

Getting Started with LinkedIn

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Getting Started on LinkedIn

Creating Your LinkedIn Profile

Establishing a LinkedIn account is easy. Simply fill in a short registration form, and that's it. You have a free personal LinkedIn account. But if that's all you're going to do, you might as well not bother. It's going to do you more harm than good. The same holds true if you don't fully develop your profile.

- **Spend time considering how you want to present yourself, how prospective connections might view you when reading your profile.** It's not uncommon for people you don't know to find you on LinkedIn through their networks. Your profile is your calling card; make sure it leaves a good impression.
- **Gather the information you'll need to complete your profile, including:**
 - Headline description: this displays beneath your name, along with your location and industry, every time you appear in a search—give some thought to what you want people to see
 - Current and past employment
 - Education
 - Websites*
 - Public profile URL preference**
 - Summary that conveys the key message(s) about you and your background/expertise; think of this as your elevator pitch
 - Specialties
- **Edit your public profile settings.** You can elect to show nothing in your public profile all the way up to everything. Remember, the more you show, the more people outside your network can learn about your services, expertise, and skill set.
- **Add connections:** LinkedIn offers four ways to invite people to connect:
 - Manually enter the first and last name and email address of each person you want to invite
 - Import contacts from Outlook or your Web-based email account (LinkedIn will check the email addresses and let you know which of your contacts are already on LinkedIn)
 - Colleagues search (LinkedIn will show you the names of all the people who share a common employer with you)
 - Classmates search (functions the same as the colleagues search)
- **Build your recommendations.** Ask for recommendations from colleagues, employees, etc. Also be willing to give recommendations; but try not to make it always a quid pro quo. Sometimes, it's natural that you will recommend someone with whom you've worked. But if all your recommendations are from people who you also recommend, viewers are less likely to take the recommendations seriously.

*You can list up to three websites in your profile. The key is to choose "Other" and give your website a name, instead of the generic "my website," "my company," etc. that are the defaults. This makes it clear where the link will go, and it's an opportunity to brand your company or your blog.

**You have the opportunity to edit your public profile URL. A common approach is to use your first and last name, such as <http://www.linkedin.com/in/averyhorzewski>. Give some thought to whether you want to use your name or something else related to your personal brand, as this makes it easy to share the URL.

Deciding Which Account Type Is Right for You

Once you've joined LinkedIn and completed your profile, you might want to peruse the different account types available to you. LinkedIn has a nice table that shows the five options:

- Personal (free)
- Business (\$24.95/month or \$249.50/year)
- Business *Plus* (\$49.95/month or \$499.50/year)
- Pro (\$499.95/month or \$4,999.50/year)
- LinkedIn Talent Advantage

Unless you're a professional recruiter (or an in-house recruiter at a large company), the latter account is not for you.

Comparing Account Types

For many people, the free personal account is fine. However, if you want the option to interact more with people on LinkedIn who aren't in your network, you should consider one of the premium accounts. The difference between a personal account and the different premium accounts is related to the number of times you're allowed to do certain activities, including:

- Receive requests for introductions (unlimited across all accounts)
- Send requests for introductions (ranges from 5 – 40 at a time)
- Receive InMails (unlimited across all accounts)*
- Send InMails (0 – 50 per month)*
- Receive OpenLink Messages (0 – unlimited)**
- Reference searches—locate people in your network who may know a job candidate or business prospect that you're considering (premium accounts only)
- LinkedIn network search results (100 – 700 per search)
- Saved searches—save a search and receive alerts when new people match your search criteria (3 – 10 maximum daily alerts)
- Expanded LinkedIn network profile views—see full profiles, without names or contact information, of people who aren't in your network (premium accounts only)
- One-day priority customer service (premium accounts only)

*InMails are private messages that allow you to send career and business opportunities to any LinkedIn user. You can receive unlimited InMails regardless of account, but the number you can send is limited by account type. You can't send InMails with a personal account.

**Premium account holders may opt to receive unlimited direct contacts, called OpenLink Messages, from other LinkedIn users. OpenLink messages are free to the sender. When you accept OpenLink messages, you get opportunities and contacts that you want, including each sender's profile, yet your email address and phone number remain private. OpenLink messages are sent quickly and directly to you. And senders outside of your network can see your full profile and name, instead of a summary profile.

LinkedIn Feature Comparison Table

- LinkedIn feature comparison table
http://www.linkedin.com/static?key=business_info_more&trk=acct_set_compare
- LinkedIn help (while it's not organized very well for scanning help topics, LinkedIn's search functionality within the help section is really good; even better, LinkedIn does a good job of explaining how to do something and defining terms)
http://linkedin.custhelp.com/cgi-bin/linkedin.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php?p_sid=xVWnqjAj

Getting the Most Out of LinkedIn

You get out of LinkedIn what you put into it. The good thing is you don't have to invest a lot of time and money to see results. The key is starting with a good profile, and then tapping into the various ways LinkedIn lets you connect with people within and outside of your network.

