

Career Services Guide To

LinkedIn™

Getting started on the best social media site for professionals.

Using Social Networking in your Job Search

LinkedIn is the go-to social networking community for job hunters. Sure, you can use Facebook and Twitter— but LinkedIn is the only social network where you must have a professional presence.

The key to networking is to find people you can network with. There are many online sites that facilitate networking and most are based on the "six degrees of separation" principle.

First, you join the site and create a personal profile. Your profile can include anything you want but generally it's your business profile that is of interest. Second, you invite all your friends and business associates to join. When these people join, they are one degree away from you. Their network of contacts would then be two degrees away.

Your network will grow quickly as you recruit members who recruit members. Your ability to e-network your way to a new job grows exponentially as your network develops.

How to Join

Your LinkedIn profile page represents your career experience to the public. You can add everything from your level of education to current employment and relevant professional accomplishments. Everyone has the ability to include or exclude any piece of information on a LinkedIn profile, but the more thorough the profile, the better.

Personalization

Create a personal URL (www.Linkedin.com/NAME) so you are easier to find.

Make some recommendations for your colleagues and likely they will return the favor. A testimonial from someone you worked with is a very powerful thing to have on your profile.

The Summary

This is where you synthesize your experience and expertise and list major accomplishments, strengths and past successes.

Keep it short, sweet and objective — being overly self-promotional or self-aggrandizing is not appealing.

Emphasize the areas where you've achieved the most success. If you've been in one industry for 25 years, you don't need to list extra-

curricular activities from college. On the other hand, if you're fresh out of school, you should play up college experiences, leadership roles and internships.

The "Additional Information" section is where groups or affiliations can be added. To access more groups that are of interest either personally or professionally, search the database and add relevant associations.

Personal Information

You can include details such as your birthday, email address, marital status or IM address. You can also provide details on why you want to be contacted, such as for Career Opportunities, New Ventures or just Getting Back in Touch.

A handy bar on the profile page shows the percentage of completeness. Your goal should be to reach All-Star status.

You can click on "View Your Profile" to see how your public profile appears and modify it as necessary.

Add People to Your Network

Now comes the fun part: adding people to the network! You can either reach out to people individually or simply upload desktop contacts to automatically invite contacts who are current LinkedIn subscribers. Over time, adding people to your network creates a web of connections that could lead to your next client or a great employment opportunity.

Advanced Tips to Dominate LinkedIn

Use SEO Tactics

Using keywords in your profile for search engine optimization (SEO) can make you easier to find. First, determine what words people looking for someone with your services might use in a search engine by going to SimplyHired.com first. Look for jobs that match your qualifications, and then write your profile in a way to include those words. If you understand what the employer is looking for and include those terms they will find you when they are looking for someone with those qualifications.

Qualifications

Be specific— If you have a Certified Medical Assistant certification say so but don't stop there. Ask yourself if there are acronyms that are commonly used. Include CMA and other acronyms that apply. You need to account for people who are searching those key words as well.

Affiliations

List the professional organizations that you have joined. Which should include College and/or Employer Alumni Associations as well as any Professional Associations.

Complete your profile

Users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through the site than those with incomplete profiles.