

LinkedIn[®] Guide

SPRINGFIELD
COLLEGE



Career Center

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What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is a popular and global business-oriented social networking site. LinkedIn is the leading online professional directory of individuals and companies. It allows users to make "Connections" with people they know, have done business with, or trust. Individuals use LinkedIn for professional networking, connecting, and job searching. Companies use LinkedIn for recruiting and for providing company information to prospective employees. LinkedIn members can search for jobs, join groups, research companies, connect with alumni, and network with members of their network.

Why should I use LinkedIn?

You can create and build your professional presence and brand. You can find and network with existing contacts and alumni. You can research companies and employers. You can create an online "resume" that has no length limitations. You can find and apply for jobs. You can maintain your professional network and keep current on trends and issues in your career field. This is a lifetime professional networking tool that you should keep up-to-date. Ninety-two percent of potential employers check social media.

Setting up your Account and Developing a Profile

Setting up an account is easy, you only need to visit LinkedIn.com and click Join Now. Choose a password you will remember! LinkedIn will start to walk you through creating a profile. Remember this is a PROFESSIONAL networking site. This is not like other social media so be cautious. This is the first impression you make to a potential professional contact, made sure it is a good impression. The temptation will be to start connecting with contacts right away – STOP! LinkedIn will ask if you want to upload your email address book. Do Not Add It! Create the best possible profile before you start to add contacts.

You can let LinkedIn walk you through each section, if you start to make your profile and you have to stop, you can log back in using your username and password. If you pull down the drop down menu under the "Profile" tab along the top of your screen, you can find "Edit Profile" and go back in to update your profile at any time. The "+ sign" will allow you to add to each section and the "✎ sign" will let you go back in and edit sections you have already created. Be careful about capitalization and typos. You may wish to create your text in a Word document, so that you can spell check and then cut and paste into LinkedIn or use an internet browser that has a spell check option. Spell Check is standard on Chrome and most others have it as an add-on option.

Linked In Sections

LinkedIn has many sections. This provides you with the opportunity to customize your profile to be your best possible professional networking tool. You do not have to utilize every possible category. At the minimum, you should include your photo, summary, experience, and education.

Other sections will add depth to your profile and it is recommended that you make your profile dynamic by listing all of your accomplishments. This will help potential employers and contacts learn about you. The keywords you use will also help LinkedIn to identify potential contacts for you.

Photo

You should have a profile picture. This is the first image professional contacts have of you. A headshot of yourself will help contacts remember you and help contacts locate you. Use a recent picture of yourself. Do not have other people in your profile picture. Dress professionally and be in a professional setting. The background should not be too busy. If you do not have an appropriate picture, the SC Career Center will take one for you.

Summary

The summary is important. It is the portion of LinkedIn where you can highlight your professional philosophy and let people get a sense of your personality and tone. Write for your intended audience. List your accomplishments, not tasks. Write something substantial, describe work values, and use keywords. You should write in the first person and end your summary with why you are on LinkedIn.

Summary Sample #1

I am in my final year of the Educator preparation program at Springfield College. I will be graduating with my Bachelor of Science in American Studies and Education after passing all Sections of the MA Tests for Educator Licensure. I will be ready to jump into teaching elementary school students as soon as June of this year.

Teaching for me is an opportunity to invest in the future. I believe students are agents of change, and in order for them to succeed and lead this society, teachers need to teach social responsibility, to teach community, and to empower students to take charge of their learning, not only in school but in lifelong learning contexts as well.

Growing up as the oldest of five children, I quickly developed a love of teaching. Not only did teaching my brothers a new skill allow them to be more independent, but it opened up a world of possibilities and empowered them to see the world in new ways. Those moments of clarity, when it clicks into place for a child, are the favorite moments of my life.

