# LINKEDIN USING & BUILDING A PROFILE

## WHAT IS LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn claims to be "the world's largest professional network with 225 million members in over 200 countries and territories around the globe." Their mission is to "connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. When you join LinkedIn, you get access to people, jobs, news, updates, and insights that help you be great at what you do."

## BUILD A GREAT STUDENT PROFILE

LinkedIn claims that profiles that are 100% complete are 40x more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn. You have more space here than on a resume so don't forget summer jobs, paid and unpaid internships as well as volunteer and leadership roles.

1. **Write an informative profile headline**. Your headline is a short, memorable professional slogan. For example, "Honors student seeking marketing position." Check out the profiles of students and recent alumni you admire for ideas.
2. **Pick an appropriate photo**. LinkedIn isn't Facebook. Upload a high-quality photo (your profile will be 7x more likely to be viewed) of you alone, professionally dressed. No party shots, cartoon avatars, or puppy pics!
3. **Show off your education**. Include all your schools, major(s) and minor, courses, and study abroad or summer programs. Don't be shy — LinkedIn is an appropriate place to show off your GPA, test scores, and honors or awards.
4. **Develop a professional summary**. Your Summary statement is like the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter — concise and confident about your qualifications and goals. Include relevant work and extracurriculars.
5. **Fill "Skills & Expertise" with keywords**. This section is the place to include keywords and phrases that recruiters search for. Find relevant ones in job listings that appeal to you and profiles of people who have the kinds of roles you want.
6. **Update your status regularly**. Posting updates helps you stay on your network's radar and build your professional image. Mention your projects, professional books or articles, or events you're attending. Many recruiters read your feed!
7. **Show your connectedness**. Groups you join appear at the bottom of your profile. Joining some shows that you want to engage in professional communities and learn the lingo. Start with your university and industry groups. Then find volunteer organizations and professional associations of interest.
8. **Collect diverse recommendations**. The best profiles have at least one recommendation for each position a person has held. Recruiters are most impressed by recommendations from people who have directly managed you.
9. **Claim your unique LinkedIn URL**. To increase the professional results that appear when people search for you online, set your LinkedIn profile to "public" and create a unique URL (e.g., www.linkedin.com/in/JohnSmith).
10. **Share your work**. You can also add actual examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments on your profile, where you can share rich media or documents. What better way to sell your skills than to show employers exactly what you can produce?

## NETWORKING THROUGH LINKEDIN

According to US U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics , 70% of jobs are found through networking. After you set-up a profile to 100% complete begin sending personalized (no mass emails) connection requests to everyone you know - friends, family, neighbors, faculty members, advisors, classmates, supervisors, etc. You may need to include a reminder of where you met, who you met through or what organization you have in common.

Then, ask your network for help. Let them know you are engaged in a job search and ask questions like these:

- What advice do you have for me as I pursue a job in xyz industry?
- Do you know anyone in my field of interest and would you feel comfortable connecting us?
- Could I meet with you to talk about your day-to-day activities?

Utilize the **LinkedIn Resources** listed below, and don't be afraid to reach out directly to alumni and recruiters. LinkedIn recommends that if you apply for a job, identify what recruiter posted the position (typically found in the job posting information) and reach out to that person specifically.

**Don't forget …**

Give back. Write referrals. Endorse colleagues' skill set. Comment on others' status updates. Forward a job listing to a friend.

Get away from the computer. Follow-up your online networking with a phone call, attending events and sending snail mail notes to people with whom you interact.

## LINKEDIN RESOURCES

**Linkedin.com/alumni** - Identify Murray State alumni by where they live, where they work, what they do, what they studied, what they're skilled at and how you are connected to them - or not.

**Linkedin.com/studentjobs** - Identify available entry level jobs and professional internships by job function. Then, narrow by company, location, date posted, salary, job function and if there is anyone in your network associated with the available job.

