

Job-Hunt Quick Guide





LinkedIn for New Graduates

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Chapter 1: Why Use LinkedIn?

Congratulations! You are well on the path to career success by completing your degree. Now that you're planning to take the world by storm, LinkedIn needs to be a first step in your online professional networking strategy.

Why Develop a Presence on LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is currently the premier online professional network. Nearly 160 million registered users from more than 200 countries use the site as of Spring 2012, and it's estimated that 10 new members join every 5 seconds.

This volume of existing and future users offers you the opportunity to form relationships and connections with literally millions of employers and hiring managers, the vast majority of whom use the site purely for business reasons (including recruiting).

At the time of this writing, it is estimated that nearly 100% of recruiters use LinkedIn to find candidates for open jobs, and **nearly 50% use only LinkedIn** for their candidate sourcing. In addition, an early 2012 Bullhorn Reach study showed that LinkedIn dominates all social networking platforms used to find prospective employees.

In other words, if you haven't already discovered the power of the site, now is the best time to leverage LinkedIn for gaining entrance to that first, coveted job. After all, it's among the first online venues that employers will check for your professional story and career background.

How LinkedIn Differs from Facebook

To maximize the power of LinkedIn, you'll first need to recognize what it offers, and how it differs from Facebook in common usage. While each site has similar features, LinkedIn's reputation as a business hub means you'll want to keep your interactions purely professional!



Most people use Facebook to share an abundance of personal information, from family news to information on their latest vacation. Conversely, business professionals join LinkedIn to promote their career status and skills to employers and to connect with other professionals to help them succeed in their jobs.

What is the major difference between LinkedIn and Facebook?

LinkedIn will support and advance your career objectives, **but only if you cultivate a business-minded presence that aligns with your professional goals, career reputation, and demeanor at work.**

Here are some similarities between the functions of both sites:

FACEBOOK FEATURE

LINKEDIN EQUIVALENT

Friends

Connections

Similar to Friends, Connections are added via invitation, where the other party must accept. The more Connections you have on LinkedIn, the "closer" you become to additional contacts (who are sorted by degrees of separation from you).

FACEBOOK FEATURE	LINKEDIN EQUIVALENT
News Feed	<p>Status Updates</p> <p><i>These updates are shown to your Connections in a scrolling list, similar to a News Feed, and invite comments and “likes” from your contacts. The main difference? Fewer Updates, with a much more professional tone.</i></p>
Messages	<p>InMail</p> <p><i>LinkedIn’s internal email feature allows you to send and receive private messages from other users. Most often, these will be business offers, requests to connect, or follow-up messages to/from employers.</i></p>
Groups	<p>Groups</p> <p><i>Each LinkedIn Group runs its own forums, which are often completely public (and indexed by Google), which means that your forum posts should be kept 100% professional in nature.</i></p>
Timeline Photo	<p>Photo</p> <p><i>Only a single photo is allowed on LinkedIn, and if you’re serious about your job search, it should be a professional headshot (or similar image).</i></p>
Info	<p>Profile</p> <p><i>This is LinkedIn’s term for your career information, which is publicly displayed to most other users. Read more about populating your Profile in the following sections.</i></p>

As this information shows, each site offers functions that seem to align with each other. However, the similarities end with how these items are used, since your presence on LinkedIn can greatly affect the quality of your contacts and business opportunities.

One significant difference for LinkedIn is that your Profile information must be filled out as completely as possible in order to make your data more visible to other users. We’ll cover Profile updates in detail in this book.

Chapter 2: Getting Started

To get started on LinkedIn, follow the site’s “Join Today” link to specify your user information. A tutorial will be displayed that walks you through adding your ZIP Code, Status (employed, job seeker, or student), Job Title, and Company (employer). Setting yourself up as a Student will also prompt the site to request your graduation year.

Join Now

An important note: use a personal email address to sign up for LinkedIn, NOT an email address tied to your university, job, or other potentially temporary situation. You’ll want to retain control of your LinkedIn Profile on a permanent basis.

You’ll also be asked to import contacts from your address book to start the process. While you can skip this step, it’s recommended that you revisit it at a later time to quickly add connections.

Upon confirming your email address and signing into the site, you may see an all-text display that shows different pages of LinkedIn. It’s best to click on the Home page, and let LinkedIn continue to walk you through adding information for your Profile.

