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RIDICULOUSLY AWESOME LINKEDIN KIT

Jenny Foss

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Finally, use your marbles. Nothing in this guide is intended to replace your own brilliance, nor other legal/professional advice, and is meant to inform the

reader. So kick back, relax and get ready to learn how to use LinkedIn to your massive advantage, both in job search and throughout your career.

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Portland, Oregon USA (home of pinot noir, craft beer, and the most stylin' rain boots you ever did see)

“It occurs to me
that our survival
may depend upon
our talking to one
another.”

- Dan Simmons, Author

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LinkedIn: You're either there, or you don't exist

If you're a working professional, you fall into one of two main categories today:

- 1. On LinkedIn**
- 2. Not on LinkedIn**

If you're in the first category? Congratulations! At the very least, you're off to a good start.

If you're in the second one?

As a professional, you hardly exist.

Read that line again, and please don't shoot the messenger. Because it's true-- at least so far as hiring managers, recruiters, and other professionals who could be helpful to your career growth go.

Not existing in the eyes of these crucial people is less than ideal, to say the least.

So, before you even think about browsing the Jobs section of Craigslist for the 75th time this week, if you aren't yet on LinkedIn, drop everything (except eggs, small children, and priceless china) and set up an account.

If you are in that first category, yet still bought this book, I'm guessing you realize that it's a darned good idea to be there. But maybe you're unsure of how to best leverage this amazing networking tool for an active job search or for ongoing career networking.

That's perfectly fine, because guess what?

That's exactly what this book aims to do.

The purpose of this book is to show you how to craft a great LinkedIn profile; teach you ways to harness the power of LinkedIn for networking, research and job search; and showcase some of the most common mistakes people make with LinkedIn—so you can be sure and not make them.

In the Ridiculously Awesome LinkedIn Kit, I'll answer a bunch of the most common questions I hear about how to best use LinkedIn as a job seeker or professional in general.

Then I'll share a sampling of "gold standard" LinkedIn profiles, to inspire you as you create or modify your own.

A very important thing to remember as you proceed:

Throughout this book and throughout the rest of your working life, you must remember this one simple rule. (No, it's not "Call Mom on her birthday." Come on you guys. That's a no-brainer.)

LinkedIn is not a magic genie.

No matter where you are in your career, your job search or your life, you're going to be far better served by approaching LinkedIn (and, frankly, human interaction in general) with these two equations top of mind:

Small, consistent deposits over time = Big dividends

&

Being a generous contributor to others = Generous contributions in return

For sure, magical things can happen, sometimes relatively quickly, when you learn how to use LinkedIn to further your career. But it's not a simple matter of rubbing some magical oil lamp and waiting for the fat blue genie to pop out with three wishes for you.

You have to invest in this. Time, attention, and genuine effort.

Lip service is for suckers.

LinkedIn simply isn't designed to be some drive-by oasis that you use only when sweating bullets about landing a new job. In fact, if you treat it as such, the people in your network will smell it. If they smell it, they will eventually peg you as a "user." Here's a bit of a newsflash:

People don't like helping "users".

With that in mind, from this day forward (both now and after your active job search) you must vow instead to make small daily (or weekly) deposits into LinkedIn. This will help you keep your professional network fresh and further your position as a passionate, engaged thought leader. It will help you stay top of mind (as a helpful, smart person) with the very people who could influence (or directly deliver to you) your next big opportunity.

This book, by the way, is not an advanced user's guide. This is because the majority of people with whom I work are not advanced users.

Instead, The Ridiculously Awesome LinkedIn Kit is written with the assumption that you:

1. Know at least a little about LinkedIn and/or are using it casually.
2. Either have or are about to have a LinkedIn profile.
3. Have at least some basic awareness of how other people are using it.
4. Are willing to embrace this social media platform as a job search / networking tool.
5. Are pretty freaking amazing.

If this sounds like you? Perfecto.

Let's get ready to rumble.

2 Setting up (or rebuilding) a LinkedIn profile the right way

You can't get the party started until you get the house in order. Get on your grubbies and limber up. It's time to build an incredible LinkedIn profile -- one that you're proud to spread around all over the Internet.

Before you begin with the nuts and bolts, let's start with a scenario. I like scenarios. I even like the word "scenario," matter of fact.

ALRIGHT...Here comes that scenario.

You're building a canoe. And this is most certainly not just any old canoe. You're building a canoe that, once complete, you'll use to paddle your way clear across Lake Michigan in search of an amazing, fulfilling, money-is-never-a-worry, people-look-up-to-me, and-my-family-is-nearly-perfect kind of life.

Pretty important stuff, huh?

Of course it is. But before you get too excited there, consider this:

You're going to be navigating through some serious waters in that canoe. Sometimes it will be cold. Sometimes you won't be quite certain if you're heading in the right direction. Sometimes you'll look over the edge and see some really big fish that, you could swear, has fangs. (I grew up in Michigan – I'm telling you, this fish exists.)

Sometimes your freaking arms will hurt. If your trek goes down in July, you're most definitely going to get sunburned.

No matter how the journey unfolds, one thing is for darned sure:

That canoe had best be built to win.

Now take this entire semi-crazy analogy and replace the word "canoe" with "LinkedIn profile". Pretend Lake Michigan is the waters of your job search. I'm not really sure what the fish with fangs is, but stay with me here.

Simply put, this is no time to be out there in some slapped-together cardboard canoe.

If you're in it to win it, you need to craft something seaworthy, amazing and capable of carrying you safely through the uncertain, fanged-fish-filled waters of career transition.

If you're in it to win it, you need a phenomenal LinkedIn profile.

Let's do this right.

How to set up a killer LinkedIn profile

Whether you're building (or rebuilding) you absolutely must do each and every one of these things as you craft your new LinkedIn profile:

1. Position yourself purposefully.

Perhaps the most common mistake I see with LinkedIn profiles is that the core message isn't abundantly clear. In short, I have no idea what specific audience the profile owner is attempting to entice.

As a job seeker, you absolutely must think about your goals for using LinkedIn in the first place. Who are you talking to? What is this audience most likely going to care about? What do you want these specific people to know about you?

Once you think this through, you can much more readily angle your new profile to the specific stuff that's going to matter to decision makers in your target career field.

2. Write an incredible headline.

When you're surfing a news website, which article are you most likely going to read first? I'll tell you which one: The one with the best headline. It's human nature to be captivated by a catchy one-liner. It makes us curious. We want to know more. We click. Same goes for LinkedIn profiles.

When recruiters, hiring managers, and HR people conduct LinkedIn searches for people with skills that align with yours, they're going to key in several search terms. Once they do this, they're going to see a list of people on their computer screens. The list will show a photo, name, and headline for each person. From this list, they're going to decide who they want to know more about. Then they're going to click into that person's profile.

Can you understand why it's going to be incredibly advantageous for you to have the best headline among that bunch? Of course you can:

Best headline = First profile to be read.

The cool news is that it's not that hard to have the best headline. When you set up your profile, LinkedIn automatically defaults your headline to your current title and employer. Thus, my default headline would be:

Jenny Foss

Founder / Job Search Strategist at JobJenny.com

Many people never change this default headline. (Truthfully, plenty of LinkedIn users don't even know they can.) Instead, they leave it just like mine up above there. Zzzzzzzz, right?

Knowing that you can alter the headline can work to your advantage. When you change it to something way better, you grab the eyeballs of the decision makers who are reviewing LinkedIn profiles.

Instead of announcing your ho-hum title and employer, I strongly recommend that you use this real estate to tell the world what you're all about in a succinct, clear manner. You have 120 characters available. Think "elevator pitch."

My customized LinkedIn headline read as follows:

Jenny Foss

Job Search Strategist | Career Consultant | Resume Writer | I help people navigate job search and build great careers

This headline will give you a decent idea of what I'm talking about. For those who want to check out more examples, head on over to Appendix A for a few additional headline ideas.

