

# Networking in a Digital World

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A dedicated support system is crucial for personal and professional success. Networking has and will play a vital part in your business. Face-to-face networking and handshaking is still a fantastic way to do business, but with the Internet at our fingertips and available everywhere, there's a new way to connect and communicate with people.

Networking is the process of searching for contacts. Not just to be a collector of people, but to get involved, get connected and to help build each other up. It may still be about handshaking, passing out business cards, giving your elevator speech, and wearing name tags, but we should view networking as establishing and maintaining authentic relationships.

## *So, why do we network?*

- Engage with people who will have a positive impact on us and our business.
- Swap ideas and stories with others.
- Find clients and partners.
- Find a job or recruit potential employees.
- Gain feedback and insights.
- Get inspired!
- Present yourself as an SME (Subject Matter Expert)
- Generate and build leads.
- Establish meaningful relationships, personally and professionally.

LinkedIn is a global social networking site for people in professional occupations. In a sense, it is a bit like Facebook – you create your own profile for others to see, but it is used for professional purposes. Members build a profile of their job history, interests and experience – an online Resume if you will – and ‘connect’ with former colleagues and people in their line of work.

LinkedIn is a great resume reference tool, but it is so much more. Visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) to get started for free today.

Like most social media websites, your journey on LinkedIn begins with creating a personal profile. Many LinkedIn profiles are abbreviated resumes due to LinkedIn's professional tone, but with the new concept of Social Selling we need to think of your profile as a brand. Employers look for inside information on candidates such as professional interests.

## *10 ways to build you and your brand on LinkedIn:*

1. **Update your profile is the first step in marketing you and your business.**
  - a. From the top toolbar, click Me.
  - b. Click View Profile.
  - c. From here you can take the time to edit your profile by adding education, experience, volunteer experience, and so much more. Click the pencil next to a section to edit, or click the more button (three dots) to access more features.
  - d. Make sure to save all changes.
  
2. **Upload a Professional Photo.** Make the first impression count, in about 6 seconds someone has crafted an opinion of you through your photo and your profile. You want your potential customers/connections to answer the following questions about you.
  - a. Are you trustworthy?
  - b. Are you someone I want to do business with?
  - c. Can I recommend you to my friends and clients/customers?
  
3. **Create a standout Headline.** Your headline is the important real estate that appears next to your name in search results. The wording of a headline may determine whether a new potential client searching through LinkedIn contacts you. Done well, your LinkedIn headline can be used to promote your brand statement, marketing message, most enticing expertise, and more.
  - a. This should not be your job title/description.
  - b. Why should people stop and take a closer look at you?
  - c. What impressions are you leaving behind?
  - d. What do you do?
  - e. Use keywords or core words. Make your headline fit with SEO, Search Engine Optimization.
  - f. Demonstrate real value to your potential clients, customers, etc.
  
4. **Claim your LinkedIn Username:** Personalize your LinkedIn URL, own your brand. You are the brand we are talking about, claim your URL, so that when someone searches for your name they will find your public LinkedIn page/profile. Visit your profile and select the edit public profile URL option.
  
5. **Add Skills:** When updating your skills section, make sure you use relevant updated keywords. For example, potential buyers/customers probably won't be searching for "cold calling", try to mirror your buyer's skills/needs.
  - a. Use SEO keywords.
  - b. Add up to 50 skills to your profile.
  - c. The skills with the most endorsements from your connections will be listed first.

6. **Endorsements:** Skill endorsements are a wonderful way to recognize your 1st-degree connections' skills and expertise with one click. They also let your connections validate the strengths found on your own profile. Skill endorsements are a simple and effective way of building your professional brand and engaging your network.
7. **Write a summary:** Why should you fill it in? For starters, it gives the reader a quick overview of who you are, what you do, what you are looking for and most importantly, what you can do for them. Think like your buyer, what's in it for me?
  - a. Demonstrate your expertise, make sure you include keywords.
  - b. Show them that you are a valuable resource.
  - c. Add a video, a minute video equals 1,000 words!
  - d. Include Call to Action Statements, this could include companies/clients you've helped, include your signature with contact information, keywords that are important to buyers.
  - e. Demonstrate the value you offer, be their solution.
8. **Experience:** This is the time you can treat LinkedIn like your resume. Add your previous and current jobs, making sure to include key industry words so that you will be found in searches. When you add who you worked for and you find their name in the drop-down list, your experience will then have their logo beside your name because they created a company business page.
9. **Add Connections:** On LinkedIn, the people who are part of your network are called your "connections". Connect with people with whom you have worked or done business with, or people with similar interests or work in your industry. You can ask someone to join your professional network by sending them an invitation to connect. LinkedIn encourages networking by showing you exactly how your connections are related.
10. **Engage with your connections:** Status updates are short messages that are typical of many social networking platforms. While posting updates on LinkedIn is like Facebook and Twitter, it's also different. From your LinkedIn home page or your Edit My Profile page, you can change your status update as frequently as you like.

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