

Don't Do These Things On LinkedIn!

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Don't Dismiss LinkedIn as Something Only for People Who Are Looking For a New Job.

The best time to build your LinkedIn profile, connect with people, and participate on LinkedIn is now — before you need it. If you find yourself suddenly unemployed and decide that now is the time to start using LinkedIn, you're going to be playing catch up. Instead, take time to “dig your well before you're thirsty,” as author Harvey Mackay says.

Don't “Set it and Forget It.”

Your LinkedIn profile is an evolving snapshot of you. You should be updating it regularly with new connections, status updates, and activity (especially within LinkedIn Groups).

Don't Ignore It.

Check in on LinkedIn regularly — at least every other day if you are in active job search mode; at least once a week for passive jobseekers. Plan on adding a new status update each time you log in.

Don't Be A Wallflower.

LinkedIn is most effective when you engage with it. Seek out opportunities to connect with thought leaders in your industry. Join 3-5 Groups and participate in conversations.

Don't Be Selfish.

You will get more out of LinkedIn if you focus on how you can help others, not how they can help you. The phrase “give to get” is very powerful on LinkedIn. You can earn the respect of your peers and people of influence if you “help enough other people get what they want,” in the words of Zig Ziglar.

Don't Wait For Others To Find You.

Use the LinkedIn search function to look for people you know and invite them to connect with you. You should aim to add 2-5 new connections each week if

you are a passive job seeker, and 6-10 connections a week if you are actively searching for a new job.

Don't Forget to Explore the People Your Connections Know.

One of the most powerful functions of LinkedIn is the ability to connect you with people who are connections of the people you know. Follow LinkedIn's guidelines on connecting with these folks (using InMail or requesting connections through your mutual friend), so that your account is not flagged for spam.

Don't Indiscriminately Try to Connect With People.

One of the strengths of LinkedIn is the connections you make, but it's not a race to get to 500 connections. Have a reason for each of the people you connect with — either it's someone you already know or are related to, or someone it would be beneficial to connect with. If you don't know someone, get to know them a bit before sending a personalized connection request. (You can do so by seeing who you have in common — or who they are connected to, checking out their LinkedIn Summary and work history, visiting their website or blog, and seeing what Groups they belong to).

Don't Forget to Give Recommendations.

Acknowledge and recognize the contributions of people you know by providing unsolicited, genuine Recommendations for them.

Don't Restrict Your LinkedIn Networking to Online Only.

Use LinkedIn to connect with people — but then request in-person get-togethers, when possible. Meet for coffee, or lunch, to catch up.