3. Grab yourself a Vanity URL.

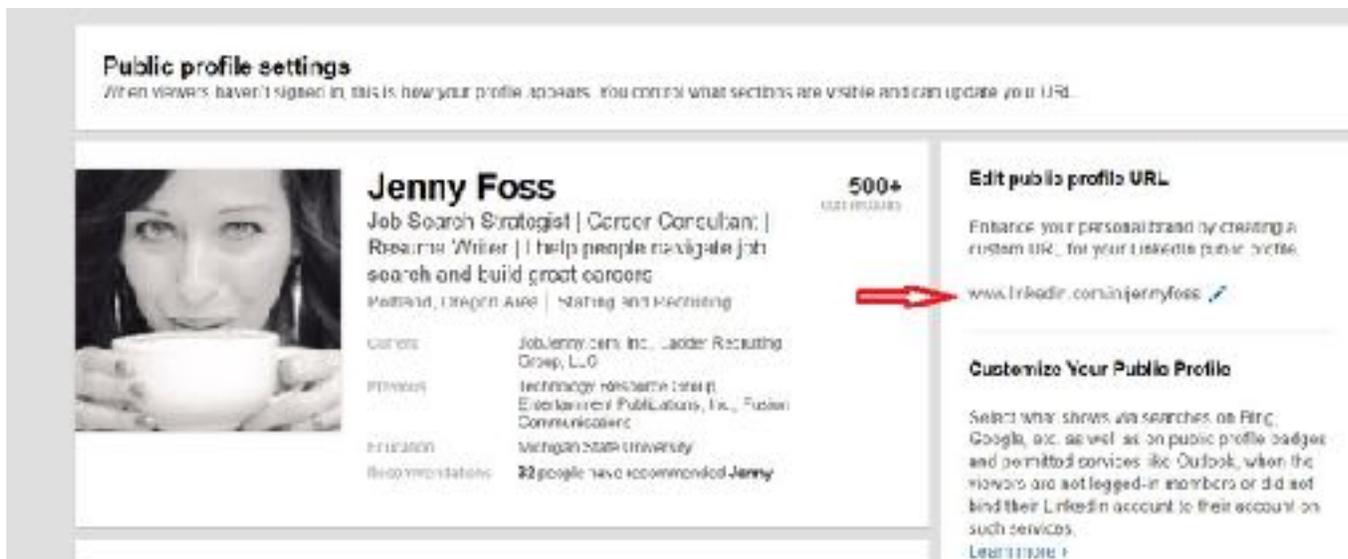
Don't know what this is? Go look on your LinkedIn profile. You'll see a URL that directs people right to your specific LinkedIn profile. If you've never changed it, it will look a lot like this:

www.linkedin.com/pub/jenny-foss/5/5b1/8b2/

This default URL will typically contain a long string of letters and numbers at the end. It looks cumbersome. You most certainly don't want to publish this anaconda of a web address on your resume, email signature line or a job search business card. Instead, while in edit mode, you can click on the "edit" icon next to the URL and create a customized one that doesn't include all of that garbley-goo at the end. It's called a vanity URL.

Here's where you'll find it:





Typically (unless you have a common name) you can snag a URL that ends simply in your firstname/lastname. Mine, for instance is: www.linkedin.com/in/jennyfoss

If your name happens to be John Smith or Susan Jones, and someone has already claimed your URL, just pick something close or something that incorporates your field of expertise. For instance, if you're an accountant, you might go with:

www.linkedin.com/in/johnsmithCPA/

Any which way, create a vanity URL for yourself. It's much cleaner and having one makes you look like you know what the heck you're doing on LinkedIn.

4. Have a photo. It's non-negotiable.

LinkedIn is a social media tool that, by design, invites two-way conversation. It's much easier to engage in a two-way conversation with someone when you can envision what the person with whom you're talking looks like. So rule number one, you have to have a photo. Have one not only for this reason but

also because, if you don't? People will wonder what you're trying to hide by not having a photo posted.

I often chat with people who are very worked up about what the photo should and shouldn't look like. I tell these people this: There are no hard and fast rules. Except this one: Use your best judgment. This isn't Tinder, Facebook or Instagram. It's LinkedIn. I recommend that you go with something that's clear, friendly, invites conversation, and aligns with your target industry.

It doesn't have to be some stuffy studio headshot, at all. Rather, it should show the viewer that you're approachable and appropriately professional. By this, I mean you should dress to a level of professionalism that will be relatable to your target audience. That said, if you're gunning for work in some highly conservative corporate bank? A suit and a studio shot may well be the answer. If you've got your sights set on a higher personality organization, or a more free-wheeling startup? Gauge what this audience would likely consider "professional attire" and fall in line with that.

You're going to get hired for your next job based on three criteria:

- A. Can he / she do the job?
- B. Do we like him / her?
- C. Do we think he / she will fit in around here?

If your photo makes it instantly clear that you're likable and would probably fit in at your target employer? You've already got a leg up.

5. Write great, engaging, mistake-free copy.

You must approach your LinkedIn profile development with marketing at the forefront of your mind. As in, you are not writing an autobiography, nor a list of everything you've ever done in your adult life.

I'm sure there's much to be proud of, but if you're using LinkedIn for job search, you absolutely must angle your brand message (the brand of Y-O-U) to the stuff your target audience is going to care about.

Your LinkedIn profile is a marketing document.

Go back and read that sentence 10 more times. Then craft accordingly.

You're going to want to showcase the things you're best known for, particularly proud of and can absolutely nail when you walk through the doors of your next employer. If you're transitioning into an entrepreneurship, then you need to make it instantly clear to the reviewer why she should check out your business and (more importantly) buy from you.

So before you begin writing, think about your career history. Pull out the information that you feel will be most relevant to the specific audience you're targeting. If you're trying to become a client relations manager, for instance, consider the instances in every job you've held that demonstrate your strengths in maintaining exceptional relationships with your internal and external customers.

If you're gunning to be a corporate trainer, highlight those moments in which you've educated, mentored or guided others, even if these were not under an official umbrella of "corporate trainer."

If you're not sure what your target audience is going to care most about, study a few job descriptions that align with your interests. Line them up side-

by-side and compare them. What are the common deliverables and priorities across all of these job descriptions?

Chances are, these are the very things your audience cares most about. You want to be sure and demonstrate your excellence in these specific categories, right there on your LinkedIn profile.

Considering that this is a marketing document, you also want to be sure and write your profile in an engaging style. Again, LinkedIn is a platform designed for interaction. It's absolutely OK to write your summary and profile in a conversational manner. Certainly, it must be professional, grammatically correct and typo-free, but it shouldn't be boring, stuffy or look like everyone else's LinkedIn profile. And for the love of guacamole, don't write it in the third person.

Your goal, again, is to entice the audience. Not bore their pants off.

6. Populate your top 10 skills thoughtfully.

The Skills & Endorsements section of your LinkedIn profile should not (and I mean, not ever) be left blank. This section is a veritable treasure chest of opportunity in terms of loading your profile with terms and phrases that a recruiter will most likely use to find someone with your specific background.

Ever wonder why that one co-worker (who does the exact same job as you) is always getting calls from recruiters who found him on LinkedIn? Chances are, your co-worker isn't better at that thing you guys both do. He's just done a better job at populating his profile with skills that are common to your industry and relevant keywords.

Think about it: Recruiters find you by keying in terms. Since you're an expert in your field (or you have a good idea of the skills most valued in the field

you're attempting to transition into), you probably already have an idea of the most critical terms, right? Assuming you've got some background in these very things, list them out in the Skills & Endorsements section.

You're allowed to list up to 50 terms. If you list only 5-10, you're limiting the possibility that a recruiter or hiring manager will find your profile as they search. Consider the various terms a recruiter might use for the same skills. An example: "project management," "project coordination" and "program management." If you know 'em all, list 'em all.

You will note that the three skills for which you have the most endorsements will appear as "Featured Skills" on your profile. If you want a different three to appear, you can arrange your skills (while in Edit mode) so that the ones you feel are most critical to your trade will appear at the top of your list. Once you start getting endorsements for certain skills, they will move toward the the top of the list. But you can always go in and reorganize them, if you wish to bring certain skills into the "Featured Skills" section, or appear higher on the list.

If you're unsure which terms to use for your targeted field, just take a sampling of job descriptions that you find online (for jobs that appeal to you). Identify the most common keywords across these descriptions and, be sure and list them in your skills section.

7. Enter the company name correctly.

If you're not yet "in the know" on how some people get those fancy schmancy corporate logos to show up next to each employer within their Experience sections, here's the magical secret:

If your current or past employers already have company profiles / pages on LinkedIn, so long as you enter the name of your employer in the exact same

way that the company has it listed on their company page (and they've added a logo on their company page), the logo will appear automatically. In other words, LinkedIn will pull from the company's LinkedIn page and populate that logo onto your profile. LinkedIn tries to prompt you to choose the registered company name, you'll get a choice from a drop-down menu as you type it in. Always be sure and choose that option if you want the corporate logo to appear.

You cannot affix a logo using an outside file, or if the company doesn't have a LinkedIn company page.

8. Seek out recommendations.

How do we as humans make purchase decisions? In large part, we make them based on social proof. What do others say about this or that product? Does someone that we admire and trust rave on and on about it?

Think for a moment about Yelp.com. How many times have you gone right over to Yelp before trying out a restaurant, a new hair stylist or a resume writer? My guess is plenty. You do this because you want to see what others are saying. You're going to base your decisions, at least in part, on their reviews.

The same exact thing goes on with hiring decisions. The only difference is that the "consumer" in this case is a hiring manager, recruiter or HR person. LinkedIn recommendations provide you with the perfect opportunity to dish up third party endorsements (or social proof) of your talents to someone trying to make a purchase decision.

