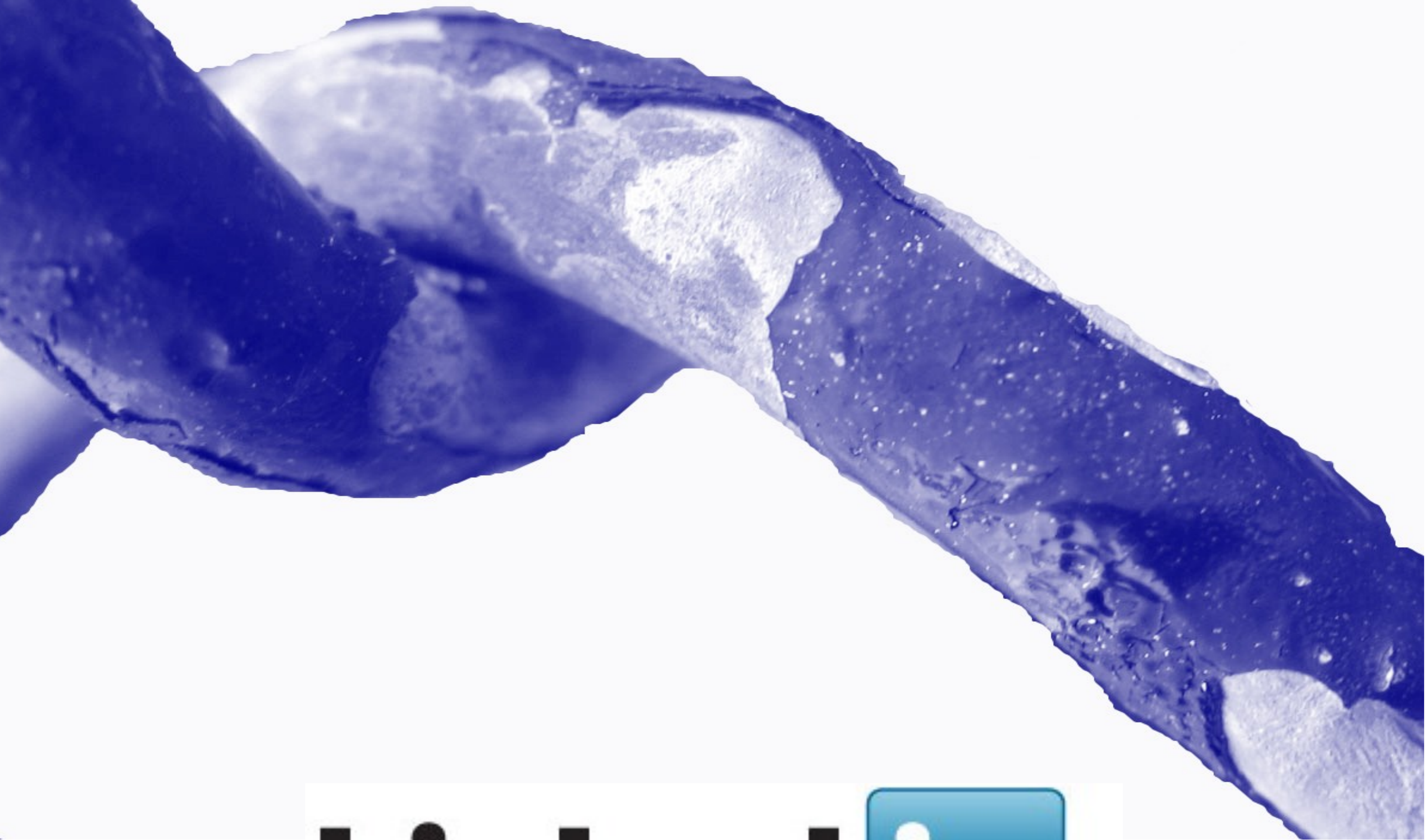

LinkedIn®

FREE Guide for Beginners

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This guide available from *www.box.net/shared/z1srecn736* or *www.scribd.com/kimberlyacallahan*

Introduction

As a frequent LinkedIn user, I see many of the same questions asked. I also hear a common refrain from others that have joined: "I don't get LinkedIn. What are you supposed to do on it?" I hope this guide will answer some common questions and provide an overview of what LinkedIn is about. This is not intended to be an exhaustive guide of everything there is to know about LinkedIn, however, for the average user it should cover most issues.

The book is divided up into several sections:

If you would like to comment on this guide, visit *www.scribd.com/kimberlyacallahan*

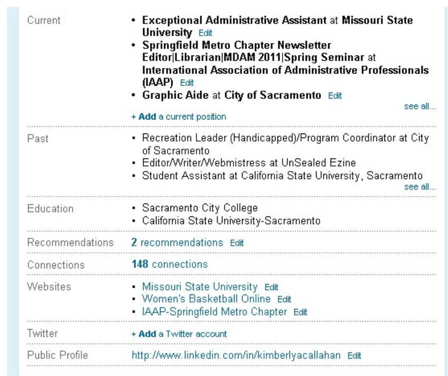
Getting Started

LinkedIn.com is an international professional networking website with over 100 million members. It is estimated that a new member joins *every second*! Reasons to join LinkedIn include staying in touch, reconnecting with past coworkers and classmates, making connections in your industry, finding job opportunities, information exchange, and creating a global presence online.

Before you join, consider first what you want to accomplish by joining LinkedIn. Are you joining just to join or are you looking to build a network to help further your career? If it's the former, then it won't be worth your time. If it's the latter, then it will require effort.

Step 1 **Sign up!** Visit www.linkedin.com

Step 2 **Fill 'er out!**



Completely fill out your information: job title, company, education, work history (including volunteer positions), awards/honors, certifications, skills, etc. Sounds like a resume, doesn't it? Well it is, so treat it just as you would a paper resume with proper capitalization and grammar, be honest, and be specific. Unlike a resume however, you don't have space limitations. So, add all prior jobs and be detailed in what your job responsibilities and accomplishments were. Note that you can use the "upload resume" feature to populate your profile, but it can be buggy and it's just as easy to type or copy & paste the information since you will probably need to edit it anyway.

LinkedIn is more than just a static electronic resume. Consider it your professional advertisement to the world. It should be compelling. It should be strategic. It should make people visiting your profile take interest in you, want to connect with you, and more importantly—want to hire you!

Your "**Headline**"—what appears directly underneath your name—is automatically generated based on your current job position. However, you can edit this. Look for the edit button that appears next to your name. While you may see members who have email addresses, phone numbers, and other extraneous information in their headline, it actually violates LinkedIn's User Agreement so *don't do this*.

Take the time to craft a knockout personal "**Summary**." Let your personality shine through (don't be too "cutesy" though.) It may take several revisions until you find something you're happy with. Also, be specific when filling out the "**Specialties**" and **"Skills"** sections (e.g. "Microsoft Office").

When entering your job positions in the "**Experience**" area, watch for the drop-down menu that will appear as you enter your employer's name. For larger companies, chances are it already appears in the list. Click the name when you see it and you will be added to the Company Profile page. This will make it easy for your co-workers to find you and for others to find information about your employer.

If you are looking to be found by recruiters, then you will want to use "**keywords**" in your profile—for example terms like "Microsoft Office" and "administrative assistant." This is also why it is important to spell out words and triple check your spelling! Think like someone hiring for the position you want—what types of skills and experience will they be looking for and how does that match up with your resume? Use LinkedIn to demonstrate your competencies, how a company will benefit by hiring you, and what makes you a better choice than the next candidate. Don't overdo it, but be conscious about the words you use in your profile. For example, if you type in "exceptional administrative assistant" in the People search—the top ranked person is…me. Think about how you would like to "brand" yourself. "Sales maestro"? "Rockstar Manager"? Just be sure your skills, experience, and reputation back it up. Also don't get so carried away with titles, that you don't come up in searches under common search terms. You want to appear at the top of searches in your career field and you also don't people to have to guess what your job title means.