In addition to my dedication to the field of teaching, I also possess a demonstrated ability to prepare extremely well for my classes and a track record of creating a favorable classroom environment that is appropriate for the maturity and interests of the students. I am well-versed in preparing and implementing lesson plans to meet the varied learning styles, abilities, and requirements of students in a culturally diverse environment. My highly effective planning of activities and projects which are relevant to students' needs allow me to differential the projects for different learning styles.

I am on LinkedIn to network and explore potential teaching opportunities.

Summary Sample #2

I am a Personal Trainer seeking to help my clients reach their fitness goals while challenging them to improve their overall wellness. My expertise includes strength and conditioning, individual and group training, teaching group exercise classes, and creating individualized nutrition plans. I love to work with clients to help them transform their bodies through the most targeting, cutting edge techniques focusing on cardiovascular exercise, strength training, and stretching. My Bachelor's degree in Applied Exercise Science has given me an advantage over trainers who only possesses training certificates. My program with its international reputation and strong science base has specifically prepared me to prescribe

exercise for a wide range of populations with a focus on developing and maintaining wellness and preventing health problems.

I have training privileges at most of the fitness centers, gyms, and community facilities, in greater Norwich and I am on LinkedIn seeking new clients. No matter what your current fitness level is, if you are looking for a fitness partner who is dedicated to helping you develop and meet your wellness goals, I can help.

Experience

You should create a new experience for every job and/or internship. You can take these from the experience, employment, related experience, etc. sections of your resume. You will have to create a new section for each position, and then you can cut and paste the bullets into the provided box. Check for formatting.

One of the benefits of LinkedIn is that there is not a length limit, so you can include as many experiences and as many details about the position as you want without worrying about page limitations.

Organizations

You should list any clubs, student organizations, professional development groups, and teams in which you participated. Include any leadership positions you held. You should continue to add additional groups and professional development organizations as you move through your career.

Skills and Expertise

This is a basic listing of your strengths. You should identify traits you consider to be your most desirable transferrable skills. Your LinkedIn contacts can endorse you for these skills.

Education

You should create a Springfield College education section. Create additional sections for any other institutions or certificate programs you have attended, this will help you connect with alumni.

Interests

As with your resume, this can be a place to tell potential employers or networking contacts a little about yourself. They are looking for “fit”; as long as your interests are appropriate, you can include them here.

Personal Details

Should you post your birthday or your marital status? If you want this information to be viewed you can post it, but it isn't necessary. Again, this is a professional networking site not a personal site.

Advice for Contacting

Let people know how to reach you. LinkedIn will only allow you to message your contacts. Including an email here will allow potential contacts to reach you outside of LinkedIn.

Honors and Awards

List any honors, awards, scholarships that you have received, and also list an explanation of what

the award signified. LinkedIn will show this as a stand-alone category and also display it under the appropriate Experience Section.

Example

The John P. Smith Award 2013, Awarded annually to the student with the highest GPA in the Math major

Projects

This section allows you to name your project and upload a digital file. You can highlight any large class or co-curricular projects you completed. Highlight class projects or work, articles about you or written by you, and websites. You can also create projects and link in other team members who are on LinkedIn; this is a way to highlight your teamwork experience. LinkedIn will display the project under the appropriate Experience Section.

Languages

If you speak more than one language or possess the technical knowledge of any computer languages, this is a good place to highlight that.

Publications

If you have published any articles or research. If you have been featured in the “Alden Street Review” or “The SC Student” include it here.

Test Scores

If you are using this profile to help apply for graduate school, you can include GRE, GMAT, LSAT, or MCAT scores, you do not need to put grades, or SAT scores.

Courses

You can highlight specific classes or workshops you have attended. This can give potential employers a feel for the diversity and rigor of classes you took at Springfield College.

Patents

If you’ve patented anything, this would be the section to list it.

Certifications

Include any certifications you possess, even if they are not directly related to your career field; you never know what might make a difference.

Volunteering and Causes

This is a section many where SC’s mission can be highlighted. Include any volunteering, service learning, community involvement, or causes you support. Many people on LinkedIn may not have this section; most SC graduates will be able to use it to enhance his or her profile.