Throughout your journey with LinkedIn, you'll probably encounter many new scenarios, with questions on site usage or rules. You'll find answers to nearly every query in the [LinkedIn Help Center](#).

Adding Contacts

The simplest way to add new Connections on LinkedIn is to allow the site access to your email address book. While doing this might seem as if you're giving too much information, relax: LinkedIn will first import your contacts, and then allow you to select which users to invite into your network.

Don't worry about finding this function; no matter how you sign in (or what screen you're on), you'll get reminders to go through this process.

There are several other ways to add Connections; you can issue a request to connect by viewing another user's Profile, send out an InMail (the site's internal email feature), or respond to Connection Invitations from other users.

An important note on issuing Connection invitations

Just about any "standard" communication through LinkedIn comes with a default script, such as "I'd like to add you to my professional network."

Don't use it!

The majority of users on LinkedIn are turned off by a "canned" message that appears to have been sent to many people simultaneously.

However, they'll react much more favorably to a message such as:

I'm building my online professional network, and noticed that we share the same (university, place of employment, etc.). I thought we might have interests in common, and I would therefore be pleased if you would accept my invitation.

Or

We're both graduates of CSU! I'd like to connect here and find out if we share other points of interest as well.

Or

Since you are an employee of ABC Company, a firm I admire for (their rapid growth, their pursuit of rain forest preservation, their new facility in Montana, etc.), I'd like to connect here. Please accept my invitation.

How can becoming well-connected on LinkedIn help your job search?

As you become more accustomed to using the site, keep this in mind: ***your job search will suffer if you routinely limit the volume of your Connections or refuse invitations from other users.***

LinkedIn is built on the premise that all users are separated by just one to several Connections. By becoming "linked" to another user, you'll automatically move yourself closer to others in your desired audience (employees or recruiters at your target companies, for example).

A key distinction: unlike Facebook, most LinkedIn users don't "size up" your account by the quality of your Connections (they rarely review your circle of networking contacts to gauge the company you keep).

In addition, a larger group of Connections puts you closer to potential contacts at your target employers. Therefore, unless you have a specific reason to reject a Connection invitation from a particular site user, you'll be best off accepting nearly all of these requests.

100% Completeness

LinkedIn prefers to have your Profile set at “100% Completeness,” which requires the addition of these items:

- Industry (career field) and postal code
- Current position with a description
- 2 additional positions (description not required)
- Confirmation of your current role
- Education
- A minimum of 5 skills
- Photo
- At least 50 connections
- Summary



As you fill in each part of the Profile, you’ll see a Profile Completeness Score on the right-hand side of the display that shows you the percentage achieved to date.

Why should you aim for a 100% complete Profile?

Users with a full set of Profile data appear to have advantages, such as higher rankings within recruiter searches for your skills.

In this guide, we’ll lay out the steps for populating each of these areas, as well as other sections that can help boost your credibility and searchability.

What are keywords?

Employers and hiring managers using LinkedIn often perform a site search for suitable candidates by job title or skills. These terms are referred to as **keywords**. Another way to think of keywords are the phrases used in job

descriptions. Here, employers list specific abilities (account management, Java programming, computer networking) required of a successful applicant.

Why add keywords to your LinkedIn Profile?

LinkedIn uses the data you provide in the Profile as an index, or key, to locating your qualifications.

When other members search LinkedIn to find suitable candidates for open positions, you’re much more likely to pop up on their radar if you’ve added a large percentage of keywords.

In addition, keywords represent the skills employers commonly seek, meaning that your Profile will appear more impressive and compelling when you’ve taken the time to demonstrate a greater level of competency in your field. Therefore, you’ll need to consider how many areas of expertise you can list within your Profile.

Throughout this guide, you’ll see references to keywords, especially in the examples provided. Take note of the many ways to incorporate these phrases and terms into your own Profile.

Be aware of LinkedIn Profile character limitations

Each field in LinkedIn is set up to allow a limited number of characters that INCLUDE spaces. As of this writing, character limits for commonly used portions of your Profile are as follows:

Headline – 120 Characters

Summary – 2,000 Characters

Company Name – 100 Characters

Position (Job) Title – 100 Characters

Position Description – 2,000 Characters

Interests – 1,000 Characters

Should your information be too lengthy to fit in each space, set up the sections of your Profile in Microsoft Word, then use the Character Count shown (go to Prepare, Properties, Advanced Properties, and then the Statistics tab) to count characters with spaces.

