

Introduction



Maybe you are looking for a job. Or, you are planning to keep doing exactly what you have been doing for years. You may be thinking about a completely new career and need to smooth the transition to your next big opportunity. Perhaps you are seeing the writing on the wall and deciding that starting a business—and hanging your own virtual shingle—is in the cards. You are a new graduate, an experienced professional, or somewhere in between. Whatever your current situation, and job goals, this book is for you. Social networking is also for you—and it can profoundly impact your career in many positive ways.

If you have not yet dived into the world of social networking and experienced how powerful it can be, you don't know what you are missing. If you think LinkedIn is only for job seekers and Twitter for stalking celebrities, I have great news—these and other networks can change your life in ways you will never understand until you jump in with both feet and try them out.

You may be skeptical. I meet people who are all the time. Perhaps you don't think sharing your personal or professional information online is going to help your career or business. Maybe you don't have time and think social networking is for people who have nothing better to do all day. The truth is, social networking gets some bad press. Many think of it as a way to lose a job, not a tool for

getting one! If this sounds like you, you are not alone. I challenge you to read this book, and to really engage in these online communities. After doing so, I challenge you to tell me it's not worth it.

I've leveraged my own social network to write this book. It includes expert advice and opinions from over 100 of my colleagues and friends, other coaches, recruiters, human resource professionals, and others, all of whom I've met via Twitter or by reading their blogs. I share stories from people who have used social networking to get them where they want to go—and their advice can help you do the same.

This book is different from many you may have seen about social networking; I actively work with the tools I devote chapters to telling you about. I tell you that Twitter can keep you connected while I am watching my Twitter stream, which keeps me up-to-date regarding resources and information for this book. I am not researching this topic—I am living it! As a job search and social media coach, I teach entrepreneurs and job seekers how to optimize these tools, as I have done myself, for success.

When I started in social media, I was just one needle in a haystack, working alongside hundreds of thousands of career coaches. Today, reporters for major national newspapers and media outlets regularly contact me to provide expert advice. I created my online reputation and distinguished myself as a subject matter expert, and this book tells you how you can do the same thing (no, you don't need to be a technical whiz to do it—I am certainly not one).

Recent economic changes have proven that everyone—whether they know it or not—is a job seeker. You can no longer count on doing the same work, in the same field, for the long term. However, you can take control of your career and reputation in a way that was not possible just a few years ago.

Social networking can empower you to grow your reputation beyond your office, and to create a cohort of people who know and respect you from all over the globe. The power of that exponential network—and having people who take an interest in your

professional expertise and insight—is invaluable when you need to decide on a next step. Whether it's by your own choice (you decide to make a move) or someone else's (maybe you were laid off), creating a network of colleagues online can prove invaluable.

This book includes how-tos for beginners as well as tips and tricks that even some of the most experienced social networkers don't know. It's filled with expert advice and first-hand knowledge about these topics, from me and others who use these tools every day and know what you need to make this all worth your time.

Social networking is not a magic wand. You need to be able to bring the expertise to share. It's important to listen first and learn the rules of engagement. Just as you wouldn't approach a stranger on the street to ask for help landing an opportunity, you cannot expect strangers online to raise their hands to help you until you have joined their community. But once you do, you won't be sorry.

Are you ready to learn how to take advantage of today's networking tools, so you can stop looking for a job and instead let opportunities find you? Are you prepared to try something new? If so, then this book is for you!

RESOURCE

Visit www.socialnetworkingforcareersuccess.com for information, updates, advice, and resources, including links to contributor's sites.

Using LinkedIn

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn.com is the world's largest online network dedicated specifically to professional connecting. It is a place to find and share opportunities, keep track of people you know or meet (even if they move and change jobs), and to help grow your community. LinkedIn has over 90 million members from over 200 countries, and continues to expand at the rate of one new member every second.

The number of potential connections on LinkedIn is one reason it is known as a first-choice destination for job seekers looking to enhance their professional images. According to Anderson Analytics, the LinkedIn community is made up of 28 percent executives (average household income of \$109,000) and 30 percent consultants (average household income of \$93,000).

WHY USE LINKEDIN?

