



# Networking with Facebook

*Employers are increasingly using social media as part of their overall recruiting strategy and Facebook is part of that strategy.*

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Most people use Facebook for social purposes like staying in touch with friends or sharing pictures. Users rarely mention their professional life when describing the social network. However, Facebook offers countless opportunities for professional networking.

## **Set up your profile as a networking tool**

Most people's personal and professional lives are already intertwined. It is a good idea to literally split those two worlds on Facebook.

Separating them is simpler than you may think. Just follow these easy steps:

1. Click Friends → All Friends at the top of your Facebook page.
2. Click "Create a New List" and create one called "Professional."
3. Go through your entire friend list and add all of your professional contacts into this separate business list.
4. Navigate to your profile privacy settings by clicking on the Settings link in the top right corner of your Facebook page; click Privacy, then click Profile.
5. On the profile privacy settings page, separate your Facebook profile into personal and professional segments by restricting access to different parts of your profile using your newly created list. For example, if you don't want your business associates to view your pictures, click on "edit photo album privacy settings." In the "who can see this" drop down, click on "customize" and then in the "except these people" field type in your professional friends list. Now only your personal friends will be able to see your pictures.

## **Using Facebook Groups for networking**

One way to benefit professionally from Facebook's large user base to grow your professional network is to participate in Facebook Groups. Facebook Groups is a helpful feature that allows users to connect, discuss and network with each other within the context of a common interest or topic.

To find the right group for your profession, think of topics that will motivate you, allow you to connect with others of professional interest, and allow you to gain insight into your industry/skill set.

Use these topics to think up keywords to search for. These keywords will lead you to a multitude of helpful groups. You can also filter down the displayed groups by drilling into a number of sub categories, including business (a good bet for many professional groups), common interest, geography, Internet and technology, and organizations. Some other techniques to find helpful groups include:

- Go to your friend's profile page and clicking on their info tab. Near the bottom of the page, you'll see links to all of the groups to which they belong.
- Look on the main page of any Facebook Group for links to related groups.
- Search the internet for "popular Facebook Groups" with some of your keywords.

Once you find a group that interests you, evaluate whether or not it will be a good fit before joining.

### **Participate in your groups**

Once you have joined a group, it's time to start participating. Post an introduction on the group's Wall stating why you are interested in the group. If you are looking to network, or on the hunt for a new job, don't be afraid to say so. It is important to make this a simple introduction so the group knows who you are.

Other ways to get involved and show your continued interest are to add links to sites or articles you feel might interest other group members, comment on the discussion boards, post discussion topics, and add friends from the group to your professional page. Even if these new friends cannot immediately help you in your job hunt, they may prove valuable assets in the future.

Professional networking on Facebook is very comparable to professional networking in life. The same etiquette and rules should apply. As you build your professional network on Facebook you'll be able to use those contacts for job hunting, business development, and more.