11 Tips to Maximize Your LinkedIn Account

Social networking is similar to face-to-face networking in that both focus on relationship development and a mutual exchange of resources and ideas. LinkedIn is the main professional social networking site connecting individuals across diverse industries worldwide. It is important to note that LinkedIn is much different than other less formal social networking mediums such as Facebook.

Start building your professional network early, before you begin your internship and job search. You will benefit most by maintaining a complete LinkedIn account, remaining active on a regular basis, and serving as a resource to others. Below are recommendations for using LinkedIn effectively.

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com to create your account.**
   - Click on the Profile drop down menu, and “Edit Profile.”
   - Create a unique professional URL address (e.g. linkedin.com/georgewashington) by clicking the edit button next to your URL under your profile picture. Click on “Customize your public profile URL.”
   - If your name is fairly common, consider adding your middle name or initial to differentiate your LinkedIn account (e.g. linkedin.com/marycynthiajones or linkedin.com/johnqsmith).

2. **Include a professional-looking photo.**
   - Profiles with pictures are up to seven times more likely to be viewed than those without a photo, according to LinkedIn career expert Nicole Williams.
   - Your photo can help someone find your profile more easily.
   - Include a clear photo in professional attire (no bare shoulders or t-shirts). An office or natural outdoors setting makes a good backdrop. The photo should be a good headshot of you alone, with no alcohol.

3. **Create a complete profile.**
   - Headline: Right now for many students, your education will be your strongest selling point, and your title should reflect that. (e.g. Finance major at Loyola University New Orleans). However, when looking for employment near graduation, you can update your headline to reflect that you are seeking employment: “Marketing Major at Loyola University New Orleans seeking employment in Social Media”
   - Summary: Include a brief description of your qualifications, such as your relevant experience, professional interests, skill set, and achievements. This is often written in paragraph form in first person. Use keywords relevant to your studies and industry of interest.
   - Experience: Match your LinkedIn experience titles and position descriptions to what you include in your resume. Both should be thorough and professional. This section includes jobs and internships.
   - Organizations and Volunteering & Causes: If you are actively involved in organizations or volunteer experience, you can highlight and describe your roles here (or add them under the Education section).
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- **Education:** Again, this should match your resume. The official university name is “Loyola University New Orleans.” Your degree will be a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) or Bachelor of Accountancy along with your major. List your expected graduation date.
- Under the Summary, Experience, and Education sections, you can add media files such as presentations, videos, and photos to highlight your projects in a visual context.
- Once you have completed and actively begun using your account, consider adding your LinkedIn URL to your resume, email signature, or business cards.

4. **Check your privacy settings.**
   - Let your mouse hover over your small photo to view “Account Settings.” Select Review “Privacy & Settings,” and you can control who sees your LinkedIn activity feed.

5. **Request to connect with people you know well first.**
   - Start with classmates and professionals such as current and former work, internship, or volunteer colleagues and supervisors.
   - Use your email contact lists by clicking on Network, then Add Connections, to search for potential LinkedIn connections, but don’t send a mass email to all your contacts to join.
   - Tailor your connection requests to create a personalized message. Instead of sending the standard “I’d like to add you to my professional network” request, include a friendly greeting and an update on your studies or career path, if applicable.

6. **Expand your network through the alumni tool.**
   - Under the “Network” drop down menu, select “Find Alumni” to search Loyola alumni on LinkedIn.
   - Filter results by work location, company, and industry.
   - If you find an alum working in a role that interests you, check to see whether you can contact this person through referral by a current connection or directly for an informational interview (advice appointment).
7. Search and apply for internships or jobs.
   - Enter job titles, keywords, or company names, then search.
   - Note: the system will default to positions within 50 miles of your current location. Use additional search criteria to select a different location or expand your results.
   - Create email alerts for jobs that may interest you.
   - Click on “Apply Now” to submit an application with your profile, resume, and cover letter. Target your cover letter to the individual who posted the position.
   - Search [http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs](http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs) for positions targeted to students and recent graduates.

8. Follow companies and influencers.
   - To follow a company, select Companies from the Interests drop down menu, and enter a company name or industry (e.g. Management Consulting). Once you click on the name of a company that interests you, select “Follow” to receive updates on your LinkedIn homepage and stay informed about jobs and news.
   - Company pages are a great place to research organizations.
   - View your 1st and 2nd degree connections at the company, to see if you can reach out for an informational interview.
   - From the Interests menu, search for Influencers, people who have made strong contributions to their field. Read their articles for career advice and to stay current on relevant, professional topics.

9. Join groups.
   - Learn about job opportunities or current news related to your professional interests by joining groups.
   - Under the Interests drop down menu, select Groups. Search for groups by academic affiliation, including “Loyola University New Orleans, College of Business” and “Loyola University, New Orleans.”
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- Under Groups, enter keywords for industries of interest or for names of professional associations, e.g. “marketing” or “financial services”. You can even join regional organizations if you plan to relocate.
- You can send a message directly to another group member requesting an informational interview, but do so professionally.

10. Actively participate on LinkedIn.
- Do not wait until you need a job or internship to become engaged with your connections.
- Read others’ comments and questions to get a sense of appropriate professional content.
- Experts suggest updating at least once a week, by asking a question, contributing your thoughts to a group discussion or reposting a thought-provoking article.
- Do not use LinkedIn to post repeatedly that you are job searching.

11. Use recommendations and endorsements wisely.
- Request recommendations from someone who knows you well, such as a current or previous work, internship, or volunteer supervisor. These are often the same people you would ask to serve as a reference.
- Use your discretion, and be selective in who you endorse. Endorsements only work well and carry weight when you use your best judgment.
- Only endorse others for skills that you know they possess. For example, if you are the president of your student organization, you might endorse the VP of Marketing and Events for “Event Planning,” but not for “Excel” or “Financial Analysis.”
- Remember to thank those who have written you a recommendation. You can also thank people who have endorsed you and use the opportunity to reconnect.

**Strategy and Planning Intern**

Sarah Keiber  
Group Account Director at MRY

“Molly was a wonderful asset to the Syrup team. She is very bright, ambitious, confident and easy to work with. She benefited the team not only by researching important information for pitch work and preparing internal creative briefs but also by analyzing key trends and leading the way for digital strategy. She was able to exceed my expectations for any task I gave her and... more”

August 16, 2012, Sarah managed Molly indirectly at Syrup

Emily Woolf  
Senior Strategic Planner at Saatchi & Saatchi

“Molly was an absolute pleasure to work with. Her upbeat, friendly and fun personality complimented her drive and desire to work extremely hard on anything that came her way, at any time of the day or week. From research to brief writing to helping interactive producers update a website, Molly not only gave it 100% but she delivered amazing results. Her intelligence and the... more”

August 13, 2012, Emily managed Molly at Syrup

**Bonus Tips**

- Utilize Portfolio staff: sit down with a career counselor and have them run through your profile to make sure it is up to date and free of errors.
- We can also help you brainstorm a networking strategy: who to connect with, what to say in your invitations, what companies to follow, and what groups to join.