

How to Create a LinkedIn Profile

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LinkedIn is a social network used for building and maintaining professional contacts. There are more than 16 million members of LinkedIn who've created profiles summarizing their professional and educational experiences. Members who have created profiles can connect with former colleagues, friends, and coworkers making it easier to stay in touch and share information.

More importantly, a LinkedIn profile is an important component to building a positive presence for yourself on the Internet. Profiles are often returned in search results on Google and other search engines. Current and potential clients will look for information about you on LinkedIn. Defining yourself as an expert who is well-connected will help build a positive presence for you online.

Setting up a LinkedIn profile is easy and requires that you respond to incoming connection requests and spend, on average, 5-10 minutes per week managing your profile, responding to questions, and participating in the community.

Benefits of having a LinkedIn Profile

Most importantly can be used as a new business tool to “connect” with potential clients prior to meeting

Clients and people in our industry will see how we position ourselves – we'll be visible

Stay in touch with colleagues and coworkers

Great way to seed “positive” content about yourself in search engine results

Makes it easier to be found by clients and people in our industry

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Register for a Free Account on LinkedIn

- Visit www.linkedin.com and click “Join Now”
- Register both your personal and business email addresses
- Create a public profile and choose “Full View” so everyone can find you
- DO create a custom vanity URL for search engines (e.g., linkedin.com/briangiesen)

Fill Out Your Profile As Completely as Possible

- Use the profile to brand yourself – use a tagline, define yourself strategically
- Add ALL of your employers, education, memberships, and interests - not just current!
 - Makes it easier to connect with former colleagues, classmates, coworkers
- Make your profile sound human and interesting
 - Use colorful adjectives, active voice, a variety of verbs
 - Think like Google and use smart keywords relevant to your experience
 - Write in First Person
- Use descriptions for everything – but write them in short, digestible chunks
- Link to your blog, personal, company or organization site (inbound links!)

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Build Your Network by Adding Connections

- Send connection requests only to people you know directly
- Make your connections accessible to others
- Accept in-coming connection requests from people you know
- Find connections by searching for their names or employer names in the search box
- Upload your contacts from Outlook, Gmail, Yahoo! Mail to see if they're LinkedIn
- Connect with classmates by using the "Find Classmates" search
- Request introductions to people who are connected to your connections

Participate in the LinkedIn Community

- Ask and answer business-oriented questions within your network
 - Thoughtful Q/A's relevant to your field positions you as an expert
 - Builds credibility for yourself and increases your visibility
- Write thoughtful recommendations for people you know very well
- Request recommendations from previous managers, clients, or colleagues
- Join an official LinkedIn Group (e.g., alumni association, company)
 - Or start a new Group for an organization where you're a leader

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Advanced Tips & Tricks

- Use LinkedIn for new business
 - Get to know potential clients better by connecting to them before the meeting
 - Find out what competitors or employees are saying about the company
 - Add your LinkedIn URL to your email signature
- Get Google and other search engines to list your profile
 - Link to your profile from your blog
 - Include a link in your signature when you comment on blogs, forums
- Download the Outlook Toolbar & Browser Toolbar
 - Recommends people you should connect with based on email frequency (Outlook)
 - Invite people with one click w/out logging into your account (Outlook)
 - Search or access LinkedIn from anywhere on the Web (Browser)
- Upgrade to the Business or Pro accounts (starts at \$19/month)
 - Allows for more than 5 **Introductions** (emails to people in your connection's networks) and **InMails** (emails from LinkedIn to people you're not connected to)
 - Displays who's looked at your profile