

LVX
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Networking in the Digital Age



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Build Your Online Profile

- Think about the following:
 - How do you want others to view you as professional?
 - What skills would you like others to know you have?
 - What experiences and accomplishments are important for you to share?
 - What is unique about you that separates you from others?
 - What's interesting about you?
 - **What is your brand?**

LinkedIn Profile

Your LinkedIn Profile should have the following components:

1. Professional picture: High-quality resolution, interview attire, headshot, neutral background of the picture (no distractions!)
2. Headline: Personalized to student – distinguishable! (not: 'MS ____ student seeking co-op')
3. Summary: Well-written narrative, no grammatical errors/typos, includes applicable skills/keywords – distinguishable!
4. Experience: Well-written accomplishment statements (with action verbs), reverse chronological order, includes company location and project context (if applicable)
5. Education: Reverse chronological order, schools and correct degree (Master of Science in ____). Nothing before BS.
6. Projects: Add projects as you **complete** them
7. Groups: Join 3 career technical groups (such as Java Developer, Cloud Computing, etc)
8. Companies: Follow 3 companies related to your field of interest (Northeastern University does NOT count)
9. Endorsements: Have at least 3
10. Connections: At least 10

LinkedIn Tips

- Use your positioning statement, resume, career goals, etc. to get started.
 - Modify as necessary
- Keep it professional.
- Nothing before your undergrad experience (RECENT!)
- Don't just click on the Connect button; make sure you include a message!
- **No one wants to connect with you if your LinkedIn is empty or if it lacks major components!**

Other Professional Websites

- If you join other networking websites, make sure you are updating your profile there as well. Upload a professional photo of you and share about your professional experience.
- Engage with others on this professional website. Respond to threads or articles, and post your own!
- Establish connections with other professionals by sending them messages.

Clean up Social Media

- Make sure you update your privacy setting on your social media so no one can view your photos or read your posts etc.
- Social media is your personal space, but if you make it public you need to make sure it is clean and professional.
- **Google yourself – what comes up? Is this an accurate representation of you?**

Have a Goal

- **Set a networking goal** – what do you want to accomplish through networking? Is it to find a job, build a partnership, provide resources or gain assistance? Figuring out what you want to do will help you narrow down who to reach out to, what kind of companies and industries you are targeting.
- **Keep your goal in mind** as what you ultimately want to achieve, but you don't have to lead with this goal, especially if it is for a job. **Build a relationship first – let them get to know you.**

Look for a Shared Connection

- This is easy to do on LinkedIn – click on the individual's profile and see how many mutual connections you have. **Are there anyone you know well that could introduce you?** This might be an easier way to get in touch than just reaching out directly.
- Look to see if this individual graduated from your college or worked at a company that you also worked at or is part of an organization you know. **Look for some common grounds.** This can help you when you reach out.

Crafting a Message

- **Keep it as short as possible.** Include three to five sentences about what your intentions. If you want, you can include a link to your Github or a personal website etc.
- Make sure you are **offering a clear next step.** Do you want to grab coffee? Do you want to talk on the phone? Give them an email address to reach you at in case they prefer that.
- If you are referred by someone they know, make sure you mention their name. However, if you were NOT referred, don't lie!
- **Don't be a salesman.** You aren't trying to convince them to hire you (unless if you are talking to a recruiter), you are trying to make a connection.

Sample Message

Hi Joshua,

I obtained your name through the Northeastern University LinkedIn Group. I am a MS student in the College of Engineering and I am in the process of making a career transition. It would be helpful for me to ask you questions about your experiences as a Software Engineer for Mathworks.

I am not expecting to discuss a particular employment position but I would appreciate being able to talk with you on an informational basis.

Thank you in advance.

Regards,

YOUR NAME

Follow-up and Follow Through

- **Don't message the same person every day** – that's annoying and nobody likes that.
- Message them once a week or every two weeks. After a month if they don't respond, then let it go.
- **If they respond, you need to follow-up IMMEDIATELY!** Don't wait for the opportunity to slip you by. Set up your LinkedIn notifications so you get alerted when you get messages. Catch people when they are online and are looking at your messages!
- If it's an email, don't wait for a workday. Respond when you get the message. Don't delay.
- If you meet with them or they offer to help you in anyway, **be sure to thank them.** They had no obligations to do you any favors!
- If you promised to do something for them, **make sure you follow through.** If you don't, there's no reason for them to help you when you ask.

Nurture the Relationship

- Like, repost or comment on their articles
- Congratulate them on new jobs or accomplishments
- Engage in their online presence
- Help promote events they are promoting – or better yet, attend those events and share about your experience online
- Tag them in your articles
- Publicly thank them for their help!

Keep Track

- If you are serious about expanding your network, it's a good idea to keep a spreadsheet of these contacts. Consider including the following information:
 - Name of contact
 - Company
 - Position
 - Contact Information
 - Where you connected (LinkedIn, event etc.)
 - Connection to you (are they are friend, alum etc.)
 - Other Comments
 - Consider using color coding or labels to differentiate between groups of people or if they've been responsive or not

Final Thoughts

- Don't be afraid to try – you never know till you try!
- Don't take it personally if they don't respond. Just move on.
- It's normal to feel nervous when talking to someone you don't know. That nervousness doesn't go away, but you will learn how to deal with it the more times you do it.
- It's okay to make mistakes. Learn from it and try to avoid it next time.

