

USING LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a directory of professionals, organizations, and companies. Individuals and companies use LinkedIn for networking, job searching, hiring, company research, and connecting with affiliates, including alumni, industry, and a variety of other business related groups. It's free and easy to get started using LinkedIn; you'll need to sign up for and create a LinkedIn profile. Then you'll be able to start using LinkedIn to connect, network, job search, and boost your career.

Create a Profile

The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the more chances you will have to be found and contacted. Use your LinkedIn profile like a resume and provide prospective employers with detailed information on your skills and experience.

- **Biographical information:** Include your full name, title, current location, industry, and a *professional* photo (optional).
- **Summary:** Use this section to write about your professional background and/philosophy. How do you approach your work? What are some of your career goals? How would you describe your strengths? What types of experiences are you looking for? Highlight intangible skills like “hard working,” “passionate,” “reliable,” or “quick learner.”
- **Experience:** List your recent jobs, internships, coursework, research, leadership positions, etc. as they relate to your career interests.
- **Skills and Expertise:** List skills and topic areas you have strengths in, for example: communication, administration, counseling, finance, etc.
- **Education:** List the institutions you have obtained degrees from, type of degree received, (Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Ph.D., J.D., M.B.A., etc.), month and year of graduation, major(s) and/or minor(s), and GPA (optional).
 - **Honors and Awards:** List any scholarships, membership in honor societies, or other academic accolades from college here.
- **Organizations:** List your membership in clubs or organizations as well as any leadership positions you have held.
- **Additional Info (optional):** Add interests, hobbies or other unique information but don't get too personal- this is still a professional networking site. Be sure NOT to include information about your gender, age, religion, political affiliation, etc.

Make Connections

Now that you have a profile, use the search function to look for people you already know and then those you are interested in getting connected with; but there is no need to go overboard and connect with everyone. Be strategic!

- **Who should I connect with?** Ithaca College alumni, family and friends, classmates, faculty, supervisors, recruiters from job/internship fairs, members of LinkedIn groups, etc.
 - **What does first, second, and third level connections mean?** Think of them as degrees of separation between you and the other person. A first degree connection means you are connected to someone. A second degree connection means you share at least one person in common with another person, and so on.
- **How do I ask someone to connect with me?** When you send a connection request, LinkedIn provides a general message. *Delete this and write a personalized request explaining who you are and why you want to connect with this person.* General feedback from employers and professionals indicate they prefer a unique message from those they don't know.

Keep Building Your Network

- **How do I connect with people I don't know?** Write a personal message when you request to connect introducing yourself and explain why you want to connect. Mention what you have in common- the person is a second degree connection, mention that you share a mutual friend or colleague, or that you are both IC alums, etc.
- **Where do I find new connections?** Did you know that if you're a member of the same group as another user, you can bypass the need to be a second degree connection in order to message them? Additionally, group members are also able to view the profiles of other members of the same group without being connected. Join groups to enable more messaging and profile viewership capabilities. Find groups by using the search bar, and remember to change it to Groups using the drop-down menu.

Use Your Connections

So now you have a profile and developed a network of contacts. Now what? Be active and don't wait for someone to contact you. Send messages, join groups, post status updates, and engage in conversations. No one will know that you're searching and what you're searching for if you don't tell them.

Other LinkedIn Features That May Be Helpful

LinkedIn was created as a professional online networking tool, and this remains its primary function. However, as the site evolved, demand for other features led to new options. Here are some to consider utilizing in your networking or job/internship searches:

- **Organization Profile Pages:** Similar to Facebook fan pages, profile pages give the opportunity to "follow" them and receive updates. Some companies and organizations may post job and/or internship opportunities for their followers to see.
- **Status Updates:** These quick updates appear on your LinkedIn main page. You will see when your connections have received promotions, accepted a position at a new organization, view job and internship postings from companies you follow, or read articles to stay current with industry news. **Tip:** Sending a note of congratulations to someone who got promoted is a great way to keep in touch.
- **People You May Know:** In the upper right corner of the LinkedIn main page, the People You May Know box will suggest new people for you based on second and third degree connections.
- **Job Postings:** Remember that LinkedIn is a networking tool first and therefore should not be used as the only job or internship search resource you use. However, a growing number of organizations have started posting positions on their profile pages.
- **Skill Endorsements and Recommendations:** The quickest way to get endorsements and recommendations is to give them. Endorse former and current supervisors, faculty, current and former coworkers, etc. and they are more likely to endorse you in return.

Other Useful Tips

- **Don't pester people.** Use LinkedIn to follow up but not too frequently. Once every couple of months is fine, but refrain from sending messages once a week.
- **Don't ask for jobs/internships when you start making connections.** Networking is about establishing a relationship first and asking for favors later.
- **Update your status with industry-related information (not personal updates like Facebook).** Post articles or resources related to your field.
- **Participate in group conversations.** Get your name out there! Don't join groups for nothing.
- **Use LinkedIn to find a person to address a cover letter to.** You can also use it to research people before going into an interview with them.
- **Networking should be a mutually beneficial process.** Be appreciative and give back.