

MASTERING LINKEDIN

With more than 175 million users, [LinkedIn](#) is the most popular social network for professionals as well as one of the top social networks overall. Are you using it to its fullest potential? While Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and Pinterest have been monopolizing the buzz in the social media marketing world lately, **LinkedIn is a powerful platform that often gets underutilized or put on the back burner.**

But the truth is, LinkedIn can be extremely useful -- especially when you're aware of all the little hidden tricks that don't get nearly enough exposure as they deserve. To help you [master LinkedIn](#), below is our ultimate list of 35 awesome tricks you may have been overlooking.

We've divided these tips into three main categories -- optimizing your LinkedIn presence, using LinkedIn for professional networking, and using LinkedIn for business and marketing.

Optimizing Your LinkedIn Presence

1) Claim your vanity URL.

Make your profile look more professional and easier to share by claiming your LinkedIn vanity URL. Instead of a URL with a million confusing numbers at the end, it will look nice and clean like this: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/pamelavaughan>. Do so by "editing" your profile and clicking "customize your public profile URL" on the drop down box next to "edit".

2) Create a profile badge for your personal website.

If you have your own personal website or blog, you can promote your personal LinkedIn presence and help grow your professional network by adding a Profile Badge that links to your public LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn has a few different badge designs to select from, and you can [configure your own here](#).

3) Make your blog/website links sexier.

Instead of using the default "My Website"-type anchor text links in your LinkedIn profile, you can change the anchor text to make those links more appealing to people who view your profile. So if you want to increase clicks on the website links you can display on your profile, change the link's anchor text to something more attention-grabbing than the standard options LinkedIn provides. For example, if you want to include a link to your blog, rather than choosing LinkedIn's standard "Blog" anchor text, customize it to include keywords that indicate what your blog is about, like "Internet Marketing Blog." Each profile can display up to 3 website links like this, and they can be customized by editing your profile, clicking edit on your website links, and selecting "Other" in the drop-down menu to customize the anchor text.

4) Search engine optimize your profile.

You can also optimize your profile to get found by people searching LinkedIn for key terms with which you want to be associated. Add these keywords to various sections of your profile such as your headline or summary.

5) Install applications.

Did you know that LinkedIn provides a variety of different applications you can use to improve your LinkedIn profile? Browse the [Application Directory](#), and consider adding the SlideShare application or linking your blog to showcase your presentations and blog articles on your profile. The Events application is also a great way to see what events your connections are attending and find other popular industry events to attend.

6) Rearrange your profile.

LinkedIn enables users to reorder the sections of their profile in any way they prefer. When in edit mode on your profile, simply hover your mouse over the title of each section. Your mouse will turn into a four-arrowed icon, at which point you can click then drag and drop to another position on your profile.

7) Take advantage of "Saved Searches."

LinkedIn allows users to create up to 3 saved searches. After conducting a search, clicking the "Save This Search" option allows you to save a search and easily run it again later. You can also choose to receive weekly or monthly reminders via email once new members in the network match your saved search criteria. Just click on the "[Saved Searches](#)" tab on the Advanced Search options page and select one of your saved searches to run again.

8) Extend the life of your questions.

Perhaps you're using the [LinkedIn Answers](#) feature to grow your knowledge of industry-related topics. If so, you may have noticed that, after a period of time, the opportunity closes for users to answer questions that are posed in the Answers feature of LinkedIn. To extend the life of the questions you ask and enable more time for users to provide answers, click on the "My Q&A" tab within Answers, click on the question you'd like to revive, and click "re-open this question to answers," which will open it up again for 7 more days.

9) Quickly turn your LinkedIn profile into a resume.

Job seeking is one of the most common -- and beneficial -- uses of LinkedIn. Were you aware that LinkedIn enables you to turn your profile into a resume-friendly format in seconds with its [Resume Builder tool](#)? Just choose a resume template, edit it, and export it as a PDF that you can print, email, and share.

