

LinkedIn for College Graduates

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional online network with nearly 690+ million users in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide and is growing rapidly.

LinkedIn is a free professional social networking site that enables connections with trusted professional contacts to exchange knowledge, ideas and opportunities. It is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their resumes.

Please note: Having a LinkedIn profile also increases your chances of appearing at the top of search engine results. LinkedIn profiles usually appear at the top of search engine results, so keep in mind that your profile can provide a first impression to those searching online for information about you.

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The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page for Anne Marie DiNardo, PMP. The top navigation bar includes the LinkedIn logo, account type (Basic | Upgrade), and a notification badge (147). The main navigation menu includes Home, Profile, Contacts, Groups, Jobs, Inbox, Companies, News, and More. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a link: "Are You a Female Manager? - Apply Now to the National Association of Professional Women". The main content area features a post input field with the text "Ask a question, share a thought, or post an article...". Below this, there is a section for updates, showing "See 4 new updates" and "All Updates". The updates section includes a recommendation from LinkedIn Today: "5 Companies to Watch in the Silicon Prairie" from entrepreneur.com. There are also several smaller posts, including one titled "The Inaugural Address that will not be delivered" by Michael Moritz and another titled "Are slipping manners a sign of the times?" by Linda Coles. On the right side, there is a "PEOPLE YOU MAY KNOW" section with three suggested connections: "Connect", "Analyst at Gryphon Technologies", and "Fairfax Water". At the bottom of the page, there is a notification: "10 people have new connections." and a large advertisement for HP Gen8 Servers, featuring Intel Xeon processors and PC Connection.

How it Works

Your LinkedIn homepage acts as an online dashboard to access news and updates from members of your network, as well as messages from colleagues and invitations to connect. You can also find out which colleagues and former classmates have recently joined LinkedIn, who's viewed your profile, and how your network is growing.

Updates from members of your network appear on your dashboard with tips, job leads or inquiries that are professional in nature. As with Facebook, users can choose who to accept as contacts and who to ignore.

Professional Uses of LinkedIn

Your LinkedIn profile allows you to be found by alumni, former colleagues, clients, prospective partners and collaborators. You can invite contacts to connect with you and join your LinkedIn network. LinkedIn is also an effective tool for small businesses and corporations to search for potential hires and share information about their company and services.

The following professional features are offered:

- ***Reconnecting.*** Use the search tool to find former colleagues and classmates easily to reconnect with them. Find out where they are working now and who their connections are.
- ***Present yourself to potential employers.*** Provide potential employers with a detailed summary of your experience, education and specialties. LinkedIn enables you to share your unique profile URL and you also can select a personalized URL, such as <http://linkedin.com/in/janehoya>. This URL is also helpful to add to business cards, which allows connections to see your recommendations and previous experiences.
- ***Get answers.*** Ask industry and career questions, and receive answers from experts and colleagues in the field. Search top experts and browse by industry to get a better understanding of different topics and career paths you can explore using LinkedIn.
- ***Recommendations.*** Former and current colleagues can provide recommendations of your professional accomplishments and work ethic for current and future employers to reference. These recommendations will appear on your profile page with a link back to the pages of your colleagues who made the recommendation. You may also be requested to give recommendations for members in your network. If you give a recommendation, your comment will appear on your colleague's profile page for members of his or her network to view with a link back to your site. To make a recommendation, click on the "Recommend X" link at the top right-hand side of the member's profile page. The member will be notified that you have made a recommendation and review it before it is posted.
- ***Search and promote.*** Businesses can access LinkedIn to find future clients, service providers, subject experts and recommended partners and employees. Employers can also post and distribute job listings and utilize marketing tools to further promote their business.

Three Main Types of Information on LinkedIn

- 1. Information about yourself that you share.** This is the information that your connections, other professionals and companies see about you. This includes your profile and your contributions to discussions on LinkedIn Groups, Answers or other community features LinkedIn may offer. You have control over what you share, and you can update information at any time.
- 2. Communication.** Communications in LinkedIn can be one-to-one, group discussions or public discussions. You decide how much or how little you wish to communicate to individuals or groups.
- 3. Private activity.** LinkedIn also provides tools that you can use privately on LinkedIn (for example, searching or adding notes to your connections' information) on the website.

10 Tips for New Graduates

1. Get a professional-looking headshot.
 - You don't have to hire a professional photographer, but it should look professional. Get someone to snap a pic of you -- head and shoulders -- in natural light. Expect 10x more profile views when you have a profile photo, according to LinkedIn.
2. Upload a cover photo.
 - Make your background photo depict an interest of yours; nature, your favorite quote, a city skyline of where you live or your hometown, etc.
3. Write an informative, but punchy profile headline.
 - If you don't have a job yet, use the headline space to describe the role you'd like to have. For example, recent graduates (YOU!), maybe it would be Stockton University Grad Seeking Marine Biology Job or Natural Science and Mathematics School Grad with Internship Experience Seeking News Job. Just remember to change it when you get a job.
4. Update your summary and make it reflect where you are right now.
 - Don't waste the summary space. This is your professional bio. Use it to make your case for where you see yourself and what you learned in school or during college internships. Update it as your career progresses.
5. Fill out the experience section with any previous jobs. Include volunteer experiences.
6. Build a strong network so it's there when you need it. Don't "collect" them, make meaningful connections.
 - The networking part of LinkedIn is about getting to know your connections, not merely collecting them. So keep in touch with those you know. Check in to see what's new with those in your network and ask about catching up by phone or in person.
7. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL.
 - If you don't specify the URL you would like, LinkedIn will assign you one automatically (like one of those automatically generated passwords). It's best to override this and set your own vanity URL. The upside of this is you can add it to your email signature to make it even easier for key people to find your LinkedIn profile. Set your account to public, access the 'your public profile URL' and follow the directions form there. Generally it's best to use your full name as you vanity URL.
8. Show, don't just tell: Share your work.
9. Use keywords in adding skills you can be endorsed for – and get a few recommendations.
 - Ask professors, classmates, internship supervisors, or anyone else who knows you professionally to write a recommendation on your LinkedIn profile. These can validate your skills described.
10. Check out the content on LinkedIn. It's awesome!
 - Join industry groups, research and keep up to date.

Bonus Tip: Log in and regularly engage!

- Now and throughout your career, make sure to log in regularly to LinkedIn and engage. Like and comment on posts that interest you. Congratulate people on new jobs and promotions. Post your own content -- status updates, articles worth reading and maybe even articles you write. Check and reply to your messages.