

The Launching Pad



A Publication of More Than a Resumé

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This issue of The Launching Pad focuses on LinkedIn - a major social media networking community for business people. It's Facebook for your career. With over a hundred million members worldwide (basic membership is free) and close to one million groups, new professionals like you will find LinkedIn an invaluable tool for starting a job search and launching a career... but only if you understand how to fully use it.

GET LINKEDIN

More Than A Resumé clients know how valuable LinkedIn is to their job search. It's a great place to find others, and to be found. As you get closer to graduation, it's time to transition from your Facebook profile to a LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn has created a standardized way for people to present themselves. Follow the steps and you've essentially uploaded your resumé. But for today's job-seeker that's not enough to get you noticed. Instead, you need to think of LinkedIn as your website and adopt good search engine optimization (SEO) practices.

The only way for you to get linked in and matched up is by having a complete profile. The More Than A Resumé standard for completeness is higher than the benchmark set by LinkedIn. Here's an easy-to-understand list to get you started.

- 1 **Your profile must include your full name.** During a job search, many Facebook users convert their profile names by using initials or a middle name so employers can't find them. That is not what you want to do on LinkedIn. You want to be found by the name that appears on your resumé.
- 2 **Include a recent photo** that captures you in the way an employer will meet you. While it does not need to be a professionally taken photo, it does need to show you looking professional. Do not opt for not displaying a photo: It raises too many questions.
- 3 **Create a professional headline** (which appears under your name) that properly brands you. Your professional headline appears prominently in search results.
- 4 **Your summary is your personal brand statement.** LinkedIn limits the number of characters. You need to concisely tell the reader your skills, strengths and characteristics, and highlight an accomplishment that impresses employers in your field.
- 5 **Display your work experience** with just enough detail to incorporate keywords and phrases that will get

picked up in search results. Typically, a one-sentence summary is enough to ensure that a potential reader understands that you actually worked at the company and comprehend the role that you had.

- 6 **List the colleges/universities you attended, the degrees earned,** published papers and other relevant information. Alumni networks on LinkedIn are active and a great job-search resource. You want to be found by alumni.
- 7 **Recommendations are third-party endorsements.** Others, through a recommendation, can say things about you that you can't say without coming off as boastful. As a college student, get a recommendation from your advisor and a professor in your major, and if you have established a relationship with people in administration (such as a dean) have that person write a recommendation, too. You should also get recommendations from previous employers. There's no magic number on recommendations, but one per job will serve you well.
- 8 **Build your professional network.** Immediately start making connections. Connections are important because that is one way you will get found in the LinkedIn database. You meet someone at a conference: send a LinkedIn request. You talk to a hiring manager: send a request. You don't need 1,000+ Facebook friends. A minimal threshold to get noticed is around 200 LinkedIn contacts. And remember, you are evaluated by the company you keep and you don't have to accept every LinkedIn invite you receive.
- 9 **Status updates are effective** in showing your relevance to the industry, in the way that Facebook showcases what you are doing for your friends. Unlike Facebook, you do not want to tell your LinkedIn connections everything you are doing. Instead, upload a great article or post an event or conference you are attending. Only update weekly, not daily or minute-by-minute.
- 10 **Make sure your contact settings make it easy for people to access your profile and contact you.** LinkedIn lets you set your privacy levels. On Facebook, you likely block contact from those people that are not on your friend list. With LinkedIn, you want people to find and contact you.



YOU'RE LINKEDIN: NOW WHAT?

Building your LinkedIn profile is just the first step in building your professional network. LinkedIn Groups offer one of the best ways to learn about a field, make important connections and get access to the hidden job market—the jobs that are not posted.

LinkedIn has sprouted close to a million groups, and allows you to join up to 50. More Than A Resumé clients have learned the effective job-search method is to target: Focus your time and effort on a deep and narrow approach. This same targeting approach holds true for LinkedIn Groups. Think about it this way: How many of your 1,000+ friends on Facebook do you have engaging conversations with in the way you do with your close friends? Exactly. To make the most of your social media engagement time, adopt a deliberate and targeted approach when joining LinkedIn Groups.

What LinkedIn Groups are good for you?

By searching through LinkedIn Groups, you will discover groups that are in the field you are pursuing. You can then learn about companies you are targeting, find people in those companies, connect with your peers, and more. Once you find your groups, apply to join in. Some groups are designed in a way that you will be accepted right away. Some require the admin to reply and approve your request. Either way, once you're in, you're in—and you can begin information gathering and networking by participating in discussion, starting a discussion, liking, commenting, etc. Joining your college/university alumni group will get you started. Then look for other groups. Try to join groups with a sizable membership. However, joining groups with thousands of members is the antithesis of a focused strategy.

