

LinkedIn defined:

1. On-line social network with over 30 million users in 150 countries primarily for business people
2. Users establish on-line profiles – detail background, areas you are interested in (networking, etc.)
3. Users 'invite' one another into each others' networks
4. Invited users can then view names of other user's connections
5. System is free, though offers premium services for fee
6. Provides functions that find match you with people who have similar work history (e.g. same company, college, graduate school)

Overview of LinkedIn uses:

1. Find potential clients, service providers, subject experts, and partners who come recommended by people in your network
2. Business opportunities
3. Job search
4. Discover inside connections – for jobs
5. Post and distribute job listings
6. Find candidates
7. Get introduced to other professionals through the people you know – critical for researching companies and people

Building Your LinkedIn Network – a word of caution:

LinkedIn makes it very simple to connect with people. I would recommend you treat your LinkedIn network like your off-line network – with great care. I do not accept someone into my LinkedIn network unless we have met.

If someone wants to meet one of my LinkedIn connections – I should understand what they are seeking and determine if this connection is appropriate.

If you pass your connections a couple of clunkers – they will likely ask you not to send anyone their way. Trust me; I've had a couple of those discussions.

Using LinkedIn for Job Search/Networking/Research:

Guy Kawasaki's "Ten Ways to Use LinkedIn" (Go to www.guykawasaki.com – Search for "LinkedIn" under his blog) was a great eye opener for me. I have used Guy's ideas (his blog does a better job to describe them) and a few of my own for using LinkedIn.

Writer's note: If you are interested in Start-ups, it is well worth spending some time on Guy's site. Also, I'm sure you find his style fun to read.

Consider this your starter list on how to use LinkedIn. The site is continually adding content and functions that make it more valuable. Do a Google search and you'll find loads of from people who find excellent ways to leverage the functionality.

The key to success in using LinkedIn is picking a few items and get started. Have fun.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

1. Connect with people who have a vested interest in you
 - Former bosses, co-workers, colleagues at professional services firms (lawyers, consultants, etc.), college or graduate school alumni
 - The folks tend to be the most valuable people in your network as they will go the extra mile to help you and can vouch for your business skills
 - They also may be in the position to hire you
2. Building your personal network
 - Link to contact list (Outlook, etc.) as simple method to send invitations
 - The bigger your network – the better your results in searching out companies, people, etc.
 - *Build connections with people who have a reason to connect with you*
3. Use LinkedIn as tool to stay connected with network
 - Sending out questions or answering questions
 - Reviewing their connections for common links
4. Join a LinkedIn group – find people with whom you have a connection
 - There are groups for prior companies, colleges, graduate schools, entrepreneurs (by state, industry, region)
 - Most people allow others in the group to directly connect them
 - When you reach out to a new contact – you start with a common bond of being in the same group.

MAKING PEOPLE AWARE OF WHO YOU ARE

5. Adding connections increases your visibility
 - Increases likelihood that you will appear first in search results (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - People can then ask their connections for a referral or reference
 - LinkedIn displays how many times your profile has been viewed and by who
6. Filling in biography improve your connectability. (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - The more complete your profile – especially with key words, companies, titles, etc. – the more points for connection on a data query
 - LinkedIn shows connections on schools, associations, affiliations, etc. – completing the profile will bring you up in searches
 - LinkedIn allows your profile to be available for search engines
7. Add link to your profile as part of e-mail signature, resume and marketing plan
 - Allows people to view your credentials
8. Joining LinkedIn Groups or Forming Your Own Group
 - LinkedIn groups are great ways to both find and be found by people of similar interests – industry, professional, region, etc.
9. Using the Presentation feature
 - LinkedIn has a presentation feature that you can add to your profile that people can play. It's really cool.

FINDING NEW ROLES

10. Key Word search

- LinkedIn has a search capability that looks for key words – so make sure the key words that companies or recruiters would search on for your role are in your profile

11. LinkedIn job listings

- More companies are using LinkedIn for job postings, as they can look at candidates and immediately see their profile and possible connections to do background checks

12. Getting a referral to who posted the job

- Once you apply, see if you can find a referral to who posted the role.
- Do some background work on who posted it, so you can customize your communications

13. Download the LinkedIn JobsInsider

- Useful for when using 6figurejobs, CareerBuilder, Monster, etc.,.

ADDING STRENGTH TO YOUR BACKGROUND

14. Get Endorsements from current and prior co-workers

- Endorsements, especially from prior bosses, go a long way to eliminate any possible concern about why you left a firm or current performance.
- Endorsements are very visible components of your LinkedIn profile – so someone making an endorsement must feel confident in you.

15. Great for expanding on your resume

- Add different or additional depth regarding your accomplishments
- Include your LinkedIn profile URL to your resume and e-mail signature to invite them to learn more about you.

RESEARCHING PEOPLE AND COMPANIES

16. Use LinkedIn to perform blind, “reverse,” and company reference checks. (GUY KAWASAKI)

- Allows you to see how long someone has worked for a firm
- Find people who worked at the firm at the same time – find ‘other’ references
- Able to do reference check on potential bosses/colleagues
- Find the person who’s job you are interviewing for by doing a job title search (be sure to uncheck ‘current titles only’)

17. Increase the relevancy of your job search (GUY KAWASAKI)

- Use advanced search to find people with similar education, work experience or key skills to see where they work – useful for targeting firms

18. Make your interview go smoother. (GUY KAWASAKI)

- Use LinkedIn to research the people that you’re meeting – having a common interest, shared acquaintance, etc. – can help you kick off an interview.

19. Gauge the health of a company (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - Used advanced search for company name (uncheck the “Current Companies Only”). Provides ability to look at rate of turnover and whether key people are abandoning ship. Former employees usually give more candid opinions about a company’s prospects than someone who’s still on board.
20. Gauge the health of an industry (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - If you’re considering a new sector, use LinkedIn to find people who worked for competitors—or even better, companies who failed.
21. Track startups (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - Find in your network contacts who are initiating new startups by doing an advanced search for a range of keywords such as “stealth” or “new startup.” Apply the “Sort By” filter to “Degrees away from you” in order to see the people closest to you first.

HELP FOR NEW OR CURRENT JOB

22. Ask for advice (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - LinkedIn Answers, aims to enable this online. The product allows you to broadcast your business-related questions to both your network and the greater LinkedIn network. The premise is that you will get more high-value responses from the people in your network than more open forums.
23. Integrate into a new job. (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - New employees can study fellow employees’ profiles and therefore help them get to know more people faster in a new company.
24. Scope out the competition, customers, partners, etc. (GUY KAWASAKI)
 - Use LinkedIn to scope out the competition’s team as well as the team of customers and partners.