This way, you can tune the Profile sections without having to encounter the “excess characters” message that LinkedIn will issue for over-limit errors.

Chapter 3: Using LinkedIn Effectively

After you’ve joined LinkedIn, you’ll receive a prompt each time you login to the site, with questions that walk you through the information needed to reach 100% Completeness.

If you choose to ignore the prompts, you’ll see a list of Profile Completion Tips on the right-hand side of your screen, noting the different areas needed for your Profile and offering a quick way to access each section. In addition, you can selectively update particular sections of your Profile by using the pull-down menu under “Profile” to select “Update Profile.”

Here, we’ll cover the basics of updating important sections of your LinkedIn Profile (not just those required for 100% Completeness), so that you can fill in data of interest to prospective employers.

1) Your Profile Headline

The Headline field is a critical part of your brand and professional image, as it is not only displayed prominently under your name, but will appear throughout all of your interactions on the site. Limited to 120 characters, the Headline can help others locate your skills and become compelled to contact you – all based on the keywords, job titles, and status that you specify in this field.

If you join LinkedIn as a Student user, the site will automatically show your Headline as “Student at <University Name>.” Even though this is technically accurate, there are other ways to show your student status, while giving employers an idea of the jobs you’ll be pursuing.

Why change your LinkedIn Headline?

Updating your Headline allows you to create a “hook” that is much more compelling than “Amy Jones, Student at Ohio State University.” The best way to do this is to reject LinkedIn’s automatic Headline setting (which defaults to your current occupation).

Updating this field to a more accurate and interesting description of your overall job target will pay off quickly, especially as you become more active on LinkedIn. Similar to other areas of LinkedIn, your Headline will also produce better results if you fill up as many of the 120 characters allowed as possible with keywords appropriate for you and your goals.

To change your Headline, click on the Profile option at the top of your Home Page, then choose Edit Profile. In the area that lists your name, select Edit to change your Headline.

These examples can help inspire you to create a Headline that fits your career goals, while describing your value proposition:

Headline Example 1

This sentence gives other LinkedIn users a quick overview of the student’s desire to join a bank, while listing skills needed for the position and making it clear that he or she has recently graduated from a major university:

Aspiring Financial Analyst Targeting Banking Jobs | Financial Modeling, Forecasting, Transaction Support | U of MN Grad

Headline Example 2

This LinkedIn user specified various areas of expertise that he or she might pursue upon graduation, while showing the major field of study and the institution:

Computer Engineering Major, Texas A&M | Multi-Platform Development, Networking, Infrastructure, Product Analysis

Don't neglect your Headline, even if you don't have time to address other areas of your Profile! As shown in these examples, a unique tagline can help other LinkedIn users understand your job goals, and will market your skills in a way that hiring managers can understand.

2) Your LinkedIn Photo

While it may be tempting to add a photo that shows your most relaxed, happy self, there's something to be said for showing your professional image (and standing out among other students). Your LinkedIn Photo offers a prime opportunity to demonstrate your serious approach to finding a career opportunity.

In fact, the headshot you choose will become an important part of your digital identity – one that you'll want to keep toned-down and professional.

Why add a photo on LinkedIn?

Future employers, recruiters, co-workers, and hiring authorities will all be looking



at your Profile Photo, especially right before your interviews. A photo that exudes confidence and professionalism will set the tone for your first meetings, while a too-informal one can cast doubt on your fitness for the new job.

In addition, employers from other locales who recruit from your university may be looking at your Profile. In this case, your Photo may be a key signal that helps them decide if you're the type of candidate they want to pursue.

What type of photos should you avoid?

A group shot, a less-than-serious photo, or one that shows you in a casual setting (such as a beach or nightclub) will actually damage your professional presence on LinkedIn. Employers WILL pass on contacting you if they believe you lack a professional demeanor!

How can you get the best "look" for your digital identity?

Invest in a professional headshot, which can be a surprisingly low-cost endeavor. Perform a Google search for photographers who work with real estate and other professionals, and ask about the cost of a single shot.