Tirumalai Kamala, immunologist, microbiologist, and organizer, replied to my inquiry on LinkedIn, asking people to talk about its top features. She said:

“LinkedIn allows you to establish credibility and earn trust by providing value. This is what I attempt to do by participating regularly in LinkedIn Answers, where I share the information, knowledge, opinions, and insights at my disposal. I believe the networking value of this interactive forum is incalculable. How else to get to know each other better than by analyzing how and what we ask and how and what we answer, and by engaging in dialogue and discussion?”

If you are familiar with the concept of six degrees of separation, which suggests that everyone on the planet is connected to everyone else within six steps (or friend-of-a-friend connections), you will easily understand LinkedIn’s approach. The site encourages you to connect with people you know and trust; once you’re “linked in,” you will be connected to your friends’ friends and their contacts as well.

The advantage of this approach is that your network expands every time one person in your close network adds a contact. For example, when I had 365 first-degree contacts in my immediate network, I was connected to an expanded network of more than 7,700,000 people. My total network was growing at a rate of approximately 11,300 people every few days.

A Must-Have Professional Network

While several of the networks I describe in this book may or may not be well suited to all job seekers, LinkedIn is a must-have network for the following reasons:

- **LinkedIn ranks well for Google and other search engines.**
If you have no other online presence, at least your LinkedIn profile should appear in search results about you.
- **LinkedIn gives you an easy, free, and user-friendly URL.**
This is a good way for people to learn more about you and find out how to contact you. You can use your LinkedIn URL to augment other profiles (such as Twitter), or as a standalone resource for anyone who wants to learn more about you. There is an option to upgrade your profile to a paid account, but most users do not require this specialized access.
- **LinkedIn offers a way for you to stay connected.** Keep in touch with people you meet, both professionally and socially. Searching for people on LinkedIn after a networking event or social gathering, and requesting a connection, ensures you have a chance of being remembered.
- **LinkedIn lets you provide key information to contacts.**
Adding your LinkedIn URL to your resume, business card, e-mail signature, and other places where you share information is a good way to provide extra details to people, as well as give them access to endorsements of your work.
- **LinkedIn provides a showcase for sharing recommendations.**
While some downplay the importance of endorsements on LinkedIn, the fact that the recommendation is tied to the recommender's profile does help legitimize the reference.
- **LinkedIn allows professionals to share their information and expand their networks.** This is true even when they are not in job search mode. It is a great tool for passive job seekers (those who might consider a new opportunity, but are not actively looking), or job hunters who do not want anyone to know they are looking for a job.
- **LinkedIn is the go-to site for recruiters and many who want to identify potential hires.** The *Wall Street Journal* quoted Connie Thanasoulis-Cerrachio, a career services expert with Vault.com and former Fortune 500 recruiter, as

saying, “85 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn to find talent.” I have yet to meet a recruiter or who does not include LinkedIn as part of their search strategies.

- **LinkedIn helps you build an effective brand.** If you have a solid resume, you can quickly and easily build a professional profile on LinkedIn that demonstrates your expertise.
- **LinkedIn helps you protect your brand.** The nature of the site does not invite you to share inappropriate information that may damage your personal brand. I have never heard about anyone being fired from a job as a result of something posted on LinkedIn.
- **LinkedIn lets you learn and demonstrate your expertise.** It offers you a place to demonstrate your expertise and seek industry expert advice via the *Answers* section (described in depth in Chapter 7).
- **LinkedIn provides access to an international community of professionals in 200 countries.** There are over 450,000 groups on LinkedIn, and half of LinkedIn’s members are from outside of the United States.
- **LinkedIn is a good resource for new business development opportunities.** It offers a place to promote your offerings to a large potential cohort of professionals and customers.

FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIRING DESK

Heather McGough, a staffing consultant who recruits within the Customer Support Organization at Microsoft, believes that having a LinkedIn profile is an absolute must for job seekers as well as professionals who are not currently job hunting. She explains:

“Recruiters use LinkedIn as a first-line source of prospective candidates. It is such a useful tool, because it allows us to find qualified people and to offer them a chance to apply for opportunities they may not have considered. If job seekers make it easy for recruiters to find them by using keywords and completing their profiles, it

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could improve their chances to land a new job. When creating a profile, I always recommend searching for your dream job via Indeed.com or SimplyHired.com, find the key words companies/recruiters are using in those job descriptions, and incorporate those words to jazz up your LinkedIn profile.

