

Job Seekers Part 4: Networking with LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an online professional networking tool, which allows users to connect to professional contacts and build relationships with professionals in your field. LinkedIn is certainly a crucial tool for job seekers, but at heart, LinkedIn is a networking tool. It can be very helpful during the job searching process: find open positions, learn about potential employers, find connections related to jobs and companies of interest – knowing someone can be invaluable.

Before you Begin

- Define your purpose. Be clear in your mind about what you are doing on the site. The clearer you are, the better job you will do using the site.
- As you set up your account, look at other profiles. What works? What doesn't? What makes profiles really pop-out?
- Investigate all of the functions available on LinkedIn. Answers, Groups, and other tools within LinkedIn are great, and will help you turn up more in searches.

Building Your Profile

- Your Profile includes a number of separate areas including your heading info, summary, experiences, skills and recommendations.
- Don't let LinkedIn force your hand: build a profile that works for you, even if it is not the profile that LinkedIn wants you to build.
- Look for other built-in tools on the LinkedIn site to help hone your profile.
- Write a compelling headline, a strong summary, and carefully choose skill words. These areas allow you to use important keywords for your industry, as well as write an attention grabbing statement that can help your profile pop out. Put as much time and thought into your summary as you would into writing a cover letter.
- Make sure your picture is professional.
- Update your summary with new projects, achievements or other items that you'd like to highlight. Your summary does not need to be static.
- Get recommendations. These can show off your skills in a way that traditional tools cannot. Think creatively about soliciting recommendations and ask unusual sources for recommendations.
- Spend time in the Privacy and Settings Tab. From here you can change the display on your Public Profile, including hiding past positions and editing your Public Profile URL.

Building Your LinkedIn Contacts

- Build your contacts creatively and add to your contacts frequently. Think about connections to current and former co-workers, people with whom you've worked on projects, people you've met at conferences and industry leaders. As with Facebook, it's polite to explain why you want to connect when you are requesting a connection with someone you might not know personally.
- Give recommendations. Recommending people gets your name to pop up more often on LinkedIn.

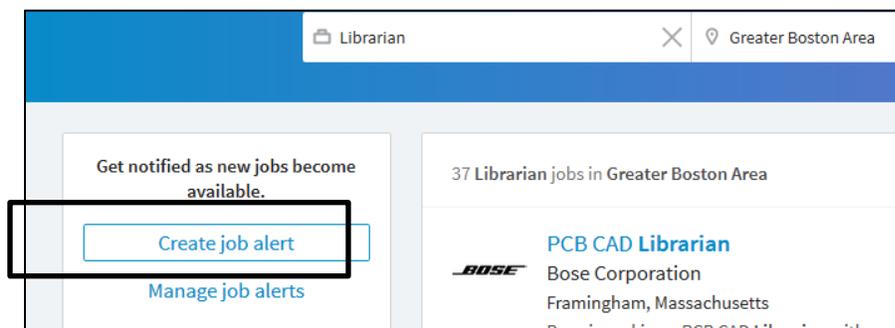
- Search for groups, and join them. LinkedIn Groups tend to be busier than many FB groups, so take the time to ask questions, answer questions, and in general show that you are an engaged and active thinker.
- Use groups to identify LinkedIn users who might have great insights for you.
- The number of contacts in LinkedIn might not be as important as the quality of contacts. Connecting to industry leaders can exponentially increase your number of 2nd and 3rd connections.
- Remember, LinkedIn is a primarily a networking tool, not necessarily a job searching tool. Connecting to more people can never hurt.

Using Your Time Wisely on LinkedIn

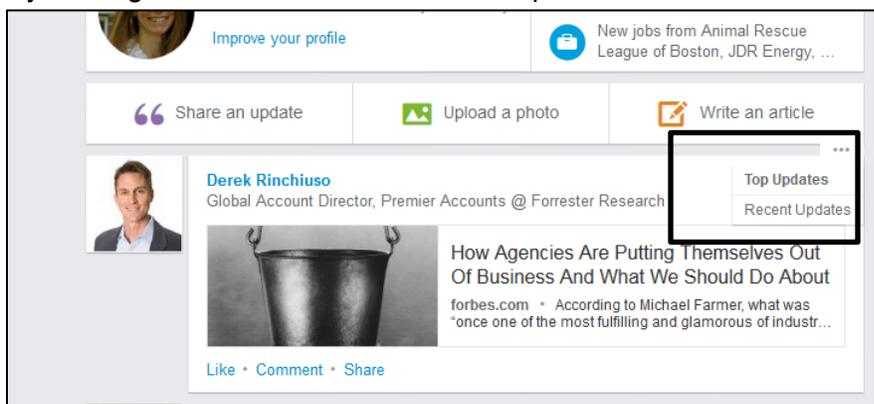
- LinkedIn doesn't generate email in the same way that FB does, so be sure to make it part of your tasks for the day.
- Schedule LinkedIn like a networking meeting. Give yourself some time there, and something to accomplish such as find a group to join, answering a question, or adding a recent PowerPoint to your profile.

Other Tips for Using LinkedIn

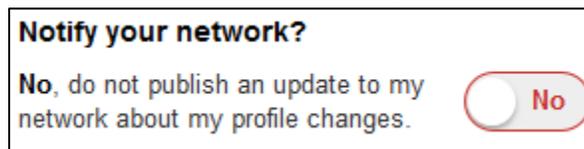
- Using the **Company Search** option helps you see 1st, 2nd, and 3rd connection you might have at an organization, and can help you get a foot in the door.
- **LinkedIn Salary** - <https://www.linkedin.com/salary/> - Use this tool to search for job titles and location to see the median salary. This can be helpful for negotiating job offers.
- **Job Alerts** – Set up email or text alerts when new jobs are posted based on your interests.



- **Sorting the News Feed:** LinkedIn defaults to 'Top Updates' but you may want to change this to 'Recent Updates' by clicking on the three bubbles at the top of the News Feed.



- Develop a unique **headline**, which appears below your name on your profile. Sum up your professional identity in a short phrase.
 - “Library Professional Focused on Information Literacy Instruction and E-Resources Development”
 - “Creative Marketing Director * Organizational Development * Gourmet Foodie * Game Changer”
 - “Software Engineer → Building the Applications the Make Your Business Life Easier”
- Write a compelling **summary** that catch’s the reader’s attention. The limit is 2,000 characters, about 350 words. Think ‘elevator pitch’.
- Add **symbols**:
 - Go to: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/todonna>
 - Scroll to the Projects section
 - Copy and paste your desired symbol to use as bullet points or spacers in your headline.
- **Turn off your update notifications.** Found on left side of profile.



- **Power Search:** There are five search operators to help get the results you want right away.
 - **firstname:** Finds members based on first name
 - **lastname:** Finds members based on last name
 - **title:** Finds members based on their current title
 - **company:** Finds members based on their current company (keyword search)
 - **school:** Finds members based on schools attended (keyword search)
 - **Example:** to search for current software engineers not named Doe, who have attended either Harvard University or Stanford University, try: title:"software engineer" NOT lastname:doe school:(harvard OR stanford)

Help:

- <https://blog.linkedin.com/>
- Dummies.com – Search for LinkedIn
- <https://www.linkedin.com/help/>