You can also put on either a suit (a dress shirt for men, or a professional-looking blouse for women) and ask a camera-bearing friend to take an array of shots. Use a neutral background, or better yet, a library or office setting.

3) Your LinkedIn Summary

Similar to the Info section of Facebook, your LinkedIn Summary is used to display a quick snapshot of your career interests and background. It appears under the full Profile view, and is the first area to be displayed (after the basics of your Education and Experience).

While the Summary data isn't required to reach 100% Profile completeness, it's actually a critical area to use on LinkedIn, due to its prominent placement.

Most visitors to your Profile will immediately look at this area for an overview of your career goals and experience.

What should your Summary contain?

The best Summaries offer a snapshot of professional history and aspirations. In addition, writing your Summary in first-person will help your audience believe that you're reaching out directly to them.

Limited to 2,000 characters, your Summary can contain skills, job titles, details of your education, and other key facets of your qualifications. Well-written Summaries can also offer a glimpse of your passion for your career, strong interest in particular roles, major accomplishments, or your reasons behind choosing a particular major.

Sample Summary 1 for an Accounting major:

As a newly minted accounting professional, I'm planning to leverage my Bachelor of Science from the School of Business at Ohio State to first earn a CPA... and then fulfill a lifelong goal of entering the world of public accounting.

I offer a solid record of study across accounting information systems, business law, cost accounting, corporate and individual taxation, government and regulatory compliance, and auditing topics.

To better prepare for my career as a public accountant, I've also interned under accounting firm Roberts Roth & Anderson, where I gained exposure to corporate tax practices and recent changes in Sarbanes-Oxley requirements.

Throughout my studies, I've also gained knowledge of:

Tax Withholding Requirements

Accounting Systems (ERP, Oracle)

Securities Research

State Income Tax

Form 990-T Compliance

Federal, State, and Individual Returns / Extensions

Bank Reporting

Microsoft Excel

Note the keywords used throughout the Summary (e.g. CPA, public accounting, cost accounting, taxation, Sarbanes-Oxley, tax withholding, etc.), which help reinforce a message of value, while helping employers locate this candidate's skills on LinkedIn.

Sample Summary 2, using a different approach for a student in the field of Marketing:

MARKETING ASSOCIATE ~ MARKETING ANALYST

Always interested in creating promotions that increase business, I've developed marketing strategy for several businesses, including an electrical contracting firm, a commercial dry cleaning company, and most recently, a real estate practice (as part of my internship).

My studies as a Bachelor of Science candidate in Marketing from Northwestern University have rounded out this experience; I chose this program because it offered real-world, hands-on marketing insights from business instructors and professional practitioners.

I'm looking to make a substantial difference in profitability as a Marketing Associate or Marketing Analyst, and offer solid knowledge that includes:

Global Business Concepts

Market Research

Competitive Intelligence

Branding

Analytics

Consumer Behavior

Social Media

E-Marketing

I can be reached at johnjones12@gmail.com or 203-555-3311.

To update your Summary, select “Edit Profile” from the top menu under “Profile.” You’ll see a short, narrow window in which to enter your information.

Updating this part (and others) on LinkedIn is much easier if you first prepare your text in a Word document, then use the Properties feature to check for the total count of characters with spaces. After tuning your entry, select all the text and paste it directly into the Summary area on LinkedIn.

4) Your Experience

This area can be the hardest for an entry-level candidate to tackle. After all, you may not have actual work experience to show, so what (if anything) can you add here?

Consider leveraging internships, volunteer experience, part-time jobs, or other activities that show your promise as an up-and-coming professional in this section.

When updating your Experience, remember to flesh out your information in a Word document first, as this can help to see how the text will look prior to pasting it onto the site.

Example of an internship position in the Experience section:

Forester & Roberson

Accounting Intern

Schaumburg, IL

April 2011 – July 2011

Gained experience in forensic accounting by working with senior CPAs in a 100-associate firm. Met with clients from industries including retail, real estate, advertising, and construction; attended meetings with senior partners.

Completed initial tax compliance analysis for large technology company client. Worked with Corporate Tax Analysts to draft and publish findings after researching individual state taxation restrictions.

Here, you’ll see reference to details such as the size of the firm, the type of work assigned, and the requirements for working on a major project.

