

LinkedIn for Dummies

How to Create a LinkedIn Profile Even your Boss will be Impressed

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This article is meant to give you an insight of one of the best online social networking site at the moment. According to the information presented on the site, this site gathers around 19 million registered users, representing 150 industries. [LinkedIn](#) is now considered to be the fastest growing business networking site and it offers a wide range of benefits.



Here is a brief list of benefits of using LinkedIn:

- Networking
- Hiring
- Posting jobs
- Get business advice; expertise
- Find high-quality passive candidates (people who are not really looking for a job)
- Make money; "Even if you are not a professional recruiter, you could work your contacts to find candidates for a recruiter and charge a finder's fee" Ajay Jain states in his recently published book, [Let's Connect Using LinkedIn](#) to get ahead at work.
- As an employer you could save a great deal of money that you might have needed to spend on recruiters' fees or on advertising.

If I were to draw a parallel with any other similar sites, I would bring up Facebook. Both are considered to be very private, you can actually get in contact only with those who you accept as a discussion partner. LinkedIn covers business networking while Facebook brings friends together for chatting mainly. LinkedIn CEO Dan Nye states (when talking about Facebook), that it makes sense to keep one's professional life separate from the personal. I recommend in this respect reading David Kirkpatrick's article, [Why you'll finally use LinkedIn](#).

LinkedIn. Six Steps Explained


Your 1st degree connections are people you know and they are the center of your network. Each person connected to your direct connection makes a 2nd degree connection and those who are linked to your 2nd degree, make up your 3rd degree connection.

So, in this way you can say that you have linked with friends' friends and you don't feel like your connections are strangers. You actually trust people who made a new connection possible for you. And as a connection yourself, you feel responsible for recommending somebody to a friend... this is what I would call "the circle of trust".

1. Creating your profile

- Create an account – free of charge.
- Fill out your profile completely.
- Make your profile less formal, people are more interested in the person and what they are doing with their life. Short paragraphs are welcome.
- Say a few words about you, don't just stick to your education and jobs or positions you had; be funny, be creative; use simple language.
- Talk about your professional experience, goals and it is also recommended to mention why you chose to be a member of LinkedIn, and what is it you are hoping to get from your connections.
- It might be useful to tell people who you worked with in the past (industry, organization type, number of employees, etc.)
- There is also a feature called "Recommendation" which actually allow people on LinkedIn to put in a good word for you, right in your profile. In case you don't agree with the things written about you, you can reject that certain recommendation. This feature is a great help in editing your profile, because there are perhaps some details you missed and then somebody remembers them and send them back to you.
- Recommendations and your answers rated "Best" in the Q&A section boost your credibility.
- It is advisable not to put your email address under your name on your profile and there is a good reason for it. Putting the email address there, make people aware that you are willing to connect

with just about anyone. Better let the person interested in you contact the mutual friend in order to get in contact with you.

- Add a photo of yourself, so people can actually see who they are interacting with.
- You can use up to three websites as a reference to you, places where people can find out more about you.
- Keep your profile up-to-date. Every time you add something new to your profile, connections can see it. "Your profile is like a dynamic CV, and beats any of those static, outdated ones posted on job sites or left with recruiters" Ajay Jain concludes in his book.
- Use a tagline under your name, this is what members see first.
- There are some privacy settings you could use in order to avoid spammers, salespersons to waste your time (Introductions, OpenLink and Inmails).
- The checklist gives you the possibility to filter your incoming messages whether you want to be contacted for career opportunities, expertise requests, business deals, job enquiries or just to reconnect with others.
- Set your profile to Full View. With this feature viewers will have more information about you and search engines will find you easier. You can also promote your profile by copy pasting the LinkedIn code wherever you are allowed. Why not check my LinkedIn profile?  [View Adriana Jordan's profile](#)

2. Connecting to people

- Upload your address book from Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook or any other database where your contacts' email addresses are stored and LinkedIn will tell you immediately who of these are already LinkedIn members.
- You may choose to invite all these people to your network.
- Invite people who are not LinkedIn members to set up accounts, this way your network broadens.
- LinkedIn doesn't allow you to contact somebody let's say 2 degrees away, at least not doing it directly (there are no contact details to let you do this). First you have to find a mutual connection that could forward an Introduction on your behalf. Beware, there is a limit of five Introductions per month at the free basic account!