Tip: **Personalize your LinkedIn address**. Do a LinkedIn search to see how you can set yourself apart from others sharing a similar name then create a personalized address and Profile name accordingly. For example there is only one "Kimberly A. Callahan" on LinkedIn and that's me! In the edit profile mode click the edit link next to the Public Profile listing.

Step 3 Start connecting!

To add your first **"Connections"**, you can import your email address books. I personally don't recommend importing your contacts unless you have hundreds of them. Even if you know the person well, you should write a brief note to everyone before you send the invitation rather than the default text. The import feature *does not give you this ability*. It sends a generic invite. This is critical for people you may not know as well—remind them who you are and why you want to connect with them. In order to get this personalization option, you must click on the "Connect With…" link on the person's actual profile. Take the time to search for friends, family, colleagues, business contacts, etc. This is a great way to build up your network quickly. Don't fret if someone doesn't respond right away since some people have let their accounts go stale, rarely check in, or simply have a different purpose on LinkedIn.

Step 4 Recommend and be recommended!

Once you've got some of your colleagues and business associates as Connections, request "**Recommendations"** from those who can offer a legitimate reference. Also give recommendations to those you have worked with. I strongly suggest you don't give or receive recommendations from people you wouldn't be comfortable having a potential employer contact.

Tip: Filling out your profile, adding a photo, and receiving recommendations will make your Profile more "complete," which means it will be placed higher in search results. It will also make people more likely to connect with you.

Common Profile Questions

What are the new sections and how do I add them to my profile?
Recently LinkedIn gave users the ability to add several new sections to their profile: Languages, Patents, Publications, and Skills.

From the edit profile mode, look for the yellow box that appears directly underneath the blue summary area. Choose the “Add Sections” link. From there pick the section you would like to add.

Isn’t the Skills section redundant?
Yes and no. Yes you will probably end up listing many of the same things which appear in the “specialties” area. However, LinkedIn has recently made the “Skills” section a powerful search engine. Mouse over “More” in the static menu and you will see “Skills” listed. From that area, you—or more importantly, recruiters—can search for members with specific skills and areas of expertise.

How do I add links to my profile?
LinkedIn does not allow HTML and links you add to the text in your profile will not be active. However, LinkedIn provides three slots for links. Use them wisely. Also note that if your company has a profile and it is properly selected in your job entry, visitors to your profile can access the link that way.

One note about adding personal links—whether it’s a personal website, a blog, Twitter, or your Facebook profile. First and foremost LinkedIn is a *professional* networking site. Consider whether it is appropriate to link all of your online websites together. Don’t ruin your professional reputation because of risqué photos or crude language. You don’t need to be “boring”, but you do need to be smart.

How do I get bullets into my Profile?
Two ways, both of which involve copying & pasting. You can find a profile which includes the bullet or character you want to use, copy it, and then open your profile in edit mode to paste it in the appropriate location. Or you can open a Word document, create the bullet or character, copy it, and then open your profile in edit mode to paste it. I have found this method doesn’t always work. A reminder that these types of characters are not allowed to be pasted into your name or headline fields.

How do I add a blog feed?
The only way to integrate a blog into you profile is by using an application. Mouse over “More” from the static menu, choose “Applications”, and then select the appropriate blog application.

Should I post a photo of myself?
Like many people, I'm not fond of having my photo taken and I've not yet seen one of me I like....but I digress. The importance of a photo is that it puts a face to a name. Many people are visual and like to see who they are dealing with. A photo also personalizes your profile. I have heard it put this way: would you go to a networking event with a bag over your head or a mask on? I have also found it very useful when meeting LinkedIn contacts in person—we already know what the other person looks like.

In terms of what type of photo to use, it should be a current, clear, professional-looking headshot. John Cassidy of John Cassidy Headshots says your photo should look "PPE: that's professional, personable and engaging and not FFF: fuzzy, faraway and forgetful. "

How do I rearrange sections in my profile?
Mouse over the four-pronged arrow to the left of the section’s title. Click and drag to the location you desire. Applications generally cannot be rearranged individually.

Where should I add volunteer positions?
There's several ways to go about this:
You can list each position as a separate listing in the Experience section just as you would a paid job.

You can create a listing for "philanthropy", "volunteer positions", "advisory board member" or other appropriate title then list your positions this way. Note: you will be required to add a company name. You can get a little creative here. For example most of my volunteer positions are listed under "Philanthropist at Planet Earth".

You can also choose to list them under the "Groups and Associations" area or in the "Summary" area.

How do I combine profiles/remove a duplicate profile?
You cannot merge profiles or automatically transfer contacts to another profile. So your first step is to determine which of the profiles you will be deleting. Log into the profile you want to delete. Take note of or export any connections you have. Then go to Settings and choose Close Your Account. Repeat if you have more than one duplicate profile. Now log into your remaining profile. Re-invite all the connections who were associated with your other account(s). Now go back to Settings and then add all of your Email Addresses to avoid creating a duplicate in the future.

Does LinkedIn allow HTML?
No, LinkedIn does not allow HTML.

How do people download my resume?
They don't. Unless you have added an Application such as Box.Net to your profile then uploaded your resume document there. Using the "import resume" function serves only to help new members to populate their profile, it does not make it available for others to download.

How do I add photos?
You can create a Slideshare presentation or you can add the Box.Net application and upload a PPT, PDF, or other files. If you have one of your three website links available, create an account with an online photo sharing service such as Flickr and link to it. LinkedIn does not provide a "photo album" feature as some other websites do.

I cannot find my profile
Patience, grasshopper. Indexing on LinkedIn may take a few days. It can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks for you to show up in search engines like Google. Second, keep in mind that you may not be the only person with your name no matter how unique you may think it is! So you will need to take some steps to help increase your visibility: 1. Complete your profile and make more of it publicly available; 2. Start connecting with people; 3. If you have a middle initial, you might consider adding that to your name so that you stand apart from the others with your same name. You'll note that I use my full first name and middle initial; and 4. Actively participate on LinkedIn.

How do I get a gold "In" badge on my profile?
This requires that you have a Premium Account. If you do, then mouse over your name in the upper right to choose Settings. From there choose Edit Your Name, Location, and Industry.

How do I add a video to my profile?
You can embed the video in a SlideShare or Google presentation and be sure the appropriate application is added to your profile.

Managing recommendations
First a reminder: if someone sends you a recommendation, you must click the “accept” button in the email notification you receive.

To work with recommendations: Mouse over Profile in the static menu and select “Recommendations.”

You can “hide” a recommendation you have previously accepted, but you cannot delete it entirely. Find the position for which the recommendation was made and click the “manage” link. Find the recommendation you want to hide, uncheck the “show” box, and then “Save Changes.”

If a recommendation someone sent you needs to be edited, you can click the “request a new or revised recommendation” link. The individual can also initiate the edits on their end.

If you want to withdraw a recommendation you have made, click on the “Sent Recommendations” tab. Click “edit” next to the recommendation. Look for the “withdraw this recommendation” link. If you simply need to edit or amend the recommendation, you can do this here too. Do note the individual is under no obligation to accept the changes you make.

If someone sends you a recommendation, but chooses the wrong position for it. They can edit it on their end to choose the correct job. You can also change it yourself—though you need to be very careful when doing this as it will involve removing the position the recommendation is currently associated with. So the first step is to go to your profile and copy all of the job description information and paste it to a document on your computer. Then, remove that position. This will result in the recommendation being “orphaned”. You can now go to the Recommendations area and associate that recommendation with the correct position. The last step is to go to your profile and add back the position you removed.

Can I “block” people from viewing my profile?
No you cannot block specific individuals from viewing your profile. Keep in mind the purpose of having a profile on LinkedIn is to “be seen” and to network with others. You can limit the amount of information that is displayed to individuals who are not connections, however this will apply to everyone and the less information you display, the less likely people are to network with you.

