What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is world’s largest professional network on the Internet with over 364 million users as of July 2015. LinkedIn offers tools to help users find job openings, businesses to hire employees and promote their own, or simply network with other professionals. Once you create your profile on LinkedIn, it acts as your online resume, featuring your experience, skills, and recommendations/endorsements from colleagues or supervisors. Since your existing connections can directly introduce you to others, you can quickly expand your professional network. LinkedIn has several different types of accounts to fit everyone’s needs. This handout will cover the free LinkedIn Basic account. To create a LinkedIn account, follow the steps below.

Creating an account.

Go to [www.LinkedIn.com](http://www.LinkedIn.com)
Fill out the small form on the first page. Your email address will be your username. Create a unique password here.

Next enter your location and employment status. This information will be used to suggest connections and jobs for you.
Confirm your email address. To do this you will need to log into your email and follow the link back to LinkedIn.

You can choose to sync your email contacts to your new LinkedIn account to easily find people or choose the people LinkedIn have suggested. You can skip this step for a later time.

Once you have registered for an account you will need to choose a plan. If you choose “skip this step” in the registering process you will automatically get the basic (free) account. You can change this at a later time.

Home: When you sign into your LinkedIn account you will automatically be on the home page. From here you can branch off to other parts of the website. Your homepage will appear whenever you sign in to LinkedIn.
The tool bar will always be available at the top of the screen. The envelope represents your message and invitation center and the flag is just a general notification center. When there is a number on top of it that means you either have a new message/invitation or a new notification. You may add connections by clicking on the person’s image with a plus sign on it. LinkedIn will suggest people you may want to connect with. Clicking on your profile mini picture will allow you to manage your privacy settings, language, etc.

You can use the search bar to search for people, groups, or companies to connect with. You can also use the search bar to look for available jobs.

The *home* menu is where you will see how many people viewed your profile, how to share an update or publish a post, and the updates from people you have connected with, you will also see groups you have joined, jobs you may be interested in, and some ads from sponsors, etc. LinkedIn does not currently offer the option to remove advertisement from your home page.

**Getting to know LinkedIn Terms:**

**Profile:** Your profile is what other people will see when they find you on LinkedIn. You can think of your profile as your online resume where you can add information about your employment history, education, and skills. In addition, LinkedIn also allows you to add things you might not include on a traditional resume, like a profile picture and personal **summary**. On your profile page, you can edit your profile by clicking on the pencil icon on the page. See below.
Creating A Professional Profile

After you create your account, LinkedIn will take you through steps to complete your profile. You can add information to your headline (the information at the top), along with your employment history, education, skills, a summary, and more. You can also click and drag to rearrange the position of each section of your profile. Also, you are able to upload a picture of yourself. When you first sign up, you will be brought to the page where you can upload your picture. Click on Add a photo button and follow on-screen instruction on how to browse and upload your photo from your computer. Some recommendations for your profile picture:

- Picture should not be blurry, use a high-quality JPEG file
- Make sure you're the only person in the photo (do not put a cut out of yourself from a group picture)
- Ensure you're dressed appropriately for your career field—in other words, wear what you’d wear to a job interview

If you had skipped these pages at the time of registration, you can edit your profile. Place your mouse cursor on the “Profile” tab and click “Edit Profile” from the drop down menu. From the edit page you can easily add/edit information on your profile. Click the pencil sign in each section to add/edit the information. At the bottom of each section, you can add more information by clicking on “Add (section name)” such as “Add Language”.

Your profile will display all the information you provided when you set up your profile. When users do a search from the people category, your profile will come up in the results. Depending on what type of account they have, they will have access to the following information:

- Current Position
- Summary
- Professional Background
- Skills & Expertise
- Education
- Recommendations (both given and received)
- Groups that you have joined
- Companies you're following
- Connections
Summary: Your personal summary looks similar to that of an objective statement on a résumé — a brief bio explaining who you are and your intentions – Are you looking for a new job? Or a potential customer? Your summary can be formal or informal depending on the industry you are in. It should not be dull. In other words, this is the place for you to infuse your personality. This will likely be the first impression you make to anyone visiting your LinkedIn profile, such as an employer or a potential customer. A few solid suggestions by many job coaching professionals include:

- DO NOT skip this.
- Write for your desired audience.
- Tell an engaging story.
- List your achievements, in other words, list the results you delivered. Do not repeat your duties and responsibilities you listed on resume here.
- Avoid being too wordy or using too much jargon. Make it visually easy to read. Break it up (with Bullet Points, Headers, Sub-Headers and Graphics)! And take advantage of the way LinkedIn allows you to incorporate different kinds of multimedia into your profile. You only have 2000 words limit on a summary.
- Include your contact information. Make it easy for recruiters or people to find you. If you’re comfortable, include your phone number and e-mail.