Some people may wonder if having a LinkedIn profile is a sign that they are looking for a job and worry that their boss or employer would view it negatively. Keep in mind, building a professional network is your responsibility and should make you desirable as an employee. LinkedIn is not a job board for active job hunters, such as Monster or CareerBuilder, where your profile obviously indicates you are in the market for a new job. If your boss is on LinkedIn, it would be difficult for him or her to say you should not be. If he or she isn't there, no worries!"

Advantages of LinkedIn

In addition to the reasons already mentioned for joining LinkedIn, it also offers the following advantages for job seekers and workers:

- You can import and export contacts from LinkedIn into Excel and other supported file types. (Just go to "Contacts" from the main toolbar and scroll to the bottom to a link that says "Export Connections.") It's a good idea to do this so you have a backup of your network.
- It's an easy way to touch base with your contacts regarding your professional engagements or plans. All you need to do is update your status, and LinkedIn will notify your network.

LinkedIn is also an effective research platform:

1. You may easily use the "Answers" section to ask for information and advice. LinkedIn encourages people who ask questions to select a best answer, which encourages a lot

of professionals who are hoping to raise their professional profiles to spend time answering questions.

2. You can use LinkedIn profiles to learn what skills others in your field or industry are marketing. Reviewing complete and well-done profiles is a great way to learn how you should be marketing yourself.

Now that you've learned a bit more about LinkedIn, and are hopefully eager to develop your profile, here are a few other things to keep in mind:

- You can answer questions as a way to demonstrate your knowledge and market your services. I actually hired someone to design my first website as a result of his response to a question I asked on LinkedIn. If you are looking for contract work, spending time answering questions can be lucrative, but it is also useful for anyone hoping to share expertise and be known as an expert.
- LinkedIn makes it very easy to search—for people, companies, and answers.
- You can easily integrate other online presences via this platform, including your blog, Twitter, and presentations and videos via Slideshare. The Applications feature provides an opportunity to share your resume and other documents via Box.net.
- You may request introductions to people in your extended network.
- LinkedIn allows you to communicate from within the site, which shields your e-mail address until you are prepared to share it with a new connection.
- While LinkedIn encourages you to only connect with people you know and trust, you have an opportunity to expand your network by connecting with LinkedIn Open Networkers, known as LIONS. These are people who announce their willingness to accept any opportunity to join anyone's network.

- Reconnect with people you may have lost track of. I mentioned in Chapter 3 that I located two long-lost high school friends via LinkedIn when I first signed on. It is a great place to find people you worked with years ago, and to reconnect for networking and information sharing.
- If you are diligent, you can learn all types of information about companies, including where people who work in one company tend to go next. (This information is available when you follow companies. I provide details about how to use this feature in Chapter 6.)
- Recruiters use LinkedIn to source for opportunities, and it is a great place to connect with them.
- LinkedIn lets you know how many people have reviewed your profile and how often you came up in searches, which helps you gauge if your profile is attracting attention or needs to be tweaked. This is on your homepage.

LinkedIn—Cons

There are not many disadvantages to using LinkedIn, but you should consider the following:

- It is a closed network and does not encourage you to reach out to people you do not know directly.
- For certain functionality, LinkedIn requires a fee; for example, to send InMail (a message to someone outside of your network). However, it is usually not necessary to pay for LinkedIn in order to research people and organizations, and to market your skills. Start with a free account, and consider upgrading to a job-seeker membership (described in Chapter 6) if necessary.
- As LinkedIn has incorporated more and more features, it sometimes provides utility that encourages users to meld

their personal and professional lives *too much*. Although I mentioned earlier that I have never heard of someone losing a job as a result of posting something inappropriate on LinkedIn, it is now possible to over share. For example, if you feed your Twitter updates to LinkedIn and post something less than professional, it may cross the line to something inappropriate. Be careful.

Create and Optimize Your Profile In LinkedIn

When you think about what to share via LinkedIn, the most important thing to consider is that you want to make it easy for people to find you, to learn what you have to offer, and to contact you. As you will learn in the following chapters, LinkedIn provides many ways to interact with and meet new people. When you engage via LinkedIn, keep in mind that everything you do, every group you join, all the information you provide should be in pursuit of expanding your network, sharing your expertise, and providing opportunities for people you know—and those you do not know—to experience what you have to offer.