**Linkedin.com/companies** - Identify and follow companies/ organizations of interest and determine if anyone within your network works or has worked there. Follow their feed to stay up-to-date and get a better feel for their corporate culture. Use to research the company and people with whom you're meeting before an interview as well.

## LINKEDIN COMMUNICATION TIPS

1. **Be authentic**. Communicate on LinkedIn the same way you would in professional interactions outside of LinkedIn. No need to be overly formal or change your style – be real, be you, but be professional.
2. **Customize your connection requests**. Instead of using the generic "I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn" message, tailor each request. Remind him/her where you met/explain why you want to connect. They'll be more likely to respond.
3. **Be responsive**. Reply within a few days to connection requests, personal messages, or comments on group discussions you post. Stay on top of your LinkedIn inbox! This will keep you top-of-mind with people and opportunities.
4. **Research before reaching out**. Review a person's profile before contacting him/her on LinkedIn. You'll make a stronger connection by highlighting things you have in common or specific aspects of his/her experience you want to discuss.
5. **Be targeted and personalized**. Stay away from stuff like, "Hi everyone – I'm sorry for the mass message!" Your connections are more likely to respond to personalized messages. If you do want to announce something in a mass way, use a status update instead.
6. **Be careful with introductions**. If you're asked for an introduction to someone in your network, remember that your reputation is on the line. Unless you're confident in recommending someone or you know the connection well, it's okay to politely refuse.
7. **Keep it short and sweet**. In today's busy world, no one wants to read long, dense paragraphs on their computer or smartphone. Keep your profile summary, messages, group discussion postings, and recommendations clear and to the point.
8. **Proofread**. Remember that everything you post on LinkedIn could be seen by a wide audience (even private messages could be forwarded or saved). Represent yourself well by double-checking spelling, grammar, style, and tone.
9. **Give more than you take**. Balance your needs on LinkedIn with those of your connections. In addition to updating your own status and asking for help or connections, try commenting on other people's updates and helping with their requests.
10. **Always say thank you**. When someone answers a question you've posted, provides an introduction, suggests a job, or otherwise helps you on LinkedIn, send him/her a thank you message. The golden rule applies online just as much as it does in person.

## BUILDING YOUR BRAND ON LINKEDIN

1. **Be authentic**. The best online identities are real, honest, and focus on what makes you unique and what you can offer. Personal branding is not about sales or spin.
2. **Create a distinctive profile headline**. Your LinkedIn headline is the first description that people will see. Make it count. Good headlines are clear, confident, and use terms people search for.
3. **Avoid clichés**. Words like "creative," "extensive experience," and "team player" appear on so many profiles that they're almost meaningless. Find unique ways to describe your skills.
4. **Be visible**. Stand out by updating your status with projects you're working on, stuff you're reading (and your opinions on them), and events you're attending. Your brand is not just who you are; it's what you do.
5. **Build brand associations**. You're judged by the company you keep. By building your LinkedIn network, you're building your personal brand. Connect with colleagues, classmates, and others.
6. **Add to your knowledge**. Differentiate yourself by knowing your industry deeply. Read up on topics you care about (as a start, check out LinkedIn Today, Channels, and Influencers).
7. **Share in LinkedIn Groups**. Every Group post you make and question you answer is an opportunity to market yourself and to build your credibility. Groups are also a great way to learn industry lingo. *One way to determine if a group is worth your time is to click the "View Group Statistics" button on the bottom right of the group's homepage. Check the group's growth and activity. Also consider joining groups followed by professionals you respect.*
8. **Be personal**. Customize connection requests or any other message on LinkedIn to your recipient. People will appreciate the personal attention.
9. **Be consistent**. Make sure all the pieces of your professional footprint are consistent and send the same message — from your LinkedIn profile to your resume to other social networks.
10. **Give generously**. Helping others is a crucial way to build your own personal brand. Give advice, share job leads, provide endorsements, and congratulate people on their successes.

Most of these tips as well as others are provided on this website: **university.linkedin.com/university/global/en_us/index/linkedin-for-students.html**