



## WWW.LINKEDIN.COM FOR NETWORKING

Job Seekers have long been advised that "networking" is the way to get a job rather than sending a flood of resumes in response to newspaper or internet job postings. The process of networking hasn't changed much in many decades. Email has made communication faster and cheaper, but networking still means staying in touch with people you know, letting them know that you are job seeking, and getting more contacts who can get you closer to someone who can hire you.

In recent years we have seen the rise of online social networking. You may have heard about websites such as MySpace and Facebook which are largely used by the NetGen generation to communicate and stay in touch with their friends. The coming generations who use social networking sites are much less likely to ever lose touch with their friends, because staying in touch has become so easy.

Now there is a site called LinkedIn that serves the same purpose for professionals who need/want to stay in touch for business and professional reasons. LinkedIn has been growing at a rate of 100,000 per month and shows no signs of slowing. This tip sheet discusses the basics of using LinkedIn, and building your online social network.

First of all, there is one important viewpoint that is known by all really successful networkers, and that is that it is all about what you can do for others, not just getting your own needs met. If you are not interested in being helpful or being a resource for others, then you will benefit from networking very little. The willingness to help others is the grease that makes it all work and makes it all worthwhile. If others perceive you as a "taker" and not a "giver," you will find less cooperation in your network.

1. First, do some looking around on the LinkedIn website to see how it works. Do some searches of people you know and examine profiles to see what people are putting out there. Go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).
2. If you decide to sign up, then click on the JOIN NOW button. The basic level of service is free. There is a premium membership which allows more capability and features. But the basic free level is all you need to get started.
3. Fill in the required fields of information, and click the JOIN LINKEDIN button.
4. Spend a lot of time composing and completing your profile. You will want to do a good job on this because this is what people see of you online. **IMPORTANT:** your profile is not the same as your resume. It is not simply a listing of jobs you have held and things you have done. While there is overlap, nothing is more boring than reading a sterile resume. Your profile should reflect more of who you are than your resume would. This is why it is a good idea to look at what others put out there. Some, you will quickly see, have just put a few bare bones facts out there and these profiles don't inspire much interest.
5. The **HEADING** includes your name and your job title or your occupation and your company. It also includes your location. A default will be inserted based on your zip code, but you could reword it if you want.
6. **POSITIONS:** The section on positions allows you to put in your current company and your last few employers. Keep in mind to use the correct company name because this is something others will be searching on. If your company is one that is frequently abbreviated by acronym like IBM you don't have to worry. But if your company is Twin Cities Amalgamated, but you put in TC Amalgamated, then you might lose some hits. So, it is safest to put the whole name and then any acronyms or abbreviations in parenthesis after it. Example: Boston Scientific (BSC).

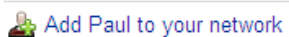
7. If your company has been acquired and the company changed names, put in both. Example: Boston Scientific (Guidant), or Integra Telecom (Eschelon). This way it will show up no matter which name someone searches on.
8. **EDUCATION:** You will have a chance to put in any schools you attended and any degrees you earned. Schools are a big link for people, so don't hesitate to add one even if you didn't graduate from there. There maybe some colleagues who remember you and would love to get back in touch.
9. **INDUSTRY:** You can select the industry where you work(ed) from a list. Get as close as you can because some people will search by industry.
10. **EXPERIENCE:** More detailed information on your previous work experience.
11. **EDUCATION:** Listing of each school and degree or certification you have attained.
12. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** This section is for fleshing out your profile with other kinds of information you may want people to know about you.
  - Websites: List the URL for any website you own or have a stake in wanting people to know.
  - Interests: This could be for topics you love to study and activities you are involved in.
  - Groups and Associations: List any professional associations and organizations where you are a member (SHRM, ASTD, etc.).
13. **Contact Settings:** For what purpose do you want to be contacted by others? (career opportunities or getting back in touch, etc.)

## Searching on LinkedIn

The search features in LinkedIn are very powerful for finding people you would like to re-connect with as well as finding people with whom you might want to build a professional relationship.

1. In the keyword field you can type the name of a person, business, school, or even a city and it will return all the LinkedIn members who have that in their profile. It is fun to find out what happened to some of your classmates. You will quickly realize that there are many people with the same names out there so you might need to use the advanced search feature to narrow it down.
2. **REFINE SEARCH RESULTS** - this button is found in the upper right section of the search results page. Clicking this options allows you to do more advanced searches. You can select a company and restrict the search to only members who have that company listed as their current company. You can do combinations to find people who used to work with you by entering your company but not checking the current companies only box.
3. **Restrict searches by location.** The default search is for "anywhere," which is sometimes not useful. The other option is to select "In or near," which then uses a zip code area. The default zip code is the one you entered when you registered for LinkedIn. But you can change it, and then LinkedIn will search within a 50 mile radius of that zip code.

## Adding people to your network

1. When you find someone (through a search or in someone else's contact list), you want to add to your contacts, just click on the button near the top right that says: 
2. This will bring up a prepared message that asks how you know the person, and says, "I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn. In most cases you should customize the note with something personal. Remember, you want this person in your contacts for some reason, so send them a warm and inviting message.

## Responding to requests to join another's network

There are three possible responses: 1) Just don't respond. 2) Accept. 3) "I don't know" this person, also known as "IDK." Avoid using IDK because it negatively affects the requestor's LinkedIn status. After 5 or so IDKs their account may be suspended, because the system assumes they are misusing it.