Create Your Profile

Visit www.Linkedin.com to secure your profile. Use your real name and an e-mail address that you own, *not* one that belongs to an employer and might change as a result of a job change or layoff. You will be able to include alternate e-mail addresses once you have a profile, but sign up with a personal address as your main contact point. LinkedIn allows you to import and invite contacts from a wide array of e-mail services.

I suggest you skip all of the options to import your contacts and wait to connect to people once you have completed your profile. That way, you will be sure that everyone you contact knows who you are and how they know you. Having a fully optimized and complete

profile before you try to expand your network is a good idea. (Read more about expanding your network in the next chapter.)

TIP

Are you multilingual? You have the option of creating a profile in a different language. LinkedIn users also have the option to add a section indicating multiple language fluencies. Simply click "Add Sections" on the Edit Profile page.

Perfect Your Pitch

Before you populate your profile, be sure you spend time perfecting your pitch and identifying the keywords (explained in Chapter 4) that people are likely to use when they search for you. Look at other LinkedIn profiles from people in your industry for ideas of strong key words and search terms.

According to Lewis Howes, coauthor with Frank Agin of *Linked Working: Generating Success on the World's Largest Professional Networking Website* (as reported by Brooke Howell, via SmartBrief's SmartBlog on Social Media), in order to optimize the number of searches where you appear in LinkedIn, the keyword must appear in five places in your profile:

1. Headline
2. Current experience
3. Past experiences
4. Summary
5. List of specialties

In addition, Howes says you need to be sure that the summary answers three important questions:

1. Who are you?
2. Who do you want to help?
3. How are you going to help them?

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This is important advice for anyone creating and optimizing a LinkedIn profile. Just having a profile is not useful if it does not highlight what you offer. Make sure to spend some time identifying keywords appropriate for your description before you delve into creating or editing it. When you are ready, just follow the link from the toolbar to “Profile” and “Edit Profile.”

ADVICE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIRING DESK

Craig Fisher, a management and information technology recruiter, staffing entrepreneur, and cofounder of A-List Solutions, advises job seekers to focus on their keywords:

“As a job seeker, you need keywords in your LinkedIn profile that will be specific to your niche in order to help separate yours from the hundreds of less targeted profiles. Good recruiters will narrow their searches with unique keywords. Study job descriptions and other profiles to select strong choices and incorporate the keywords in multiple places in your profile—your headline, summary, specialties, in your job tiles, and in the descriptions of your jobs. Having these listed multiple times in your profile will help it come up at the top of the search results when a recruiter or hiring manager searches for someone with your skill set.”

Uploading Your Resume

Until LinkedIn considers your profile 100 percent complete, you will see an option to “Import Your Resume.” It’s important to know that LinkedIn is not actually inviting you to have a traditional resume on its platform; it is inviting you to use data from your resume to populate your LinkedIn profile (if you want to share an actual

resume, you should consider using the Box.net application, which allows you to upload a document to share. Navigate to this option from the main toolbar: “More,” “Application Menu”).

LinkedIn’s Help feature explains that uploading a resume is not permanent until you click on “Save Changes.” Follow these simple directions:

- Click on “Profile” at the top of your home page. This will take you to the “Edit My Profile” page.
- Click “Browse” to locate the resume document on your computer.
- Click the “Upload Resume” button.
- Review and edit extracted information.
- Click “Save Changes” to complete the process or “Go Back to Edit My Profile” to cancel the import process and return to your profile.

If you are starting a new profile, it might be helpful to use your resume to fill the sections, but cutting and pasting from your resume section by section is also an easy way to populate your profile.

Profile Sections

To edit your profile, all you need to do is sign in to your profile and select “Profile” from the top menu bar. Navigate to “Edit Profile” and select “Edit” for each section you wish to update or create.

Professional Headline

This is the equivalent of your tweet pitch (discussed in Chapter 4). Use your headline to clearly describe what you offer—your value proposition. There are no specific rules about what should go into this space, but I encourage you to use it to market yourself clearly and succinctly. Some suggestions for your headline include work titles, descriptions of your expertise, and target opportunities.

