

LifeWork Search's Guide to Getting the Most out of LinkedIn

Are you using LinkedIn to its fullest potential? With more than 575 million users worldwide, LinkedIn has become the most popular social media network among professionals, yet its power is underutilized by many. LinkedIn provides a way for you to connect with friends and colleagues and request introductions to their network. So why is this important? Seventy percent of job offers come as a result of networking. Your chances of landing a job increases with the right introduction. As the saying goes, "it's all about who you know".

As recruiters, we use LinkedIn on a daily basis, so we understand its importance. Over the years we have compiled a list of the best ways to utilize LinkedIn to help our candidates and clients reap the rewards of a good network.

Build your profile:

- 1. Add a photo:** Statistics show people are more likely to reach out to you if you have a profile picture. [Click here](#) for (5) tips for picking the right LinkedIn photo.
- 2. Customize your headline:** Your headline is not only viewable on your page but also in search results. Make sure it communicates what you do. Keep it simple and intriguing. This along with your photo and title will entice people to click on your profile to learn more.
- 3. Customize your URL:** Make your personal LinkedIn link streamlined and easy to read. By default, many LinkedIn links have a bunch of letters and numbers at the end. Keep it simple. For example: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jasonbreault>.
To customize your URL:
 - Click the Me icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage
 - Click View profile
 - On your profile page, click "Edit your public profile & URL" in the right rail
 - Under the section Edit your custom URL in the right column, click the Edit icon next to your public profile URL.
- 4. Have a good Summary:** Take the opportunity to say a little bit about yourself. The summary is a great place to briefly describe your mission, accomplishments, and goals.
- 5. Mimic your resume:** This is our top recommendation. LinkedIn is your digital resume. People use LinkedIn to get to know you on a professional level. Allowing users to get a glimpse into your experience will increase the chances of you being found.
- 6. SEO for your profile:** When building your profile, make sure you include all key terms relevant to your work experience. If there are multiple ways of saying something, make sure you include all of them. For example, if a recruiter is looking for an "S&OP Manager", and you only have "Sales & Operations Planning" written in your profile, you may not be found, make sure you add both. In many cases, HR professionals are only searching terms found on a job description.

7. **Add skills:** Listing your skills is another way to increase your chances of being found. Skills are searchable, if it's a skill you possess and it correlates to your work experience, make sure you list it. For example, this is a great place to list software you have experience working with (i.e. SAP, Oracle, etc.). [Click here](#) for information on how to add or remove skills.
8. **Add contact information:** If you are serious about being contacted, we suggest adding your email or cell phone to your profile (you can always remove it later, if needed). LinkedIn does limit the amount of InMails a user can send out, so adding your email address will increase the chances of someone reaching out to you. Many people will add their email address in the About section.
9. **Link your profile to your other accounts:** Do you have a personal website? Links to articles you've written or a presentation you've created? A blog? Each profile can display up to three website links. You can customize them by editing your profile. When in the "Edit Profile" screen, click the Contact Info section, then click the pencil icon next to your website links.
10. **Show work samples / Include media:** If you have work samples that aren't accessible through a link, LinkedIn allows you to upload a variety of files such as videos, images, documents and presentations to the Summary, Education, and Experience sections of your LinkedIn profile. For instructions on how to add or remove work samples, click [here](#).

Be active:

1. **Build your network:** Best place to start? Current and former colleagues as well as college connections (friends and/or professors, as well as any alumni working in the same field as you). Having only a handful of connections can prevent someone from contacting you. LinkedIn offers some tools to add connections. Click "My Network" at the top of the screen and in the left side column you will find the section to "Add personal contacts" and import contacts from using your email address.
2. **Join groups:** You can join up to 100 groups in LinkedIn. We recommend maxing out that number. Join work-related groups as well as alumni groups - both university and former places of employment. Why is joining groups important? If you're a member of the same group as another user, you can view their profile (private or not) and avoid the need to be a first-degree connection in order to message them.
3. **Follow hashtags:** We also recommend that you follow hashtags (i.e. #demandplanning, #supplychain, #supplychainplanning, #supplychainjobs, etc.), to view and interact with posts on topics that are important to you. To follow hashtags, search for a hashtag in the "search" field at the top of the page, make sure you include the symbol (#supplychain). Once you've clicked enter, you will see the option below to follow that hashtag.
4. **Update your status:** Share information with your connections. Status updates appear on the newsfeed, think of it like a Facebook feed. Posting statuses and/or asking questions make you more visible to your network. It also shows you are interested in learning and networking with others. Need advice on a work-related issue? Ask your network/ group. For example, if your

