

LinkedIn

is a social networking website primarily used for professional networking.

LinkedIn was specifically created to connect you to potential employers and to facilitate education on industries and trends within specific fields. It can be a powerful tool throughout your career exploration and job search process. As outlined below, when using social media for networking, remember to keep your communications professional in frequency and in tone.

Explore

Use LinkedIn's search function to find people, groups and organizations in industries that you are interested in. Find people with your "dream job" and take note of their career path. Look at the various job titles and responsibilities of people that you connect with to see what you find interesting. Reach out to your connections and ask for informational interviews. This will help you to gauge what people like and don't like about their jobs and give you an idea of what path you could take. Utilize the "LinkedIn Today" feature to find articles related to your field and interests.

Prepare

Share relevant content with your connections. Contribute feedback and commentary in group discussions. Get your name out there in a positive way. Build upon the value of your connections and develop a rapport with people who cannot only assist you in obtaining an internship or job, but also people who will give you feedback on the quality and strength of your profile. Search for organizations in your industry and use the "Insights" feature to gain more information about the people and similar organizations.

Start

Utilize LinkedIn's "Career" feature to find job and internship opportunities in an organization. Ask connections with whom you have built a relationship for advice in your search and suggestions of opportunities to pursue. Ask members of the groups you belong to if they know of any job or internship opportunities. Follow organizations and receive a notification when they post a new job opportunity.

Adapt

Stay abreast of current trends in your industry by reading news articles posted by the people in your field. Utilize LinkedIn to make connections that may be helpful to you later on in changing organizations or even changing careers.

General Tips for Creating a Profile

- Complete 100% of your profile. Don't leave sections incomplete
- Use a professional photo of yourself
- Include your area of study or career ambitions in your headline
- Use industry appropriate keywords and phrases in your summary and include the type of positions that you are seeking
- Include extra-curricular activities, volunteer experiences and internships to show the full breadth of your qualifications
- Use the profile sections designed just for students, such as Courses, Projects, Languages, Certifications, and Organizations. Keywords are good here, too
- Obtain recommendations from professors, advisors and internships
- Make sure your profile is consistently up-to-date

How to Pick Your Pic

Do

- Have a professional photo
- Avoid distracting backgrounds
- Make sure the picture is industry appropriate
- Get someone else's opinion

Don't Do

- The "selfie"
- Badly lit or grainy photos
- Pictures from parties
- Random objects (your car, a pet, etc.)

Getting Connected

- Don't connect to everyone you know, make meaningful connections that will be useful professionally
- Personalize the "Invitation to Connect", but be brief and don't ask too much of someone who doesn't know you. Develop a relationship first
- Start with people you already know (peers, family, extended family, co-workers, members of affiliate groups)
- Utilize the "People you might know" tool to find new connections
- Add new contacts that you have met at events
- Join groups and add contacts that will bring value to you professionally
- Request a connection when you want to ask someone a question
- Utilize www.linkedin.com/alumni to find useful connections from the Gator Nation

Stand Out

- Create your own URL for easy sharing
- Customize your profile and add sections and applications
- Customize your public profile settings (to show what is relevant and impactful)
- Be a content contributor. Find insightful articles and create industry related content to share with your network
- Ask questions about the latest trends and share own your ideas in groups

Groups

Benefits

- Allows you to meet people you're not already connected to
- Enables you to send mail to mutual members
- Allows you to see full profiles of 3rd degree connections

Tips

- Start with large professional associations
- Find people in your field or with your dream job and see what groups they are in
- Don't just "join" groups; Join the conversation
- Customize settings to control how often you receive updates

Endorsements

- Identify skills and expertise that you possess from previous jobs, experiences or coursework
- Endorse your connections' skills, and they may endorse yours in return

Recommendations

- Ask supervisors, professors or advisors to write a recommendation for you
- Return the favor if appropriate

Sources: http://university.linkedin.com/university/global/en_us/index/linkedin-for-students.html

<http://www.naceweb.org/uploadedFiles/Content/static-assets/downloads/social-media-guide-linkedin.pdf>