Note that the keywords included in this example include *forensic accounting*, *CPA*, *retail*, *real estate*, *advertising*, *construction*, *tax compliance analysis*, *Corporate Tax Analyst*, and *state taxation* – all words that you might find in a common job description for an entry level Tax Analyst.

Sample Experience entry for a volunteer role:

Western Flower Society

Reno, Nevada

Nonprofit Assistant (Volunteer)

November 2010 – May 2012

Coordinated marketing meetings, daily appointments, and Development Director calendar at growing nonprofit organization.

Took meeting notes and established calendar for marketing projects. Delivered graphic designs used as in marketing collateral for Society's annual fundraiser.

Worked with and mentored additional volunteers on short projects.

Even though this was technically unpaid experience, it still counts with employers! Volunteer activities can often show initiative, ability to juggle multiple duties, and your ability to produce quality work.

5) Your Education

This portion of LinkedIn is very straightforward to update and maintain. Education can be used to specify current, completed, and unfinished degree programs, as well as studies for certifications or seminars.

While you may have been prompted to enter your university name when setting up your LinkedIn Profile, you can either edit this section, or add other areas of study.

You can also use the Activities and Societies subset of Education (tied to each college or university you specify) to show extracurricular activities.

Employers frequently look for these details, so be sure to add information such as:

- Part-time jobs (especially if related to your job goal)
- Nonprofit or volunteer roles
- Academic honors
- Overseas studies

- Dissertation or thesis topics
- Language studies
- Student council representation
- Community service

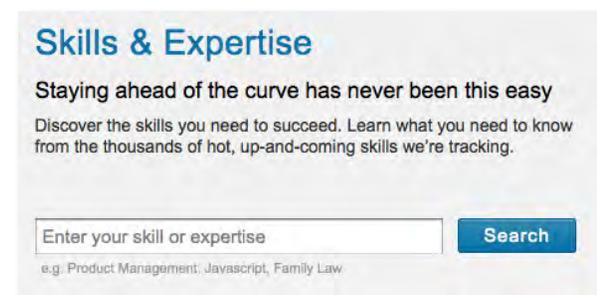
Even though you can use these activities to populate other parts of LinkedIn, employers may look more carefully at the information associated with your college experience.

6) Your Skills

The Skills section is somewhat new to LinkedIn, and has emerged as an important area for Profile keywords. This part of LinkedIn's member database is also searchable by other users, who may be able to find you based on the terms that you specify.

To use the Skills area, first access LinkedIn's Sections; from the home page, click on "Edit Profile" (after choosing "Profile" from the top menu).

Scroll just past the shaded synopsis of your background, and right before the Summary, you'll see "New: Add sections to reflect achievements and experiences on your profile." (as of this writing in 2012, the phrase "New" has appeared here for nearly 2 years)



Click on Add Sections, and a list of categories will appear. Select Skills & Expertise, and you'll see a freeform Skills input field.

Here, you can add any area of competency. However, as you begin to type, you'll see suggestions pop up in the box while you type. This means LinkedIn users have already added the Skill as a common term in the database.

When you are adding a new Skill, you have the opportunity to specify your level of expertise, which LinkedIn labels "Proficiency" with choices ranging from "Beginner" through "Expert."

How will adding Skills help your job search?

Remember that these terms are technically the same as keywords used in job descriptions! If you're stuck on what to put here, pull some postings for your desired position (using a job board).

Next, take some time to peruse each listing for common skill requirements. Even if you aren't particularly well-versed in each area, remember that LinkedIn will let you specify your Skills at the "Beginner" level.

Entering at least 10 Skills (the limit is 50) will help your Profile become more searchable by the keywords related to your desired job.

Examples of typical Skills (or keywords) common to entry-level candidates are:

Project Coordination
Computer Networking
Global Business
Sales Prospecting

Graphic Design
Organizational Development
Social Media
Chemical Analysis
Operating Systems
General Ledger
Packaging Design
Financial Analysis
Business Writing

This Section can be continually edited to add more Skills, allowing you to specify your level of expertise and years of experience for each entry.

7) Your Projects

Another part of LinkedIn's Sections, the Projects area will allow you to add major projects that you've completed as part of your studies or work experience.

As most employers expect a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration from new graduates, the Projects area is a great place to note your experience with teams of classmates.

