

How to Use LinkedIn Effectively



Selection
PARTNERS



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How to Use LinkedIn Effectively

LinkedIn is an essential tool to help you step up in your career.

I'm sure you know that LinkedIn™ is the world's largest professional networking platform. It's also one of the most influential social media networks, as of 2018 it has more than 575 million members.

LinkedIn is more than just useful in developing your career – this information will focus on this. LinkedIn can help boost your profile, build awareness of your brand, and help you to connect with the right people who can help you advance your career or even recruit you.

Nine things you must do to get the best from LinkedIn

1. Complete Your LinkedIn Profile

Your profile can be a powerful part of your personal brand. All registered LinkedIn users will be able to view it (unless you set it to private mode). You can also have a public profile that can be found by external search engines, so that even people who are not registered with LinkedIn can see it.

LinkedIn's internal search algorithm have a preference on profiles that rank as "complete," and these can get more than 20 times as many views as incomplete profiles. It's important, therefore, to complete yours. Here are the essential things to remember:

- Add a good-quality photo of yourself. Look smart, smile, and don't have any distractions in the shot. LinkedIn profiles with photos are viewed 7 times more than those without.
- Make your profile stand out by adding a background image (sometimes called a "banner" or "cover" image) that reflects your personality and your profession.
- Mention your industry and location in your headline. You have up to 120 characters for this.
- Include a concise summary of who you are, what you do, and what you have to offer. You have 2,000 characters to play with, but you don't have to use them all. You can also link to, or upload, six examples of your work to make your profile pop.
- Add your current position and describe what it involves. Be specific. Again, you have 2,000 characters.
- Add your previous work history, education details, and at least four skills or areas of expertise.

As you add more details to your profile, you can track your progress from "Beginner" to "Intermediate" to "All-Star" using the Profile Strength bar.





Nine things you must do to get the best from LinkedIn

2. Contact and Connect with Other LinkedIn Users

LinkedIn enables you to network with people and professional organisations in your industry. This is a great way to stay up to date with the latest developments, and to share information with others in your field.

You can invite anyone to connect (and accept their invitations to connect with you), but they must have their own LinkedIn account to use the site.

LinkedIn saves the connections that you make to a list called My Network. When you make a new connection, you gain access not only to that person's profile, but to their publicly available connections, too. These become your "second-degree connections." This opens up even more networking opportunities, as you can then invite them to connect directly with you.

You can also introduce any two LinkedIn connections who haven't yet connected to one another, but who might benefit from doing so.

The number of connections you have affects your search ranking on LinkedIn. It's a good idea to aim for at least 500 "first-degree" connections.

3. Start Talking!

Once you've made your connections on LinkedIn, the Messaging facility allows you to have real-time conversations with them. The Active Status feature tells you which of your connections are online – look out for the green dot beside their profile pictures.

And the Smart Replies function – short, automatically generated, contextual responses (such as "What time?" and "Great, thanks!") – can help to keep your conversations quick and productive.

If you have a Premium account, you can also use InMail. This allows you to send private messages to any LinkedIn member without any prior introduction or additional contact information.

4. Give and Receive Recommendations and Endorsements

Your connections can write "recommendations" for your profile, and offer "endorsements" of your skills, and you can do the same in return. Recruiters and hiring managers read these and it impacts who they invite for interview when they are shortlisting.

Recommendations are personal testimonials that emphasize your professional abilities. Aim to collect a handful of these (between five and 10 is a good "rule of thumb") by asking people you've worked with to write one for you. Ask them to highlight the particular attributes or achievements that have impressed them, rather than making general comments such as, "Tina was fun to work with."

If they are busy you could always jot something down for them to edit, this can be helpful when people are time poor.





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Endorsements are simple notifications confirming that you have a particular skill. They may lack the impact of custom-written recommendations, but if a connection endorses you for your leadership skills, for example, it can help you to stand out from the crowd. LinkedIn also uses these in their search algorithms, so the more endorsements you have for your key skills the better.

5. Use LinkedIn Groups

All LinkedIn members can set up or join groups to discuss ideas and share industry news. This can be a great way to develop your professional network and connect with people who may be in a position to hire you now or down the track.

You can use the search bar at the top of your profile page to look for interesting groups to join, or you can find new groups via the ones you've already joined. Once you're a group member, you're able to join group conversations, ask questions, and send messages to other members.

LinkedIn groups can be a valuable source of information, ideas and support. Share your knowledge with people in your groups, and they'll likely respond in kind.

Be aware - LinkedIn warns against self-promotion in groups. Showing your expertise is good; gratuitous plugging of your company's products isn't. You can be blocked or removed from a group if you break its rules or code of etiquette.

6. Create Engaging Content Especially for LinkedIn

Just as with other social networks, you can post simple text updates, images, and links to other sites, and you can share posts from other users. But make sure that your post is useful, informative and relevant to your professional connections.

You can also record or upload video directly to LinkedIn from your device. This allows you to share your insights and experiences, or to boost your organization's brand identity. Use the built-in filters and "stickers" to brighten up your video, and add captions for people who watch with the sound off.