Don't squander it.

Certainly, you will want to be thoughtful about who you approach for a recommendation, and how you position the actual request. Ideally, you want to approach people who know your work well and can speak intelligently to capabilities that will matter to your future employer.

When you ask for this recommendation, you can approach them right through LinkedIn.

Here's how you do it:

1. Go to the profile of the person from whom you want the recommendation
2. Hover over the three horizontal dots next to that person's picture
3. When the dropdown menu appears, select "Request a Recommendation"

Once into the request screens, you'll have opportunity to send either a generic recommendation, or a customized request. LinkedIn will default you to this lame and impersonal stock request that reads:

"Hi Karen, can you write me a recommendation?"

Don't use this.

It's lazy, unoriginal and fails to specify to the receiver what, exactly, you'd like from them and how they can best help. I'd recommend something more along the lines of:

"Hi Karen, I hope everything's going well for you in Texas! I'm writing to ask if you'd be willing to write a LinkedIn recommendation for me that highlights my crisis communications skills. Ideally, I'd love for you to outline the experience you had with me through the Def Con 5 initiative last year in Tulsa. I'm working hard to make a career transition into a senior communications role, and most of the companies I'm targeting put a strong focus on crisis communications."

You get the point. Be sure and be very gracious and thankful in this note and, at the end, suggest that you'd be glad to return the favor.

Reciprocity is a huge, wonderful thing.

Also, semi-sneaky but totally-happens-all-the-time alternate suggestion:

If you know the person incredibly well, you may even wish to offer to draft something for them to review and, if they agree with your assessment, post on your behalf. Again, you need to know that contact well. Otherwise, they may raise an eyebrow at this suggestion.

If you're terrified about approaching a certain person, one good way to encourage a recommendation is to recommend her first. Make it specific, genuine, and terrific. With luck, she'll turn around and recommend you right back.

Finally, a note about timing:

As a recruiter, I can always tell when someone on LinkedIn has raced out and asked 15 people at once to give them a recommendation, because they are date stamped when they come in. Regardless of the circumstances, you really want to make your recommendations look like they're coming in organically rather than as a result of your strong-arming your buddies. Thus, space out your requests a little bit. Rome does not have to be built in a single day here.

9. Enjoy / encourage endorsements, but realize people love / hate them.

Ahhhh, endorsements.

So pretty, so impressive when you have dozens of them splayed out on your page, amiright?

For now, I am right.

LinkedIn endorsements have been called both “recommendations lite” and also “the professional version of a Facebook ‘like.’”

It’s quick and easy for anyone to give and receive endorsements. LinkedIn makes no small effort to encourage you to endorse every Tom, Dick and Sally in your network.

(If it drives traffic? LinkedIn is happy.)

However, LinkedIn endorsements are not without criticism, including criticism from recruiters and hiring managers who refuse to put much stock into them because they realize that it’s simply too easy (and “no brainer”) to vouch for people with just a simple little click.

Yet, people are still paying attention to the things for which you’re endorsed.

Having more endorsements for specific skills can help your profile rank higher than other profiles when a recruiter conducts a search for the very skills that define you as a professional (e.g. “cost accounting” or “materials management” or “event planning”).

Given this, you don’t want to ignore the entire topic of endorsements. But you’ll probably serve yourself well to care more about recommendations. Also, know that you don’t have to accept all of the endorsements people offer up, especially if they don’t reflect skills for which you want to be known.

Understand that your skills are going to appear visually in order of “most endorsed” to “least endorsed.” If people are vouching for skills you don’t really care about? Those skills will appear high on the list. You don’t want this. You can delete them.

You should also be thoughtful in the way you endorse others, because they may well reciprocate and endorse you right back. If the person you’ve endorsed feels you’ve selected their skills with care, she will likely do the same in return.

3

Building and leveraging a powerful network

Just look at that fabulous new (or renovated) LinkedIn profile you've crafted. Feels kinda like when you walk out of the salon knowing you just scored a really stinking good haircut, doesn't it?

You, friend, look mahhhhhvelous.

Sitting around looking good isn't enough on LinkedIn. That'd be like getting all dressed up for some swanky cocktail party, cooking up a Stouffer's mac and cheese, and watching Netflix (alone) for the night.

You've got to put that amazingness out there. You've got to step out there and shine.

It's time to build a LinkedIn network!

The best way to start stepping out is by increasing your number of connections. Once the profile is done, start connecting with people. Then connect with some more.

Then some more.

This is absolutely no time to be shy. Thoughtful and strategic, for sure. Shy?

No way.

I have probably had at least 150 conversations with people that go something like this:

“But he doesn’t know me that well. I just don’t want to appear too forward.”

or

“What happens if I invite too many people into my network?”

or

“I don’t know anyone. I don’t have anyone to network with.”

In these conversations, I invariably will answer:

A) There’s a difference between being proactive and fearless, and being “too forward.” We’ll talk about the difference and, so long as you stay on the “proactive and fearless” side of the line, you’re golden.

B) I am not aware of any arbitrary number that represents “too many” LinkedIn contacts. There is, literally, no magic number. You have to decide what works best for you, but generally speaking, more is better than hardly any. I’ll cover this in a bit.

C) Baloney. Puhlease.

You know people. I know you do. So, go out there and link up with them. And, if you can get yourself to 501 contacts? You'll get that fancy "500+ connections" designation that you see on other people's profiles. And now we're talking next level awesome.

Got 'er done?

Assuming yes, high-five yourself! Do one of those peacock strut moves around the house. Fist bump your husband or wife or mom, or the mailman if they're around. Then carry on.

Now it's time to think about how you're going to leverage your network for your job search and continue to grow it.

This is no time to be scared. It's time to dive right on in.

You've got people now, but who should you contact first? What's the best approach? What the heck are you supposed to ask them? The ways in which you can approach and interact with people on LinkedIn are nearly endless, but here are a few that will be especially useful for you:

1. Find a first- or second-degree connection who's working at a company of interest.

Using the search box, you can easily locate both your first- and second-degree connections to people working at companies of interest. If they're first-degree connections, this one's cake: You just go right to these contacts and ask if they'd be willing to provide information about their company. Or introduce you to the hiring manager (or a recruiter, or someone in HR).

If you do that same search and discover you don't have first degree connections, but have second-degree connections (as in, someone in your LinkedIn network knows someone at a company you're eyeing), it's also quite doable. Go to your first-degree contact and ask him if he'd be willing to introduce you to that person / contact.

Something like, "Hi Bill - I just noticed that you're connected with Ed Wiseman over at Pink Industrial. I'd love to work for Pink. Would you be willing to introduce me to Ed so that I can ask him a few quick questions about his experience there?"

Boom.

Assuming your connection follows through with the intro, you could have a pretty quick foot-in-the-door at an organization of interest. I've used this tactic many times, and it works brilliantly.

2. Ask leaders in your industry a quick question, and then endear yourself to them.

LinkedIn has given every one of us something wonderful: an ability to access leaders within our chosen industries, instantly. Never before has it been more doable to fire up a conversation with virtually anyone within any organization, including that firm's top leaders.

So many people either get super intimidated when it comes to reaching out to key players. Or they do it in a way that is so forward and invasive that the contact blows them off. So how do you find the happy medium?

Simple answer: You make it easy for these contacts to say yes to you. Easy as that.

You have to make it their pleasure, or at the very least low-effort and non-annoying for them to respond to whatever it is you're requesting.

How do you do this? Start small. I always approach big dogs by first explaining who I am, and then asking if I may ask them 1-2 quick questions about themselves or their experience. You can come up with whatever questions you see fit, but I strongly recommend making the first ones softballs, and make them specifically relevant to that contact's job or background. People love talking about themselves.

You'll see an example in "The approach" section on the next page.

3. Join Groups and get to know the key players within them.

By getting to know members within Groups that are specific to your industry, geography or both, you not only have opportunity to continue growing your LinkedIn network, you also have opportunity to position yourself as a thought leader in your particular sector or region. Again, you don't want to dive-bomb these people before building a bit of rapport. But if you can begin to become a bit of a "regular" within a few key Groups, you most certainly can expand your LinkedIn network by becoming an intelligent, helpful resource to fellow members, and then inviting them to connect with you directly.

Don't worry if you're not yet crystal clear on Groups – That's what Chapter 4 is all about.

The approach.

With "make it easy for them to say yes" at the forefront of our minds, let's talk about how, specifically, you might approach someone with whom you'd like to network on LinkedIn.

Here's just one example:

Say I'm interested in a marketing manager role with XYZ Company and, upon searching for contacts who work for XYZ, I see that William Jackson is a marketing director there. Now here's a guy who is likely going to be influential to this particular search, right? However, I find that we are not directly connected, nor do I have a 2nd degree connection to William.