How do I see who has viewed my profile?
The first order to business is to make yourself completely visible when viewing other people’s profiles. If you aren’t, you can change this setting in one of two ways. First when you click on the number from your page to view visitors, LinkedIn will ask if you want to change your settings is they are not appropriately set. The other is to mouse over your name in the upper right to choose Settings. Then choose the link that says “Select what others see when you’ve viewed their profile.” You will need to choose the first option which displays your name, photo, and headline.

Who are “anonymous” viewers?
Anonymous viewers are users who have chosen to keep personally identifying information private while browsing the profiles of others. Some do this because they are recruiters who want to remain discreet while others, such as me, don’t find it to be anyone’s business whose profiles they are looking at. Some members however think there is something “creepy” about “anonymous” viewers. Just as you cannot block specific individuals from viewing your profile, you cannot block anonymous viewers. You also cannot completely block people not logged into LinkedIn from viewing your profile (nor are these views logged for you).

User Agreement

Most people breeze past LinkedIn's **User Agreement** and miss important points. It is critical to note:

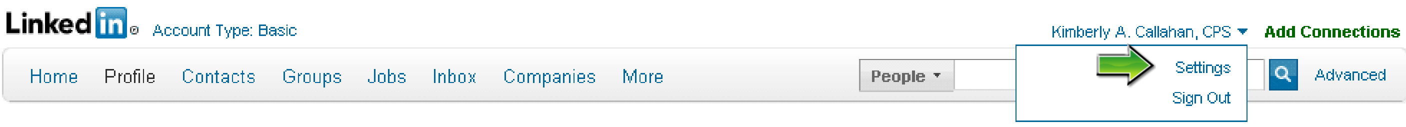
- Profiles are for "natural persons" only (not a company or mascot)
- Individuals may only have *one* profile (in other words you may not have one "personal" profile and one "business" profile)
- Photos must be headshots of the individual (i.e. no logos, pets, graphics, poses with kids/spouses, group photos, etc.)
- Do not place your email, phone number, or address in your public profile except where LinkedIn *specifically* requests such info
- LinkedIn only recommends connecting with people you know (or at least have interacted with in some way)
- Post accurate information

The LinkedIn User Agreement can be found linked at the bottom of every page.

Settings

It may seem odd to dedicate a section to something so mundane-sounding as "settings." However, this is really the nerve center of your LinkedIn account. Chances are if you need to change something, Settings is the place you want to go. We won't touch on every item listed, but look at a few of them.

How do you get there? In the upper right hand corner of your LinkedIn screen you will see your name with a blue down arrow next to it. Click the down arrow next your name and choose the Settings option. Enter your password if asked and you're ready to explore.



In the Profile tab:

Email Addresses

Let's start with an important issue. A common problem on LinkedIn is that an individual signs up with one email address. Then they receive an invitation at another, accept it, and inadvertently create a duplicate profile. Not only is this contrary to LinkedIn's User Agreement, but it makes it more difficult for people to find you (which one do they connect to?) and it splits your contacts up. An easy solution: associate all of your email addresses with your account. You can even add old or unused addresses—this will help those trying to get in touch with you to do so using an old email. You should confirm all active email addresses. If you ever want to change your primary email account (the account where LinkedIn email goes to) then you simply change the selection. You can login using any address associated with your account. Also, when sending emails through LinkedIn you can select any of the email addresses associated with your account in the "from" field. To access this area, choose the Account tab and then the "Add and Change Email Addresses" link. You can also access it by clicking on the "change" link that appears next to your email address in the gray info box at the top.

Edit Your Public Profile

This is where you can choose how much of your profile to make publicly viewable. I recommend making as much of it viewable as you're comfortable with. If you are actively seeking a job, then it is critical for you to make it completely viewable. This also helps your search rankings on LinkedIn and Google.

Select Who Can See Your Connections

Choose whether to allow your contacts to view your other connections. While some people, such as recruiters may have good reason to want to hide their connections, it is preferable to leave them open to your contacts. Only your 1st degree connections can see your other connections. A good rule of thumb is that if you don't "trust" someone with your connections list, then don't connect to them.

Select What Others See When You View Your Profile

There are several different settings you can choose from when deciding what information people will see when you visit their profile. "Nothing" of course means they will see no information. You can also choose to remain somewhat anonymous by having only your title and employer show. These two settings however mean that you will *not* be able to view any information about who has viewed your profile other than the statistics located on the Home page. The third setting will display your name, photo, title, and employer. It will also allow you to see names of people who have recently visited your profile.

Select Who Can See Your Activity Feed
This will display your actions such as posting a network activity update, joining or starting groups, comments you've made on other updates, Answers activity and posts to groups you share with that connection. It's a good idea to keep this visible to others. You can choose a range of options from "only you" to "everyone." Keeping your actions visible helps your connections keep tabs on you.

Turn On/Off Your Activity Broadcasts
This will alert your connections to profile updates, recommendations you make, and companies you follow. Again, a good idea to keep this visible to your connections. If you will be doing a lot of updating of your profile, you might consider turning this off temporarily.

In the Email Preferences Tab:

Set the Frequency of Emails
This link will allow to you change how you receive email from LinkedIn. Want to stop receiving a notification via email for each invitation you receive? One notification you *cannot* turn off is when someone accepts your invitation to connect. LinkedIn will always send you an email about this.

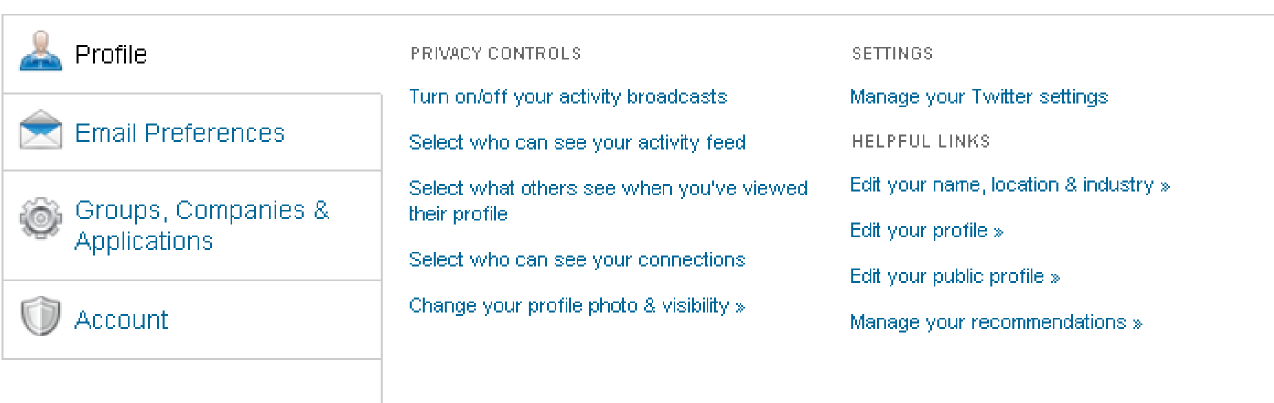
Select Who Can Send You Invitations
You have three options on LinkedIn. The default, and recommended, setting is to accept ALL invitations. This means that yes you will have to deal with unwanted invitations, but click "ignore" and move on. The next option is to require people who want to connect with you to have your email address. The most restrictive option is to limit invitations only to people who are in an imported address book.

Set the Frequency of Group Digest Emails
This is an easy way to change the frequency of all your group digest emails in one spot.

In the Groups, Companies, and Applications Tab:

Select Your Group Order Display
This is where you set the order groups will display on your "My Groups" page. The first three groups will display in the drop-down menu when you mouse over "Groups" in the static menu. You can also set the group order display from the "My Groups" page. On your profile, Groups will be listed in alphabetical order.

There are numerous other settings. I recommend you take time to explore each one.



Contacts

Making contacts, also known as connections, is the purpose behind LinkedIn. How do you find them? Once you make connections, what do you do with them? How do you keep track of them?

