5 Ways To Use LinkedIn Like a Millenial

1. Don’t be Afraid of Contacts

One of the biggest faux pas I’ve experience with older generations is a fear of social networking. The apparent over-familiarity that comes from “friending” someone on Facebook or “linking” with them on Linkedin strikes many Boomers as overtly personal. This is not online dating. You do not, “gasp”, have to even know the person you are linking to. Think of it this way: connecting with people on LinkedIn like nodding your head at someone or shaking their hand in greeting. Clicking the button to connect is like saying, “Hey. We might have something in common.” At the very least, they are another human being.

1. Reach Out Before You Need Help

When it comes to a job search, it is extremely important to have your social networking skills up-to-date BEFORE you job search. Regularly check your accounts. This might mean congratulating an old co-worker on a new promotion, or simply keeping tabs on old aquaintances. Once you are in job search territory, maximize your common experiences.

1. Develop Your Twitter-Length Pitch

When you connect with someone on LinkedIn, you only have a few sentences to explain what you are about. If you are using this opportunity to network for a job, consider a two-sentence personalized pitch. Something like: “Hey. I am a fellow graduate of Wheaton College. Looking for new opportunities and career advice.” If they connect with you, consider sending them a longer message that explains your current career trajectory and asks for advice in the field you want to progress in. My husband had a lot of success with a wonderful woman from his alma mater who spent time counseling him on the best course of action to take for his career. This experienced professional gave him invaluable tips on joining the American Society for Training and Development to advance his career in e-learning.

1. Join Groupss, Get Involved, Find A Career Mentor

The more vocal you are in your Alumni group, the more people can help. Be courteous. Don’t ask for a job right off the bat. People are generally excited to help other alumni if you give them a chance. Start off by listing your area (i.e. Chicago-land area job-seeker) and then explain that you are looking to make connections and possibly meet up with other networkers.

1. Have Respect For Your Alma Mater

People like people who are like them. This is simply a fact of life. We all love to find hidden “connections” between us. This is why LinkedIn is so powerful. Are you an ’84 graduate of the University of Michigan living in Raleigh? Type in your college name in the search bar on LinkedIn and explore typing in other search words like “Raleigh” alongside it. You’d be surprised how many people want to connect to people and relish the shared experience of college. After all, there is a ton of nostalgia and shared love for college experiences.