stay on other people’s radar screens and enhance your professional image is to update your status. Updating your status shows you are engaged and actually using LinkedIn. It can also help show your unique experience and perspective on your field. Tell people about events you’re attending, major projects you’ve completed, professional books you’re reading, or any other relevant news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or on a quick catch-up phone call.

7. Show your connectedness with LinkedIn Groups

Joining Groups and displaying the group badges (group logos) on your profile are good ways to fill out your profile and show your desire to connect to professionals with whom you have something in common. There are a wide variety of groups for clubs, universities, official organizations, and general networking groups.

8. Collect diverse recommendations

Nothing builds credibility like third-party endorsements. The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors. You can ask for changes or approve recommendations before they are posted on your profile.

9. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: www.linkedin.com/in/your_name). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism. A lot of URLs for common names have already been taken, so you may need to be creative!

10. Share your work

A final way to enhance your LinkedIn profile is to add examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments by displaying URLs or adding LinkedIn Applications. By including URLs, you can direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed. Through Applications, you can share a PowerPoint or store a downloadable version of your resume.

Other tools and benefits

1. Advanced Search

Whether you’re looking for a career opportunity, winning new clients or building your professional reputation, LinkedIn connects you to jobs, sales leads and ideal business partners. With our powerful advanced search engine (<http://www.linkedin.com/vsearch/p?adv=true>), company research tools and a jobs board that shows who you know at listed companies, LinkedIn is the place to turn for new opportunities.

2. LinkedIn Blog <http://blog.linkedin.com/>

Find up-to-date suggestions on job and career skills, tips for using LinkedIn, and what LinkedIn is developing.

3. LinkedIn today

Brings you news from over 150 million LinkedIn members. It shows you the top articles shared on LinkedIn by people in your network. It tells you who shared the article and what they said about it. LinkedIn Today also provides a homepage that can be customized to your industry, network, and areas of interest.

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