LinkedIn allows you to enter Project details such as the Name of the effort (which may simply be the name of your class), Team Members (you can specify yourself only, as other students may not be using LinkedIn, any URL for the Project, Dates, and a Description).

The following examples show Projects added as part of a college curriculum:

Graduate Market Research Study (Marketing Management Course) 2011 – 2012

Produced the first of several demographic studies supporting the goals for XYZ Company's new campaigns. Analyzed new market potential in Europe and the U.S., with results and trends mapped in Microsoft Excel. Worked with team members to present findings over several course periods.

Computer Science Degree Program – Game Development 2011

Worked in a group of 5 to develop game proposals suitable for iPhone, Xbox 360, and Wii platforms, with prototypes meeting initial Microsoft and Nintendo requirements. Interfaced with "users" including outside groups of students. Conducted interviews to gather data on desired features. Published proposals and demonstrated single prototype to graduate-level students.

Note that in Projects, as in other areas of LinkedIn, keywords can be used to demonstrate knowledge of the skills that employers will need in your first job. Be sure to add sufficient detail of the project size, scope, impact on an actual company, and alignment with your future (target) jobs.

8) Your Language Abilities

Employers are continually on the lookout for candidates who can navigate multicultural situations with ease. For example, some companies may need sales professionals with sufficient abilities in Portuguese or Spanish to handle common scenarios in Latin America or Europe.

Therefore, you'll benefit from listing all language competencies in this part of your Sections.

Even if you aren't fully conversant in another language, it still makes sense to list these skills, along with your level of capability. LinkedIn suggests using terms such as "Native proficiency," "Elementary proficiency," or "partial fluency" to specify your level of language ability.

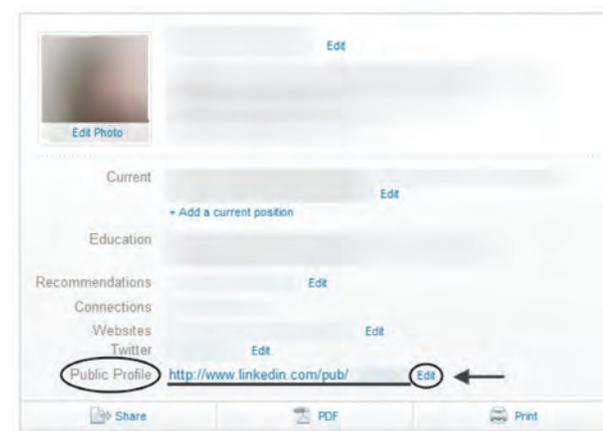
If you are conversant in more than one language, LinkedIn encourages you to set up a Profile in each language. However, multiple Profiles are otherwise discouraged.

9) Your Public Profile

LinkedIn creates a separate web "page" for each user Profile, and will publish information on this page according to settings that you control. It's recommended that you edit the Public Profile, as this will control how you appear when others search for you on Google, Yahoo, Bing, and other search engines.

To verify and change these settings, scroll down past your information in the gray shaded box on LinkedIn to "Public Profile," which is the last entry within the box. Select "Edit" at the right end of the Public Profile link line.

After clicking on "Edit," you'll see various categories of the Profile listed on the right side of the page (see below). The recommended entries are "Make my public profile visible to **everyone**"



and to check all the items listed (Picture, Headline, Summary, Current Positions, Honors and Awards, etc.). Selecting these choices ensures that others will find all of your Profile information indexed via search engines.

Right underneath this area, you'll see "Your public profile URL," which displays the page LinkedIn has assigned to your account.

It is recommended that you click on "**Customize your public profile URL**" to change this field to a more readable name (such as your full names or a descrip-