HEADLINE WRITING TIPS FOR UNEMPLOYED USERS

If you are in transition, consider writing a headline that describes your professional goals. For example, if you are hoping to land an executive sales opportunity, write “Executive Sales Specialist.”

Are you wondering if it is a good idea to openly advertise the fact that you are looking for a job via LinkedIn? There are two approaches here:

1. Openly share your plans to land a new opportunity and advertise that you are in transition or seeking a new challenge.
2. Simply share your professional qualifications without calling attention to your status as a transitioning job seeker.

I have spoken to many recruiters who prefer to hire passive job seekers—people who are employed. As a result, I advise you to focus on your professional skills and what you offer, without spotlighting your unemployed/jobseeker status. Anyone who spends time on your LinkedIn profile will be able to recognize you are in transition without you saying it. Hopefully, people will be so impressed by your profile your employment status will matter less than your skills and accomplishments.

However, there are a few exceptions to this advice:

1. If you are a contractor, or seeking frequent, short-term opportunities, noting your availability for new challenges may be useful.
2. When you first transition to being unemployed you may want to change your headline, to alert your network of your status, by adding something such as “Seeking New Opportunities in _____.” After your contacts have had the chance to see the update (about a week or two), consider changing it to a more specific, goal-oriented headline.

If you are looking for your first job as an IT manager, it is fine to write, “IT Manager,” indicating your target job. Examples of types of headlines that work if you are not currently employed include:

- Accounting Professional
- Business Development Professional

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- Senior Finance Executive
- Digital Marketing and Emerging Technology Expert
- HR Generalist
- Experienced Technical Resource
- Health and Wellness Professional
- Trainer specializing in professional and organizational development, negotiation, relationship management, and communication

Be as creative—or conservative—as your industry requires. Remember, this is a professional network, and your headline is what everyone will see when they peruse other peoples' connections. While you may choose to advertise your job search status, do not use the entire headline to simply broadcast that you are seeking your next opportunity. Use this important space to let people know about you.

ADVICE FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HIRING DESK

How to present yourself on LinkedIn and other social networking profiles if you are between jobs is a frequent topic of conversation in the career advice blogosphere. Harry Urschel, an executive professional technology recruiter, job hunting coach, and CEO of e-Executives, states:

"If you're currently unemployed, how that is portrayed on your LinkedIn profile can have an impact on whether you get responses or not . . . in my opinion, there is no-one-size-fits-all solution. The impression you make has a lot to do with the length of your unemployment. Your LinkedIn profile can adapt as time goes on."

Harry suggests that an effective progression on a LinkedIn profile might look like this:

- **Less than one month unemployed:** Include an end date on your last position; no other explanation or comment is necessary.

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- **One to three months unemployed:** Include an update, headline, or job entry that indicates you are interested in exploring new career opportunities in your specific field or industry.
- **More than three months unemployed:** It is important to show ways you are staying actively plugged into your field or industry. Perhaps a more recent job entry from “layoff date–present” to include any applicable activity, such as:
 - active participation in (trade association name/professional association name)
 - pursuing (relevant certification/advanced degree/industry specific training)
 - leadership of (industry specific or field specific networking group)
 - writing industry-related blog, trade articles, or White Papers
 - consulting projects or assignments (only if legitimate, and include details)

Harry does not believe it hurts your chances of being considered for positions if you’re unemployed. There is a caveat, however. He explains:

“It is harmful to create an impression online that you are stagnant, out of touch from your career field, or simply waiting for something to come along. When you can show that you are professionally plugged in, current, showing initiative, and active in your field, you become a much more attractive candidate.”

Industry

Because you must select this designation from a drop-down menu, you have a lot less flexibility with this section. Do your best to identify the most relevant industry that suits your goals or situation. If necessary, choose a broad category if a niche designation does not cover your expertise.

Photo/Avatar

You can upload a JPG, GIF, or PNG file (up to a file size limit of 4 MB). LinkedIn gives you the option to decide who will see your photo (your connections, your network, or everyone). While conventional wisdom for job seekers is to avoid using a photo on job search materials, the new standard is to include a photo online. This is a matter of personal preference, but I would suggest having a professional photo taken for your social media avatars (pictures).

