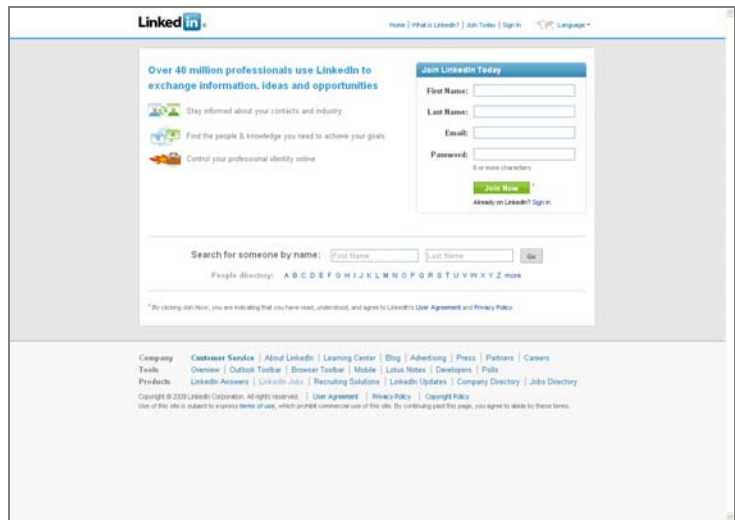


What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a social networking site for business people and professionals, established in 2003. It currently has over 43 million users in 200 countries.

The headquarters of the company are in California with a European head office in London.

To use LinkedIn you need to set up an account on the site. Basic accounts are free to set up and run. You can also subscribe to gain access to 'premium' features but a basic account is fine for most people.



Using LinkedIn for job search

LinkedIn offers two main opportunities for job seekers:

- using your network and its connections to access people, information and companies
- making yourself visible to recruiters and potential employers

It's also an important way of controlling your personal brand online.

Tips for getting the most out of LinkedIn

Building your connections and network

LinkedIn makes it easy for you to find other people you know who are already on LinkedIn. There is a general search function on the home page but you can also automatically check for contacts via the webmail importer (covers WindowsLive, Yahoo, Gmail, AOL and a few others) or via Outlook or Apple Mail. You can also search for colleagues from companies you have worked at, or universities or schools attended.

Make sure that you choose contacts who you have worked with or done business with. Similarly you should consider only accepting connection requests from people you know. Your online network should mirror your offline one.

As you begin to add connections, you will see on the home page how your network grows.

So for instance you may start with only 35 connections in your contacts (1st level), but this immediately gives you access to a further 3,200 contacts for instance (2nd level) and then a further 336,000 (3rd level).



Make your profile work for you

Your profile is your showcase and key opportunity to promote yourself on LinkedIn and you should make sure that you complete as much of it as possible.

Add as much detail as you can because the more complete your profile is the more likely you are to feature in search results.

To make your profile 100 per cent complete you will need to:

- add a **photo** – make sure that this is a recent, professional picture. It doesn't have to be taken by a professional photographer but it needs to look businesslike. Remember, this isn't Facebook!
- add details of your **current position** and your most **recent two positions**. If you don't have a current position that's ok – it just means your profile won't be 100 per cent complete
- add details of your **education**, qualifications and professional training
- add a summary of your **skills and experience** – make the most of this section to promote the key information from your work history and professional background
- summarise your **specialities** – similar to the profile you might have written on your CV
- get some **recommendations** – you need three recommendations for a full profile. A LinkedIn recommendation can be from a colleague, former employer, academic tutor, employee – in fact, anyone who you are connected to. Recommendations should be brief and factual. You can request recommendations from anyone in your connections list.

You should also spend time creating your “**professional headline**” – this is the subtitle below your name.

Make it interesting and descriptive.

Emma Gartside

Researcher and info entrepreneur, owner of career transitions information business Career Workshop
Harrow, United Kingdom



LinkedIn also allows you to post status updates. If you use these, keep them relevant and update regularly if the post is time-sensitive.

You can use status updates to let people know that you are actively job seeking. However, again, this isn't Facebook so keep them business related.

Job Search

LinkedIn has its own Jobs section (find it along the top menu) where other members and recruiters can post vacancies. Some, but not all, vacancies are exclusive to LinkedIn.

Use the advanced search features to search for roles within a certain proximity of a selected postcode (defaulting to your registered address). You can also search by keyword, experience level, date posted, job title, company, function and industry.

If the recruiter or hiring manager is in your network, the details are provided in the results table.

Groups

LinkedIn has many groups related to companies, membership organisations, professional interests, career topics, academic institutions and so on. Some are open to anyone whilst others have membership criteria.

Groups enable you to network and collaborate with likeminded professionals. The discussions area enables you to contribute and offer opinions and answers to questions posed by other group members, thereby building your reputation.

Find relevant groups using the tab on the left navigation where you can either search by keyword or via the category menu.

Questions and Answers

Answers is another section on LinkedIn where you can increase your visibility and build your reputation by answering others' questions and offering opinions. Answering questions is flagged up on your home page, and on the notifications to your connections.

The people who ask questions can also rate the answers that they receive – if yours is rated as the best answer you gain a point of expertise. Building up points of expertise raises your profile on LinkedIn's expert list.

Browse questions and answers by category from the Answers tab on the top navigation.

Privacy

You need to be aware of how much of the data you are entering into LinkedIn is available to others and how your profile looks to other people. There are numerous places where you can view your profile, but doing a search on your name from the home page (when you are not logged in) is a good start.

You can access your privacy settings via the Accounts and Settings option on the top navigation.

The main areas that you can control the settings on are:

- profile photo – who can see it
- elements of your profile – control which details you want others to see
- status visibility – set to just your connections, your network or everyone
- member feed directory – this covers the information that people in your network are informed about in the weekly update, eg your new connections, questions you have answered etc
- survey settings – if you want to participate in market research
- connections list – allowing your connections to see your other connections
- profile views – control how much information is shown to people whose profile you view
- profile and status updates

The amount of information you choose to share can also affect the amount of information you can see about others. There's very little point in using LinkedIn for job search if you close down all the information and don't allow people to find out about you.

However, you do need to feel comfortable with the amount of information you are sharing – which may be more to do with the information you include on the site than the privacy options you select. Sometimes you will also need to consider client and company confidentiality and competitors when selecting privacy options.

Further support on using LinkedIn

The LinkedIn Learning Centre has a lot of useful background information to help you get to grips with the site and to learn more about its uses. There are a variety of learning methods including e-modules, webinars and subject guides.

<http://learn.linkedin.com>

Further Research

You can find a full list of all our documents, arranged by subject, on the Career Workshop website at:

www.careerworkshop.co.uk/documents

Search

There is also a search facility on the website which offers an alternative method of finding documents, and indexes all our other content too ... such as news items, content pages, newsletters etc.

www.careerworkshop.co.uk/search

Have we missed anything?

Although we do our very best to identify the most useful sources of information on any topic, you may know of a good resource that we have missed. If so, we would like you to share it with us.

Please email us at info@careerworkshop.co.uk or use the suggestion form on the website. There's a bottle of wine every quarter for a lucky winner, chosen randomly from all suggestions received.

If you need more information about our content or have a suggestion for future documents, please contact us by email: enquiry@careerworkshop.co.uk or by post, telephone or online form: www.careerworkshop.co.uk/contact

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