10) Find a job with LinkedIn's job board.

Now that you've generated that awesome new resume from LinkedIn's Resume Builder tool, you can use it -- and [LinkedIn's Job board](#) -- to help you land an awesome job. LinkedIn allows you to search for jobs by industry and location. It even suggests jobs you might be interested in based on the information in your LinkedIn profile.

11) Get endorsed.

Back in September, [LinkedIn launched a new feature called Endorsements](#), which enables users to endorse their connections for skills they've listed in the Skill & Expertise section of their profile -- or recommend one they haven't yet listed. These endorsements then show up on your profile within that same Skills & Expertise section, as you can see in the screenshot to the right. Okay, so you can't *guarantee* your connections will endorse you for those skills, but because it's so easy for LinkedIn users to do (all they have to do is click on the + sign next to a particular skill on a user's profile), you'll find that many of them will do it anyway. Just make sure your profile is complete and you've listed the skills you want people to endorse you for. It will definitely give your profile a bit of a credibility boost.

Using LinkedIn for Professional Networking

12) Use OpenLink to send messages to people you're not connected to.

Aside from the exception of group members (more on that in number 17), LinkedIn only allows you to send messages to people with which you share a first-degree connection. But did you know some people let you send them messages anyway, even if you're not connected? The ability to be part of the OpenLink network is only available to premium account holders, but it allows them to be available for messaging by any other LinkedIn member if they choose to be. [OpenLink members](#) will appear with an icon that looks like a small ring of dots next to their name in search results and on their profile.

13) Check in on "Network Updates."

Found on your LinkedIn homepage, Network Updates are kind of like your Facebook news feed. Check these periodically for a quick snapshot of what your connections are up to and sharing.

14) Be identifiable.

Find out who's checking out your profile by allowing others to see who you are if you view theirs. When you click the information under "Who's Viewed My Profile" on your profile page, you'll be able to view users who have looked at your profile, stats on your profile's number of views, and its appearances in search recently. To change this, go into your settings and click "See what others see when you've viewed their profile."

15) Export connections.

Want to transfer your LinkedIn connections to another contact management system? LinkedIn enables you to easily export your connections. Just click on "Contacts," "My Connections," and then scroll down and click "Export Connections." You have the option of either exporting as a .CSV or .VCF file.

16) Easily find email contacts on LinkedIn.

Speaking of connections, the [LinkedIn Companion for Firefox](#) is a great plugin that helps you identify the LinkedIn profiles of people who are emailing you. It also enables you to easily access other LinkedIn features via your browser.

17) Leverage the perks of LinkedIn Groups.

Did you know that if you're a member of the same group as another user, you can bypass the need to be a first-degree connection in order to message them? In addition, group members are also able to view the profiles of other members of the same group without being connected. Join more groups to enable more messaging and profile viewership capabilities.

18) Take advantage of advanced search options.

LinkedIn's Advanced Search feature provides a much richer search experience. For example, say you want to find out if you're connected to anyone that works at a specific company. Type the company name in the company field in Advanced Search, then sort the results by "Relationship" to see if you have any first or second degree connections to any employees.

19) Share your LinkedIn status updates on Twitter.



Ever since the [LinkedIn/Twitter breakup at end of June](#), you can no longer automatically sync your tweets to publish on LinkedIn (or even selectively by using the hashtags #in or #li in specific tweets). But don't fret -- the opposite is still possible! So if you're ever posting an update to LinkedIn that you'd like your Twitter followers to see as well, you can easily syndicate that update to Twitter by checking off the Twitter checkbox before clicking "Share" in the LinkedIn update composer.

Chattahoochee Technical College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate degrees. Inquiries related to the college's accreditation by the Commission may be directed to SACSCOC, 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or telephone 404-679-4500. Questions related to admissions and the policies, programs, and practices of Chattahoochee Technical College should be directed to the College.