



# LinkedIn

## GUIDE



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**EASTIN CENTER  
FOR CAREER READINESS**  
Spears School of Business

# PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LINKEDIN



“Did you know that LinkedIn, the professional social networking platform, has actually been around longer than Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram? It is more relevant now than ever.

Why? Because it hosts more than 500 million professional profiles, which means nearly an unlimited supply of network connections and job opportunities. From seeking a new job to maintaining your personal brand, LinkedIn is an important part of being a full-fledged professional in any industry these days.” - [TopResume](#)

“90% of recruiters use LinkedIn to screen candidates” – [Career Builder](#)

LinkedIn is a tool for professionals and future professionals to build connections. It can assist you in creating a digital stamp that embodies your personal and professional brand.

### ***Through LinkedIn, you can\*:***

- Create a profile that highlights your professional accomplishments
- Build and maintain a professional network
- Connect with colleagues and classmates
- Learn about companies and industries
- Discover new career opportunities and connect with recruiters
- Share thoughts and insights about what is new in your profession or industry

[\\*LinkedIn.com](#)

## Suggestions for Effective Use of LinkedIn:

### **1. Utilize the option to send a personal message to connect.**

By sending a unique and tailored message invitation on LinkedIn, you can remind them of how you met, showcase your written communication skills, and make a good impression. Reach out to fellow students and alumni and your university, as well as recruiters and other industry professionals.

## 2. Use the “recommendations” feature.

Think of recommendations as “living references,” because your personal brand is not just what you say about yourself – it includes what others have to say about you as well. Personally ask some of your connections (especially supervisors from work or your advisor/professors who know you well) to write brief recommendations that specifically commend your skills in certain areas. If you ask someone to write a recommendation for you, offer a recommendation in return, or at least send him or her a thank-you note.

## 3. Be an active user.

Post articles, send congrats and a “thumbs up” message – like and share articles.

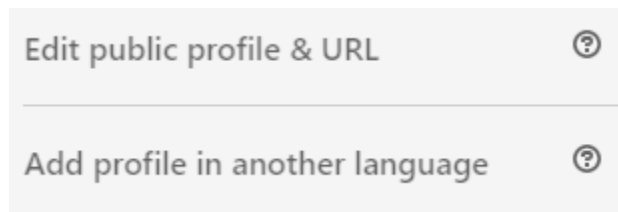
## 4. Follow groups, companies, and industry leaders.

Especially follow those for which you have an interest. This highlights your passion for the company, industry, or related topics.

## 5. Customize your LinkedIn URL.

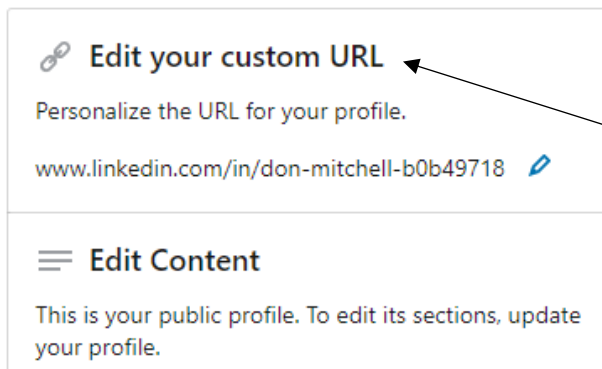
This is especially important if you are going to include this URL on your resume. Customized URLs make your profile easier to find in online search engine results. You can make a customized LinkedIn URL by following the prompts below:

1. Once you have logged into your LinkedIn account, go to your profile page. Select “Me” at the top right, and then select “View Profile”.
2. After your profile has opened, you will see these options listed to the top right of the screen:



Select “Edit public profile & URL.”

3. You will then see this option appear at the top right of the screen:



This is where you can make your URL your own. Make sure it is professional and unique.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Make an appointment with a Career Coach at the Eastin Center for Career Readiness in Business 155, or at the Central Career Services office in the Student Union to review and provide feedback on your LinkedIn profile.

**LinkedIn for Students:** <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>

- **This site includes many resources on job hunting using LinkedIn, building your professional brand on LinkedIn, and how to build an excellent student profile.**

## PROFILE INTRODUCTION

The three most influential elements of your profile are the **Headshot**, **Headline**, and **Summary**. When done effectively, these elements can increase traffic to your LinkedIn page and the likelihood of someone accepting your invitation to connect.

### Headshot

Make sure your photo is professional and of high quality. If you do not have access to a professional photographer, you can have a friend or colleague snap a photo of you with a solid light-colored or natural background behind you. You will want to pay attention to what is in the background of your headshot.