I can approach in a William few different ways:

1. Send him a detailed connection request.
2. Send him an InMail through LinkedIn (if I have a Premium membership).
3. See if we share a Group affiliation and, if so, contact him directly through our shared Group membership. I'll cover this in more detail in Chapter 4.
4. Google him and attempt to find a direct email address.

Whichever method I choose, here's what I might say as I approach:

Hi William, I'm Jenny Foss. I'm a marketing leader with experience in digital content strategy and ecommerce. I'm also one of your customers. May I ask you a very quick question about your experience working on XYZ's marketing team?

Congrats, by the way, on the great work you've been doing over on Facebook. XYZ is one of the most engaging company pages I follow. Thanks, William!

Best, Jenny Foss

Pay attention to how, in this first note, I didn't ask William for a job. I didn't ask him to walk my resume over to the decision maker. I didn't ask him to take time out of his busy schedule to meet me for lunch or coffee ... yet. I asked him for something very simple. I made it really, super easy for him to say yes.

(Incidentally, I also complimented William, which will always get you places so long as it's genuine and specific.)

I did not ambush him.

Ambushing anyone, especially busy organizational leaders, won't propel the conversation forward. Rather, it's going to net you very little response, which is the exact opposite of what you're gunning for through this exercise.

I made it easy. Assuming William gives me the green light to ask my simple question, I can then use the opportunity to build some rapport. My goal with this is to not only grab a quick bit of information that may be helpful to my search, but to encourage a back and forth exchange that, if all goes well, will give me clearance to ask for the bigger favor. But I'm not going to make that bigger request until William feels like he's had the chance to get to know me a bit.

Just as you'd never walk into a bar and ask a stranger to marry you, you cannot dive-bomb corporate leaders on LinkedIn and ask them for the moon. Start small. Endear yourself first.

Staying top of mind.

Another important consideration as your roll out your LinkedIn strategy:

The best professional networkers are those who stay top of mind among their people. At all times, not just when they're looking for a new job or business opportunity.

Why so important?

Consider this: What happens if someone in your network knows of a job opportunity that might be perfect for you? If you've managed to stay on that person's radar, guess what? They're probably going to think of you and, perhaps, let you know about the position.

Likewise, if you stay in touch with those in your network throughout your career, you look like far less of a sketchball if and when you need to reach out for help during a job search or career transition. (*"Oh, great. Here she comes again. The gal who only reaches out every five years, when she needs a favor."*)

One very simple way to stay top of mind with the people to whom you're connected is to share updates on a at least a semi-regular basis. This is almost exactly like Facebook, but you're not going to post the same types of updates on LinkedIn. Instead, you're going to post updates on interesting things you've learned about your industry, articles you think are worthwhile, and news of conferences you're attending, etc.

There are no hard and fast rules on what you should post in your update section, or how often you need to do it¹. But you really should consider posting something worthwhile on a reasonably regular basis. Status updates, which appear directly in the news feeds of your connections, show that you're engaged, that you're thinking, that you are ALIVE.

¹Use a bit of care with frequency if you've never used your status update feature before, especially if you're a covert job seeker. You don't want to tip off current colleagues, clients (or your boss) that you're looking. A sudden influx in LinkedIn performance could trigger an eyebrow raise.

4

Groups: Harnessing their power

Groups. You know about them? Are you using them? Why not?

If you're not using (or participating) in LinkedIn Groups, you're cheating yourself out of one of LinkedIn's great features.

Groups are among the more valuable, yet rather underutilized features of LinkedIn. Many people have absolutely no idea why they should join LinkedIn Groups, or how to proceed once they do so.

Let's walk you through this. I'll take it from the top:

How many Groups can I join?

Up to 100. I'm not saying you'll want or need to jump into this many, but LinkedIn allows members the ability to join up to 100, so you've got all kinds of options.

Why join Groups?

Two common questions I hear all of the time from our LinkedIn makeover clients are:

What's the point of Groups? Why join a Group?

The primary purpose of LinkedIn Groups is exactly the same as that of just about any other group on the planet: to unite like-minded people. To get a bunch of people who share common bonds or interests together, and then create opportunity for them to communicate.

For heaven's sake, gather. Bond. Then communicate.

You should absolutely select and join at least a handful of LinkedIn Groups so that you may engage with (and possibly gain from) people who share common interests, vocations or industry expertise.

What do I do once I'm in a Group?

1. Engage in conversations within the Group discussions.

Once you're in, don't be a wallflower. One of the easiest ways to get noticed by fellow Group members (and get to know people who may be beneficial to your job search) is to jump into the discussions. Scroll through and find a post of interest then weigh in on the topic. Answer a question. Or share some other thoughtful commentary.

2. Post your own questions or share content in the discussions.

You can also start discussion threads. Post your own questions specific to your industry or a particular company. Or share an article that's relevant to the Group's members.

While #1 and #2 won't necessarily generate instant results, you can bet that frequent interaction will put you on the radar of the Group members. Depending on the privacy / alert settings of your connections, an added bonus is that each time you make a comment within or post a new discussion, the people in your own network will see (in their news feeds) that you've posted something in that group as well. This helps you stay top of mind with your own people, and gives them a constant reminder that you're someone who is passionate, engaged, and intelligent in your specific area of expertise.

If you're able to be a non-cloaked job seeker (as in, you're not secretly looking for a job and working hard to ensure that your co-workers don't suspect you're on the prowl), you may also ask specific questions (or post a discussion thread) that makes clear your interest in finding a new opportunity. Again, don't do this if you're trying to fly under the radar. Realize that you're posting on a public forum, and that your people may see this.

3. Check out jobs specific to your areas of interest and expertise.

Within each Group, you will find a "Jobs" tab. This is where recruiters, hiring managers and HR people post job openings within their organizations (or their clients' firms). It's a wonderful way for those doing the hiring to target a very specific group of professionals. They post within relevant niche Groups.

If you're an active job seeker, you should absolutely keep an eye on the jobs being posted within the Groups most relevant to your area(s) of expertise and your specific geography.

4. Contact (and connect with) fellow Group members.

If you've picked your Groups thoughtfully, these are your people. By all means, start chatting it up with the participants you feel will be particularly interesting or useful.

Most people, when approached in a genuine, non-ambushy way, will respond favorably to someone with whom they share a Group connection. The coolest part is that you can email your fellow group members directly through LinkedIn, via your mutual affiliation. You don't have to send them an invite to join your network, or an InMail.

Keep this little ditty in mind if you ever find someone on LinkedIn that you're dying to meet, yet don't know the best way to approach.

Here's a useful trick:

Look at the Groups that your person of interest belongs to. Join one of the same ones. Voila. You have an instant way to chat directly with her. I often approach with something like:

"Hi Susan, You and I are both members of the Portland Entrepreneurs Group here on LinkedIn. I am so impressed by the way you are marketing your services via Twitter. Well done! May I ask you a quick question about your social media strategy?"

Of course, you'd frame that note in a way that is specific to your interests / needs, but you see the point. Mention that you share the

common bond, compliment her on something, and then ask if you can may ask a quick question or two.

Then, without a doubt, as you get to know the people in your Groups, invite them to connect directly.

5. Consider starting (and moderating) your own Group.

Another brilliant way to establish / affirm your expertise and thought leadership within a particular sector is to start your own Group and then serve as its moderator. This tactic has many advantages, but it isn't for everyone. In short, it's not for the already overcommitted among us.

If you are going to dive into it, you've got to be committed to building and overseeing a community of like-minded people. If you've got the chops to go for it, the potential benefits are many. "Owning" a group helps position you as a thought leader. It also helps you build a network of people with similar expertise and interests – people who may be incredibly useful to your job search or overall career.

As the Group moderator, you will need to invite people to participate, manage the content that is being posted by members, and encourage thoughtful dialogue.

What are the "right" Groups?

There are a ton of brilliant, thoughtful, well-moderated Groups on LinkedIn. And there are some that genuinely suck. You'll realize pretty quickly which ones are which. Often, when a Group is poorly moderated (or ignored entirely by the moderator), you'll see a bunch of spam and ridiculousness going on in the discussion threads. But when the moderator's doing a good

job, and the members are engaged as a community, the Group can be a real asset to your search and your career.

Here are some Groups that will likely serve you well. Play around with some variables in the search box and you'll find some specific to your expertise, geographic region and interests:

Groups directly related to your industry

This one's a no-brainer. Go out and find a Group or two whose members are in the same industry as you, e.g. the Software as a Service (SaaS) Group, Restaurant & Hospitality Experts, and Packaging Industry Professionals. Now talk amongst each other.

Groups related to your job function

If you know you want to be a project manager or marketing director, yet are not certain on which industry you wish to serve, definitely join a couple of Groups more specific to job function / title, e.g. the Project Manager Network or the Marketing Director Support Group.

