

# Expand your horizons

*LinkedIn is the tool of choice for professionals looking to network with like-minded colleagues – as well as reconnecting with former co-workers. It's also a great place to find a job and get the attention of hiring managers.*

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Using LinkedIn for networking can be extremely rewarding. Getting started using LinkedIn is as easy as picking a password. You'll truly see the power of using LinkedIn once you build your list of connections. If you approach it right, you can use LinkedIn to network your way to a new job, build your business know-how or stay networked during a lull in your career.

## **Create a profile**

The first step in using LinkedIn is to create a complete and self-promotional profile of your career. Don't be modest. Use your current resume to cut and paste your most impressive accomplishments into the appropriate LinkedIn fields. Use exciting verbs like "led," "created," "mobilized" and "sold." Quantify your accomplishments – rather than simply describing them – as often as possible.

Make sure your profile includes keywords that a recruiter or hiring manager might be searching for to find someone with your job experience. If you are not sure what skills to emphasize, looking at other people's profiles in your field of interest is a good way to get ideas.

## **Create your network**

A great aspect of LinkedIn is that there is no need to search and add your current network. LinkedIn will automatically search your email account for people you may want to invite to connect. You also can manually enter email addresses or search for specific people with whom you may have lost touch.

It's best only to connect with people you know fairly well and trust, but feel free to cast a wide net if you feel confident. You can even let your colleagues and friends speak on your behalf by scrolling down to the Experience section and clicking "Request Recommendations." Make sure to write an individualized request to your friends and colleagues and suggest which of your skills or achievements you'd like them to highlight.

## **Expand your network**

After completing these easy steps, you are ready to get LinkedIn to work for you! If you are interested in exploring a new job, you can research a specific organization by clicking on the Companies tab. This enables you to search for people in the department you'd like to work with and see if you're connected to anyone involved.

Before you contact someone, be sure to read through his or her profile and look for common ground that might start a conversation if you end up in an interview. Remain businesslike and courteous, online and offline.

### **Strategic search**

To further your job hunt, you can search for open jobs by clicking on the Jobs tab. Simply forward your profile to any job postings that appeal to you.

If you are content in your current position, you still can use LinkedIn to find ways to expand your business. Or, you can connect with other people in a similar role and learn how they do their job and perhaps improve your own performance.

LinkedIn can expand your personal and business network in a multitude of ways. It is a tool with an expanding base of users that is becoming an integral tool for job hunting through the profound worldwide presence of social media.