

# Top LinkedIn Tips by Areas of Functionality

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There has been a significant paradigm shift over the last three years regarding how you **network** in the business community. This document is meant to raise that awareness around one of those shifts.

A great definition for networking comes from Harvey Mackay “Dig Your Well Before You Are Thirsty.” Networking is about digging your well (sharing, helping, giving), not drinking from the well (can I pass you my resume, are there any jobs at your company, “Hi, my name is and ....”). Using LinkedIn is a great tool to help you dig your well, and a great tool for the day you will need to take a drink.

So what’s the big deal about LinkedIn? Founded in May 2003, LinkedIn has quickly become a primary tool for business associates and others to find you, and you to find them. What Facebook is for personal connections, LinkedIn is for business connections. It is part of your professional digital presence and you better know about it.

At a recent networking event (Feb 2009) a panel of five recruiters for major firms in Denver (like CH2M Hill, Ball Aerospace, Einstein Bagels, etc.) gave some tips specific to LinkedIn; 1) a picture on your home page changes words into a person, 2) make it easy for us to contact you, put your email address and/or phone number in your Summary or elsewhere, 3) have a few recommendations specific to your work experience, 4) groups, interest and skills tells us more about you, and 5) having between 50 – 300 contacts makes us think you are serious about your online presence.

“We’ll find you by searching LinkedIn or we’ll Google you. Monster costs us \$10,000 per recruiter and we don’t use it any more!” *A comment from one recruiter*

This guide is not intended to be a LinkedIn training manual. It does highlight some of the top tips by functional area we found to be most effective. Contact information can be found at the end of this document.

Understand the power this tool brings you (through Advanced Search) to appreciate the type of people you want to be connected with (Contacts, Groups) and then the importance of how you want to present yourself (Profile). There are other capabilities to learn, but we feel you must grasp these capabilities first.

## ADVANCED - SEARCH

Your search results will not show you everyone in LinkedIn who matches your search criteria. It is limited by your contacts and your contact’s contacts. This will become more apparent as you use these techniques described throughout the document.

Locate and click on the **Advanced** link, found to the right of the Search button on the Home page. There are many options on the Advanced Search page; the following examples are intended to stir your creativity in using your network. Make sure the **Sort By** field is set to “Relationship”, which means those closest in your network will display first.

**Objective = find someone by title:** change the default **Location** from “Anywhere” to “Located in or near”, and adjust the radius around your defaulted zip code. In the **Title** field, enter keywords for the title of someone you may be looking for. For example, to locate a person in accounting you might enter “VP Finance”, “Director Finance”, “Accounting Manager” “Finance”, etc. This will require some experimentation on your part. To narrow down the search results further you can add keywords in the **Keywords** field, or change the **Current & Past** to **Current Only** or **Past Only**.

**Objective = find someone by company:** change the default **Location** from “Anywhere” to “Located in or near”, and adjust the radius around your defaulted zip code. In the **Company** field, enter keywords for the company. Be careful you don’t spell the name wrong, and try shorter versions of the name. This may require experimentation on your part based on how the individual spelled out the company name in their profile. Depending on the number of contacts you see, you can narrow down the search results further by adding keywords in the **Keywords** field or adjustments to **Current & Past**.

**Objective = find people by skill:** change the default **Location** from “Anywhere” to “Located in or near”, and adjust the radius around your defaulted zip code. In the **Keyword** field, enter keywords for a specific skill someone may have entered in their profile. For example, “finance” or “accounting”. With these keywords you will definitely get too many search results, so add other keywords specific to your area of interest, for example “audit”. This will require some experimentation on your part.

**Objective = find peers by groups you belong to:** change the default **Location** from “Anywhere” to “Located in or near”, and adjust the radius around your defaulted zip code. Select one of the **Groups** you belong to. Now use any of the other fields mentioned above (Title, Company, Keywords) to limit your search results. This will require experimentation on your part. **Note:** you can email any member in a group you belong to directly; you do not need to know their email address.

**Objective = find people by industry:** change the default **Location** from “Anywhere” to “Located in or near”, and adjust the radius around your defaulted zip code. Select one of the **Industries** listed. Now use any of the other fields mentioned above (Title, Company, Keywords) to limit your search results. This will require experimentation on your part.

