

Best Practices for Utilizing LinkedIn for a Job Search

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LinkedIn, an online social networking site, is an extension of—not a replacement for—in-person networking that can greatly expand one's reach and be an important tool in a job search. The key is to use LinkedIn to identify your target audience and position yourself to interest them in assisting you to reach your goals, while serving the needs of others.

Here are some tips:

- Create Your Profile. Your profile should be complete and include a professional quality photo. Your profile needs to be more than a statement of where you work and what you do. It should highlight your accomplishments and value propositions to those with whom you would like to meet, work for and/or conduct business. If you are searching for a position, as in a resume, use as many keywords as possible in your profile. Many recruiters search LinkedIn for candidates and will be more likely to notice your profile if it contains the sought-after keywords.
- Use the Companies Section for Job Searching and Make Direct Contacts. Despite the fact that not every person is on LinkedIn, it is a Web site for business networking. A great many organizations are represented on LinkedIn (In the USA, all of the Fortune 500 companies have an executive level presence). If you are seeking a position within a particular company, you may be able to find on LinkedIn the hiring manager or at least someone in that department, with whom you can establish communication. Maybe you won't find the Marketing Manager of a company, for example, but you might find the IT Manager. The Marketing Manager is only one step away from him. Often hiring managers, when looking to fill a position, remember those who approached them directly and showed an active interest. It saves them the time and trouble of recruiting, sifting through resumes and interviewing strangers.
- Join Groups. LinkedIn contains a wealth of industry and specialty-related groups. Groups provide a forum for its members to ask and answer questions and otherwise discuss issues of common interest. Being a part of LinkedIn groups helps the networking process dramatically, particularly if your professional network is small to begin with, and if you're looking to expand your job targets to industries in which you have no network. LinkedIn is a great place to start for building new relationships. By answering questions in the discussions forum you not only gain visibility but you also have the opportunity to show your interests and expertise.

Groups also allow you to build relationships with those who are not in your first, second or third degree network. Once you are introduced to them in the group you can view their profiles. Unless a group member has disabled this function, you can contact a group member directly with communications not intended to the group in general.

- Get Recommendations. Your expertise and reputation for good service is considerably reinforced by posted recommendations from others. Ideally, you should have at least three professional recommendations that also reflect upon your integrity and likeability as a person.
- Tell the World. Include your LinkedIn profile URL on your resume. There is a lot of valuable information that you cannot include on the resume, but curious recruiters and hiring managers may be eager to look you up on LinkedIn to glean more information. Also include your LinkedIn profile URL on the signature line of your email, including your personal email. If you have presented yourself in the best light, there is every reason to let the world know.

Remember that successful networking, whether in person or on line, requires that you offer to share information and assist others in a way that shows the best of your character and expertise without expecting anything immediately in return. This builds trust and makes you more “attractive” to other people. And remember that employers will seek out those they trust and like first before looking elsewhere to fill a position. For more information about the use of LinkedIn join us for our webinar The Potential of LinkedIn by visiting www.fullcircleny.com and selecting Career Development.

*Karen E. Nethersole, Esq., is CEO of Full Circle NY
Full Circle NY (FCNY) matches the right people with the best opportunities. We create ongoing strategic partnerships through career development workshops, networking events, recruiting and speaking engagements.*