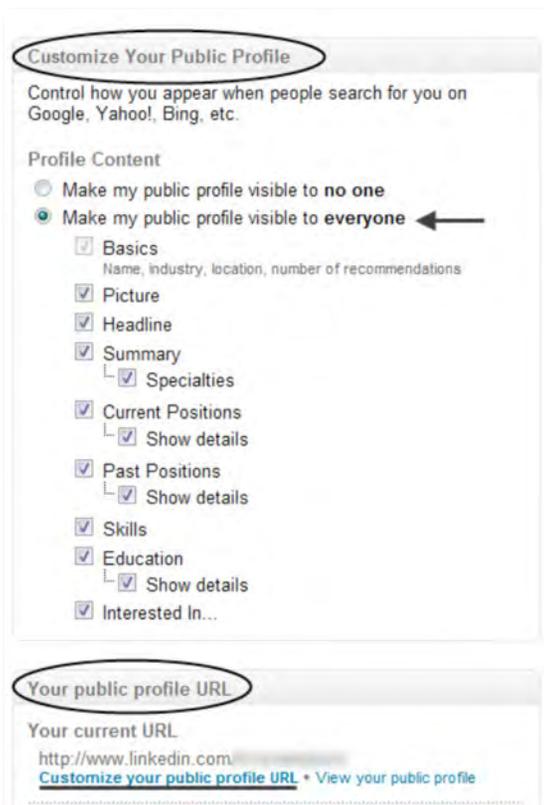
tion of your professional identity), rather than the series of numbers and letters assigned by LinkedIn.

Examples of customized LinkedIn URLs:

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/robertrjones>

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/accountingspecialist>

Customizing the URL makes it more effective if you use it on your resume, in your email signature, on networking/business cards, etc.



Chapter 4: How to Continually Leverage LinkedIn

After you've taken the time to properly update your Profile and add Connections, what else is there on LinkedIn that will facilitate your job search? Plenty.

These tips will help you regularly get the most out of LinkedIn, with activities that will draw the attention of employers and other members.

Status Updates

Noticed all the updates scrolling by on your home page each time you log in?

These are called Status Updates, and they offer a unique way for you to promote your skills to other users.

Not to be confused with Facebook's News Feed, Status Updates are intended to show other users how you operate professionally – filling them in on your career activities or work interests.

Examples of common Status Updates include:

- Notes on a trade industry event you plan to attend
- Comments on an industry-related book or article that you've read
- Thoughts on best practices in your industry
- New projects you're working on in your degree program
- Additional skills you're developing as part of your studies

Why should you issue Status Updates?

Anything you post as an Update stays in place on your Profile, and can therefore be read days, weeks, or even months into the future by your Profile Visitors.

Updates keep you on employers' radar by giving them a glimpse of what interest you professionally, and the efforts you've taken to develop your skills.

These Updates stay on your Profile (in the View Profile display, in a scrolling list shown on the right) for an indefinite period of time – giving visitors an idea of your professional level, career expertise, and goals.

Updates benefit you in other ways as well: if you're starting a new project that can add sought-after skills to your repertoire, this notification will keep employers informed of your new skill set for months to come.

How to Add a Status Update

Use the Share an Update box on your LinkedIn home page to provide a description or link (or both). If desired, you can include a Twitter notification.

If the Update is an article, you can add the link, along with a short comment in the description box.

After adding an Update, check back to see if others have commented on it, or issued a "Like," which can give you a reason to reach out to them on the site.

Groups

Among the most powerful features of LinkedIn, Groups allow you to "converse" with other users in forums, get in touch with those not already in your network, and gain new Connections.



First of all, join Groups (a lot of them!) that represent your career goals. The benefit of Group membership isn't just the forums; it's the fact that LinkedIn allows free contact from other users who share the Group with you. The maximum number you can join is 50.

A Group can be launched for nearly any common interest or function, and as the site has grown, so has the volume of Groups. You'll find Groups devoted to everything from your career level, alma mater, field of interest, or personal activities.

Why should you join (and participate in) Groups?

Other than using InMail (the internal email feature) or an email address, the only way to get in touch with other users on LinkedIn is to join Groups.

Employers and recruiters often prefer to connect with users in other Groups, rather than pay additional fees for accessing a larger volume of members.

When you join a Group, it also signals to others that you have a professional interest in this particular area. Therefore, aspiring financial analysts should join Groups for finance or accounting professionals, engineers can target technology Groups, and biotechnology candidates can seek out Groups with a focus on R&D.

Groups also contain Discussions forums that allow you to post and comment on various topics.

How to find and join Groups

Select the Groups tab on the top menu, and then “Groups You May Like” to see a list of suggested groups for your career interests. You’ll notice that the Search box at the top right of the page also defaults to Groups, allowing you to put in a keyword for finding others outside of this list.

Use the “Join” function next to each desired Group name. Most often, you’ll receive a message stating that your membership must be approved. After gaining approval, access your Groups by selecting the same item at the top of the page, then clicking on “Your Groups.” Within each Group, you’ll see tabs for the Discussions, Members, and other features.