Invitations

How to Connect With Someone

As discussed earlier, it is critical to personalize each invitation you send. To access this, visit the person's profile, click on the "Connect With…" link in the menu to the right. Other ways to send invitations are to click on the "Add Connections" in the upper right hand corner or by choosing the option under the "Contacts" menu option. But again, this will not allow you to personalize your invitation.

Who Do I Connect With?

Okay, so you have exhausted your lists of family, friends, and colleagues. Hopefully this will put your list of contacts in double figures. Since LinkedIn recommends only inviting "people you know" to connect, how do you get to "know" others on LinkedIn? We will discuss **Groups** in further detail in the next section. They are a great place to interact with other members who you already share something in common with. If you belong to a Group and the individual member has allowed emails to be sent from other Group members, send the individual an email asking if they would like to connect. If a member of a Group starts a discussion thread, you have the option (under "More") to reply privately.

If you are responding to a question a user has asked in the **Answers** section you can send them a "Private Reply" in addition to your response. If you ask a question all responses will arrive as an email in your LinkedIn Inbox which allows you to respond to the individual directly.

You can also check a user's profile and see if they have a link to a blog, Twitter, or personal website. You can contact them through those means.

Finally, use your current contacts to introduce you to interesting people they are connected to.

LinkedIn offers a service called "InMails." For basic accounts, the cost is $10 each. You must decide if it's worth the cost if you absolutely must contact a person and have no other way to get in touch.

You may find some users indiscriminately send invitations to everyone they suspect has a pulse (others aren't even that picky). You needn't feel obligated to accept every invitation you receive.

Sent Invitations

You can get to the list of invitations you sent in two ways: the first is at the bottom of the contacts section. You will see a link that shows the number of your "outstanding" invitations (no, LinkedIn doesn't think they're really great, it means they haven't been acted upon yet.) You can also access that list by clicking on the Inbox option from the static menu, then choosing Sent in the left hand menu, then the Invitations tab. FYI: You are initially given somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,000 invitations. Should you exhaust that amount, you can contact Customer Service and request additional invitations be added to your account. If you think are close to the 3,000 limit, it might be time to withdraw some.

To **withdraw an invitation**, you will need to click on the link for the invitation that says "Join my network on LinkedIn." On that screen you will see a "withdraw" button. You must click that button. Deleting the invitation does *not* withdraw it, it just removes it from your list.

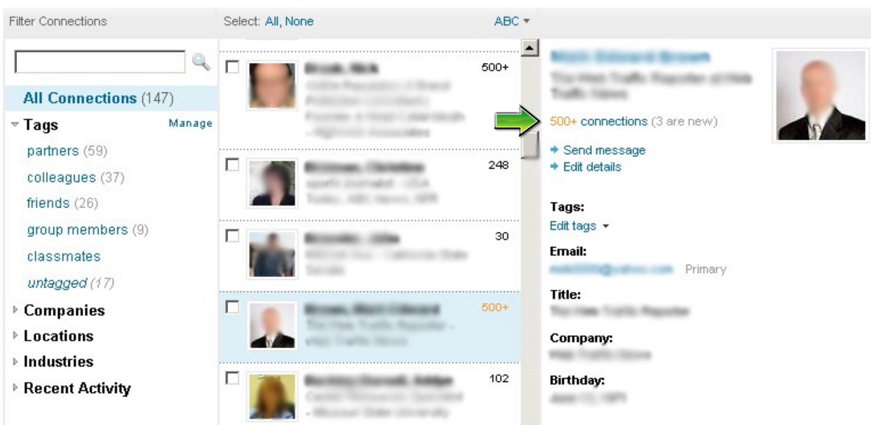
If someone "ignores" your invitation (which actually sends it to the "Archives" area of their Inbox), it will not be noted as such on your invitations list. The only notation is when the person "accepts" or chooses the "I Don't Know This Person" option after selecting "ignore." Do note that an "ignored" invitation can later be accepted.

Avoiding "IDK"

If a person chooses "ignore" on an invite they receive, there is an additional option to select "I Don't Know This Person." Why does this matter? If you receive three "IDK" responses, you will receive a warning. This may mean that for every invitation you want to send, you must first enter the person's email address. If you receive 5-7 IDK responses LinkedIn may *suspend your account*. Regardless of who you are inviting, you should always personalize the invitation and be specific as to why you want to connect. Even if the other person isn't interested in connecting, they are less likely to choose the "I Don't Know This Person" option if you explain why you are inviting them.

Managing Your Connections

To access your list of connections at any time, simply click on the "Contacts" option from the static menu that appears near the top of every screen. The Contacts area is divided into three columns. On the left you will see a list of your "tags" and several other headings such as "Companies" and "Locations." In the middle you will see by default a complete scrolling list of all of your contacts in alphabetical order. The right hand column will show you some basic details of the contact you click on.



As you scroll down your list, you might notice some of your contacts have a **yellow number**. That means they have added new contacts. If that connection has their list of contacts available to view, then select the contact by clicking on their listing in the middle column and then click on the connections link that appears in the third column. At the top of their list of contacts will be their most recent connections. Get into the habit of keeping tabs on who your connections are linking to.

When you have a connection highlighted and their information is displaying in the third column, you will notice that there is a link that says "**Edit Details**." If you click on it, a new screen will appear. This will allow you to fill in additional information about your contact. This is info that displays only to you, so if you add an address or personal note you needn't worry about others having access to it.

Another area you can edit is "**Tags**." When you initially send an invitation to someone and select the category, this not only alerts the person receiving the invitation to how you know each other, but will alert LinkedIn to how it will categorize it in your list of contacts once they accept. It is worth noting that you should choose the appropriate category when sending an invitation so as not to misrepresent yourself, however should you choose the "wrong" category (or likewise a person sending you an invitation), it really isn't that big of a deal once the connection is made because you can edit the tags. Like the "details" section, the tags are only visible to you and not to anyone else. LinkedIn not only allows you to edit the tags, but to add your own. You can do this two ways, by clicking on the edit tags button of the individual contact or clicking on the "manage" link that appears next to "tags" in the left column. Day to day this may not seem like something that's important. However, if you would like to **send a message** to certain contacts, it may be helpful to have them tagged in a way that will make it easy for you to navigate. In the left hand column LinkedIn provides several filters for you already—including company, location, and industry. But let's say in the course of making connections, you learned six of them were interested in a gardening workshop you were putting together. You can add a tag to each profile that says "gardening." When you were ready to send them information, you could click on tags in the left hand menu, select the gardening tag, select all of those contacts, and then send a message to them all at once through LinkedIn with the workshop information. If you have hundreds of contacts, this is a real time-saver!

Removing Connections

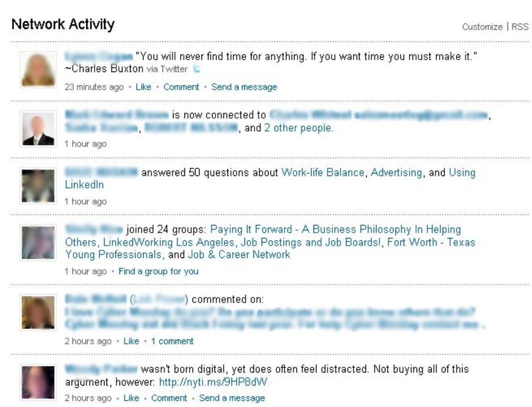
On the contacts screen, you will see a link off to the right that says "Remove Connections." Click on that, then follow the instructions for selecting those you would like to remove. The connection is not notified of this transaction, although they will of course notice their connection number lowered.

Exporting Contacts

Still in the Contacts area, scroll down to the bottom of the screen. You'll see two links relating to your contacts. The one on the right, aptly titled "Export Connections" will take you to the export feature. Just as you would do any time you save a file, pay attention to *where* on your computer you are saving it! One catch in exporting your contacts: LinkedIn will only export very limited information. So, if you were hoping to create a fully populated database or spreadsheet, you're out of luck. You will only receive a list with first name, last name, email, title, and company. When you download the file you will note it has headings for lots of fields, so why does LinkedIn include columns for these fields but doesn't include the information? It's a mystery. Even if you aren't planning on creating a database, exporting your contacts regularly is a good way to keep a back-up list. I like to input data into Outlook each time I make a new connection. By spending a few minutes of my time, I can save their photo, input web links, and more into a very nice, robust address book entry.