Groups specific to your geography

Joining Groups specific to your own geography (or the one you'd like to live in) can be very helpful, especially if you find ones that are both geography specific **and** industry specific. Definitely pay attention to the Jobs tab within each of these groups, as you will see new postings regularly, and they will be jobs available in that region. A few examples: Greater Dallas HR Professionals, Chicago Area Accounting & Finance Pros, and IT Jobs in Detroit Metro Area.

College alumni Groups

No matter if you went to a college of 400 or 40,000 students, one thing is for certain: College alumni take care of their own. I've seen it time and time again, and I've enjoyed the rewards of participating in Groups related to my own university. (Gooooo, Spartans!) I don't care if you were the class president or the wallflower that holed up in your dorm for four years straight, people appreciate the shared university connection, and will often go out of their way to help fellow alumni. Join the Groups specific to your college or colleges, and then participate.

Company (former employer) specific Groups

This is especially relevant if you've worked for a mid- to large-sized company in the past. Alumni from past employers often band together in their own LinkedIn Groups, specific to that organization. Just like with college alumni groups, former colleagues (and those who preceded or succeeded you) are often incredibly helpful and supportive.

Through these Groups, you can also often find people that would provide useful LinkedIn Recommendations.

Job search / career related Groups

Whether you're a covert or "out in the open" job seeker, Groups that are specific to job search and careers can be beneficial through your career transition (and beyond). Try and find ones that are specific to job search in your region (or wherever you want to move), so you can keep tabs on job opportunities in your area. You can also find career coaches and job search consultants near you, if you need additional help.

Just be advised, if you're a covert job seeker, you will want to hide the logo of that Group, so that it doesn't appear on your profile page. You can choose this as an option when you join the Group. (Nothing says "Hey everyone, I'm looking for a new job!" quite like a JOB HUNT GROUP logo on your profile.)

Hobby Groups

Whether you're a runner, a knitter, a coin collector or a beer brewer, you'll find hobby-specific Groups on LinkedIn as well. While your participation may not be of direct, immediate benefit to your job search (yet, it could...), you will certainly find like-minded people and, perhaps, influential people working in your field of interest. Any which way, you'll probably find some cool new contacts for your network in hobby Groups.

Final thoughts

When you commit yourself to regularly participating in / contributing thoughtfully to a short list of Groups within LinkedIn, you can build both your personal brand and your LinkedIn network. It's a brilliant, yet highly underutilized strategy that works. It's also a strategy that should continue on well beyond your job search, and throughout the rest of your career.

5

Using LinkedIn to research people and companies

If you're 40 or older, you likely remember using those hefty, scholarly looking encyclopedias when conducting very important research, yes? Perhaps you made a regular pilgrimage to the local library to dig up the information you needed for some research paper about blue whales or the Great Salt Lake or, if you were insanely lucky like me, you HAD AN ENTIRE SET right in your own bedroom. (Is there any wonder how I grew up and became a giant book nerd?)

Today, we can all thank our lucky stars that we have this nifty thing called the Internet that makes research like, oh, about 1,000,000% easier than it was back in the days of yore.

We can also be grateful that, as professionals, we have this thing called LinkedIn. It's one of the best places you can go to research people, companies and industries, either as you make decisions about a career transition, or as you prepare for a job interview.

How can you, as a job seeker, use LinkedIn to your best advantage for research? Read on, amigo. Read on.

Researching People.

Have your eye on a particular company? Well then, it's time to start figuring out who the players are around the joint.

It's easy.

Simply key in the company name in your search box on LinkedIn. Once complete, you can drill down further using a variety of filtering options, including location, market sector / industry, keywords, etc.

You can also go right to a company's LinkedIn page if they have one and see how/if you're connected to any of the organization's current employees. Not to mention, companies often share information on their LinkedIn Company page that you may not find elsewhere.

Why is it so important to find these people? How is researching people going to directly benefit your job search or career in general?

Here are just a few examples of how this information can – and will – be useful:

1. You can review the career paths / backgrounds of would-be peers.

This is a great way to determine what skill set your prospective employer values in their hiring. Find people at that same company working in same or similar roles, and (assuming they don't have their privacy settings on lock-down) take a gander at their career paths.

Where did they work? What were their former titles? What do their core strengths seem to be?

Certainly, companies sometimes hire people of varying backgrounds, but if you find more than one or two people working in the same role at the company you're eyeing, you may be able to figure out what patterns they look for in their talent.

2. Once you've studied them, you can introduce yourself.

The magic of LinkedIn is that it's a tool designed for interaction (They don't call it a social media platform for nothing, folks.) So if and when you find someone who seems to be interesting and knowledgeable about the team or department you'd like to join, by all means, endear yourself to him. That guy could very well be golden when it comes to knowing "the inside scoop" on the department, and help you determine what the hiring manager really needs or desires. I've covered how to approach strangers on LinkedIn already, so this should be a very doable proposition for you.

3. You can study the people with whom you're interviewing.

We are officially at the point in history in which, if you walk into an interview and know nothing about your interviewer's background, you look like a lazy slouch. Yes, you do. This is, in large part, because LinkedIn makes it so we no longer have to scour the universe for hints and details about our interviewers. So, assuming that person has a LinkedIn profile (or any digital footprint), you cannot walk in not knowing a thing about your interviewer.

Cannot. I mean never.

This research is not only mandatory today, it can be also tremendously useful in helping you find things to talk about in the interview. Maybe you two are

both into fishing. Maybe you both went to the same university. Maybe you both worked in Topeka, Kansas in 2003. SOMETHING. If you can find a common bond or a conversation starter, boom. You're off to the races.

4. You can **get cues on the company's culture** and dress code.

This one's a bit more subtle, but can certainly be helpful. Take a peek at some of the profile pictures of those who work at your company of interest. Are they all in suits? T-shirts? Do they look friendly and smiley, or staunch and all-business?

If you're wondering what the heck to wear, or what they're like personality wise, the photos of your potential colleagues can help you piece together a hypothesis.

(Incidentally, you can also sometimes find candid photo galleries of that company's holiday parties, meetings or conferences via a Google search – this can be helpful, too.)

5. You can see if you have first- or second-degree connections.

This one is just a no-brainer. It's also covered elsewhere in this book. Do you have any first- or second-degree connections with people who either currently (or used to) work for that same company? By all means, fire up a conversation with these cats first.

Researching Companies.

Certainly not every company has a LinkedIn company page. And, some that do really don't do much with their pages. But many companies use LinkedIn as a vital tool for marketing themselves to both prospective clients and

potential new hires. The information on these pages can be incredibly useful to job seekers.

Assuming the company of interest has a LinkedIn page, your first order of business is going to be to follow that company.

Hilariously, LinkedIn allows you to follow up to 1,000 companies, so you have nearly endless bandwidth on this feature.

By following the companies you'd like to work for, you can stay updated on latest happenings within that firm, latest hires and – more importantly – latest job postings. Many companies post their open positions on their LinkedIn company pages right when the opportunity is “fresh,” and sometimes before they advertise it anywhere else.

It's very easy to find companies and then begin following them. Here's what you do:

- Key the company name into the search box.
- Click the blue “Follow” button next to the company name.

You can also see if you have any direct (or second-degree) connections to people who are either current employees, or have worked there in the past.

In addition, when you're on a Company page, you'll see a “Similar Companies” section. Chances are, the companies listed here are among that organization's biggest competitors. You can walk into the interview armed with this knowledge. You may also wish to check out the competition for potential employment.

Not sure which companies to target?

If this all sounds fine and well, but you're sitting there thinking, "Hmmm...I totally don't even know which companies I want to target," then here's a trick that that will help you narrow in on companies in your area (or geography of interest) that hire people with the similar skills as you.

Key in a few specific words (in the Keywords box) that represent your expertise and/or the job you'd like to land. (e.g. "marketing," "branding," "nonprofit," and "social")

Next, scroll down to the Locations box and enter either your current city, or one near where you would like to live.

When the search results come up, you will see a list of people with similar skills and expertise, living in your area (or the area you're targeting). Take a look at where these people work. See any companies that look interesting? If so, you can begin to develop a target list of potential employers. Better yet, you can see right in front of you people with whom you might want to connect. They're working at the same companies you may like to join.

Pretty tricky, huh?

6

Stupidest things people do (or don't do) on LinkedIn

It's a magical tool, that LinkedIn. Hopefully, you're beginning to realize this. But even the most magical things can turn into the kiss of death when used improperly. As with any social media platform, you'll find all kinds of ridiculousness and faux pas going on among LinkedIn members. Your goal is to not be one of these examples.

Learn from the dumb things others do, so you can be the shining star. The blunders I see most often fall into two main categories: setup blunders and usage blunders. Let's dive right in.

Setup blunders.