Once a group member, you can view the membership, follow past discussion and more. Plan to proactively visit each of your top groups two-to-three times a week. Don't wait for the daily or weekly updates (you set the frequency of updates) that come to your email inbox. Identify your best opportunities and plan to make frequent and consistent appearances.

You also have an opportunity to start your own group. It requires some knowledge on how to market that group within LinkedIn, and you will need to devote time to building a membership.

Learn from your network: Engage in your community

LinkedIn ranks discussions within groups (based on member participation in the discussion) and the most popular discussions appear at the top of the group discussion page. These are the topics where members are most actively engaged and they feature discussions that you will want to weigh in on either by responding to existing comments,

providing an insight or opinion, or by asking a question to generate more comments. You have the option to "Like" or "Share" discussions, or you can be a quiet observer...

although that defeats your purpose of joining LinkedIn—to find and be found.

Once you make an important connection with a group member—take it offline. This is easily done by replying privately ("More") and/or sending an invitation to connect.

There isn't a single solution for everyone on LinkedIn. If you want to know how to use LinkedIn Groups effectively, the LinkedIn site provides helpful tips and advice. And remember, good networking is a give- and-take in equal measure.

GET LINKEDIN TO OTHERS

Connecting with people is easy on LinkedIn.

- Connect with people you know by entering their name in the search bar. On the person's profile page click the "Connect" icon and complete the form. An email invitation is sent and you are alerted when accepted.
- Sending a direct email to others is done through what LinkedIn calls an "Inmail". There is a fee to upgrade to this level of membership. But there is a work-around for this. Read on.
- A way of using LinkedIn Groups effectively is to add group members to your connections and then send an email directly to them, using the basic LinkedIn messaging tool. LinkedIn allows you to send a request to a group member to invite that member to join your professional network.

Inside each group, there's an option called "members" on the top horizontal menu. By clicking on that, you will see a list of group members and some of the related features about them. You can go to their profiles and read their information to find out more about them. This can be the first step to decide if you want to connect with this person or not. You can find your best contacts using such group process.

Connect with top influencers in your LinkedIn Groups

"Top Influencers This Week" are group members who have engaged in starting or adding to a discussion. They use LinkedIn Groups effectively. Find them, go to their profiles, go through their contribution to the discussions—and if you find them helpful to your networking, invite them to connect with you. This is a highly targeted job-search strategy.



MAKE A STRONG PROFESSIONAL FIRST IMPRESSION

As you start using LinkedIn in the ways described here, be sure to first optimize your profile. Then start joining LinkedIn Groups and reaching out to people of interest. Of course, it's important you approach new contacts carefully.

Web etiquette, or “netiquette,” is not a new idea. Most website and online communities state their policy before you join. LinkedIn warns against trying to connect with strangers with a notice that reads: "Connecting to someone on LinkedIn implies that you know them well . . . recipients can indicate that they don't know you." LinkedIn will then require you to enter an email address with each invitation.

If you're going to use LinkedIn, use it well. Be polite. Be smart. Be courteous. Be gracious.

To make a good first impression on LinkedIn, keep the following in mind:

- **It's all about quality over quantity.** Before you click on the “Add to my network” button, know what you'd like to get out of the connection.
- **Try to find a mutual contact first.** Your invitation to connect will be accepted when it comes through a mutual contact.
- **Treat making a connection as you would a face-to-face meeting.** Don't just go with the default text, "I would like to add you to my network." You have 300 characters to introduce yourself and explain your reason for reaching out.

Example: "Amy, I saw your profile in the Marketing Group and thought it would be nice to connect with you. I graduated from University of Iowa, BA in cultural anthropology. My interest is to build a career in research and thought you would have some advice and maybe even know of career opportunities."

In under 300 characters, you let the recipient know how you found them (Marketing Group), where the connection is (University of Iowa, their career in research) and why you want to connect (research/career opportunities). The recipient may not be interested in connecting with you, but you made a strong professional first impression.

THINK BIG

Please take a few minutes to tell
More Than A Resumé what's on your mind.
Take the [survey](#) now.

FREE CONSULTATION

Contact [More Than a Resumé](#) for your FREE 15
minute consultation and learn how a career-launch
coach can help you land your first professional
job after graduation.