Don’t forget Humanics in Action Day, any Alternate Spring Break Trips, class projects for non-profit organizations, and/ or fundraising your teams or clubs did for charities.

Groups

You should ask to join professional development and alumni groups. You will get updates, be able to participate in discussions, and you can send messages to other group members even if

you are not LinkedIn contacts.

You should join the **Springfield College Career Networking Group**, and the **Recent College Grads Group**, as well as searching, by keywords, for any groups related to your desired profession and/or geographic location. Most professional development organizations have a LinkedIn group, and members will tend to post open positions and have related discussions. Even if you can't join the parent group, sometimes you can still join the LinkedIn group. Conduct some research and find the groups that are the best fit for you. Their updates and positions will appear in your newsfeed.

Following

You can follow employers and people who might post information, jobs, or updates that you are interested in receiving. You should follow any companies for whom you might want to work. These will appear in your newsfeed. Your contacts can see who you are following and it may give them an idea of your professional interests. It would be good to be following a specific employer if a hiring manager from that organization takes the time to view your profile.

Recommendations

Request LinkedIn recommendations from people who can speak about your work. You can ask faculty who know you well, internship supervisors, or co-workers, bosses, or clients from your jobs. A LinkedIn recommendation is a reference in advance. Don't ask people you don't know for references, only ask people who know your work and would have great things to say about it. Take your time and personalize the request. LinkedIn makes asking for a recommendation as easy as clicking a button, but you are asking someone for a big favor. Be sure to send a thank you note to anyone who writes one for you.

Upload a File or Add a Link

You can upload files, pictures, and videos to your profile to highlight your work and develop a media rich profile. You can upload most formats of video, images, documents or presentations and files under each experience section of your profile. This can give depth to your profile and allow you to show samples of your work.

You can also add a link to a website: this could be a website to which you have contributed content, an article about your work, a web link to your portfolio (if you have one), or a website with content you manage.

Profile Box

After you have added information to all appropriate sections, scroll back up to the beginning of your profile and look in the at the top box. This is the snapshot information people will see when you request to join a group or when you click on their profile. Customize this.

Headline

The “Headline” will default to your most recent experience and title there. You do not want this to read “Waitress, Friendly’s Corporation.” You can click on the “✍ sign” and you can type a new headline. Select something that is more representative of your career goals.

Sample Headlines

Marketing Major Specializing in Social Media, Brand Development, Local and Mobile Media.

Aspiring Elementary Educator Looking to Make a Difference in the Lives of Inner- City Youth.

The Location and Industry

You can customize these. Change the location to reflect where you want to be working and change the industry to the most appropriate one from the dropdown menu.

Finalizing your Profile

Congratulations, you have created your LinkedIn profile and you are ready to start using it as a networking tool. Before you start connecting and interacting with contacts, be sure to review your profile and check for typos, capitalization, or spelling errors and make sure your formatting is consistent. Your LinkedIn profile, like your resume, will evolve and change as your career progresses. **It will need to be maintained and updated.**

Using LinkedIn

Remember that this is a professional networking platform and etiquette is very important. Any interaction should be considered professional communication with appropriate business format, language, and tone. SPELLCHECK and PROOFREAD everything. You should not use text speak, slang, or use an informal tone. This is NOT Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc... Always err on the side of caution.

LinkedIn Navigation

At the top of your LinkedIn page there are a number of navigation tools. There is a search bar that you can use to search for people, jobs, companies, groups, etc. You have a ✉ mailbox where you can access and create email messages and where you will be notified if people send you an invitation to connect. There is a 🔔 where LinkedIn will notify you about activity on your threads, groups, or profile. There is a place where you can access your account and privacy settings.

There are five navigation options listed along the top. These options stay consistent regardless of which section of LinkedIn you visit. They are:

Home

Profile

Network

Jobs

Interests

“Home” will take you to your Homepage which is a newsfeed of activity about the people, companies and groups in your network. You can post updates and share articles here. However, this is very different than other social media; you should only post updates or share links to professional topics. This is not a feature you would use very often.