Since we've already covered how to set up a dazzling profile, you're probably going to sashay right on through these as you set up or revamp your LinkedIn profile, but just to be sure, here are the doozies that you need to avoid:

1. Failing to add a summary section.

When you bypass the summary section on LinkedIn and, instead, launch right into your experience, you kill your opportunity to share your brand story, or your value proposition, to your professional audience.

In other words, you leave it in the reviewers' hands to figure out who you are, what you're great at, and why they should care about you. Just as you need a summary section on your resume, you need one on LinkedIn.

2. Sounding like a pretentious orator in that summary.

Again, the summary section is your primo opportunity to showcase the most important stuff about you, with your target audience in mind. Give 'em a chance to get to know you. So what do you think the first impression is going to be if you craft your summary in the form of a long, pompous speech? Or worse, if you craft it in the third person?

They're going to think you're pretentious. And it's going to be hard for that reviewer to get a feel for your personality and style. (Unless, of course, your style is pretentious and uptight.) My best advice? Be you. Keep the brand message in your summary in line with all of your other professional marketing materials (e.g. resume, cover letter, portfolio, etc.), but realize that LinkedIn is a platform designed for human interaction and engagement.

3. Forgetting to customize your headline.

We've covered this, but it bears repeating: Don't keep the LinkedIn default headline, which will be your current title, at your current employer. Use this real estate (all 120 characters of it) to tell your professional network who you are and what makes you a standout. And use keywords specific to your field.

Headlines rank high in terms of search engine optimization (SEO) with LinkedIn, so you want to make it rich in keywords.

Remember that, when conducting a search on LinkedIn, recruiters are going to see a list of potential candidates – their names, photos and headlines – when they enter in search terms. From that list, they’re going to click into those profiles that seem most interesting at a glance. Trust me on this. The one with the best headline (and a compelling photo) wins. It’s human nature.

4. Joining Groups that confuse others, or raise eyebrows.

Your goal is to find, join and participate in Groups that align with your goals, interests and expertise. You want to find like-minded people and establish yourself as a valued member of the community. A side benefit – and it’s no small one – is that once you join a Group, the logo is displayed on your profile (unless you specifically choose to hide it in your settings). This provides a visual display of your interests to anyone who comes to your profile.

However, when you join Groups that are completely out in left field (or potentially controversial), you may confuse your audience. Or worse, you might alienate them. Want an example? How about the Dating Advice Network, or the Chronic Pain Management Group? Perhaps the Medical Marijuana Advocates Group? I’m certainly not suggesting that you don’t have the right to find community in areas of personal interest; just don’t make potentially controversial ones a billboard on LinkedIn, especially if you’re actively seeking employment.

Be mindful.

5. Not making the profile 100% complete.

This is a rookie move that sends recruiters and decision makers the message that you've half-assed the operation, but of equal importance is that the LinkedIn search algorithm is going to rank your profile higher if it's 100% complete. That means you'll turn up in more searches if you get that sucker done, and get it done well.

6. Acting like your profile is a tattoo that cannot be altered.

Oh, the funny conversations I have had with job seekers on this topic.

“WHAT IF I NEED TO CHANGE SOMETHING?”

“WHAT IF I DECIDE TO LOOK AT SALES JOBS INSTEAD OF OPERATIONS?”

“WHAT DO I DO WITH MY PROFILE THEN?”

Deep breaths. Deeeeeeep breaths, everyone. The neat thing about LinkedIn is that you can change things on your profile every month, week or minute if you so choose. While I realize you're going to put considerable effort into making that profile amazing, it also needs to continually represent who you are, and brand you in a way that captivates your target audience, whatever that may be.

So if you change your mind about how you want to position yourself professionally, don't fret. You can simply mosey into the edit mode and make changes as needed.

Your LinkedIn profile is not a tattoo, not even one of those henna ones.

7. Making it inconsistent with your resume.

It's on you to brand yourself in a way that speaks to the audience you wish to entice, and to do that consistently across every single platform you use to market yourself. This includes your resume, cover letters, online portfolios, blogs, videos, etc. You will confuse people if you have varying dates, titles, educational information or any other divergent information. Worse (especially if you have inconsistent titles or dates), the reviewer may think you're lying about your experience.

8. Not making it publicly visible.

No sense creating this masterpiece if the world can't see it. You need to make sure your profile is visible to the public. When you go into your profile settings, you can pick and choose which aspects of your profile you wish to make visible to the public. You should absolutely err on the side of openness rather than secretive if you're a job seeker and want recruiters to have ready access to your credentials.

Usage blunders.

Of course you didn't make any of those mistakes in setting up your profile, right? As if. So let's move right into the most common wrong turns people make when using LinkedIn for professional networking and/or job search.

1. Setting up shop ... and then doing absolutely nothing.

You may laugh, but it's not at all uncommon. LinkedIn is an interactive platform. As in, it's designed for you to interact with others. Sure, you might be "found" if you simply have a decent LinkedIn profile, but odds are you'll have FAR greater, lasting results with LinkedIn if you actually *use* it once you've fancied up that profile.

2. Connecting with someone amazing ... and then squandering the moment.

When you invite people to connect (or they invite you), it's probably for a reason, right? So when say they yes, don't squander that opportunity to chat it up. A simple, "Great to connect with you, Lisa. I enjoyed meeting you at the Supply Chain Management Conference. Don't be a stranger and, please, let me know if I can help you out in any way down the road!" will go far. Or, if you need to ask a specific question, use this moment. But again, no ambushing. We've already covered this.

3. Never using the status update feature.

The status update feature is simply a brilliant way to stay top of mind with your professional network. Use it regularly. What should you post? Try links to industry-related articles, updates on professional events you're attending, and/or questions posed to your audience specific to topics in your field.

If you're a long-term job seeker, you can certainly mention you're seeking, but you'll want to use care to not use this real estate to bemoan your ongoing search. "Still looking for a job. For the love of God, people, please help me." Instead, stay on the radar of the people in your network, continually positioning yourself as someone who is knowledgeable, engaged and passionate in your field of expertise.

4. Lazing out on the connection requests.

Generic connection requests are for schmucks. Take the time to add a personal note every single time you invite someone to connect with you on LinkedIn. Even if it's going to be obvious why you're connecting, send a personal note.

5. Take, take, taking, yet never giving back.

The number one way to alienate and annoy the people in your LinkedIn network is to continually take, take, take and never give anything back. Always be mindful of this. **Be helpful to people every time you see opportunity, whether that's in writing a recommendation, endorsing someone's skills, making an introduction or helping them by answering a question they've posted.** The more you give, the more you get. Basic life rule, folks. Basic life rule.

6. Forgetting that this is a professional social media platform.

Social media is just that, social. Of course it is. But LinkedIn is not to be confused with Twitter, Facebook or Snapchat. LinkedIn is a professional social media platform. Thus, if you intend to use it to entice and influence other professionals, you've got to use care in everything you post, including comments you make in group discussions. Because guess what? They all go into that thing called your digital footprint. If your digital footprint tells me you're a weirdo, a loose cannon, a hard nose, a huge partier or a full-on lunatic, you're going to be hosed.

You're on LinkedIn to build and convey your professional brand. Everything you post and every way in which you interact should align with this goal.

7. Wimping out on asking people for recommendations.

Not long ago, I met with a client who brought to my office a tattered folder of recommendation letters. The letters were glowing, for sure, but guess what? The only people who ever saw them were those who came face-to-face with my client and her tattered folder of recommendation letters.

When you ask people to vouch for your specific talents and accomplishments through LinkedIn, their glowing words appear right there on your profile, for all to see. Assuming you've opened up your privacy settings, everyone on the planet has access to these reviews, just like that.

Third party endorsements can be an incredibly powerful thing, especially when they're specific and speak directly to the things you know your target audience will value. So ask your people for them, and – when you do – be specific with the request. This helps ensure that your people highlight stuff that will impress and influence those reviewing your profile.

8. Making it blaringly obvious to colleagues that you're seeking.

This may be the crowning faux pas of LinkedIn usage among covert job seekers. When you rarely (or never) use LinkedIn and then * POOF * suddenly have 75 new connections, join 8 new groups (including ones specific to jobs and job search), and have 15 new recommendations (realize, folks, these are date stamped), what do you think the colleagues in your LinkedIn network are going to think (Or worse, your boss)?

Ding ding ding!

You are correct. They are going to think that you're on the prowl for a new job. If you're not able to conduct your career networking openly, you absolutely must adjust your strategy so that your profile isn't a running announcement that you're about to jump ship.

7 Q&A – Zee questions we hear all the time, and my profound answers to them

Thanks for sticking around. I hope you're finding this kit mighty useful. Still got questions about setting up your LinkedIn profile or how to use LinkedIn to your best advantage? Here are a few of the questions I hear from clients most often and my very best answers:

I get plenty of generic connection requests. Why do I need to do a customized request every time I connect with another professional?