When you join a Group, LinkedIn makes the Group’s logo visible on your Profile by default. You can change that immediately, or you can change your mind later and adjust it in the Group Settings for the Groups involved.

For example, you could make your membership in your college’s alumni Group and your other professional interest Groups visible, but perhaps not make your more personal memberships (like a job search Group) public.

Answers

An open forum for Q&A among members, LinkedIn Answers are a great resource for nearly any topic of interest, from job search to industry-specific information. Similar to Groups forums, the Answers section allows you to ask or answer questions of any type, and also provides an Advanced Answers Search function for browsing all of the site Answers history.

While Answers don’t impact your ability to be contacted by other users, this section is often used to gain greater visibility – with widely viewed and commented

topics. *All Answers queries and responses are both 100% public and indexed by Google, meaning that you’ll need to exercise caution.*

If you decide to participate in this section, keep your Answers activity on LinkedIn as clean and professional as possible.

Chapter 5: How to Maximize Your Use of LinkedIn

Upon becoming acclimated to LinkedIn, you’ll benefit from continually sharing information, conversing with experts in your field, learning about industry topics, updating your Profile, and sending messages to employers during your job search. However, if you’re divulging too-personal details, or letting others have uncomfortably close insight into your job search, you’ll encounter many roadblocks to winning the perfect job.

In other words, LinkedIn is the place for professional conversations and interactions. Leave the personal interchanges for your Facebook account, and take care to put forth a polished presence on the site.

These LinkedIn actions can potentially harm your job search progress:

- Posting negative comments about your job search in a LinkedIn Group
- Blowing off steam about prospective employers, HR contacts, or recruiters
- Issuing too-personal or negative Status Updates
- Using LinkedIn Answers for confidential questions or personal queries
- Mistaking Status Updates for Twitter (and bombarding your contacts with constant notifications)
- Revealing concerns with a personal reference (such as a professor)
- Disclosing religious, social, or political preferences

Keep in mind that seemingly “secure” forums or venues on LinkedIn are often open to public viewing, and that employers WILL research your digital identity before hiring you. Nearly everyone on LinkedIn can read your comments or posts, and potentially use them against you when comparing you to other candidates.

Therefore, you’ll benefit from limiting your interactions to either feedback on professional concerns facing your industry, or neutral commentary on most other issues.

Chapter 6: LinkedIn for Your Career

Once you have established your LinkedIn Profile and used it to help you obtain a job, don’t let it die. Continue to maintain your activity in Updates, Answers, and Groups.

Studies have shown that LinkedIn is useful in many professions, and it is a great way to maintain a professional presence online, allowing you to control your digital identity. Employers and contacts WILL continue to search for you online throughout your professional career!

The purpose of maintaining your LinkedIn presence is twofold: it delivers a branded online message to those who Google your name after receiving your traditional resume, and it also allows others (such as recruiters) to find you inside LinkedIn when they search for people with your talents, past titles, and skill sets.

A Note of Caution: After You’ve Found Your Next Job

Be sure to check with your employer to make sure that continuing to use LinkedIn will not be in violation of a “social media usage policy.” Many companies now monitor social media activity among employees.

Continue to associate your LinkedIn Profile with your personal email address rather than limiting it to your work email address. Just in case you lose your job, you don’t want to lose access to and control of your LinkedIn Profile.



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Laura Smith-Proulx, Executive Director of [An Expert Resume](#), is an award-winning executive resume writer, national columnist, author, LinkedIn and SEO enthusiast, and past recruiter. Laura holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management Information Systems and Journalism from the University of Wisconsin and is a professionally credentialed resume writer and job search coach. Laura is author of [How to Get Hired Faster: 60+ Proven Tips and Strategies to Access the Hidden Job Market](#).

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About Job-Hunt.org

Helping job seekers since 1995, Job-Hunt has won much recognition for the quality of the content, and our goal is to continue to deserve that recognition. Job-Hunt.org is a free “employment portal” Website which links to over 18,000 employers and other job search resources, including over 1,500 professional and industry associations. Advice from various job search experts helps job seekers with topics ranging from protecting their privacy to using craigslist, LinkedIn, and Twitter for job search.

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