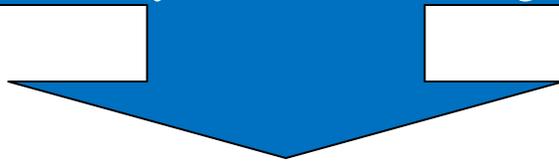


The Cheat Sheet for Advancing your Career

97 % of Hiring Managers find their candidates through LinkedIn. Whether you are looking for promotion within your existing company, or on the look out for opportunities with a new employer, you need to use LinkedIn to your full advantage.



Determining your strategy

You wouldn't get into the car without at least a vague destination in mind, and you wouldn't jump on a flight without knowing where it was going, so why start on your LinkedIn journey without some semblance of a plan?

To increase your likelihood of successful job searching on LinkedIn, you need to do some market research.

Define on paper your ideal employer and post, and search job sites for relevant job requirements and key words that recruiters use. On LinkedIn, you can create yourself a skeleton profile, then trawl through the company pages of organizations you'd like to work for in order to better understand how they describe themselves.

Pretend you're a headhunter and look at the "Post a Job" form: this will tell you how LinkedIn categorizes both employment type and industry, as well as the category levels.

Make a list of frequently used keywords for your industry, personality type, skill set, and the company or companies you want to work for so that you can incorporate them into your own LinkedIn profile.

Your Professional Headline:

Step 1: Say WHAT you are.

Step 2: Say WHO you help.

Step 3: Say HOW you make their life/work better.

Step 4: Give PROOF that you are credible.

Your Summary:

When writing your profile summary and completing other parts of your LinkedIn profile, you might be inclined to do so in the third person. Professional bios are often written in the third person. The third person has a different feel to it and can almost make that person appear even more powerful and influential than if it was written in the first person.

Be positive about yourself and your achievements, and break the summary up into subsections using the keywords you've already identified.

As fully as possible within the limits of the word count, cover your background, what you want to accomplish, how people can find you online, and provide links to work you have produced. Make sure that there is a cohesive narrative that people will enjoy reading.

Your Skills:

Use your skills selection wisely. You can add up to 50 skills, but 12 is the optimal number. Select your 12 skills that are most relevant to the job you want, and get them endorsed by your connections.

Your Jobs:

Include all of your past jobs, including temporary posts and voluntary positions. The keywords you use in your job titles are important, so if you previously had an obscurely named position, give it a more user-friendly title.

Making connections

To let people know you are a potential candidate, you need to reach out to them.

1. Leverage existing connections. Approach them via In Message, ask if they know of any employment opportunities, and ask them to introduce you to any of their connections you feel may be helpful.
2. New connections. Personalize every connection request by looking for an article or status update the person has made and commenting favorably on it. Target HR professionals in your field as they're usually the first to know of jobs not yet advertised, and also contact employees within the company you want to work for.
3. Join LinkedIn groups. Target groups including connections you want to make, using a keyword search to identify them if necessary. Read the posts and comment to get yourself noticed within the group, then follow up with individuals using In Message.
4. Follow-up. Who has viewed your profile? You'll receive notifications of this. Check the profiles of people who have looked you up, and send them a personalized In Message if you think they'd be a useful connection.

When you are making connections on LinkedIn, handle the process with the same professionalism you would meeting someone at a conference.

Personalize your messages to make them relevant to the person you want to connect with. Read about them before you make contact, and explain in your message why you want to connect.

If you receive a connection request, check out the sender's profile before you respond. If it looks empty and pointless, refuse the connection. If they send you a generic message, reply with a request for more information, and ask them why they want to connect.

Increasing your visibility

There are a huge number of things you can do to increase the visibility of your LinkedIn profile, and a few of the most effective ones are outlined here:

1. Inbound Links. Include links to your LinkedIn profile from your social media accounts, website and your emails. Post your status updated on Twitter, incorporating suitable hashtags.

2. Use the Open Link feature (available on Premium) to connect with more people and be available for connections more easily.
3. POST, POST, POST!!! You need to be active, so post regular status updates, share your work, and comment on good posts from groups and connections. Position yourself as an expert in your field, answer all the comments on your posts, and track their effectiveness using LinkedIn's analytics.
4. Use LinkedIn's mentions feature to alert potential companies and connections when you are talking about them.
5. Utilize LinkedIn's improved multi-media feature to add images and video to different sections of your profile so that it stands out from the crowd. Keep the look consistent throughout your profile.

Smart job searching

You can apply to job adverts on LinkedIn, but as many as 80% of jobs are filled without an advert even being placed!

Find recruiters in your field and connect with them, because they have access to unadvertized jobs.

Connect with groups and individuals, in particular key personnel (not just HR) within the company you want to work for.

Drill down deep into their profiles to check they are indeed the right people to contact, to see who else they are connected to (i.e. other key personnel), and to make sure you have something relevant to say to them in your initial message.

Use Pulse to track news in your network, so you can keep abreast of developments as soon as they begin to be discussed. Keep track of the key figures posting or mentioned in posts, as these people will be valuable contacts.

Use LinkedIn's advanced search feature to narrow down your search results to those that are most relevant. Keep a record of all your searches (including the URLs) so you can find them again in the future.

If you notice any more helpful keywords, add them to your own profile as the chances are that recruiters will be using the same search terms as you.

Targeting your prospects

Targeting your prospects comes in two parts: research, and connecting. Start by gathering information from company pages and groups to identify major influencers within your industry. Follow these people.

At the same time, browse company pages and groups to keep abreast of the latest news and directions. Make sure you are well-informed, and comment on and share stories and posts to get your name well known.

Building rapport

Having checked your privacy settings are already correctly set, reach out to your current colleagues. Find out if you can contribute to your company's page, as if you can make posts there, it will give you credibility. Endorse your colleagues' skills, and recommend them to others so that they will feel encouraged to do the same for you. Follow and comment favorably on their posts, and use @ mentions to attribute ideas and comments within your own posts to those people.

Using LinkedIn analytics

LinkedIn's analytics are a useful tool you can use to improve the effectiveness of your profile and posts.

1. Look at who viewed, where from and why they viewed you. Click on the graph data points for more detailed information.
2. Identify which of your actions (joining a group, posting an update, sharing a post etc.) have generated the most activity within your network. This will give you an indication of what you need to do to increase your number of views.
3. Check out your "How You Rank" status. This gives you insight into how you match up with others in your field, and what to do to improve.

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