Because you look lazy and disinterested when you don't bother to send a personal note and/or explain the reason you're connecting. It's particularly important to explain your motive when you've never met nor talked to the person you're attempting to add to your network. Don't make them guess – explain.

I don't want someone to judge me by my photo. Do I really need to use a photo on my LinkedIn profile?

Yes. You look like a newbie when you don't include a photo. Also, as a recruiter, I often don't even click into a profile if there's no photo, because I assume there's not going to be much else to see. Last, you've got to realize that LinkedIn is a platform designed for two-way communication. It's much easier for me to communicate with you when I have a visual of the person with whom I'm communicating.

What's more important, LinkedIn Endorsements or Recommendations?

Recommendations. Certainly, endorsements look impressive, but it's the recommendations that can truly influence those who visit your profile. Again, being vouched for by a third party can be a beautiful thing, especially when your reviewers offer up genuine, specific recommendations.

How do I look at someone's LinkedIn profile without them knowing I've looked?

Well there, James Bond, you might want to first consider if it could actually serve to your advantage if that person knew you'd just looked at her profile. Profile views have been known to be conversation starters. At the very least, your "drive by" may prompt that person to look at your profile right back.

If you truly don't want a person to see that you've been spying on him, you can simply go into Settings & Privacy and, under the Privacy header, choose "Profile Viewing Options." Check the box "Private Mode."

The person will only see that an anonymous person has viewed their profile. Just realize that, when you're set to anonymous, you also can't see who has viewed your profile. Be sure and switch the setting back to non-anonymous when you're done with the sleuthing.

Are there jobs advertised within LinkedIn Groups?

Absolutely. Most groups have a separate tabbed area within the group where members can post relevant job openings. Recruiters regularly post jobs in these niche groups. I do this because it's a great way to find talent that's specifically qualified for my clients' open positions, but also because it's free. If I post that same job on a job board like Monster.com, I not only have to pay to list it, I also typically get a pile of completely unqualified people responding to the ad, and then have to sift through a ton of resumes.

Keep an eye on the jobs posted within your groups, definitely.

How do I make those little company logos appear next to the name of each company at which I've worked?

You cannot paste a logo into the Experience section of your resume. The only way to capture a company logo (and display it on your profile) is if the organization has a corporate page on LinkedIn, with a logo tied to that page. This is where it's pulling the logo you see on your profile from.

Just be sure and list each of your employers' names exactly like their LinkedIn company page reads, otherwise the logo won't appear.

Why is it good to follow certain companies on LinkedIn?

At this point, I hope you think this is kind of a silly question, but I hear it often, so I'll recap:

1. So you can research the basics about companies at which you want to work.
2. So you can see who you may be connected with at these companies.
3. So you can get latest news coming out of that company. This will come in handy when they invite you in for an interview. You can look all on top of things and smarty pants about their firm.
4. Because many companies have a Careers tab on their company pages, and you can see “just posted” jobs at that company.

Should I include links to my blog, Twitter profile, etc.?

Yes, BUT only if you're using that blog or Twitter feed for professional purposes. If there's anything in your blog or Twitter feed that might make a recruiter or hiring manager cringe (or worse, bail out on you altogether), skip this integration.

I want to make changes to my LinkedIn profile, but don't want the people in my network to get suspicious as they see my updates in their own news feeds. Can I prevent them from seeing my edits?

Very important question, because if you make a bunch of changes, join a dozen groups and then suddenly have eight new recommendations on your profile, suspicious is precisely what your LinkedIn connections will be. If you're a covert job seeker, this may be a bit of a problemo.

For anyone who is an under-the-radar job hunter, I strongly recommend going into your privacy settings and turning your activity broadcasts off as you work. Here's how to do it:

Privacy > Sharing Profile Edits > Click “No”

Should my LinkedIn profile contain the same information as my resume?

Same overarching branding and messaging? Yes. Exact same information? No. Keep in mind that LinkedIn is a social platform, designed for engagement and conversation. That said, you can absolutely use first person (e.g. “I’m an inspiring, personable team leader” or “In 2013, I was recognized as the company’s highest performing account manager”) on LinkedIn.

I often suggest to clients that if your resume is your New York Times or Wall Street Journal version of you, make the LinkedIn profile your USA Today version – more bite-sized, bullet point and conversational in tone than the resume.

I’m intimidated by social media. What if I mess this up?

I assure you, you’re messing up on a much grander scale by not being there at all. Don’t miss out on the most vital career networking / job search tool available to us today, just because you’re feeling chicken. I was intimidated by driving a 5-speed when I was 16. Did that stop my friend Lesley and me from “borrowing” her dad’s convertible sports car, so I could get past my fear? No it did not. It wasn’t pretty, but that’s exactly how I learned. By trying. (And, no, to this day, he does not know. Shhhhhh.).

Never be afraid to try. You’ve totally got this.



Final deep, insightful thoughts on LinkedIn for job search & career networking

Phew, you've come all this way. Thank you, and congratulations! I hope you've learned a bit along the way. A few final thoughts before we share some sample profiles and then shove you out of this nest:

1. Unless you were already well on your way before you picked up this book, you're not going to become a LinkedIn expert overnight.

And that is totally OK. Everyone is new at something before they're proficient at it, and certainly before they become experts. You simply have to dive in and start playing around with this. Be strategic and mindful, of course. But if you're not incredibly savvy and eloquent right out of the gates, don't just walk away from LinkedIn. Keep practicing. Keep linking up with people. Keep exploring the features. Keep learning. I truly believe that you'll be impressed with all that you can accomplish through LinkedIn once you get to know the many ways it can help you through job search, and beyond.

2. If you approach setting up your LinkedIn profile like a story, it will be easier to share yours with your professional audience.

Somewhere along the way, many of us got brainwashed into thinking that everything we do in the name of job search and career networking has to be all official and formulaic. I will blame lame high school textbooks and the less-than-stellar career advisors. I know many of you are amazing, so don't yell at me if you're a career advisor. I'll assume you're one of the great ones.

Regardless of where we learned the art of being robotic, I am going to urge you to forget all of the so-called RULES as you craft or revise your LinkedIn profile. Yes, you want to be sure and embed key words that are common and specific to your industry, of course, but you are completely allowed to tell your professional story. As in, write it in a style that engages me and tells me who you are, and why I should care.

Your story is cool and interesting, I'm absolutely certain of this. Make this clear to me. Tell me your story, using conversational words and a tone that aligns with both your personality and the culture of the types of companies for whom you'd like to work.

3. If you get stuck, we are only an email away.

If you find that you're trying to do something specific and, for the life of you, can't figure out how, feel free to email your question to me at jenny@jobjenny.com. I'm happy to give you a hand. Sometimes (due to the volume of email I receive), it'll take me a day or two, but I will get back to you. You are also welcome to pose your question to Karen Friesen at karen@jobjenny.com.

4. I would love to connect with you on LinkedIn.

Don't be a stranger, for goodness sake. I'm right here on LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/in/jennyfoss

Let's hug it out over there, yes?

Drop me a line and let me know how things are going. Also, feel free to connect with me on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) or shoot Team JobJenny an [email](#).

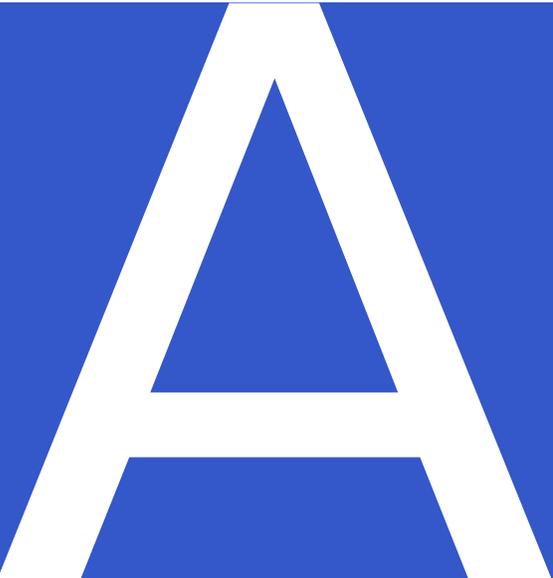
Last, but certainly not least, please do me one very small favor before you pack it up and head out of here. No matter where you're at in your career, your search, or your life. No matter how un-fun you are finding job search or career networking at the current moment ...

Please don't ever forget this one very important thing:

You're amazing.

So don't ever stop showing yourself – *and the world* – what you're made of, ok?

Alright, now get outta here... or keep going if you want to see some samples and other extra stuff.



LinkedIn profiles that leave most others in the dust

Wanna see a few noteworthy LinkedIn profiles?