“Profile” has a drop down menu with two options. You can “Edit your Profile” or you can look

at “Who’s Viewed Your Profile.” Depending on their privacy settings you can see everyone who has viewed your profile. Keep in mind that everyone you click on will also get a notification that you have viewed their profile.

“Network” has a dropdown menu with “Contacts”, “Add Connections”, and “Find Alumni.” The “Contacts” option will take you into your existing contacts. The “Add Connections” option is where you can go and invite your entire email address book. As previously stated, this is not a good idea. “Find Alumni” will allow you to search for SC alumni by location, employer, or career type.

The “Jobs” section will allow you to search for jobs that are posted on LinkedIn. You can search by keywords, job title, or company name. There are many ways to refine the search and it will show you jobs that are connected to contacts within your network.

“Interests”

The “Interests” section has a dropdown menu with “Companies”, “Groups”, “Pulse” and “Education.” The “Companies” and “Groups” sections will show you what you are already following and give you additional options of groups of companies to follow. “Pulse” will allow you to select certain types of stories that you would like to appear in your newsfeed. “Education” will default to Springfield College and provide the same information as the “Alumni” section however, you can also learn about other colleges and universities.

Adding Contacts

Do not select the options to connect with your entire address book with one generic invitation. This will compromise your contacts network by adding people you do not know or do not know well. It will also not allow you to personalize messages. This will show your potential new contacts that you are willing to do things the “easy” way.

Are you ready to start adding contacts?

Start with who you know. Friends, family, classmates, co-workers, family friends, faculty, administrators, and internship and job supervisors are all people you might want to add as contacts. *You only want to add people you actually know!*

Do not use your phone to add contacts it will not let you personalize your invitations and you want to personalize each invitation, especially if it is not someone you communicate with on a very regular basis.

When you find people that you already know well, you can invite them to + Connect. A drop down box will ask you to select how you know the person. You select how you know the person and then you have the option to write a personal message. It is always a good idea to personalize the message. If you know the person well, personalize the invitation by letting them know that you have joined LinkedIn. If you know the person, but haven’t spoken to them in a while, remind them how you know each other.

You can also click Contacts → + Add connections. By entering your email address LinkedIn can check your address book and facilitate the invitation process. Again – do not invite your whole address book. This will invite everyone at Springfield College and anyone who has ever been copied into a group email. The goal of LinkedIn is to maximize YOUR network, if you are connected to lots of people you do not know, it minimizes the effectiveness.

Networking with SC Alumni

Networking with SC alumni (even people you do not know) can be effective. The goal is to establish rapport and ask for general information and advice. You should never ask for a favor, a job, or a recommendation from an alumnus who you do not know.

Networking is a two-way street. You should also be willing to help SC students and alumni who are looking for advice or information from you.

Sample Outreach to an SC alum

Dear Mr. Smith,

I'm a fellow Springfield College alumnus and came across your profile. I graduated in 2014, also from the Computer Graphics Program, and have been working in web development for the past few years. I'm currently job searching and hoping to make the transition to a larger organization. I really admire your career and was wondering if you might be willing to offer some advice or perhaps chat by phone? I would really appreciate your time and would be happy to do anything I can to help you.

*Sincerely,
Jane Pride*

Note that the message immediately mentions the alumni connection, is polite and professional, and shows that you've done your research on the other person (signifying that you're not just sending out generic blast messages). You never want to sound desperate and you never want to ask directly for a job or send a resume.

Connecting with SC Alumni

LinkedIn has a few ways to help you locate Springfield College Alumni. LinkedIn will suggest contacts based on your existing contacts or overlap between the experiences on your profile and a potential contact's profile.

You can use the “Alumni” and/or the “Education” tabs.