- InMail is another great feature, a premium one, which only paying members can have! InMails are private messages sent to any LinkedIn user without showing their email addresses. You can see these messages only if they are accepted by the recipient.
- You can also activate your OpenLink feature. This is a way to be known at the highest rank, but you can still keep your contact information confidential. Sending an OpenLink message is free of charge, but having this feature activated means you need to be a premium paying member.

3. Further tips on how to use LinkedIn

- First work on gaining a wide network that serves your personal and professional needs. Then ask questions or answer questions yourself to help others. This way you encourage global team work.
- Check the site on regular basis, keep your connections warm.
- Read the [LinkedIn Blog](#) , because this is full of news and ideas.
- Be careful about the language you use, don't make any spelling or grammar mistakes. Connections won't see you with good eyes.
- Refresh the relation with your former colleagues, classmates (the bottom of the LinkedIn Home Page often shows them as being present in the network). You never know what kind of opportunities might come your way, and we have to admit that bonds are always stronger with these people.
- Don't spam or bother your connections with too many or any irrelevant messages.
- Always thank people when they do something for you like answering your questions, getting you an introduction or reference, giving you leads etc. Nurture the relationship. Use words like "thank you", "yes, please", "can I assist you", "I appreciate what you said".
- Contact connections only if you feel interruption is welcome.
- Be professional, be respectful.
- Avoid being intrusive.
- Don't accept invitations from people you really don't know. The idea is to get introductions from a friend and not from strangers, otherwise everyone could do the introduction himself/herself. I recommend consulting [LinkedIn Etiquette](#) .
- Don't send invitations to people you don't know.
- If you invite someone to LinkedIn, remember to remind that particular person under what circumstances you two have met and then you can choose to connect.

- An option to group all your contacts is yet to come, but you can download a LinkedIn toolbar that lets you bookmark any of your contacts under any folders you create.
- Don't invite your contacts to each social networking site you are a member of, it could become very annoying.
- When you connect, always edit and personalize your invitation.
- Give a reason for wishing to connect with a particular person.
- Be open to discuss different matters such as family, hobbies, goals, etc.
- Do not only connect with people from your industry. Try other branches too, people met there might become your clients.
- Avoid being critical of members by mentioning their names when networking with your partners.

4. Answers / Q&As

- Questions should be only posted when you can not get the desired information. Look up first!
- Close the question when you get your answer!
- Participate as much as possible in the Q&As, this is how you can know people better. I recommend here, Guy Kawasaki who identified [Ten Ways to use LinkedIn](#)
- Rate responses by all means, otherwise the respondents will ignore your future questions!
- Questions asked have to be clear!
- There is a limit of 10 questions a month for the basic account.
- Be careful not to give misleading answers in a subject area, as that will reflect your skills and knowledge!

5. How to recommend somebody

There are certain criteria that should be taken into consideration when recommending someone. Check:

- If you have actually worked with the recommended person;
- If he/she has delivered products or services to you;
- if you were content with the delivery;
- If you have met the person;
- If you are happy with recommending this person to friends;

- Language and spelling;
- The reason for your recommendation.

I recommend reading some [Linkedin Recommendation Examples](#) with explanations.

6. Belonging to a group

LinkedIn has a special feature called Groups and these are divided into three sections: Basic, Premium and Partner. The Basic group feature is free of charge which actually doesn't appear on the directory. So to form an idea, groups are collegiate and professional school alumni associations, corporate alumni groups, professional organizations, networking groups, event and tradeshow organizers etc. It is advisable to read Dave Taylor's [Secret of LinkedIn Groups](#).

The good thing about using this feature is that instead of sending out questions to a huge group of people, you can choose only the domains you are interested in the most. Being a member of a group gives you the feeling of belonging to somewhere, instead of being posted individually on the network. Read also the [FAQs about LinkedIn Groups](#).

Conclusion

To sum up, LinkedIn is once again the biggest gathering of professionals, it is like an online Chamber of Commerce, where everyone has unlimited access 24/7 to valuable information. The space set is not an impediment anymore, you can do business easier than ever with Russia or the Far East, and that is only one click away.

You can find out information about companies in a smoother, easier way; you get to know your future employer before actually going to the interview; research possibility is better than ever. You don't need to count on recruiters, there is no need to send tens of CV's to all sorts of companies, you can actually get noticed and get into contact with, before you realize that.

My advice to you is to sign up on LinkedIn as soon as possible. You could be an active or a passive member, it doesn't matter.... things might come your way from sources you didn't even expect. You could get in contact with people you otherwise couldn't. It's easier than going to a conference, where you might not get the proper attention. Doing business from the computer is all that anyone could wish for! 