Here are three examples that we love:

in Search

Home My Network Jobs Messaging

1st

Melodie Harrison

Architectural & Interior Designer | Delivering fresh, original ideas and impeccable customer service

Herndon and Schriener • University of Washington

Seattle, Washington • 248

Message

I'm a versatile and collaborative architectural and interior designer with nearly 14 years of experience conceiving and executing design projects that exceed customers' expectations and stay within budget specifications. Known for my focus on sustainability and an "anything is possible" approach, I strive to continually wow clients with fresh, original ideas and impeccable service.

An avid international traveler, I have developed an eclectic design aesthetic and deep passion for the ways in which art and architecture shape communities.

Those who know me well, appreciate the skill with which I connect to and communicate with all kinds of people. I always strive to decipher the most important wants and needs of clients – even when they're uncertain themselves – and then deliver stylish, exceptional living or working spaces.

Having recently relocated to Seattle, I am currently exploring architectural and interior design opportunities, as well as assignments in the retail furnishings sector. I welcome you to contact me directly at harrisonmelodie@gmail.com.

1. Melodie Harrison

Melodie has been working in architectural and interior design for several years, as both an entrepreneur and with a home furnishings / design firm. She recently left a small town in Arizona to expand her horizons in Seattle, a major architectural hub. Her profile was designed to quickly showcase to potential Seattle-based design firms both her capabilities and her availability. Note how the last sentence in her summary section announces her arrival to town, her availability, the specific types of positions she's seeking, and gives the reviewer a direct means of contacting her.

Cecil Porter
3rd

Hospitality Leader | Hotel Operations | VP, Brand Programs | Combining operational leadership w/ brand program execution

Porter Hospitality Consultants LLC • Cornell University
Washington D.C. Metro Area • 500+ 🌐

[InMail](#)

I'm a motivating, ROI-focused hospitality executive with a skill set that combines operational leadership with experience aligning brand strategy and programming to meet consumer demand and exceed corporate objectives. My hybrid hospitality background enables me to devise and execute programs that resonate directly with guests, while honoring the true needs of hotel owners and managers.

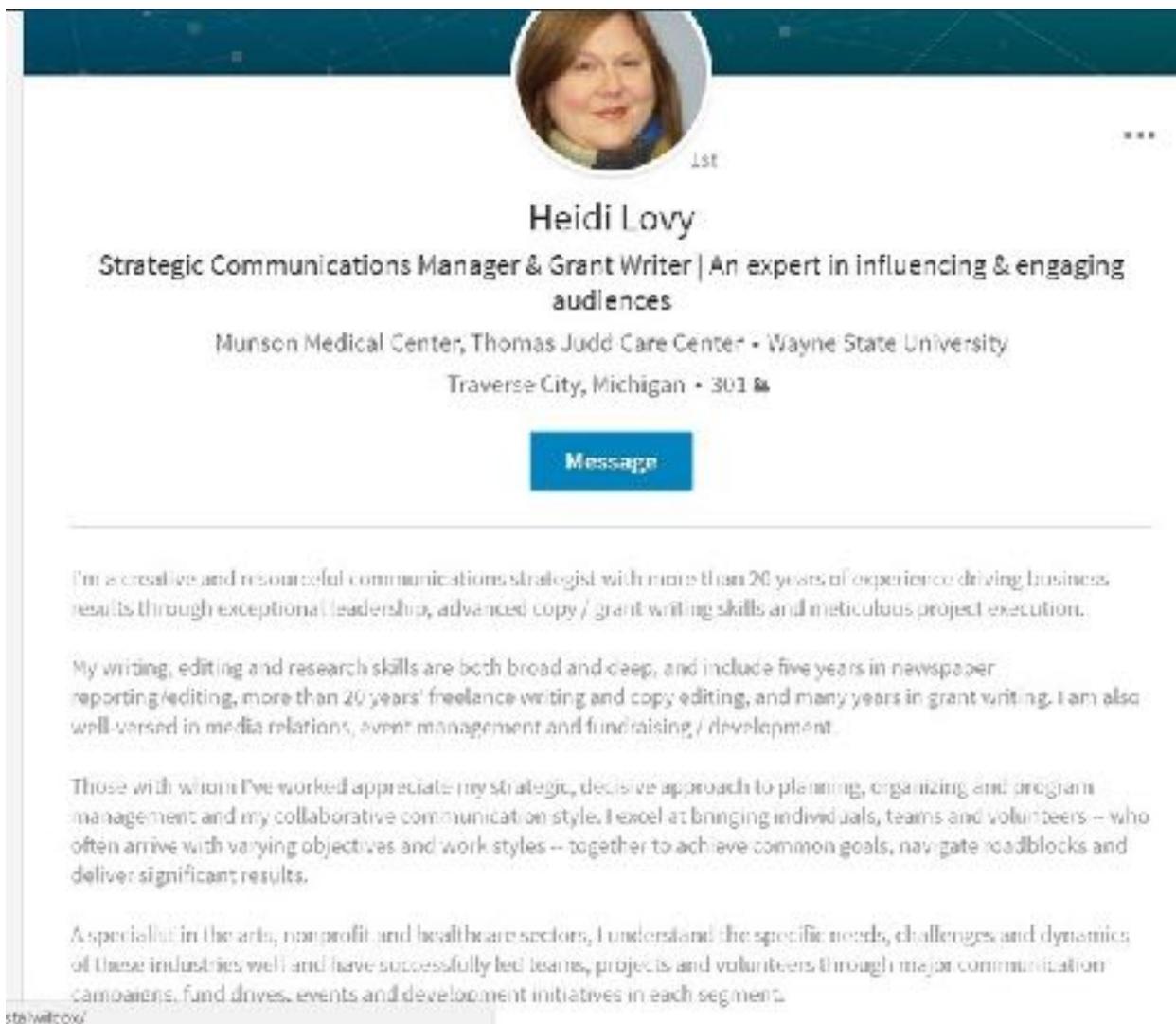
A genuinely culture focused leader, I also excel in building motivated, invested teams and rallying diverse groups around a goal to achieve big results (often, through periods of marked change).

Additional strengths include: multi-brand support, project management, strategic partnerships, market analysis, strategic program planning, change management, team member development and consumer experience.

Currently, I am exploring senior leadership roles in brand programs and hotel operations (or related). I welcome you to contact me at cecil.porter2010@gmail.com. [See less](#)

2. Cecil Porter

Cecil is a diversely talented hospitality executive with experience in both operational leadership and brand strategy. Following a downsizing at his employer, he began working as a hospitality industry consultant while concurrently exploring senior hospitality leadership roles that would benefit from his hybrid experience and refined management talents. His summary showcases who he is, and what he could walk through the doors of his next employer and deliver. It also spells out directly the types of opportunities he's seeking. And, like Melodie, Cecil makes it very easy for recruiters to contact him directly.

A screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Heidi Lovy. The profile includes a circular profile picture of a woman with brown hair, a blue header bar, and a blue 'Message' button. The text on the profile reads: 'Heidi Lovy', 'Strategic Communications Manager & Grant Writer | An expert in influencing & engaging audiences', 'Munson Medical Center, Thomas Judd Care Center • Wayne State University', 'Traverse City, Michigan • 301 &', and a 'Message' button. Below this is a summary of her experience and skills.

I'm a creative and resourceful communications strategist with more than 20 years of experience driving business results through exceptional leadership, advanced copy / grant writing skills and meticulous project execution.

My writing, editing and research skills are both broad and deep, and include five years in newspaper reporting/editing, more than 20 years' freelance writing and copy editing, and many years in grant writing. I am also well-versed in media relations, event management and fundraising / development.

Those with whom I've worked appreciate my strategic, decisive approach to planning, organizing and program management and my collaborative communication style. I excel at bringing individuals, teams and volunteers -- who often arrive with varying objectives and work styles -- together to achieve common goals, navigate roadblocks and deliver significant results.

A specialist in the arts, nonprofit and healthcare sectors, I understand the specific needs, challenges and dynamics of these industries well and have successfully led teams, projects and volunteers through major communication campaigns, fund drives, events and development initiatives in each segment.

sta/welcov/

[3. Heidi Lovy](#)

Heidi is a communications professional with specific expertise in grant writing. Thanks to her exceptional headline, we know instantly who she is and in what she specializes. Her summary also kicks off with a strong lead, and ends with details on the specific industries / sectors she serves.

(You're also welcome to check out my profile: [linkedin.com/in/jennyfoss](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennyfoss).)

B

The most overused words on LinkedIn

As you consider the most important key words and terms to embed into your new profile, you may want to rethink going overboard on these:

Responsible

(This is the biggest violator – “Responsible” was overused more than 2x more than any other word on this list.)

Following behind the Big Kahuna, in order of overuse:

- Strategic
- Creative
- Effective
- Patient
- Organizational
- Driven
- Innovative
- Specialized
- Leadership
- Passionate
- Experienced
- Focused
- Certified
- Excellent

**If your LinkedIn page
outshines your friends'...**

Could you share this book with them?

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Email](#)

*Job
Jenny.com*