Dress professionally for the photo. If a professional picture is not feasible, ask a friend to take some headshots. Use good lighting and practice until you have something that presents you in the best possible light—literally and figuratively. The fact is, people enjoy connecting with candidates they can picture. Displaying a photo that characterizes you as professional, approachable, and friendly is important, and will help you succeed.

Post a Status Update

This section allows you to make quick and easy notations to your LinkedIn profile, which show up on top of your main profile page. If your privacy settings allow your connections to know when you make changes to your profile, this section is an easy way to touch base with your contacts and let them know what is new with you.

Examples of good updates include, “Attending annual sports equipment show in Las Vegas,” if that is relevant to your professional goals. Another example is “Speaking about travel opportunities for seniors at the annual Wayfarers Conference.”

You may also include a link to a relevant article or blog post in the update section, which allows you to simultaneously update your Twitter account. Alternatively, you may also update this section via Twitter and Facebook (meaning that if you update your Twitter or Facebook status, it will automatically feed to this part of your LinkedIn profile); be careful to only share information that will be useful or interesting to your LinkedIn contacts. Since making a change to your LinkedIn profile is one way to push your information into your

contacts' status updates, it is a good idea to use this section frequently. Consistently sharing information by alerting your network is a good way to stay on people's minds.

Websites and Twitter Integration

LinkedIn allows you to list three websites. Select "Other" in the dropdown menu for each site you add, and type the name into the field provided. This helps index the name of the site for searching. You may also include your Twitter URL. Remember to only add websites and a Twitter handle if reviewing them would help someone to see you as an expert in your field.

Hopefully, after reading and following the advice in this book, your social networking profiles will be unified and professional. Remember, adding online platforms where readers may learn more about you gives people the opportunity to connect easily, which is a main goal of your profile.

Public Profile

When you first sign up for LinkedIn, the site assigns you a URL that is a random set of numbers and letters, which is not particularly user-friendly (it would look odd and out of place on top of a resume or in your e-mail signature). Luckily, you can easily personalize your URL to include your name. Just click on "Edit" near the URL LinkedIn assigns. This brings you to another screen, where you can edit the link to your profile. Just type in your name (no spaces) where it says "Your current URL."

If your name is already taken, LinkedIn will let you know it is not available. If unavailable, consider choosing something with your middle initial, or a version of your name that sounds professional. This is an important step—so do not skip it. Having a personalized URL makes you look a bit more savvy than your counterpart whose public profile is a string of random numbers.

On the same screen where you updated your profile, select "Make my profile visible to everyone" to allow people to see every part of

your profile. Remember, the point of social networks is to connect and share information. Hiding key details from public view is contrary to that point.

Summary

This is one of the most important sections of your profile, and one where you have a lot of leeway. The most important factor to consider is how to ensure your summary appeals to your target audience. Before writing your summary, it is a good idea to review summaries of others in your field or industry. This is another great aspect of LinkedIn—it allows you to easily research how people in your field market themselves. If you are in a very conservative field, a tongue-in-cheek summary that intends to make readers laugh will probably not win you any points. However, if you are in a creative business, being a bit casual and fun can demonstrate that you have what it takes to get the job done.

While searching, you will likely find summaries written in the third person. For example, “John Smith is a driven, enthusiastic, and creative communications expert.” A lot of professionals use this format because they believe it sounds more formal. I advise clients to write the summary in the first person. You may also incorporate pronouns such as *I*, *me*, or *my*, and describe yourself from a personal perspective. For example, “I author a well-regarded career advice blog, advise and coach clients in the U.S. and abroad regarding career transitions, and teach job seekers and entrepreneurs how to use social media.”

The following summaries are great examples to follow:

Lauren Randa Hasson—<http://www.linkedin.com/in/laurenhasson>

I’m an expert in all things career-related, and I’ve made a career of my own by sharing my knowledge with college students everywhere. From career coaching, to resume writing and special appearances, I do everything I can to help students get the jobs they want.

As a Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude graduate of Duke University, I took college by storm and completed a triple major in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Economics in only four years. My hard work at Duke paid off when I landed a job at Morgan Stanley as an Investment Banking Analyst. A little homesick, I headed back to Texas to be the lead researcher at one of the world's largest hedge funds.