## GROUPS – LOCATE & JOIN

Groups give you a significant advantage to extend your visibility & direct contacts. Any member of a group you belong to is a direct connection; you can email them through LinkedIn even though you don’t know their email address. It’s a great way to expand your capabilities.

Hint: Anyone can set up a group. All groups require you to request an invitation to join. Most (or some) actually look at your profile to see if you qualify. Regardless, almost all of them accept you. Even though you may not be a paying member of an association, it is likely you can get accepted to the LinkedIn group.

To sign up for a group, select the Groups link on the navigation pane on the left side of LinkedIn’s web page. On the next screen select the Groups Directory tab. In the Search Groups keywords field enter a full or partial name for a group you might want to join. For example, enter “Project” and select Search. You will get over 3,600 results. You will probably need to experiment with your search terms.

**Objective = increase my contacts by affinity:** types of groups you might want to consider are alumni associations, company groups you worked for previously or currently, industry associations, associations based on key skills you may have or want to have, vertical market groups, etc.

## CONTACTS – WHO & HOW TO INVITE

This is an area most people struggle with, “who do I accept invitations from?” This is a personal choice, but we would suggest you consider your objectives for using this tool and make sure you think of all the possible states you may experience in your career (employed, unemployed, career changes, etc). Before accepting an invitation you might want to click on the persons name and check out their profile. You can Accept their invitation to connect, or you can Archive their request if you want to ignore it. **Never click on the Don’t Know This Person** button unless you are being solicited in an unprofessional or undesirable way. When you do this LinkedIn now considers this person to be potentially *bad*. After 4 or 5 of these they are banned from LinkedIn forever.

In Groups we talked about one method to expand your search visibility. Here is another suggestion:

**Objective = increase my search results by inviting LIONS:** a LION is a LinkedIn Open Networker, someone who will accept almost any invitation. LIONS typically are people who benefit from a large list of contacts for business or other purposes; sales, recruiters, HR, etc. They do not know most or any of their connections. So you

can't use them for introductions to someone else. **THEIR BENEFIT TO YOU IS TO INCREASE YOUR SEARCH RESULTS.**

To identify a LION who could best increase your search results takes some careful consideration. Use Advanced Search: put LION in Keywords, limit your view by zip code range (in most cases). You might want to consider adding other keywords such as Project Management, Sales, etc. Look at their profile and make sure they match your objectives. You will find their email address somewhere in their profile. Copy the address and then from their profile page, select Add (person's name) To Your Network, Other (How do you know person), paste their email address and personalize the message.

## PROFILE – EFFECTIVE SETUPS

**Objective = make it easy for anyone to contact me:** this was mentioned in the opening paragraphs. Select **Edit My Profile**, in the Professional Experiences & Goals (or Summary), put your email address and optionally your phone number before anything else so it shows at the top of your Summary. Also, in the **Contact Settings**, in the “what advice would you give to users considering contacting you?”, enter your email address and phone number. This puts the same information at the bottom of your profile.

**Objective = change my digital business presentation from “words” to a “person”:** this was mentioned in the opening paragraphs. When you search in LinkedIn, look at the pictures people are using; have you seen a picture of someone's animal, their baby, a personal picture? Is this what you would attach to your resume? This is your digital business presentation, no different than a professional bio or resume. Use a good (or professional) headshot, preferably with you smiling confidently. Look at other profiles and see what we mean!

**Objective = have the appropriate recommendations in my profile:** in the recruiter panel discussion noted above, their recommendation was 3 – 5 are enough. Use your best judgment; when you look at other profiles and see 15-20 recommendations, do you bother to read them?

## COMPANIES - SEARCH

**Objective = find companies by industry:** On the LinkedIn **Home** page, click on the **Companies** link located at the top center of the page. Change the **Location** to “Located in or near” to a specified radius around your default zip code. Next click on the “Browse all industries” link located below the list of industries already listed. Now pick a specific industry you are interested in. When the companies are listed in your search results, you can refine your search criteria on the right side of the screen.

## JOBS - SEARCH

**Objective = find jobs listed on LinkedIn:** On the LinkedIn **Home** page, click on the **Jobs** link located at the top center of the page. Enter keywords you use on other job boards (titles, skills, etc.). Jobs indicated with a “\*” means they are only posted on LinkedIn and not on the other job boards. When the job postings are listed in your search results, you can refine your search criteria by clicking on the “refine your search results” link located above the list of job postings.