Keeping Tabs on Your Contacts

Having a network won't be of much use to you if you don't know how you can help them and vice versa. People are also less likely to help you if you only contact them when you want something. The best network isn't necessarily the biggest one, it's the strongest one. And to build a strong network, you need to build strong relationships. So how to do this? One tool LinkedIn provides is located on your Home page. This will be the page you come to when you log in to LinkedIn. It also the first option in the static menu near the top of each page.

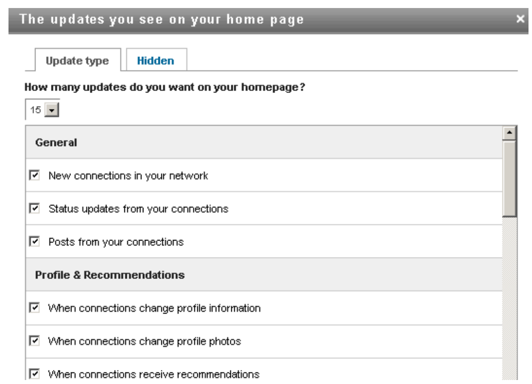


Network Activity

Browse through your "Network Activity" on the Home page. You can view new connections your contacts have made; read their "Network Updates"; see if they have posted to a group you share; asked or answered any questions in the Answers section; if they have Twitter linked to their Profile you might see these updates as well; and you can also see if they have made any updates to their profile. You can “like” or “comment” on many of these. If you "follow" any companies, you will see hires and departures listed here as well. You can even set this up as an RSS feed.

Now there are a few variables here: first, your connection has to be active on LinkedIn in order for there to be activity associated with their account; second, they must have their network activity set to be viewable by their contacts; and third, you have to have their activity showing on your home page (it will by default but you can “hide” activity by specific contacts by mousing over an update and clicking the “Hide” link that appears.)

Note that if you click **“Hide”** on a contact’s update on your Home page, it will hide *all* of their activity. It will not simply hide that particular update or one type of update from them. Now what happens if you accidentally click this? Well first, you will immediately have the opportunity to undo this action. Secondly, you can click on the “Hidden” link in the “More” menu at the top of the Network Activity area and select “Show Updates.” Additionally, you can also click on the “Customize” link that appears under the “More” menu. Click on the “Hidden” tab and select the option to display their activity. A contact will never be notified if you choose to hide their updates.



Now you can choose to hide certain types of updates, but this will apply to all of your connections, not just specified ones. To do this, you’ll need to click on the “Customize” link. You will be on the “Updates by Type” tab. You can also choose how many updates show on your Home page.

Email

It’s also a good idea to get into the habit of periodically sending an email to your contacts individually. A few lines will do—ask what new projects they are working on; comment about one of their recent network updates or blog posts; or ask if there’s anything you can do to help them (be genuine in this offer of assistance.)

Take It Offline

Some members even periodically meet local connections, or connections whose city they will be traveling to. Now of course this may not be possible for everyone. However it does demonstrate the need to integrate your online and offline networking. For your local LinkedIn group(s), if there isn’t already a regular offline networking event for group members, consider organizing an evening meet-up at a library or a power lunch at a favorite deli. Add your profile address to your business card so those you meet in the course of doing business or at networking events can connect with you online. Find ways to introduce your connections who are not on LinkedIn to those who are.

Your Network

What is my "network"?

Your LinkedIn network consists of your first, second, and third degree connections. Every time you connect with someone, you are increasing the size of your network. LinkedIn will give you a rough estimate of the size of your network—this is the number of people you potentially have access to on the website.

1st = First degree connection is someone you have chosen to connect to.

2nd = Second degree connection. This is a contact of a first degree connection. They can introduce you to this person. ("friend of a friend")

3rd = Third degree connection. This is a contact of a second degree connection. You can be introduced to this person, but it will require an extra step in the process. ("friend of a friend of friend")

How Do I Get Introduced to Someone?

Visit the profile of the person you want to be introduced to. If the person is a second or third degree connection, you can click on the "Get Introduction Through A Connection" link that appears off to the right of their summary box. If you have more than one first degree contact that is connected to this person, you can choose who you want to introduce you. Write a note to the individual in the top message field explaining why you would like to be connected to them. Then write a note to your connection in the bottom message field—explain to them why you would like to be introduced to this person.

If the individual is a third degree connection, then you will need an intermediary. You will need one of your first degree connections to request an introduction from one of their connections.

What if I am unable to request an introduction?

If the person is open to InMails, you can send them one if you think the cost ($10 for a basic account holder) is worth it. If they have a website, blog, or Twitter account, you can try reaching them outside of LinkedIn. If they belong to any Groups, you can try joining one of the groups they belong to.

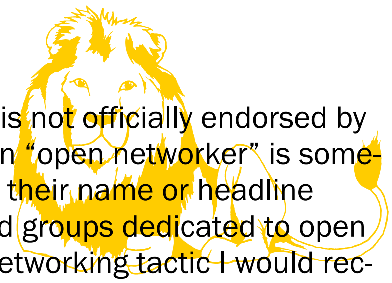
What if I want to introduce connections?

There are several ways you can do this. First, one of the connections can initiate a formal introduction. Second, you can visit each person's profile and choose the "share profile" option. Write a note to the person explaining why you are forwarding the profile to them. Third, you can send a LinkedIn message to both connections (or one at a time) explaining why you think the two of them should meet.

Common Contacts Questions

How Do I Know If My Invitation Has Been Ignored?
You don't. You will only see a notation if it has been accepted or they have clicked "I Don't Know This Person."

How Long Should I Keep Outstanding Invitations?
It's up to you. I keep mine indefinitely because I realize that not everyone uses LinkedIn regularly. If you'd really like to be connected to them, then leave it. If you want to set a "time limit" then that would need to be based on your personal preference.



What is a "LION"?
"LION" is an acronym for "LinkedIn Open Networker." This group of people is not officially endorsed by LinkedIn, but they do not explicitly "crack down" on such behavior either. An "open networker" is someone who connects with anyone and everyone. They will often add "LION" to their name or headline and/or boast of their number of connections and network size. You can find groups dedicated to open networking if this is something that interests you. In general, this is not a networking tactic I would recommend as I believe it is more valuable to have a "strong" network rather than simply a "large" one. Being a "LION" also increases your risk of SPAM. One important note: do *not* confuse the terms "OpenLink" with "Open Networker". "OpenLink" is an option given to premium members which allows them to permit messages to be sent to them regardless of another member's relationship to them.

Why do I keep being asked for an email address when I want to connect with someone?
Several possible reasons:
Using the "Add Connections" option will always require you to submit the person's email address.

You have received too many "I Don't Know" responses to other invitations.

The individual has set their invitation filter to accept only those users who know their email address.

LinkedIn members are limited to the number of "friends" they can add without entering an email.

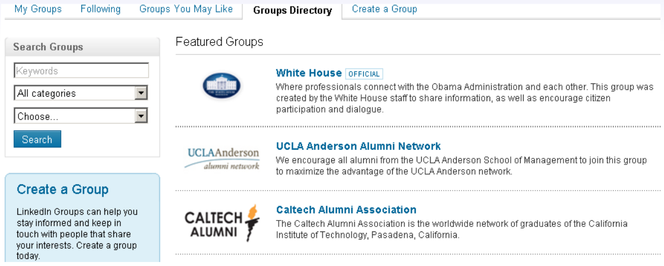
How do I find people that I went to school with?
Many colleges and Greek/Service/Honors/Athletics organizations have alumni Groups on LinkedIn so you may want to seek them out and join. If not, this may be a great opportunity for you to start one!