Recruiters: Recruiters literally scavenge their potential candidates on LinkedIn. They will post job openings and search for new candidates. They also build their potential hires database with or without an actual opening at hand.

Connections: You can start building up your online network, known as connections, during your initial registration by using existing contacts from your email accounts or add new from suggestions by LinkedIn. In the connections tab, you will find suggestions to connect with more people by LinkedIn, your most recent communications with your connections, option to add new connections, and finding alumni from your school.

The connections link allows you to manage the connections you already have. You will be able to organize your connections into groups and quickly access contact information by using Interests>Groups>Create Groups.
You have several options when it comes to adding connections. On the “add connections” page LinkedIn will ask for your email address. This will take your email contacts and search for those same email address on LinkedIn and offer to send an invitation to them. You can choose as many or as little from the results.

Connecting to someone on LinkedIn implies that you know them well. If you connect with someone, they’ll have access to people you know; others may ask you about them and vice versa; and you’ll get updates on their activity. LinkedIn lets you invite colleagues, classmates, friends, and business partners without entering their email addresses.

However, recipients can indicate that they don’t know you. If they do, you’ll be asked to enter an email address with each future invitation.

You can see all your contacts and connections by clicking on the connections menu on the top. You can find more connections by looking through the suggestions brought up my LinkedIn as you log into your account.

To filter to see your connections alone, click the drop-down menu next to All Contacts and pick Connections only.
To delete your connection, click arrow next to More on list and Remove connection. To delete someone from your contacts, click the arrow next to More in the list, then Remove from Contacts.

Sending Connection Requests: It is recommended when trying to make a connection with a fellow professional, that you send them an email request. The request is already standardized but it’s always a good idea to personalize the note. The receiver would at least get an idea of who you are. Personal connection request can be found once you click on the profile of someone and then click on the Connect button.

If you indicated that you do not know the person, LinkedIn will not send invitation and the notification message to indicate so will pop-up.

Another option for adding connections would be to search for people by name, company, or profession. Since we are working from a free account we are limited on how we connect with people. I found that searching for people by name allows you to connect with people easier. Searching someone by name allows me to connect with that person directly. If I search the same person by using his position as keywords, it only allows me to send InMail (which is reserved for premium members only). See below samples.
In many cases, you can withdraw an invitation if the recipient hasn't taken any action.

- Click the **Inbox** icon in the top right of your homepage.
- Click **Sent** on the left.
- Find an invitation without "Accepted" next to the name.
- Click the subject line of the invitation.
- Click **Withdraw**.

If the Withdraw button isn't there, the invitation can't be withdrawn. It may have already expired.

The recipient won't be notified about a withdrawn invitation. If you change your mind, you'll need the recipient’s email address to send them another invitation. **Note:** Withdrawing invitations doesn't return them to your balance of available invitations.

**Endorsement:** Your connections can endorse you for skills you've added to your LinkedIn profile. This is an easy way to verify your skills. To endorse a connection, you can click on recommended skills in their profile. Connections can also be endorsed from the new Skills & Endorsements section at the bottom of profiles. When you have been endorsed, you receive notification in email (if you opt in to receive one) and on LinkedIn, and these endorsements will show up in your own Skills & Endorsements section. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section on your own profile to see endorsements you've received. You can manage your endorsements - add or remove skill to this section. Accumulating a high number of endorsements for a skill adds credibility to your profile, and shows that your professional network recognizes you have that skill.
**Recommendations**: Once you've connected with someone on LinkedIn, you can request a recommendation from that person. This is a short paragraph that will appear on your profile. Viewers of your profile often view the recommendations you’ve received on your profile to see what others have to say about your work. It is best to receive/request recommendations from people who value your work, services, or products, such as managers, colleagues, co-workers, customers, and clients. There's no limit to the number of recommendations you can request or give. To request a recommendation:

- Move your cursor over your photo in the top right of your homepage and select **Privacy & Settings**. You may be prompted to sign in.
- Under the **Helpful Links** section, select **Manage** your recommendations.
- Click the **Ask for recommendations** tab at the top of the page.
- Follow the prompts to request the recommendation. Click **Send**.

Giving recommendations work essentially in the same area in a different tab above. For more details on how to receive or give recommendations, click on this link on LinkedIn page.