However, I soon realized that while my high corporate standing delivered nice paychecks, it came up short on satisfaction. More and more, I found myself enjoying sharing my tips for professional and academic success with friends and peers. Word began to spread that I had a knack for helping students land the jobs they wanted. It was clear that achieving my own career dreams meant helping college students achieve theirs. As a result, the Resume Girl was born, and I haven't looked back.

To date, I've helped hundreds of students secure great jobs through career coaching and expert resume writing. I also travel the country and speak to groups on how to take the wheel in any internship or job search. I've dedicated my career to helping students develop theirs, and absolutely love what I do!

***Teresa Basich*—<http://www.linkedin.com/in/teresabasich>**

I'm a marketing and communications pro with a penchant for words and the digital space. My work experience lies mostly in managing creative projects, writing and editing copy for marketing pieces and business-to-business magazines, and designing marketing collateral for a variety of industries including commercial real estate, the automotive aftermarket, and mass transportation, among others.

My professional passions include social/new media marketing, integrated marketing communications, employer branding, internal communications, public relations, and ad and copy writing.

***Rekha Thomas*—<http://www.linkedin.com/in/rekhathomas>**

Experienced, results-driven, and analytical online and offline marketing professional with a proven record of developing actionable

strategies, executing programs and campaigns, negotiating and managing partnerships and third party relationships, beating revenue targets, and measuring ROI of marketing initiatives.

Robyn Cobb—<http://www.linkedin.com/in/robyncobb>

Highly focused, passionate marketing and business leader with extensive experience championing sales and profit growth. Proven ability to envision creative marketing strategies and programs to deliver immediate results. Experience in revitalizing organization performance via cutting-edge analysis, strategic planning, and business development programs. Recognized as an energetic leader, strong motivator, noteworthy communicator, and exceptional innovator with superior business acumen.

Specialties

This is another fairly basic section; all you need to do is include relevant keywords. This can actually be a string of words. For example:

Robyn Cobb: *Social Media, Business & Marketing Strategy, Product Management, SEM, SEO, Corporate Branding, Public Relations, PR, Director, VP, Personal Branding, Blogger, Thought Leader, Social Media Evangelist, Twitter, E-mail Marketing, Director, Job Opportunities, Cobb, Robyn, Robin, Speaker, Consultant, C3G, Professional Branding, Social Media PlanIt*

Notice that Robyn has included a clever addition in her Specialties section—a common misspelling of her name (Robin). As a result, people searching for her using this misspelled version are more likely to find her profile. If you have changed your name after marriage or have a nickname many people know (or used to know), include those as well. For example, if your married name is Lindsee Brooks, you may wish to list: “Frequent misspellings: Lindsey, Lindsay. Previous surname: Smithline.” Listing your full name in this section, even if it has not changed, will ensure everyone who finds your profile has access to your name, even if they are not connected to you.

Here's another example:

Noel Patterson—<http://au.linkedin.com/in/noelpatterson>

*Process Safety Management • Preventive Maintenance Programs
• Risk-Based inspection modeling • Instrumentation Reliability
• OHS/EHS • Weibull Analysis • Turbo Pro • SPAR, plant reliability, maintainability modeling • Six Sigma Green Belt certified and leader trained • Applied API 580 and 581 RBI standards • Quality Systems Coordinator/ Lead assessor • Extensive experience with EHS Regulators • SPAR & TITAN software • Global team networking • Oversee Risk Based Integrity systems*

Sections

If you have specific certifications, languages, patents, publications, or specific skills that someone might search for if they wanted to hire someone like you, be sure to fill in those sections in your LinkedIn profile to make it easier for people to find you. At the very least, fill out the Skills section, as every LinkedIn user has skills to highlight.

Applications

LinkedIn encourages you to connect your social networks and incorporate your blog, presentations (via Slideshare or Google Presentations), and videos. If you have presentations you would like to share, you can upload your slides and video via the SlideShare app. To include video, LinkedIn's blog offers the following instructions:

- Install LinkedIn's SlideShare app and then go to the Upload page.
- Once your video is uploaded, you will be directed to a video page; from here you can share the video on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social networks in the same way that you can with presentations.