Dress for the job you want. We recommend a suit with a collared shirt and solid tie for men, and a pantsuit or skirt suit for women. Women should wear low heels or flats, light makeup, and have neat nails. Make sure you are looking directly at the camera, ensure good eye contact with the viewer, and do not forget to smile. You want to look formal, yet pleasant and approachable.

### Headline

The headline is a quick introduction to who you are and is viewable in a quick search without clicking on your LinkedIn page. Do not let the system default determine your introduction. Go beyond just saying you are a student at Oklahoma State University or using your current job title.

For example, Marketing Analyst may be your title, but 'quick-thinking marketing pro with an eye for catchy, viral content' will tell a recruiter that he or she should learn more about you. The headline is not comprised of sentences, but rather phrases, because there is a 120-character limit. Describe your skills and competencies in short bursts of keyword-rich text.

The headline can be difficult to write. Take your time and think about these questions:

- Who are your "key" constituencies? (These contacts can help unlock future opportunities.)
- What is the next step for you? (Internship? International study? Research? Job?)
- What do you want to communicate to potential employers? Whom do you want to connect with?
- What words describe you?

Some examples include:

- Oklahoma State University honors student & aspiring PR associate
- Entry-level creative professional – Strong Technical & design skills
- OkState Finance junior | Seeking investment banking internship

## **Summary**

Think of this as your written version of a 30-second elevator pitch. To begin the development of your pitch, you can pick up a [Find Your Why Guide](#) in the Eastin Center or download a copy from the Eastin Center website; select 'For Students/Careers'.

You are highlighting your background for the first time to any connections made on LinkedIn. Use first-person language and complete sentences, and make your summary between 2-3 paragraphs in length. Make sure it is professional and relevant.

Areas to include in your summary:

- Your career goals
- What you are passionate about
- Your professional development
- Keywords for your industry
- Your strengths and academic background
- The geographic location you are targeting in your job search

### *Summary example:*

I am a second year Marketing undergraduate at Oklahoma State University with an interest in marketing, advertising, and social media. I am seeking a summer internship to apply my experience by assisting a company's branding needs through social media outreach, developing marketing plans, digital marketing, and conducting customer research.

## **EDUCATION**

Include your degree, your major(s), minor or concentration, and your graduation year. If you are incorporating coursework, be selective and only highlight courses that set you apart from other candidates and are relevant to your industry. If you complete a unique academic experience, such as international travel or study abroad, include it in this section – and write a description.

## **EXPERIENCE**

Follow the prompts for specifying the company or organization, your title, the dates, and location (city, state). Do not omit a description of your tasks, skills developed, training completed, and accomplishments; integrate keywords relevant to your career field. These can be jobs as well as significant leadership or service positions.

## OTHER AREAS TO INTEGRATE

Be attentive to prompts from LinkedIn:

- Professional organizations
- Leadership positions
- Activities & volunteer service
- Awards, honors, recognitions
- Certifications

## VISUAL ELEMENTS

Consider the message you are sending if you use additional photos or a background image. Do these images enhance your professional presence? Also, consider their quality and relevance to your audience. Are these additional images critical for your LinkedIn presence?

## YOUR NETWORK AND DEGREES OF CONNECTION

LinkedIn labels your network as connections. Your network consists of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree connections (select a connection from the “My Network” dropbox list – the label for the connection status is next to the name). The various degrees you establish with other members will affect how you can connect and network with them.

**1<sup>st</sup>-degree connections:** These connections are made through sending out invitations, or accepting invitations that others send to you. You will see a 1<sup>st</sup>-degree icon next to these members’ names when you type them into your search bar at the top. **You are able to send direct messages to these connections.**

**2<sup>nd</sup>-degree connections:** These types of connections are members that are connected to your 1<sup>st</sup>-degree connections. These people will have a 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree icon next to their name in the search bar. **If you want to reach out to one of your 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree connections, you can simply send them an invitation by clicking the “Connect” button on their page.**

**3<sup>rd</sup>-degree connections:** These connections are connections of your 2<sup>nd</sup>-degree connections. When you search these members in the search bar, they will have a 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree icon next to their names. **If their full first and last name is listed, then you will be able to send them an invitation to connect with you on LinkedIn.**

## PEOPLE/JOB SEARCHING ON LINKEDIN

It is very simple to search for connections, jobs or internship opportunities on LinkedIn.

To **search for people**, you will click the search bar on the top of your screen. A drop box will come down and you will select “People”. Once you have selected that option, you will be taken to another page where you can start to filter out a targeted search. Your filter selections are “Connections”, “Connections of”, “Locations”, “Current Companies”, “Past Companies”,

“Industries”, “Profile Language”, “Nonprofit interests”, and “Schools”. After selecting your options, a list of people that fit your functions will appear on the page and you can begin reaching out to these members and building your LinkedIn network.