- **Join groups related to your areas of interest and expertise.**
- **Spend time on your home page reviewing what people in your network are doing.**
 - It offers you an easy way to stay connected and top of mind with people in your network, because it gives you a reason to reach out to them based on something they've posted.
 - Someone in your network might connect with someone else that you know who isn't yet in your network.
 - You may find new LinkedIn groups to join.
 - You can see at a glance what's happening in your groups and participate as appropriate.
 - Depending on the applications that you've installed, you can see upcoming events, read blog posts of people in your network, create or participate in a poll, and more.
- **Review the applications that LinkedIn offers for ones that might benefit you.**

Some to consider are:

 - **Google Presentation and SlideShare**—share presentations with your LinkedIn network
 - **Huddle WorkSpace and Box.net**—manage group communication and share content in a private workspace (you can only invite contacts who are your 1st degree connections)
 - **WordPress and Blog Link**—sync your blog with your LinkedIn profile, so the most recent posts appear in your profile feed
 - **Company Buzz**—monitor what's being said about your company on Twitter
 - **LinkedIn Polls**—find answers to business and market research questions (there is a free and a paid-for version)

- **Participate.**
 - Post status updates on your home page, letting your network know what you're doing
 - Answer questions posted in Q&A
 - Interact with other group members, asking questions, answering questions, sharing information, joining discussions—but don't make it all about you and your products and services
 - Don't SPAM
 - Request introductions from your network, or send InMails if you have a premium account, to people you'd like to connect with

Ten Ways to Use LinkedIn by Guy Kawasaki

While this post on LinkedIn's blog is almost two years old, many of the recommendations are still valid. Make sure to read the full post to get the details of each of these 10 tips.

<http://blog.linkedin.com/2007/07/25/ten-ways-to-use/>

1. Increase your visibility.
2. Improve your connectability.
3. Improve your Google PageRank.
4. Enhance your search engine results.
5. Perform blind, "reverse," and company reference checks.
6. Increase the relevancy of your job search.
7. Make your interview go smoother.
8. Gauge the health of a company.
9. Gauge the health of an industry.
10. Track startups.

Creating a LinkedIn Group

According to LinkedIn, "LinkedIn Groups allow event organizers and group organizations to strengthen and expand their brand's reach by providing additional value through LinkedIn Group features. LinkedIn Groups allow you to join and organize communities of professionals who share a common experience, passion, interest, affiliation, or goal. LinkedIn Groups features offer members a private space to strengthen old business contacts, and to be introduced to new ones. The space offers a forum for topics to be discussed and solutions to be discovered. Group members are also able to communicate freely with one another through LinkedIn messaging."

Linked Group Features/Capabilities

- Facilitates online discussions and information sharing (discussions and news tabs)
- Allows organizations (and members) to post jobs
- Enables news feeds to be delivered to the group news area
- Provides a place to manage members
- Allows you to send weekly announcements to members

- Supports various LinkedIn applications (see Getting the Most Out of LinkedIn above)
- Supports subgroups, a new feature in LinkedIn Groups where members can collaborate based on a function, project, topic, location, or anything you wish
 - Subgroups have many similar features, including discussions, news, jobs, digest emails, etc.
 - Only managers of a group can create subgroups
 - Only members of the main group can be members of a subgroup

Why Create a Group

- Provides an opportunity to build brand awareness, promote events, demonstrate thought leadership, disseminate information, and potentially attract and engage new members
- Offers a way to stay in tune with what members are thinking
- Increases visibility of your organization and the size of your community
- Enables online collaboration (and networking) between members and helps members stay connected to your organization
- Keeps your database current
- Potentially increases your volunteer resources
- Stops others from “hijacking” your organization’s name and creating a group with it

How to Create a Group

- Go to <http://www.linkedin.com/createGroup?displayCreate=>
- Upload your logo
- Enter a name for your group
- Select a group type
- Enter a brief description
- Enter the website URL
- List group owner’s email address
- Indicate whether access to the group will be open (any LinkedIn member may join without prior approval from the manager) or require a request to join
- Indicate whether the group should appear in the Groups Directory and whether group members are allowed to display the logo on their profiles
- List email domains of users who are preapproved
- Select a language
- Enter location
- Click to confirm you’ve read the terms of service
- Click “Create Group”

Additional Reading

- Ten Ways to Use LinkedIn (LinkedIn Blog, Guy Kawasaki)
<http://blog.linkedin.com/2007/07/25/ten-ways-to-use/>
- A Social Site, Only the Business Like Need Apply (New York Times)
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/18/technology/18linkedin.html?_r=2