Box.net is an application that allows you to share documents, and is the perfect choice if you want to share your resume or other written materials. You may also link your Twitter account, among other options, such as your reading list from Amazon. Review these options and add the ones that make the most sense for your goals. For example, if you blog on a topic related to your professional goals (which I highly recommend if you are a strong writer), you should add it to your LinkedIn profile. If you want to recommend professionally relevant books, consider using the Amazon application. If you mostly read romance novels, keep your recommendations for friends and family. Remember, you can add or delete these applications anytime.

If you do intend to feed your Twitter activity (for example, to LinkedIn), make a careful note of what you are sharing. I often see tweets about how irresponsible people are about their LinkedIn profiles displaying all of their personal and nonprofessional tweets. This is a pet peeve of many recruiters. You may elect (within the application's settings) to only send designated tweets to LinkedIn, which is something I highly recommend.

To find current apps, go to LinkedIn and navigate to "MORE" and "Application Directory."

Experience

This is an important section, and one which most closely resembles your resume. In fact, you can likely copy and paste sections of your resume in the Experience section, assuming you have a strong resume that includes keywords and is optimized for your profession.

Use very targeted phrases and keywords, and include skills and accomplishments (including numbers, as long as they are not proprietary). It is up to you how far back you choose to go with your experience. There is no rule that says you are required to list all of your jobs if you have a 20-year career. However, listing them provides more opportunities for people to find and connect with you, which is one of the advantages of LinkedIn.

Recommendations

Having recommendations helps you come up in search results and improves your opportunities to connect with people who are hiring via LinkedIn. Some may require viewable recommendations to consider you for opportunities, so reach out to LinkedIn connections who can reasonably and strongly recommend you once you have a finished profile. Make an effort to offer to endorse others, even before they request something from you. Just follow links from your profile on the main toolbar to “Recommendations” to manage and request endorsements. Read more about LinkedIn recommendations in Chapter 7.

Have a Complete LinkedIn Profile

It is important to have a complete LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn notes that you are 40 percent more likely to be found in search results if your profile is 100 percent complete, compared to a 90 percent complete rate. How do you reach a fully complete profile? Consider the following:

- Include your photo. You can use the privacy settings to determine who will be able to view your picture, but I suggest making it publicly available.
- Share a professional headline.
- Select a personalized URL for your LinkedIn public profile, as described in this chapter.
- Include your current position and two past positions, even if these were internships or volunteer jobs.
- Fill out the education section.
- Include a summary section.
- Highlight your specialties.
- Display at least three recommendations from employers or colleagues.

If you finish these steps, you should achieve 100 percent complete status.

How Much Time Should You Spend On LinkedIn?

You may be wondering how much time you should spend on LinkedIn to get the most out of it. This is always a difficult question to answer, as it really depends on the person and his or her goals and needs. I asked Jason Alba, founder of the job search organizer JibberJobber.com and creator of the *LinkedIn for Job Seekers* DVD, for his opinion. He replied:

“I tell people they can have a two-minute strategy or a two-hour strategy, depending on what they need to do. At a minimum, spend time to get your LinkedIn profile just right. Then, spend a minimum of a couple of minutes a week going in and accepting invitation requests.

If you have more time, you may try the two-hour per week strategy, which might include asking and answering questions in LinkedIn Answers, participating in Group discussions, and using the advanced search feature to find people to expand your network. There are a lot of proactive steps to take, but at a bare minimum, having a complete profile is key.

If a job seeker told me he was spending hours a day on LinkedIn I would think that is okay, as long as he or she has a serious focus and is involved in activities with a high return on the time investment. Unlike other social networks, people aren't going to LinkedIn for fun stuff; it's important to go in with a purpose. Identify your goals, do the job, and then get out so you have time to use other networks and focus on other important aspects of your job search. This is a tool, not a place to hide.”

Next Steps

Consider forwarding your LinkedIn documentation to a connection and downloading a PDF of your profile. LinkedIn makes both of these easy to do. While looking at your profile page, directly to the right of your picture you will see the link to “Forward This Profile to a Connection.” Right under that, you will see the “Download as PDF” icon (note that LinkedIn will select your default email address for the PDF). Now, keep reading to learn how to expand your network, and for tips and tricks to make the most of your time on LinkedIn!