

LinkedIn

Professional social networking for job seekers, entrepreneurs, freelancers and consultants

RULES OF THE ROAD

1. **All social media is public 24/7.** Everything you post, tweet, blog, and post, is OUT THERE, even if you delete it later. E-mail can be forwarded. Your employer can track your Internet usage at work.
2. **Assume your next employer/client will be checking you out on LinkedIn** (& FaceBook, Twitter, Google, &c.). Some employers are using LinkedIn to identify potential candidates and FaceBook to screen them out. If you tweet personal notes all day, how focused are you on the job?
3. **Decide what you want LinkedIn to do for you...**Reconnect with former colleagues? Identify contacts in specific companies/locations? Promote your business? Find jobs? Keep focused...don't mix your personal & professional lives. Link your twitter if its professional; don't if it's personal.
4. **Be selective...**connections should enhance your profile and promote your reputation. Corollary: The more connections you have, the more "attractive" you are. The 500+ club is exclusive.
5. **Networking protocol:** primary, secondary & tertiary connections.

GETTING STARTED

Registration is free. Premium services (\$\$\$) provide access to more contacts, profiles, InMails & user stats.

CREATING EFFECTIVE PROFILES

1. Every word counts. Keep your information brief, factual, and interesting Blast your accomplishments. **Assume 90% of your viewers will only read your summary.**
2. Add current/former employers with positions & dates. Note your achievements, quantify if applicable (increased sales 25%), feature your key "selling" points. This is your *mini-resume.*
3. Upload your complete resume? Optional. Also very public. Privacy matters: invite contacts/viewers to request your resume. This gives you control over distribution and the opportunity to customize your resume for each position. **Beware of identity theft.**
4. Photo? Optional. Most people do this (think: FaceBook). It helps people looking for you confirm they found the correct the person. You can also upload a logo if your face isn't a primary selling point ☺

FINDING CONTACTS & SENDING INVITATIONS

1. LinkedIn colleagues from your current/former employers.
2. Imported contacts...generates list of people from the e-mail account you registered with.
3. People you may know...people who are connected to your contacts; new list every time you sign in.
4. Join a group! College alumni, professional organization, company (Verizon alumni), eagle scouts.
5. Standard invitation form requests type of connection (colleague, friend, etc.) & generates and auto message. **Whenever possible, personalize your invitation:** reference something special to help the invitee remember you or mention how the connection would be valuable to him. Keep it brief and focused.
6. Don't annoy people by sending automatic reminders about your invitation.
7. LinkedIn keeps a record of every invitation you send. This can be helpful if you can't remember if you already sent an invitation or not. Okay to invite again if ignored. Give it some time before reissuing, NOTE: if someone doesn't accept your invitation it doesn't automatically mean he ignored you. Many people register for LinkedIn but rarely check it.
8. Sunday is the best day to send invitations. Most folks have some downtime.
9. You can purge contacts at any time (contacts, remove). Contacts are not notified.

ACCEPTING INVITATIONS

1. Invitations appear in 2 places: your e-mail (the address you supply to LinkedIn) & your LinkedIn Inbox.
2. You can accept or ignore (aka decline). The invitee does not get a message if you choose to ignore.
3. **If you don't know the person, check him out before accepting.** View his profile & Google him.
4. Your connections are viewable to all of your primary connections. Be selective. Is this a group you would be proud standing with?

WILL YOU RECOMMEND ME?

Nobody likes asking favors. It's awkward. On LinkedIn, recommendations are gold. **If you don't ask, you won't get.** Request recommendations from people who know your work and are willing to *testify* to on your behalf. Industry leaders, top companies, & respected professionals carry the most weight. Personalize your requests. Resist the temptation to blast a recommendation request to everyone on your contact list. Recommendations will be e-mailed to you. You can decide to publish (make them viewable on your profile) or hide. Be sure to thank your recommenders for their time and support. "Old fashioned" etiquette is gold when networking. If you're asked to write a recommendation, use this test: (1) I have worked/consulted with this person and I respect his accomplishments or (2) I know of this person's work/achievements and respect him as an author, speaker, industry leader, etc. **Don't recommend someone on LinkedIn if you wouldn't write them a reference letter.** This could damage your credibility.

MERGING SOCIAL MEDIA

You can connect your Twitter to your LinkedIn. Everything you Tweet is automatically viewable to your contacts. Excellent way to update contacts on your latest achievements (book/article published, contract signed, community project, conference attendance, lecture series &c.). **Keep it professional.** No one cares what you had for lunch (unless you are a famous food critic).

MONITORING ACCOUNT ACTIVITY (who's looking for you?)

1. "Who's viewed your profile"...names of people and/or private viewers (industry only)
2. "Appearances in Search"...# times people have searched for you on LinkedIn.
3. Identifying the people who are checking you out is a Premium (aka costs money) service.

I HAVE CONTACTS, WHAT NOW?

Back to square one: why did you join?

1. **Job seekers**—LinkedIn job database automatically tells you who you're connected to in a target company. You can also identify companies most listed by your contacts. Contacts can help you learn more about the company, identify hiring managers, give you a *in-house* recommendation. Contacts are also searchable by company, industry & location.
2. **Consultants/Freelancers/Entrepreneurs**—use LinkedIn to connect with colleagues & interface with potential clients. Testimonials from satisfied customers & recommendations from respected industry leaders/colleagues promote your professional credibility.

RECOMMENDED READING

1. I'm on LinkedIn, Now What???:Alba
2. Power Formula for LinkedIn Success/Breitbarth
3. LinkedIn for Dummies/Elad
4. Sams Teach Yourself LinkedIn in 10 Minutes/Rutledge
5. Find a Job Through Social Media/Crompton
6. 42 Rules for 24-Hour Success on LinkedIn/Muccio
7. Find a Job Through Social Networking: Use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook.../Crompton
8. Power in a Link/Gowel