Another way is to click the "Add Connections" link in the upper right hand part of your screen. Click the "Classmates" link then click the link to your school and like magic, there's the list of folks you went to school with. Or at least ones who have formally chosen the school on their profile.

Lastly, you can use the Advanced People Search.

How do I send a message to multiple contacts at once?
To start a new message, click on the Compose button from your Inbox. To forward a message, click on the message link and then click the Forward button. To select multiple addressees, click on the LinkedIn icon to the right of the To field. This will bring up a new window with a list of your contacts. Select the check mark boxes to the left of the names you want to email. You are limited to sending a message to 50 people at a time. So if you have more, you will need to do multiple emails. Once you have all the names checked, click the Finish button (you may need to scroll down to see the button.) Before you send your message, I recommend, out of courtesy, unchecking the "Allow recipients to see each other's names and email addresses" which appears underneath the message window.

Groups



Groups are accessed by clicking the Groups link in the static menu. There are hundreds of thousands of Groups. It can be a little intimidating to know where to begin. If you belong to a professional organization, start by seeing if they have a group. Next, look for groups in your geographic area. Are there software programs you use frequently such as Microsoft Office? There are many official groups for those as well. Don't discount groups with small membership numbers as bigger doesn't always mean better. You are limited to joining 50 groups. Focus on finding "good" groups rather than joining a ton of them.

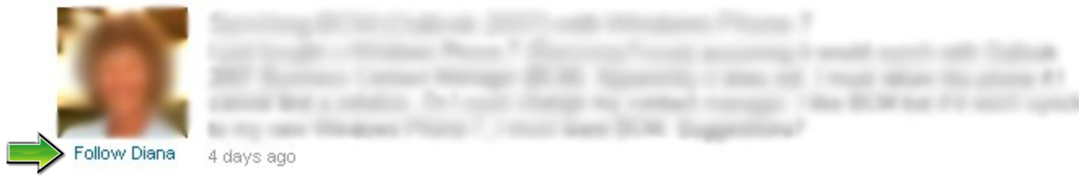
Post an introduction in groups where that is appropriate (sometimes you might see an "introductions" thread) and participate in the discussions. Don't respond just to respond though. Frequently posting links to your blog and other self-promotional posts aren't considered good etiquette in most groups.

When you join a group you have a few options such as receiving an email digest or new email for each new post and whether to allow group members to email you. I recommend you use an email digest to keep up on group activity and to keep the option to allow group members to contact you. Some group managers require an approval process before giving new members access to groups. It can take days, weeks, or even months if the group manager does not log in to their account often. Chances are if more than a week goes by without your request being processed, then the group is probably not very active. You'll have to decide if you want to keep waiting or to withdraw the request and move on. Note that you can change your digest options at any time either through Settings or by clicking on the "More..." menu link specific to each group and then clicking on "My Settings."

Note that most groups have "Jobs" and "Promotions" tabs. The Jobs tab is self-explanatory although a recent change has caused some confusion. The "Jobs" you initially see are those jobs posted through LinkedIn. The "Career Discussions" link is for those jobs posted by group members. The Promotions tab causes some confusion. The best rule of thumb is to use it to "promote" your blog, website, or events rather than posting it in the regular Discussion area. If you have any questions about what is acceptable, look to see if there are any group rules posted and/or contact the group manager to ask (to find the group managers click on "More..." and "Group Profile"). Either way, you don't want to over-use this feature. Many LinkedIn users consider the posting of blogs to be "spam", so be very careful how you use this feature and either include comments of your own and/or a part of the blog post if it's from your own personal blog.

One "**quirk**" with LinkedIn and Groups: whenever you make a connection, you are automatically set up to "follow" that person's activity. If you share a group, in the Updates box off to the right, instead of seeing group activity, you will just see activity from the member(s) you are "following." To turn this off, go to "My Groups" under the Group option. Click on the "Following" tab. On the left you will see a "manage" box with two options. Choose the "People..." option and mark " Stop following" for each.

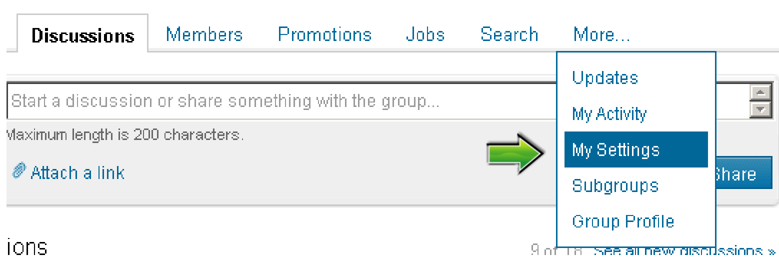
You can also choose to “**follow**” group members even if you are not connected to them. To do this, you will see a “follow” link underneath their photo in posts. Members will not be notified of this but will see your name if they look to see who their “followers” are.



You can also choose to “follow” discussions of interest. If you start a discussion or respond to a discussion, you will “follow” it automatically. Underneath the first post of a discussion you will see a series of buttons. There is one with a star named “Follow.”

Tip: You can send a free message to most members you share a group with. It’s helpful to join a few large groups to give you greater access to people you may not know, but might want to get in touch with down the road. To **contact a group member**: you can “reply privately” from a post they made in a discussion thread; click on their photo from a discussion thread and then choose “Send Message” from the summary page; or do a member search. Click on Members, search for the individual, then mouse over their entry. Off to the right you will see a “Send Message” link.

To **leave a group**, first go to the “My Groups” page. Click on the group you want to leave and this will take you the main discussion board. Click on the “More” menu option for the group and choose “My Settings.” At the bottom of the screen will be a button to leave the group.



Mind Your Manners

Most people have participated in some kind of Internet forum before. Those forums typically allow users to choose an "anonymous" user name which we have all seen lead to abuse in various ways. People feel empowered to act like bullies or say things they might not normally say in person. LinkedIn groups do not provide such "anonymity." Thus, you need be particularly careful about what you say and how you say it. As with any written communication, your tone and intent is not always obvious to the reader. There are users I would never consider working with professionally based on posts they have made. The same is true in the “Answers” section. Additionally, you must also keep in mind that whether you intend to or not, your behavior on LinkedIn reflects on your employer.

Common Groups Questions

How Long Does It Take For My Request to Join a Group Be Accepted?

It depends. Some groups are set up to automatically allow every request. Other groups require approval. The manager(s) of the group must log into LinkedIn and check the pending requests. They may do this every day, every week, or only sporadically. Like outstanding invitations, you have to decide how long you want to wait. You can send the group manager a message and sometimes this will speed the approval process up. Chances are however, the longer it takes for the approval process, the less active the group is likely to be.

Does LinkedIn allow HTML?

No, LinkedIn does not allow HTML.

How do I attach photos or documents to a post?

You can't. However, you can add an application to your profile and host files there or direct them to a link on the Internet where the files can be found. Then direct group members to go there.

How can I find group members by [Country, Employer, etc.]?

Click on the Advanced Search link from the Members page of the group. Technically in order to filter by specific group, you need to have a paid account, but if you click on the advanced search link from the members page, initial results will be members of that group. Then you can scroll down to the filters that are available to you. The results will end up showing you ALL of your group members. Then put the group name in the search box and keep the filters box checked. You can also type in the country in the search box from the Members page, but with a free account you are limited in the number of results. Using the Advanced Search above will return more results - though perhaps not perfect.

Why can't I see a complete list of group members?

LinkedIn has chosen to limit group member listings—presumably to help cut down on SPAM. Listings are also limited by the same search result parameters as other searches (Basic members are limited to 500 results for example). In the previous answer I gave you some tips on doing an Advanced People Search. Individuals have also had some luck doing a Google "x-ray" search. An example of such a search is entered as site:linkedin.com ("profile" AND "group name") which will possibly give you a more robust list of search results in relation to a particular group.

