LinkedIn: Networking and Job Search

What is LinkedIn?
LinkedIn is a social networking website with the largest online professional network in the world!

Over 170 different industries and 187 million people from more than 200 countries use LinkedIn. As of 2012, approximately 1 in 6 Canadians are on this social media platform. Students and recent graduates from colleges and universities are the fastest growing sector of users.

There are many businesses, influencers, and key decision-makers on the website today, including executives from every Fortune 500 company! Eighty-five of the Fortune 100 companies have been known to use LinkedIn as a hiring resource.

How can you build your network?
“Be LinkedIn, or be left out!”

LinkedIn is a powerful networking tool used by professionals to build and maintain contacts. As a job seeker, a key thing to remember is that you always want to build your network before you need it!

LinkedIn uses the concept of 3 degrees of separation for networking:

- **1st degree connection** = your “friend” and direct contact
- **2nd degree connection** = friend of a friend
- **3rd degree connection** = friend of a friend... of a friend!

Build your network by:

1. Adding Connections

Start close to home by sending invitations to connect with people that you already know. You can import contacts from your e-mail provider(s) to add to your existing LinkedIn network. Simply go to “Contacts” in the main header, and select “Add Connections”.

Avoid randomly adding people on LinkedIn that you do not know. You want to connect with people that you do know, so that you can help each other through recommendations, information about opportunities, etc. Connect with colleagues, employers, classmates (i.e. high school, university, college, other training programs, etc.), and others that you’ve met through networking or social events.

Will LinkedIn get you a job?

No.

Just having a LinkedIn account will not guarantee you a job. However, it can provide you with the resources to access various professional networks, key decision-makers, and opportunities that will help your search for meaningful work.
2. Joining LinkedIn Groups

Join up to 50 LinkedIn groups and participate in discussions to show your knowledge and expertise. A useful feature of “Groups” is that members can message each other directly, without being connected.

Over time, you might message group members who consistently reply to your discussions and invite them to connect on LinkedIn. If you continue to develop good rapport with these connections, and they live in your area, consider inviting them to meet up in person to continue your discussion or conduct an information interview.

3. Conducting a “People” Search

You can locate LinkedIn users with a “People” search or an “Advanced Search” by entering keywords or companies. To find professionals in your field, review others’ connection lists, Company Pages, etc.

Contact individuals of interest directly with an InMail (to introduce yourself, request an informational interview, etc.) or request an introduction through a mutual connection. Try to introduce yourself first before sending an invite to connect – users will often reject invites from people they do not know!

4. Using LinkedIn Answers

Showcase your expertise and share your industry knowledge by asking and answering questions through LinkedIn Answers.

Under the “More” tab in the main header, select “Answers.” Remember, when you help others, others are more likely to help you in return!

How can you use LinkedIn for job search?

LinkedIn Company Pages exist for over 2 million companies!

When using LinkedIn as a tool to assist with your job search, start by shifting your perspective. Instead of thinking, “What can this individual do for me?” consider, “What can I do for this individual?”
1. LinkedIn Jobs

Some employers post exclusively on LinkedIn, so be sure to look through LinkedIn’s job bank and search for jobs that interest you!

Make a note of any existing connections that you have at the company posting the job, and pay particular attention to the Hiring Manager. For instance, are they a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd degree connection? If so, get in touch with your connection(s) to find out more about the job and company.

Use the knowledge gained from your connections to tailor your job application and make yourself stand out!

2. Following Companies and People

Companies

Search for and follow companies of interest to learn more about a company and the people that they employ. Company Pages give you an excellent overview of an organization/business, list job openings, indicate products and services, and provide employee insights.

Under the “Employee Insights” section of a Company Page, you can track the career paths of employees before they started working at the company that you’re interested in. This information might give you a better idea of what the company wants in a new hire. You can also view a list of the most common skills at that company, and where employees go once they leave. In addition, the “Careers” tab allows you to see job postings and testimonials from current employees. This is a great way to get an insider’s perspective on a particular company.

By following a company, updates about new jobs, products or events will appear in your news feed on your LinkedIn home page.

People

You can now follow influential individuals and leaders on LinkedIn. By commenting on and sharing posts from influencers, you can demonstrate your insight on a topic and perhaps develop new connections. Updates and posts from influencers will also appear on your LinkedIn news feed.
3. Tracking Skills & Expertise

Use the Skills & Expertise section to research careers and discover relevant skills.

Go to "More" along the main header and select "Skills & Expertise". Search a particular skill and note its popularity year over year (y/y). If you haven’t already done so, you can add the skill to your Skills & Expertise section on your profile and view a list of related skills. The search results will also show the relative growth of the skill; LinkedIn professionals who have indicated similar skills; and related groups, companies and locations.

4. Conducting a “People” Search

Look through a Company Page that you want to target and try to determine the Hiring Manager that you would report to. Unless you are in Human Resources, the Hiring Manager is usually the person you want to get in touch with!

If you lack connections at a company you want to work for, examine the background of new hires (through Company Pages) or other employee profiles to get a sense of their skills and qualifications. You can also conduct an "Advanced Search" for individuals with your skills, and note the companies that hire them.

Need more help?

Book an appointment with a LinkedIn Profile Advisor and attend our “LinkedIn: Developing Career Connections & Effective Profiles” workshop!

Register for a one-to-one session or workshop by visiting the Career Development and Employment Centre’s website.