

7 Steps to Success for Students

Connect the World's Professionals to make them more Productive and Successful.



STEP 1

Upload a professional 'Head and Shoulders' photograph to your profile, look at the camera and smile. Are you shy and you don't like your picture taken? Get over it! This is what you look like to all of us and we still like you! People buy people first and on LinkedIn, they take one look at your photo and decided in that split second whether they wish to connect with you. A poor photo will have them running for the hills. Facebook and Twitter photos belong there and they are probably not good enough, so leave them proudly alone. Selfies are a 'NO, NO' too. Surely one of your friends, class mates, or fellow college students are already taking great professional photos. Search them out or else ask your family network. Go no further on LinkedIn, until you have uploaded a decent photo first.

STEP 2

Preparation is key before you jump IN. First of all collect all your school qualifications, certificates of courses, education history and your latest CV. With these documents in front of you, you can start completing the different sections within LinkedIn. Please don't try and complete things from memory. When was the last time you could rely on your memory? Ensure that you write a headline statement and not your title as 'Student'. How about this for an engineering student? 'With a passion for how things are made in the world, I'm looking forward to taking the plunge in the world of work' (116 characters). Only 120 characters are allowed in the headline field inside LinkedIn.

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STEP 3

Prepare a great summary statement, which is the first thing your future connections will read about you. You have 2000 characters for this section, but keep it brief, to the point and be humble. A great template is Why? How? and What? Answer these three questions when writing your summary. Write in the 1st person, that means you use the word 'I' more frequently and you never use your first name. For example: I am good at windsurfing is better than, Michael is good at windsurfing. Be honest, accurate and authentic. Think about what you would want to learn about yourself? If I interviewed a student I would ask; Why did you decide to go into engineering? How do you see the future for yourself and What would you like to be doing in 5 years time.

STEP 4

Any experience whether voluntary or paid work, counts to being valued by your peers. And by being on LinkedIn everyone there is now a peer, that means they will respect what you've done, why you are here and what your vision is for yourself. Make sure therefore that you include all work experience, apart from doing the cleaning for your Mum! Be accurate on dates and be honest. 67% of the 300 hiring managers and business owners surveyed in December 2013, said that candidates are most likely to lie about their past job titles and responsibilities. Some even lie about their qualifications.

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STEP 5

You need at least 100 connections on LinkedIn, to be taken seriously. Therefore this will be your 1st task to complete. Of course when your fellow students are joining LinkedIn, then this can be a great starter, by connecting to each other. Make sure you only connect to them when they have a decent profile. By refusing to connect to them until they have a decent profile, ensures that they develop an excellent one too. But also connect to friends outside of school, obviously your parents, if they are on LinkedIn and their friends as well. Connect to teachers, professors, business people you have met and whose details you remember. Most of us know at least 100 people. Maybe have a look at your Facebook connections and Twitter and see if they are on LinkedIn. This a vital piece of the puzzle!

STEP 6

Only once you have 100 connections, can you even consider inviting to connect with strangers (people you have never met face to face). So keep going until you have 100 connections. The most important aspect of making connections on LinkedIn, is the need to be courteous and respectful of people's time. Even when you know someone personally, ALWAYS personalise your invite, tell them why you would like to connect to them. NEVER use the standard invite template and NEVER invite anyone via the mobile app. Get in the habit of ALWAYS sending a message with your invite and you can only do that via the web app. ALWAYS acknowledge their acceptance and ALWAYS acknowledge someone who has invited you.

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That means a personalised message goes back EVERY time without fail, either thanking them for accepting your invite or for their request to connect to you. Most people don't bother, so make a start by being different and standing out from the crowd. ALWAYS send those emails via the LinkedIn system.

STEP 7

OK start searching, look for companies you respect and would like to work for, find them and follow them. Look at the people that work for them, you'll find them directly via the company page's, employee network. Read their profiles, what position are they in? Would they be a good person to connect to? Why would they want to connect to you? Maybe an invite can read as follows: "Dear Michael, I am about to graduate (or I have recently graduated) and have just joined LinkedIn. One of my objectives is to grow my network here, giving me greater possibilities for finding my dream job. I would value your connection, but please don't feel obliged to do so. Many thanks and regards, Michael." Including that final 'get-out' sentence, generally will guarantee you a connection acceptance. It means you're not expecting them to accept you and are showing that you understand if they didn't. Don't expect to hear anything back. It's not the British way.

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Bonus Step

You can set-up a search for jobs and for positions inside LinkedIn and with a free account you can set up 3 saved searches, which will alert you daily or weekly. First decide what kind of search you wish to set-up and then save it. You can always delete the search and create a new one if necessary. This means LinkedIn is always looking for your ideal job or ideal contact, who you can then invite to connect to. The more people you connect to the easier it will be to be found and connect to others.