Once you've identified some alumni in your desired field and location, it's time to make contact. While there are no guarantees, fellow alums are more likely to reply to a networking request than random strangers because you share a common experience.

Communication - Privacy

If you are using your profile for career networking, you probably want to make it as easy as

possible for people to find you and contact you. LinkedIn has a selection of privacy options. You may not be able to see all of the information about certain people.

Contacting Strangers

If you wish to communicate with someone who you have not had prior experience with, it is better to try the “+Send Message” option rather than the “+Connect” option. This will give them the chance to answer your question without adding you as a connection. If you can’t access this option, add them as a connection. Be sure to explain the reason you wish to connect.

Sample Stranger Connection Request

Explain how you know the person or what you have in common. Tell the person why you want to connect. Be friendly! Remember your “Please” and “Thank You.”

Dear Mr. Smith,

I came across your profile on the SC Computer Graphics Alumni Group. As a Computer Graphics major at Springfield College, I am very interested in learning more about Bull’s-eye Creative and exploring internship options. I am spending this summer in Seattle and I would like to add you as a contact to learn more about your organization and the greater Seattle area. Thank you.

*Sincerely,
John Humanics*

Connecting with people you do not know

You may be allowed to simply send a contact request, or you may have to verify how you know them depending on their privacy settings. If you are trying to contact someone outside of your immediate contact list of friends and co-workers, you may be able to send them a direct message or you may need to ask for an invitation from a mutual connection.

Sample Introduction Request

Dear Mr. Jones,

We met at the Springfield College Career Coffeehouse last year. To refresh your memory, I was about to graduate with a degree in Business Management and looking to start my career. You were kind enough to give me advice on companies that might appreciate my background.

Since we last spoke, I’ve graduated and started applying for positions. One of the organizations you mentioned was the YMCA and I would love to learn more about career tracks within the YMCA. I noticed that you have a first-degree connection to Jane Smith, an executive director at a local branch.

Would you be willing to introduce me to Ms. Smith? If you feel uncomfortable making an introduction, it is absolutely no problem. Alternatively, I would appreciate any advice you have on how best to approach Ms. Smith.

Any help you could provide before the end of the month would be greatly appreciated. Thank you and I hope to hear from you soon!

*Sincerely,
Sally Springfield*

Invitations to Connect

You will also have other LinkedIn members inviting you to become a contact. You should usually only accept invitations from people you know. However, networking works in both directions and you should consider why this person is trying to connect with you. Maybe the person is a Springfield College alumnus looking to expand their own network. Maybe it is a potential employer trying to learn more about you. Maybe it is a direct marketing company looking to try to sell you something.

Ways to respond to an invitation

“+ Accept” – Add this person as one of your contacts

“+ Reply (don’t accept yet)” – You can find this if you right click on the +Accept drop down menu, this will allow you to send the person a message without adding them as a contact.

“+ Ignore” – This will send the person to your archived folder without adding them as a contact.

If you choose this option the person will not be informed that you have ignored them so they may try to add you again. You can also select “I do not know this person” and that will block them from attempting to add you again.

“+Report as Spam” – This will notify LinkedIn that this is an inappropriate message.

Start Networking!

You have updated your profile and you have added connections, now you need to create a professional presence for yourself. LinkedIn will put relevant information right in your newsfeed. When appropriate, share articles related to your career-field and participate in discussions within your groups. People who participate generate more hits on their profiles. However, this is a long-term networking tool. Pace yourself.

Use LinkedIn to stay in touch with your network. Find positive excuses to be in touch – send congratulations to your contacts when LinkedIn notifies you of their promotions etc. Avoid 911 networking; don’t contact people only when you need something. Build relationships before you need them. People are not part of your network until you have a relationship with them.

Like all social media, LinkedIn is an interactive platform through which individuals and communities share, co-create, discuss, and modify user-generated content. To effectively use LinkedIn you must participate. Simply creating a profile is not going to expand your network, land you a new job, or enhance your career, but used effectively LinkedIn can help you with all of these.