If you are using LinkedIn as a tool **to apply for a job or internship**, you will first click for the search bar, and then you click the “Jobs” option in the dropdown box. From here, you can select from the following filters: “Date Posted”, “Job Type”, “Location”, “Company”, “Industry”, “Experience Level”, and “Title”. Once you have selected your preferred filters, a list of opportunities will appear and you can make a selection from the choices listed.

## **HOW TO NETWORK ON LINKEDIN**

Networking on LinkedIn is quite easy. One of the best ways you can find out if a company has any positions open is to ask the source. A great benefit of going to Oklahoma State University is that many top profile companies recruit from this college. This means that we also have alumni that want to provide internships and entry-level positions to students chosen from their alma mater.

**Connecting with alumni through LinkedIn is very simple – just follow these steps:**

- When you are on your home page click the search bar
- When the search bar drops down, click “People”
- There is a drop-down bar that says “People”, “Connections”, “Locations”, and “Current Companies” – to the right of those, click “All Filters”
- The two filters most used to connect with Alumni at a specific company are “Current Companies” and “Schools”
- From there, you can fill out the filter options as specific as you want to narrow your search

As you follow these steps and find alumni that work at the company you are looking into, you can send a private message that introduces yourself. This message can include that you attend OSU, lists you major, and that you are interested in finding out more information about this company and its culture. Through these types of interactions, it will increase the likelihood of successfully gaining a new opportunity.

## **HOW TO MAKE YOUR PROFILE ANONYMOUS**

This feature will prevent other members from seeing other profiles you view. To activate this feature, first, go to the “Me” dropdown button and click “Settings and Privacy”. From there, you will select “Privacy” and then you will click the “How others see your profile and network information” on the left-side tab. Click the “Who can see your connections” section. This is where you choose who will be able to see endorsements you made and the connections you have made. To make this section anonymous, click the drop-down bar and select “Only you.” Once you adjust this feature, you will not be able to see profiles that your connections have viewed. Additionally, it will eliminate the opportunity for members in your network to see the profiles you have viewed. **This feature will be advantageous when viewing a company’s competitor in private.**

## HOW TO APPROACH PROFESSIONALS VIA LINKEDIN

After meeting a professional through a networking event or job interview, it is vital to write a follow-up. This will help you to stand out to future employers or other professionals and give them a sense of importance, which will increase your effectiveness with them. A few appropriate greetings are:

- Hello (Name),
- Dear (Name),
- Greetings,
- Hi there,

And then some appropriate signatures:

- Best regards,
- Sincerely,
- Kind regards,
- With appreciation,

## WHAT DOES NOT BELONG ON LINKEDIN

1. Inappropriate, racy, or risqué photos, images or videos.
2. Criticism of any person, organization, entity, or group
3. Political or religious rants, memes, or articles.
4. A profile photo in an unprofessional setting or showing you looking less than mature and businesslike. Some LinkedIn pictures send the wrong message such as, “you would have to be very risk-tolerant person to hire this individual”.



5. Less-than-professional images like photos from an intern outing or conference outing that involve you or your fellow students and/or colleagues doing anything inappropriate.
6. Spelling usage, and grammatical errors. A way to avoid this becoming a problem is to compose your LinkedIn content in Microsoft Word to see if there are any errors.
7. Less-than-professional comments on other LinkedIn users' posts or status updates. Comments on LinkedIn can range from thoughtful and insightful to crass and inappropriate. **Do not forget people viewing your LinkedIn profile page can see comments that you have made!**



8. Disclosing information. Never disclose private details about yourself or anyone else on your LinkedIn profile.

9. An unprofessional email account. If you are still using an old email address (such as gnarlydude56@yahoo.com), it's time to create a more professional email address. Use your OSU email address or create a new account specifically for business and career-related information.

## **EDITING NOTE:**

After finishing any Word text additions to be inserted into your LinkedIn information, check for grammatical and spelling errors by making sure that these commands are activated. **Turn on or off grammatical and spelling errors filters by going to: FILE/Options/Exceptions for:**

(Make sure the document you are working on is noted in the box after "for".)

**Select the box for:**

- Hide spelling errors in this document only
- Hide grammatical errors in this document only

This command when selected will **turn off** highlight or underlines noting spelling and grammatical errors.

**De-select the boxes to add the highlights and spelling underlines back into the document.**

**Select these boxes to remove all highlights and spelling underlines from your document when you are finished editing the document.**