company is evaluating a certain software, ask your network about the pros and cons of software they use.

- 5. Be part of discussions:** This goes hand in hand with the above recommendation. Not only should you update your own status, but you should respond to other people's updates/discussions. This is a great way to show your expertise on certain topics.
- 6. Publish content:** Have an opinion on a certain topic? A blog? Or an experience you'd like to share? Publishing content is a great way to get information out to your network. To use this feature, click on "Write an article" from your LinkedIn homepage.
- 7. Recommendations:** Recommendations validate your experience. Ask former or current colleagues to give you a recommendation based on your performance and how the two of you interacted and offer to do the same for them. Think of it as a reference on your profile. If you are new to the professional world, ask former professors or colleagues/bosses from internships you participated in.
- 8. Endorsements:** Endorsements allow users to validate your skills (skills listed on your profile and skills not listed on your profile). It is important for you to select your skills ahead of time. This increases the chances of your connections endorsing skills you actually have and not random skills they "think" you have. In those cases, you have the ability to remove those endorsements that aren't relevant to your experience, preventing you from "selling a false bill of goods". To learn more about Endorsements, [click here](#).

Land your dream job:

- 1. Utilize the Job Board:** [LinkedIn's Job Board](#) allows you to search jobs posted by organizations. You can search by location, company and/or title. You can also set "filters", noting the location, experience level, job type and industry of jobs you'd be interested in. If you find yourself running the same searches over and over again, LinkedIn allows you to save your searches and receive daily or weekly emails listing jobs that match your search criteria.
- 2. Check Groups:** It is important to note that jobs are also posted in Groups. Most groups have a jobs section where job related discussions are posted.
- 3. Check out who's viewed your profile:** Take a look at who's been viewing your profile, you might find out that a Hiring Manager or Recruiter from a company that interests you has visited your page. Take the opportunity to send them an invitation. If you are one of those people who don't want others to know that you are looking at their profile, LinkedIn does allow you to make yourself anonymous. Within the Settings and Privacy section, click on "How others see your LinkedIn activity" and the left and click "Profile viewing options" to edit. However, before you do so, keep in mind that the more visible you make yourself, the more it may help you in the future. Therefore, our recommendation is to allow others to see that you've visited their page.
- 4. Follow companies:** Dream about working at a certain organization? Follow them on LinkedIn. By doing so, you will be kept abreast of updates and discussions posted by the company, including current job openings.

5. **Get introduced:** This is where the real power of LinkedIn lies. Use your 1st-degree connections to connect with 2nd-degree connections. It is no secret that a majority of jobs are filled by referrals. It's all about who you know. Find 2nd-degree connections at companies you've applied to. To get introduced, visit the profile of that person and in the "Highlights" section you will find your mutual connections. Send a message to one or all those mutual connections to ask for an introduction, making sure to briefly explain your reason for wanting to connect.
6. **Do your research:** LinkedIn can be extremely useful in the interviewing process. You can use LinkedIn to find out more about the people you are going to meet with. Take a look at their profiles; you may be surprised to find out you have something or someone in common. Perhaps you went to the same university or used to work at the same organization; this piece of information can break the ice and help you build rapport during the interview. If you aren't in the interviewing process, but have submitted your resume, you're probably sitting in a pile of 100+ resumes. To increase your odds of landing an interview, research potential Hiring Managers and reach out directly.