

How to Get “LinkedIn”



Job searching has increasingly become an intricate process due to the difficult economic conditions and technological evolution of the Internet. Between the high unemployment rate and companies receiving hundreds of online applications for every job openings, catching the recruiter’s eye is more difficult than ever. Many recruiters are going away from the traditional job advertisements to avoid receiving large numbers of applications from poorly qualified candidates. They rather use social networking media such as LinkedIn, to search for people who better fit their criteria. Therefore, it’s time for you to be open-minded and think differently about how you are going to get your next job.

When creating a LinkedIn account, you will need to tell a compelling story about your aspirations, motivations, and qualifications in order to stand out from millions of profiles. Below are some guidelines about ways to get noticed on LinkedIn:

1. Profiles: Every industry has its own vocabulary, so when describing your skills and experience, use the “buzzwords” commonly found in your field of interest. Recruiters usually type in industry specific key words to find profiles online. For example, if you’re seeking a marketing job, perhaps previous positions included aspects of customer acquisition, social media or market research. Hint: Be relevant, but resist the temptation to overstate your qualifications. In addition, it is important to make sure that your profile is 100% complete.

2. Update your status: Let people know you are job hunting. You may be surprised by how many people would be willing to help you. An example of a message you could post on your status would be “I’m starting my job search today. The years I spent at (name of previous company) have prepared me well to advance my career through this transition. I’m excited to see what’s available in the job market. If you know of anyone who’s looking for a (job title) with (name a couple of your top skills), let me know!”

3. Get relevant recommendations: Ask your connections to provide recommendations viewers of your profile will see. It may seem intimidating to ask, but endorsements will make you stand out. When recruiters view your profile, they are very interested in what other people are saying about you. Nevertheless, do not spam your network with requests for recommendations; only ask those that know you in an academic or professional setting.

4. Find out who you know: Use LinkedIn to get the inside scoop. Run a search on LinkedIn for a prospective employer’s company name cross referenced with the name of your high school, any colleges you’ve attended, and your past workplaces. That way, you can pull up anyone you know who is or has been involved with a prospective employer. You can ask them for information about the company’s culture and how they were successful in getting a job there. It’s even better if they know the recruiter or someone else in the hiring decision-making chain.

5. Connect with industry groups and companies: Professional networks and businesses usually have a presence in social networks. Look in the Groups section of LinkedIn and join relevant professional groups; become a fan of professional groups and your target companies on Facebook as well. Also follow experts and companies on Twitter. Once you join/fan/follow, you’ll automatically receive news (including job information). This “inside” information can alert you to opportunities and give you an advantage in interviews. Potential employers will appreciate the initiative you’ve taken to educate yourself for the job.

6. Engage in conversations: You’ve got the connections and you’re in the groups, but you can’t just sit there. Show that you have more than a pulse and are energetic. Post questions and provide answers for others. Respond to wall posts, re-tweet and react. Differentiate yourself beyond your resume by showing your interest and commitment to this professional area. By engaging in conversation, you’ll actually build the number and quality of your connections online. These contacts you engage with will see that you have something valuable to offer, and may even help with your job search.

7. Include your LinkedIn URL on your resume: Obtain a unique URL for your profile such as www.linkedin.com/in/yourname.

Now, you know how to market yourself online! If you need further information on how to use LinkedIn, check out the following link:

<http://learn.linkedin.com/students/step-1/>

Some of these guidelines were written by Jerome Young in the article “5 ways to win a new job using LinkedIn!” (August 2011) and by Dan Finnigan in the article “A resume is not enough: How to market yourself online” (May 2010).