LinkedIn also allows you to publish full articles, via its Publishing Platform. The articles that you write appear on your profile. They can be shared by other users, and may also appear in search engine results, but you retain the rights to any original content that you publish. This is a great way to showcase your industry expertise to potential hiring managers and recruiters.

SlideShare is another option for delivering high-quality content. It's embedded into LinkedIn, and allows you to post presentations and infographics.

Adding hashtags to your posts can help your content reach more users. Type a hashtag into the search bar to find out how many people follow it, and to see the kind of content that interests them.





7. Know How People Find You

When looking to hire using LinkedIn, the search for people includes those who have the specific skills and experience.

The Advanced Search facility enables organisations to search by many different criteria: location, company, former companies, industry, language, non-profit interests, schools, and degrees of connection.

LinkedIn's paid Recruiter plans give recruiters and hiring managers even more options, and can help them to source, prioritise, contact, and manage lists of candidates. It's a great tool, and often replaces job board adverts. Pipeline Builder allows companies to contact potential recruits automatically when they visit LinkedIn, and the Find Nearby facility targets local contacts.

You can use LinkedIn to look for jobs, too. As well as browsing the job advertisements, many people use it as a research tool. Always search the interviewers or people you are meeting on LinkedIn prior to any interview. This may give you the edge over competition and allows you to be aware of their background before you meet them. Additionally, suppose you have two job offers on the table, you can use LinkedIn to learn more about your potential new bosses and co-workers, and to get a feel for the organisations' corporate cultures.

A Premium Career account allows you to search even more efficiently for job opportunities that match your preferences and skill set, and to find out who has looked at your profile in the last 90 days.

8. Observe Professional Etiquette on LinkedIn

Success on LinkedIn depends on developing and maintaining a good reputation. This means that it's important to appear professional at all times. Avoid posting the kind of personal material that you might put on Facebook. And avoid spreading rumors or gossip – you never know who'll read them.

Be careful when you ask for, or make, an introduction, and do so only if you believe that both parties can benefit. Always be mindful of what you say about your organisation.

And finally, remember that honesty is the best policy – avoid overselling yourself, and don't embroider the facts when you discuss your achievements!

Fees

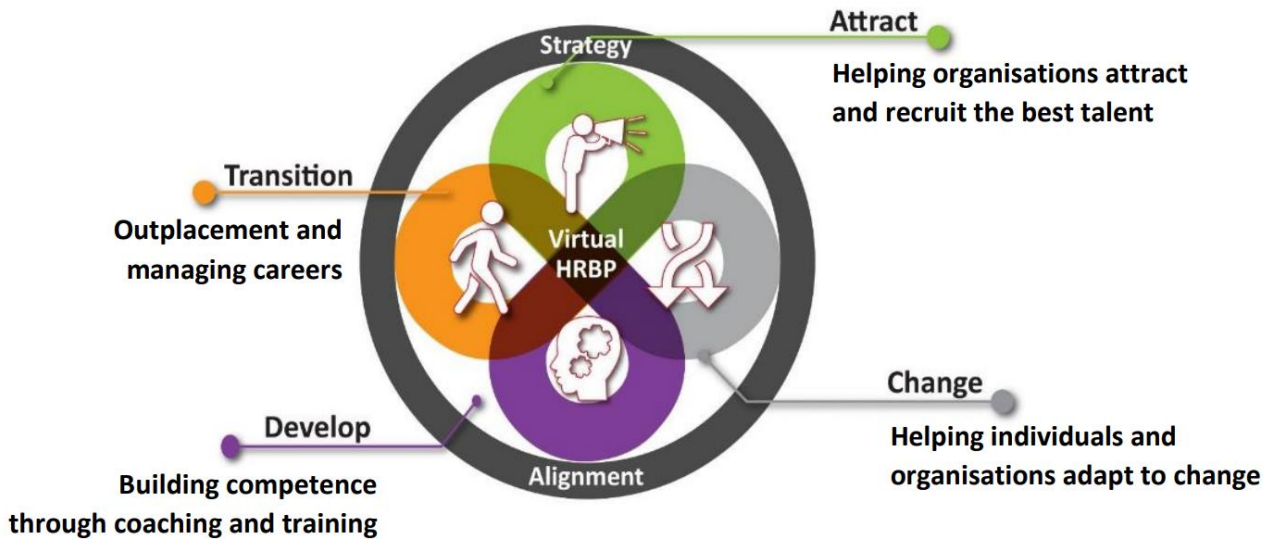
Whilst the basic LinkedIn account is free of charge, when you are looking for a new role, I would recommend upgrading your account. Premium accounts offer extra features, according to your needs. They include Premium Career (\$29.99 per month in 2018), which is aimed at jobseekers, and Premium Business (\$59.99 per month). Expect to pay more for the Sales Navigator and Recruiter packages.





About Selection Partners

Selection Partners is a talent consulting firm. We work with organisations and individuals through all areas of their careers via our four service areas:



We focus on 'the difference that makes the difference'.

If you would like career coaching, interview coaching or job search advice reach out to us, we can help you 03 9832 9100.

Contact June Parker, Director Selection Partners. June is an ICF accredited coach and the Leader of the HR Consulting team.

This information was based on information provided by Mind Tools and adapted by June Parker.