Getting Started on LinkedIn

LinkedIn represents a powerful tool for building professional connections and researching employers, industries, and opportunities. As of June 2016, LinkedIn includes 433+ million users within 200 countries and is considered the social media site for working professionals. The fastest growing demographic of users are students and recent college grads—currently at 40+ million. Review the Career Management Center’s guide and discover the features and benefits of using LinkedIn for career development. (All features included in this guide are available in the complimentary user account.)

Create Your Profile

Did you know that 94% of recruiters use LinkedIn to identify candidates? Include as much professional and academic information to your LinkedIn profile to attract LinkedIn recruiters and employers. Suggested items include:

- Background image
- Professional headshot
- Branded headline (120 characters)
- Compelling summary
- Experience
- Skills
- Education – projects, coursework, organizations
- Volunteerism
- Websites, blogs, YouTube channels

Action Items:

- Complete your profile to at least “Expert” status to be considered an active user. Set your profile to public to be viewable to individuals outside your network.
- Customize your URL to increase search engine optimization.
- Utilize a professional headshot and wear professional attire for your photo.
- List your most powerful bullet points from your work experiences. (Tip: quantify information to demonstrate success in previous work).
- Include your degree(s) and relevant courses and complete the skills and expertise section with up to 50 items that best describe your strengths and preferred responsibilities. (Tip: provide endorsements to colleagues to increase the number of endorsements you receive)
- Request 2-3 recommendations from past supervisors and colleagues that can strongly attest to the quality of your work and performance.
- Create a headline that is targeted to your area(s) of interest. It is recommended to include your major and potential job title(s) of interest.
- Research most common job titles for your career field of interest and mirror the text within the headline. Review the position description for the most common skills and include within the specialties section.

The Summary

The summary is your story, and for career seekers, the story lets recruiters and hiring managers know the types of problems you like and are good at solving, who are your target employers (or industry) and what are your skills and experiences that would make you a successful problem-solver. Career seekers should incorporate the following checklist into their summary:
Experiences and motivation

- To help you get started, review the Career Management Center’s **Elevator Speech handout** for content suggestions. Compose 4-5 sentences that articulate who you are and your career goals/interests.
- Include a list of your technical skills and non-technical skills, if applicable.
- Make your timeline for securing an internship or full-time opportunity clear based on when your internship eligibility and/or graduation date. List job titles you are seeking because this will also increase your visibility in candidate searches.
- Provide your direct contact information to make it easier for recruiters to contact you.
- Upload your resume and examples of your work such as papers, projects, certificates.
- Include professional Twitter, Blog, Pinterest, or Facebook profiles you maintain, you may include them on LinkedIn. (Only link to other social media platforms if they are professional).

Make Connections

To help you get your resume out of the recruiters’ stacks, connect with recruiters, potential referral sources, mentors or people who can share more about their experiences. Each of these will give you a better understanding about the company, the job and how to position yourself as a strong candidate.

**Recruiter Connection Request example:**

```markdown
Invite Jason to connect on LinkedIn
```

- **How do you know Jason?**
  - Colleague
  - Classmate
  - We’ve done business together
  - Friend
  - Other

- **Jason’s email address:**
  - [enter email from business card]

- **Include a personal note:** (optional)
  - Hi Jason! It was nice to meet you at UTD JSOM’s Salary Negotiations workshop on Monday. I’m interested in your company’s financial analyst internship, and I’d like to add you to my LinkedIn network to learn more about MedSynergies. Thank you!
  - John Doe

**Alumni Connection Request example:**

```markdown
Invite SHIVALI to connect on LinkedIn
```

- **How do you know SHIVALI?**
  - Colleague
  - Classmate
  - University of Texas at Dallas - Naveen Jindal School of
  - We’ve done business together
  - Friend
  - Other

- **Include a personal note:** (optional)
  - Hi Shivali, I’m currently an ITM student at UTD JSOM, and I’d like to connect with you to learn about your experience at Pepsi since I’ve applied for their data analyst internship. Please add me to your LinkedIn network. Thank you! - Jane Doe
**Action Items:**

- Sync email contacts with LinkedIn to send connection requests based on email addresses.
- To help you get started, review the Career Management Center’s [Networking Strategies handout](#) to learn with whom you should connect.
- Decide if you’d like to connect with everyone versus only people you know. This represents a personal choice; the CMC recommends reviewing the individual’s profile and seeing who he/she is connected with to ensure he/she would be a strong connection.
- Create a value-added and personalized invitation to each potential connection. Sell the value of connecting on LinkedIn and how you know or found the individual.
- Once you are connected, review the connections you have in common and identify additional individuals to pursue. Utilize the introductions feature for your connections to introduce you to someone new; the basic account allows 5 introductions.
- Review the Network Statistics Feature for a summary of your connections, the regions they are located and the industries employed. (Tip: strive for the highest percentage within your preferred industry and location)

**Join Groups**

LinkedIn groups offer opportunities for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share knowledge, get answers, post and promote jobs, make new business contacts and brand themselves as industry experts. Group members can send 15 free one-on-one group messages to fellow group members for free each month, and this limit applies to all groups (not individual groups).

**Action Items:**

- Search for groups by industry and join groups that possess 1000+ members (Tip: the HR and Talent Management group boasts over 200K members and is an open/public group and includes primarily HR professionals)
- There is no limit on the number of groups you may join and note that each group contains its own jobs board.
- There are several groups for UT Dallas and alumni. Look for the official UT Dallas group which has 4000+ members and the UT Dallas Career Management Center Group. Utilize the LinkedIn alumni tool at [www.linkedin.com/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni) to find more UT Dallas Comets
- Complete an advanced search of the members within a group and discover potential connections by employer, industry, university attended, and location. (Tip: this is the best method for finding and building new connections)
- Visit your LinkedIn profile daily and actively participate in group discussions and submit invitations to connect.

**Strengthen Your Network**

Review the Career Management Center’s [Advanced LinkedIn Strategies](#) for action items to maximize your LinkedIn experience and LinkedIn resources.