



MEADOWS CONSULTING, LLC

Lucy Meadows • Career and Life Coach

617-322-9622 • lucy@lmeadows.com • www.lmeadows.com

How to Shine on LinkedIn

WHY USE LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn is the largest professional online network. It's the first place someone will go to check you out professionally, so it's worth creating a profile that represents you well. Your profile needn't be long, just clear.

LinkedIn allows you more space and creativity than a resume, and it lets you demonstrate your talents through links to materials you've produced.

PRESENT YOURSELF WELL

Post a good picture.

This is what viewers will look at first. Have a photo taken professionally if you can. Otherwise find a friend who's a skilled photographer to take a good headshot, looking friendly, with a simple background.

Decide what aspect of yourself you want the photo to highlight – Impressive? approachable? well-dressed? Dress as you would for an interview.

You may want to add a background photo too. Be sure it's not distracting.

Have a creative, specific headline that sets you apart and contains keywords.

The headline gives you a chance to grab the reader's attention and summarize who you are. It can be up to about 120 characters. Here are examples of what you can use:

- your profession and highlights of your skills
- your current title, tweaked for clarity if necessary
- the title you want—which you will justify by how you present the rest of your profile.

If you're job-hunting, remember that your current employer can see what you say.

Keep your contact information clear and up to date.

LinkedIn will provide a “public profile URL” that you will want to simplify. On the right side of your profile page, find *Contact and Personal Info*. Click on the pencil icon, and you will see a “profile URL.” Click on it then under *Edit public profile URL*, remove all the extraneous letters and numbers. For example: change *linkedin.com/in/lisa-knutsen-999ba5140* to *linkedin.com/in/lisaknutsen*.

Also under *Contact and Personal Info*, fill in your contact information. Scroll down to enter your personal email address (and be sure it sounds professional).

Give a clear, concise job history.

No dense paragraphs or long lists—people won’t read them. Highlight your successes and accomplishments, not your duties. Quantify wherever possible. Bullets work well, in moderation.

Jargon is not your friend.

Even if you are writing for people in your field, use clear language. There might be an assistant doing the screening who doesn’t know all the terms used in your field.

Don’t go back too many years.

If you’re older, there’s no point in inviting age discrimination. Fifteen years’ worth of experience is a good maximum to show; older experience may be discounted anyway. You don’t have to put dates on your education. This is a balancing act: omitting dates suggests that you are older, but at least viewers can’t pigeonhole you based on your age.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

*Also see the section below, **Search for People, Organizations, Jobs**.*

Build a large list of connections to create a powerful network.

LinkedIn is good at suggesting people you may know. First, click on *My Network*. Below you will see *People you may know*. Contact people you’d like to be in touch with and ask to be connected, **always** sending a short personal note rather than a canned invitation. Do not connect straight from the list of *People You May Know*. Instead, go to the person’s profile, click on *Connect*, and click on *Add a note*.

It’s best not to approach people cold; get introduced through a mutual connection if possible. Also I recommend not accepting invitations from people you don’t know, since connecting with someone can be seen as a kind of endorsement.

LinkedIn will ask you to import your address book. You may or may not want to do this, and it’s not necessary. Be careful not to invite your whole address book by mistake!

Share information.

Keep your contacts in touch with what you're doing and thinking. This is a great way to become better known, and your connections can share what you post. On your home page, you can click on *Share an article, photo or update*, then *Post*.

Be active in LinkedIn groups in your profession—or the profession you want to join.

This is another good way to demonstrate your expertise. Join groups that interest you, ask questions, follow discussions and post comments. See below for how to search for groups.

Follow organizations that interest you.

These are now listed on your profile under “Interests”. They give a picture of who you are and open up opportunities to connect with people who share your interests, such as fellow alums.

Beware: keep an eye on your “interests” section. Sometimes LinkedIn will add a group without consulting you—and it may or may not relate to you.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF LINKEDIN ACCOUNT

Join the appropriate level of LinkedIn for your needs.

Although the free level has a fair amount of capabilities, you may want to pay for a higher-level account. Paid accounts are called Premium accounts.

The Premier Career level costs \$29.99 per month as of June 2017. With a Premium Career account you can:

- See who has viewed your profile
- Send 3 InMail messages per month (this is LinkedIn's private email system) but only to recruiters and job posters
- If you apply for a job through LinkedIn—get information on how you compare to other applicants, and show up at the top of the list of applicants for jobs

If you want to send InMail messages to anyone on LinkedIn, you need the much more expensive Premium Business level—\$59.99 per month. This gives you:

- 15 InMail messages per month
- Unlimited browsing

There is debate over whether InMail messages get a higher response rate than emails. Given this, most jobseekers are unlikely to need to pay for the Business level and perhaps not the Career level.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY

Click on your photo on the top right of the home page to find the *Settings & Privacy* page. There are a dozen settings here to review, including very important ones. Two of these are:

- *Sharing profile edits*. This means whether your network is notified about your profile changes. Job seekers may not want this, and you certainly don't want it to happen while you are actively working on your profile.
- *Profile viewing options*. This means whether people know that you viewed their profile.

Another place to set your visibility is on the page where you edit your profile. Here you can set LinkedIn to either notify or not notify your network about edits you make to your profile.

SEARCH FOR PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, JOBS

Use LinkedIn routinely to get information on:

- **people you have met or would like to meet,**
- **organizations, and**
- **jobs.**

If you know what you are looking for, just enter it in the *Search* box at the top. Or to browse, click in the *Search* box then the search icon. Then you can choose from a menu bar listing *People/Jobs/Posts/Companies/Groups/Schools*.

Find individuals.

It may take several steps to find the right person. First, type a name in the *Search* box at the top, and click on the search icon. A list will come up. Unless you already see the person you're looking for, click at the bottom of the list on *See all results for [Sarah Winesap]*. Then you can narrow the search by using any of these filters on the right:

- *Connections*
- *Keywords* including *Title, Company* and *School*
- *Location*
- *Current or Past Companies*
- *Industries*
- etc...

Use LinkedIn to learn more about an organization.

Use *Search* to find the organization, then find the people you may want to connect with to learn more: your first-level connections will be listed first, followed by second-level connections, etc. To reach a second-level connection, contact a person you know and ask if they would be willing to introduce you, normally by email. After you get an introduction, follow up to thank the person who connected you.

Use LinkedIn to search for jobs, but don't ignore websites that may have more job postings.

A number of employers post jobs on LinkedIn, and you can apply directly through LinkedIn. Use either the LinkedIn website or the LinkedIn Jobs app.

You can also save jobs or set a search alert that will notify you of jobs that meet your criteria, such as:

- *Location*
- *Company*
- *Salary* (only for paid accounts)
- *Date Posted*
- *Experience Level*
- *Industry*
- *Job Function*

Remember that many other websites have far more job listings. Find the ones that are best for your profession and check them regularly. Set up job search alerts that will notify you of appropriate postings.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

For more career information, see my website, www.lmeadows.com.

For more LinkedIn information, I recommend Sabrina Woods's website, sabrina-woods.com/LinkedIn. Under *Handouts*, click on *LinkedIn For Job Search*.