Add Links to Discussions

Make sure that you hit the "attach" button after you paste (or type) the link into the box. Then you will need to hit "share" to post it to the group.

How do I delete my discussion?

Find the topic you started. Click on it to open the thread. Select Delete from the "More..." menu.

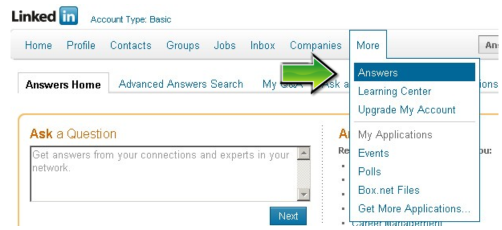
What is an "open group"?

Most groups are "closed" meaning only members can view and reply to discussions. There are two levels of "open groups": the most common is that anyone can view discussions and those discussions will also be indexed by search engines. The second, less common level, is one that allows anyone to post.

Can I stop people from "following" me?

No you cannot stop people from "following" you. While it appears LinkedIn may be tinkering with this feature, for most users a "follower" will only be alerted to the activity in the groups you share.

Answers



The "Answers" section can be found under the "More..." option on the menu. Look for "open" questions and respond to those you can meaningfully contribute to. You can ask 10 questions per month (each of which stays "open" for 7 days by default), but can respond to an unlimited number of questions. Dozens of new questions are posted every day. You can even add an RSS feed by question category. This is a great way to build your reputation (by helping others and contributing quality answers), increase your visibility on LinkedIn, and meet potential new contacts.

Tip: If your response is marked as a "Best Answer" it will be listed on your profile and give you greater credibility when answering questions in that topic area. Do note that the user who asks the question must rate the answer (using their own criteria.) Many users do not do this.

How do you know when you have received a "Best Answer"? The "asker" has the option to send you an email notification. Some do this. Otherwise in the Answers section, click on the My Q&A tab, then click on the "My Answers" tab. You will see a large green-bordered box. Your best answer ratings will also show up underneath your name when you post a response in the Answers section.

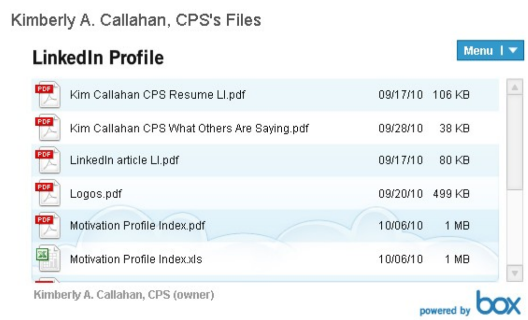
When you ask a question, it is good etiquette to rate the answers when the question closes. You will not receive an email notification, so you must go to the "My Q&A" tab of the Answers section. It is also a good rule of thumb to close "how-to" questions as soon as they have been satisfactorily answered. It's also good etiquette to respond to each answer, even if it's just with a simple "thank you."

One item that catches people's eye is the "This Week's Top Experts" listing. This is a bit of a misnomer because it is not related to the "Expert" rating you are awarded when your response is selected as the "Best Answer." It is based solely on the quantity of questions answered, rather than the quality of questions answered. I disagree with this system of recognition. **Focus on *quality* not quantity**.

Tip: One shortcut used by frequent responders is to create a document or file with answers to frequently asked questions. There are plusses and minuses to this tactic. On the plus side, if it is easily accessible and organized, it can be a time saver and provide concise, accurate responses. On the minus side, it can also become obvious very quickly when someone is pasting the same answer over and over. Sometimes the formatting is off when pasted. And if there is extraneous information in your answer it either may not be applicable to the question or it can become tiresome for others to read repeatedly. I have found personally that it often takes as much time to find the document, open it, find the appropriate answer, copy it, then paste it as it does to just type the answer each time. Another note: LinkedIn does not provide a mechanism to save your answers or to search them, so if you have one that you especially like or received a good response, you might consider copying and pasting those to a file if you want to reference it later.

Applications

LinkedIn offers nearly 20 applications—with more being added regularly. You can access them one of two ways: first mouse over “More” in the static menu and select Applications or in the edit profile mode you will see an option to add applications. You can share your reading list using an Amazon.Com application. You can share your Tweets or blog posts (provided those are more professional than personal). Want to upload documents or presentations? Have events you want to list? You can do all of those things and more with the various applications.



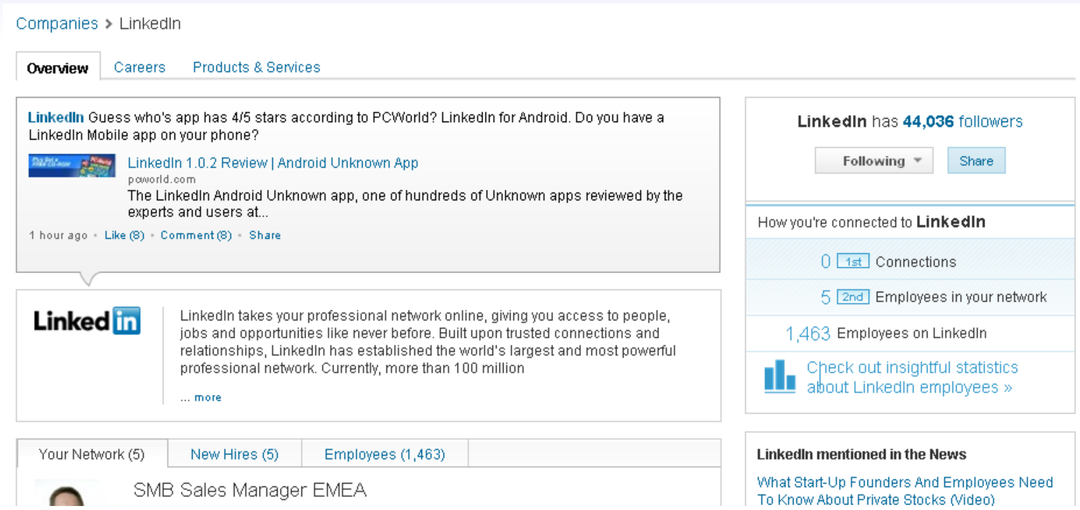
One application I find particularly useful is **Box.Net**. Box.Net is a free personal virtual storage site. This allows users to upload any types of file (provided they meet the size guidelines). Although any user can print your LinkedIn profile in a resume format, it may not look the way you would want it to and it will be longer than your typical resume. Use Box.Net to upload your resume (I recommend removing any contact information you wouldn’t want everyone to have access to). Have projects or a photography portfolio you want to share? Use Box.Net. Have files you want to share with group members or others? Use Box. Net. Even better, you are provided a direct link to your folder and each individual file so you can share them even more easily. Not only can you conveniently provide resume information and a demonstration of your skills, but you can share presentations and white papers which will help add value to your presence on LinkedIn. It also gives people another reason to visit your profile.

BUILD YOUR REPUTATION

While its placement is near the end, it’s certainly not an afterthought. In short: be a “giver” not a “taker.” Add value to LinkedIn by providing information, helping others, and fostering thoughtful discussion. Frequent promotional announcements or requests for job leads aren’t relationship builders. This is true of any type of networking. Be an individual that others enjoy interacting with.

- In Answers, answer more questions than you ask. Answer questions accurately and courteously. Don’t regurgitate the same information as another responder simply to get your name out there and don’t use it as an opportunity to advertise yourself unless it is absolutely germane to the post. You will see several different tactics to answering questions, and not all of them will build your reputation as someone who is a reliable resource. Put yourself in the place of the asker first.
- In Groups, while you may find your daily blog posts vastly interesting and think your business is the bee’s knees, others don’t want to see a new post from you every day promoting such. Instead, become an active member and respond thoughtfully to other posts. Share useful info related to the group topic. Members who want to know more about you will click on your profile.
- Send genuine invitation requests and interact with your connections. Don’t be viewed as a “name collector.” Find out how you can help others in your network and follow through.
- Use applications such as Box.Net and Slideshare to provide informational material you have created. Build your expertise. Use the Events application and your Network Update to invite others to events of interest.

