

LinkedIn Basics for Job Searching

June 9, 2011 by [Tom Denham](#)

According to OnlineMBA.com, 98% of LinkedIn users make at least \$60k and 74% have a college degree. With 100 million users and growing by 1 million every 12 days, LinkedIn is not a fad! It is commonly referred to as the “Facebook for Professionals.” Perhaps you created a LinkedIn profile because several people said you should have one. Now what the heck do you do with it?

If someone is thinking about hiring you, they will search for you on 1) Google, 2) Facebook, and 3) LinkedIn. Be sure to position yourself as an SME – Subject Matter Expert. LinkedIn is your professional Internet image. It allows you to create a virtual resume and swap business cards online. LinkedIn is a powerful tool for networking your way to your next job. Having a strong social media presence can make a great first impression. If you are serious about advancing your career today, you must be on LinkedIn!!!

1. Complete Your “Profile”

Start by logging on to LinkedIn.com and follow the directions for setting up a Profile. It is free and easy. Your “Headline” is the first thing a prospective employer sees after your name. Make it persuasive. Very concisely tell them: 1) Who you are, 2) What you do, 3) How you can add value. Absolutely include a great photo, but not something that appears unprofessional. People will feel more connected to you with a photo that is well done. Add all past work and educational experiences – the more the better. By adding Honors/Awards and contact information your Profile will finish up strong. A Profile that is 100% complete will give a positive first impression, anything less and you may come across as not serious.

2. Build Your “Connections”

Set a weekly goal to add at least five Connections to your LinkedIn – that’s one a day. My advice is to only connect with people you have met. Otherwise, your network will be filled with a bunch of strangers. You don’t want to get the reputation that you are just fishing for anyone and linking with people you don’t even care about. Be sure to send a personalized message when you “Add to Network.” The important networking questions are: 1) Who do I know?, 2) Who knows me?, 3) Do they know that I am looking? and 4) Do they know the type of job I am seeking? Don’t wait until you are laid off to nurture your network – begin today!!!

3. Give and Get “Recommendations”

The more colleagues and past supervisors that can vouch for your reputation the better. You will be taken more seriously if you have at least five

Recommendations. The way to get Recommendations is to give ones to people you: 1) Know, 2) Like and 3) Trust.

4. Research “Companies”

If you do a search under “Companies” you will learn a great deal about the types of employers that hire people with your background. You will see a list of people in your network that are employed there that may be able to open doors for you. Also, companies can post opportunities on their Profile. By “Following Companies” you can stay current on those that interest you.

5. Join “Groups”

Participating in Groups is one of the best ways to interact and build your reputation with others of similar interest. For example, if you joined the Chamber of Commerce, you would see a built-in job board exclusively to the members of their discussion group.

6. Search for “Jobs”

This allows you to search for jobs by title, keywords or company name. You can save your searches, save jobs you have found and even do a detailed advanced search. I suggest you do a weekly search on the three to five types of jobs that interest you the most.

7. Share an “Update”

When you have at least 50 Connections in your Profile, you can then begin to tell your network that you are seeking a new opportunity. Be specific with the two to three types of jobs you want. When you update your Status, it shows up on all your Connection’s homepages. The more people that see your photo, read your name and know what you want, the more your “Job Search Agents” will be looking out for you. Regularly stay engaged with your network and update your progress – be focused and specific.

8. Network with Hiring Managers

Two Connections away is the limit for reaching the hiring manager. This means you either know someone who can get you hired or they know someone that can help. If that is not possible, then perhaps someone you know inside the company can hand deliver your resume to the hiring manager. Knowing it is from a co-worker will give it special attention. Also, company insiders can give you the real details about the job and how to land it. LinkedIn is a useful tool that builds a safety net in case of a career emergency.

9. Spend 10 Minutes on LinkedIn

It takes time to build your network and comfort level with LinkedIn so be persistent and patient. Play around with it for 10 minutes each day. Have fun with it. Ask people who are regular users of LinkedIn for tips and advice on how to maximize its potential. Take this virtual network to the next level by meeting your Connections for coffee and requesting their help in your job search.

Tom's Tip: "The value of a man resides in what he gives not in what he is capable of receiving." – Albert Einstein

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