**Messaging**

You can easily use LinkedIn as a way to communicate with your contacts. LinkedIn had two messaging systems: **InMail** and regular private messaging. “**InMails** are messages you can send directly to another LinkedIn member you’re not connected to. Any member can purchase an **InMail**, or you can get them with a premium account.” (LinkedIn Corporation, 2012) Regular private messaging refers to messaging your contacts on LinkedIn.
Start by clicking on the envelope icon at the top. This will open your Inbox.

Here, you will be able to see your messages, invitations, sent, archive, and trashed folders which help organize your messages. To the right of your folders you will see some current messages. You can use the search box and filter the messages you only want to view.

To create a new message click on New. This will open up a blank message to create and send. Typing in the name of the contact will trigger the drop-down list from where you can select the person you wish to send your message. Select a name from the drop-down list. You can also send attachments in your message just like in your regular web mail. Once you are finished composing your message click send message.

**Job Search**

In addition to networking opportunities, LinkedIn has its own job search section. Members can search for jobs, post new positions, and save the open positions they find. You do not need to have the Job Seeker Premium account to browse or apply. Based on the information you provide to LinkedIn, they will automatically gather a list of open positions for you. You can also search for a job. They have an advanced search that allows you to put in specifics about the type of job you want. Clicking on the Jobs tab on Home page will open Jobs Search box as shown.
The learn salary range for the particular job of your interest and find out who is viewing your profile can be unlocked for premium members only.

When you find a job that interests you, you can apply for it or save it. Easily keep track of jobs that you have already applied for.

Not only can you save particular jobs, but you can also save an entire search by using the buttons next to Preferences (to specific geographic area, company size, and specific industry).

To unsave a job, click on the job you saved then click on the Unsave button.

**Privacy and other settings**

Just like other social websites you can control the settings on your account. To access your account options, hover the mouse over the Profile icon in the top-right corner, then select Manage next to Privacy & Settings. From here you can update your password, change your email notification settings, and more.
There are also several privacy settings you'll want to consider. For example, if you're searching for a new job while you're still employed, you may want to take extra precautions to ensure your activity isn't especially noticeable to your current employer. For that purpose, you may want to turn off your activity broadcasts (2nd link under Privacy Controls column).

The 4th link Select what others see when you've viewed their profile is an interesting tool but not very effective in both ways if you are not a premium member. LinkedIn explains here:

> Some members choose to remain anonymous when viewing profiles. These members do not choose to be anonymous when only viewing certain profiles. Instead, they choose to be anonymous when viewing all profiles. You can't block them or force them to reveal their names in order to view your profile.

> When free members choose to remain anonymous, they won't be able to see who's viewed their profile either. If you have a Premium account, you can browse anonymously and still see the list of people who viewed your profile. However, even if you have a Premium account, you still can't view the names of anonymous viewers of your own profile.

In the profile category you can manage who can see your activity on LinkedIn. Next you might want to take a look at your public profile. This is the profile that will be found when doing a public search from websites like Google, Bing, etc. Since this profile can be seen by people who do not have a LinkedIn account, you'll want to make sure that you're comfortable with the information that's available.
**Share an Update:** Sharing your thoughts, articles or other content-rich websites from your homepage and several other places is called **Share an Update.** Text is limited to 600 characters maximum. You can attach files such as PDFs, Word documents, and JPEG images by clicking on the photo icon on the right. You can attach a link by typing in the URL. It may take a few seconds for a summary to display. Your update can include either a file with text, or a link but not both. You can share with the entire public or just with your 1st degree connections.

**Upload a Photo:** You can use this feature just like **Share an update** above but mostly to focus on the photo in your share.

**Publish a Post:** LinkedIn members are encouraged to contribute professional insights on LinkedIn by posting their expertise and interests in a long-form posts. Publishing on LinkedIn allows you to further establish your professional identity by expressing your opinions and sharing your experiences. Upon clicking the **Publish a post** button, you will be taken to the publishing tool for your long-form post. Click here for suggestions by LinkedIn. Per LinkedIn:

*When you publish a long-form post on LinkedIn:*

1. Your original content becomes part of your professional profile. It is displayed on the Posts section of your LinkedIn profile.
2. It's shared with your connections and followers.
3. Members not in your network can now follow you from your long-form post to receive updates when you publish next.
4. Your long-form post is searchable both on and off of LinkedIn.
**Sign-out**

Hover your mouse over to your small profile button and click on the **Sign Out**.

**LinkedIn on the go!**

LinkedIn is available on mobile devices. Go to your application store, search for the LinkedIn application. Make sure the application you’re downloading is the correct one. It should be free and have the LinkedIn logo on it.