Company Pages



Many individuals make the mistake of using an individual profile as their company page. This is not only incorrect, but a violation of LinkedIn's User Agreement. There are two ways to create a company page. The first is that in the process of adding the job to your profile, LinkedIn will ask if you want to create a page when it doesn't recognize the company. The other method is to visit the Companies section and create a new page that way.

The most obvious benefit of having a company page on LinkedIn is that is a free opportunity to be visible to over 100 million business professionals from around the world. The company page can include your company's blog, Twitter account, news links, employees, job openings, a list of products and services your company offers as well as customer reviews. LinkedIn members who are interested in your company can choose to "follow" it and be alerted to activity such as personnel changes.

How can I control who edits my company page?
By default, any individual with a confirmed email address at your company's domain may edit the page. However, you can now limit editing to certain LinkedIn members without the need to purchase an upgraded account. You will see an option to limit editing to designated users only.

How do I add employees to my company page?
You can't. Employees must add themselves by editing their profile. They will need find that job listing on their profile, choose the edit link associated with it, and then choose the change company link. They will need to clear the company field and begin typing the company name. As they do this, a pop-list of companies appears. When they see the correct company in the list, they need to select it. Then save changes! Once this is done, a "page" icon will appear next to the company on their profile and they should now be appearing on the company's page.

How do I remove someone from my company's page who no longer works here or has never worked here?
You can't. The first step is to see if you can contact the individual and request they update their profile so that they are no longer listed as a current employee. In the case of someone who has never worked for the company and will not respond to requests to update their profile, then your only other option is to contact LinkedIn's Customer Service. In addition to contacting them directly, you can also click on the person's profile and look for an exclamation point icon next to the employment listing. Click on that and you are given an option to report the inaccuracy.

Other Common Questions

How do I add LinkedIn to my email signature?
There are several ways you can add your LinkedIn address to your email signature:

1. At its most basic, just copy and paste your personalized link from your profile into your email program's signature field. Example:
   Sincerely,
   Kim Callahan, CPS
   http://www.linkedin.com/in/kimberlyacallahan

2. Make it spiffier by adding a LinkedIn graphic if your email supports an HTML signature. To do this, you can visit the Logo and Branding Guidelines page at http://developer.linkedin.com/docs/DOC-1101 which will display several different LinkedIn logos. Choose the appropriate size, copy it, and then paste it into your email signature field. In some programs you may even be able to make the logo itself a clickable link.
   http://www.linkedin.com/in/kimberlyacallahan

3. Visit LinkedIn's Customized Email Signature page for Outlook and Thunderbird at http://www.linkedin.com/signature?display= There are several designs to choose from.

How can I add a LinkedIn button to my website?
The first location is from the "Promote Profile" area. This will provide you with ready-made buttons and code for you to copy & paste. http://www.linkedin.com/profile?promoteProfile A similar button is available for companies on your company profile page.

The second location is a page where you can obtain a LinkedIn logo.
http://developer.linkedin.com/docs/DOC-1101

What are the benefits to a paid membership?
Additional Inmails which allow you to send emails to people you don't know; advanced search features; more search results; and seeing last names of third degree connections. You really have to decide if these features are worth it. The vast majority of LinkedIn members use the free basic membership account. In the lower right hand corner of the LinkedIn screen you will see a link that says "Upgrade My Account." You can view a comparison of the different premium account options there or via this link: https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/71/kw/premium%20account/related/1

How do connect my LinkedIn Profile to my Facebook page?
Use the LinkedIn app on Facebook: http://apps.facebook.com/linkedinprofile/?ref=ts You can then use one of your three website links on LinkedIn to link to your Facebook page. Please keep in mind however that LinkedIn is a professional networking website. So if you are going to direct people to your Facebook page, make sure it's something you don't mind potential employers seeing.

Removing deceased persons from LinkedIn

If the person is deceased, you have verification of their death, and know what email address they used to register, you may submit a request for removal. While some argue it is unnecessarily "difficult", it should be so that ill-intentioned people are not able to erroneously report another member as deceased out of spite. The Verification of Death form and instructions can be found at the following link. http://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/2842

Where can I find LinkedIn demographic information?

One location is http://advertising.linkedin.com/audience/

What is OpenLink?

Premium account holders can choose to allow any LinkedIn member to send them a message for free. To enable this, go to Settings and change the options to allow OpenLink Messages. You can also use advanced search features to search for other OpenLink members.

What is Profile Organizer?

Premium members can "save" the profiles of members for later reference. Think of it as a "bookmarking" system. Premium Members can also create folders in which to organize the saved profiles and also make notes on each profile.

What if I get something that is SPAM?

When you open the message in your LinkedIn Inbox. You will see a button to mark the message as SPAM. If the person is a contact, disconnect. If a group member, report to the owner/manager.

Where does LinkedIn get the "People I May Know" list from?

LinkedIn generates this list based on a variety of things: your employers, your educational institutions, people whose profiles you have visited, people who have visited your profile, group members, and 2nd degree connections. One word of caution: this is not an invitation to connect from that individual. In fact, they have no idea that they are showing up in this list for you.

These Mistakes Could Be Costly....

TYPING IN ALL CAPS DOESN'T MAKE YOU OR YOUR WORDS MORE IMPORTANT. In the world of Internet etiquette, typing in all caps is considered "shouting". It also gives the appearance of laziness and/or technological ineptitude.

likewise, typing in all lowercase or wEiRd CaSiNg doesn't make you hip. It actually makes you look lazy and/or may make people think you are a 12-year-old emo wannabe.

Putting very little on your profile. This does not make you intriguing. It makes it look like you don't care or have so little experience and so few qualifications that you are hiding.

The only contributions you make to groups are: posting your latest blog, clicking the "like" button for every single thread, and/or when you do post it is a repeat of something already said or of little use such as "That's great!" or "I totally agree!" This is a sure-fire way to obtain the "obnoxious" label.

Never sign in to LinkedIn. This is a great tactic if you don't want to keep tabs on your connections, don't want to take full advantage of the website, and don't want to meet any new people. It's like going to a networking event and sitting outside in your car.

Use the Answers area as your personal soapbox, free advertisement medium, and homework tutor. Also make sure that your answers fully reflect your egotism, snarkiness, and exasperation. *Not!*

Additional Resources

Official LinkedIn Resources

Blog
http://blog.linkedin.com

Help Center
https://help.linkedin.com

Learning Center
http://learn.linkedin.com

YouTube Channel
http://www.youtube.com/user/LinkedIn

Webinars
http://learn.linkedin.com/training

To Contact LinkedIn:
https://help.linkedin.com/app/ask/session

650-687-3600

cs@linkedin.com

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An Executive's Guide to Social Media (Nate Kievman) http://www.deminghill.com/blog/

Best of LinkedIn http://bestoflinkedin.net

I'm on LinkedIn - Now What??? (Jason Alba) http://imonlinkedinnowwhat.com

LinkedIn Intelligence (Lori Ruff) http://linkedintelligence.com

Linked Into Business (Viveka Von Rosen) http://linkedintobusiness.com
Details for Viveka's Weekly LinkedIn Chat: http://linkedintobusiness.com/2010/10/the-linkedin-chat/

LinkedIn Lawyer (David A. Barrett) http://linkedinlawyer.blogspot.com

Link Power Group http://www.linkpowergroup.com
http://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=3266388

Linked Strategies Group http://www.linkedstrategies.com
http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Linked-Strategies-1245667

MyCorporateMedia (Randy Schrum) http://mycorporatemedia.com/blog/

Social Networking for Newbies (Rick Iztkowich) http://www.snfornewbies.com

The LinkedIn Personal Trainer (Steve Tylock) http://www.linkedinpersonaltrainer.com

Windmill Networking (Neal Schaffer) http://windmillnetworking.com/blog