



1. NOW A CAREER IMPERATIVE

If you have been avoiding joining LinkedIn because it seems to be a passing technology trend, it is time to join – now! Members span all industries and include recruiters, hiring managers, and executives from each of the Fortune 500 companies. If a recruiter cannot find you on LinkedIn, this may raise a red flag and/or be viewed as disengagement in your profession. While there are perks to purchasing the LinkedIn Premium account, it is not necessary as the free account provides ample opportunities to network.

2. MORE THAN YOUR ONLINE RESUME

In fact, do not upload your resume directly into LinkedIn. Paraphrase your experience to the most salient points and focus on achievements. Instead of using the default headline – the job title and current employer line under your name – use a six-word professional brand and essential industry keywords. Make use of your summary by highlighting core competencies and telling your professional story and mission.

3. DOUSE YOUR PROFILE WITH KEYWORDS & SKILLS

In your headline. In your summary. In your job titles. Everywhere. Why? Recruiters search LinkedIn for candidates based on the keywords and skills listed in profiles. Find the appropriate keywords from job descriptions to which you apply and incorporate them into your profile and other professional documents. If your job title is vague, add brackets and put industry-known titles or specialties that describe the work you do. You have 100 characters for a job title, so use those to your benefit.

4. ENDORSEMENTS MATTER

By receiving endorsements, you increase your LinkedIn Search Engine Optimization. Recruiters search LinkedIn for keywords and skills, and endorsements affect your ranking in those search results. Just as you would ask for recommendations from trusted professionals in your network, ask for endorsements. The more a skill is endorsed, the higher it is ranked on your profile, so if you want certain skills to be ranked higher on your endorsements chart, ask to be endorsed for specific skills. While you are at it, ask for recommendations from those who know you best and can write a genuine reference for you versus a canned and standard recommendation.

5. SMILING, PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE GET HIRED

You do not need an expensive headshot, but you do need an appropriate LinkedIn profile picture. A professional photo will give the impression that you are a serious candidate worth evaluating. It should be a close-up picture of you only, wearing professional attire, and taken in a neutral background with good lighting. Do not forget the most important accessory – a smile! Exude confidence and affability – qualities sought after in teams.

6. CUSTOMIZE YOUR PUBLIC PROFILE LINK

This is part of establishing your online professional brand. Go to your “Edit Profile” page and scroll down to your public profile URL, found under your picture. On the right side of the newly opened tab, you can customize what profile content is visible in your public profile. Below that, you will find the “Your public profile URL” box. Below your current default URL, click on the link “Customize your public profile URL” link. You may have to go through several iterations of your customized name, but try to make it as consistent with the rest of your online branding. Consider adding your LinkedIn profile URL to your resume, e-mail signature and any other professionally-used social media channels.

7. CONNECT, CONNECT, CONNECT - TO ALUMNI AND JOBS

By visiting the webpage www.linkedin.com/alumni, you will find a tool that provides you with information about where your fellow alumni work, what they do, and where they live. The tool pre-fills the years you attended a school listed on your LinkedIn profile and shows you the classmates who attended at the same time. For a broader search, you can enter additional graduation years or modify the school to access your undergraduate institution’s alumni network. For a customized search, you can narrow your results by industry and geographic location. You can also search for jobs on LinkedIn by searching for keywords, companies, titles, locations. In the results, you will also see how many people in your network connect you with that particular job posting and company.

8. DO NOT INVITE PEOPLE TO CONNECT ON MOBILE DEVICES

It is essential to personalize an invitation to connect instead of sending the default generic message. Doing so illustrates a touch of personal care and human connection and can remind someone in what context you met. For this reason, many professionals admit to ignoring automated invitations. The online mobile device does not offer this option, so wait until you can access a computer before sending custom invitations.

9. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF REAL-TIME COMPANY RESEARCH

Customize your LinkedIn homepage newsfeed by following channels, influencers, and companies on LinkedIn Today. Conduct company research by visiting their LinkedIn page to view articles they are posting and their career and product information. Get insight into how your network connects to their employees, companies (and competitors) where their employees came from, and the top skills and expertise of their employees.

Additionally, LinkedIn maintains an [official blog](#) and often announces changes to the system, sometimes a month or more before the implementation takes place.

10. BE ACTIVE & JOIN THE DISCUSSIONSEARCH

Shake it up and join the discussion. Epictetus said, “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak.” The same goes for online presence. Respond and contribute to discussions on your LinkedIn Groups. Start your own discussion threads by posing questions that require a simple, one sentence or word response. There are currently over 1.7 million groups on LinkedIn and 27 groups that are devoted to Johns Hopkins Carey Business School. Join all of your alumni, professional associations, industry, and personal interest groups to actively learn from and contribute to your network!