

Using LinkedIn to Highlight Your Company & Staff

LinkedIn is an effective social media tool that focuses on professionals and businesses. Many individuals are represented within LinkedIn, as are “special interest” groups [corporate or university alumni groups, job interest groups, etc.]. Many people use LinkedIn as an online resume, representing their work history and achievements. A database of businesses is also available within the tool, allowing individuals to search on and learn more about these companies. Most large corporations have already added their information to the site, and many HR departments use the site to post open positions or to do passive searches for suitable candidates to fill openings—searching on keywords found in individual’s profiles.

Basic business information in LinkedIn is added and maintained by current staff—that is, if your email address domain in your LinkedIn profile matches the company you are trying to add or change, you will be allowed to do so.

Getting Started

It makes the most sense to designate an individual or group of people to set up and maintain your company’s LinkedIn profile. That person will need to set up an individual profile before he or she can add the business.

Setting up Your Personal Profile

Whether you are new to LinkedIn or have been linked in for years, you will want to set up (or review) your profile with a critical eye. LinkedIn is essentially your online business persona—it should represent your professional capabilities and history clearly. Consider that LinkedIn profiles rank high in many search engines, so if someone Google’s your name your profile will likely appear. Profile suggestions:

1. Enter a brief, concise headline to describe yourself. An example: “Senior Marketing Analyst”. When your name comes up in search results, your headline is shown, too.
2. Choose your industry from the drop-down list. Read through it carefully for the best fit.
3. Add a photo of yourself. Use a headshot no more than 80x80 pixels and make certain it is professional.
4. Your summary should provide one or two short paragraphs on your background and skills. It should be grammatically correct and have NO typos!
5. The specialties section allows you to enter key words representing your areas of expertise. Don’t leave this empty.
6. Add your professional experience, including companies worked for, dates of employment and titles. If the company name is not listed on the drop-down, type in the name. [Since you will be adding your current employer to the database, use the name as it will appear on the “permanent” profile.] You may also add job descriptions for each role. This is essentially an

online resume. You may wish to leave off history older than 15 years if it does not add value to your profile. Include your education and any professional certifications.

7. When your profile is initially saved within LinkedIn, you are assigned a unique URL. You should edit your public profile and customize the URL to contain your name. Note that you may not get your first choice so have a few others in mind. Again—remain professional with the names! Make sure your profile is public so it can be searched. *Helpful hint: put your customized URL on your business cards, resume and email signature so people can access your profile quickly. You may also take advantage of the LinkedIn widgets to show the “in” icon on your signature.*
8. Optionally, you may add up to three websites to your profile (great if you have your own business), list interests, add honors and awards, list personal information, or change contact settings. Include your blog, too.
9. Use the mobile LinkedIn feature if you have a Smart Phone. It’s m.linkedin.com.
10. You may also add a secondary email address to your account under Settings.

Note that you can modify certain account settings to limit access to information on your profile. You may (and should) edit your profile frequently to keep it current.

Adding Your Company

Once your profile exists, you may add your Company listing. To do so, select the Companies link at the top of the screen and then choose “Add a Company”. Type in the company name and your email address at the firm. If the company email domain already exists (i.e., vitalinkweb.com) you will be prompted to edit the current company profile. If the company does not yet exist (the email domain isn’t there yet), a confirmation email will be sent to you using the corporate domain. This email will provide a link for you to login to your LinkedIn account. Once confirmed, you will be taken to the “Create a Company” page to add your company. Note that the majority of the company information in LinkedIn is voluntarily posted and maintained by the companies themselves, so you will periodically want to update the information. Information you might provide (many of these items are optional but should be included to provide a complete profile):

- Company description gives a synopsis of the business. This can be pulled from your corporate website, but keep it fairly short.
- Specialties—e.g., “marketing strategy, branding and positioning”, etc. Make sure to use industry keywords that others may search on to locate your business.
- The URL for the corporate website.
- Industry (selected from a drop-down menu)
- Type of business (corporation, proprietorship)
- Status of business (operating, closed)
- Number of employees
- Year started
- Locations

- Financial information
- RSS/URL for a company blog
- Related companies
- Company logo (file size must be less than 100kb)

In addition to the general information above, a Products and Services tab was added in 2010 to allow businesses to highlight their offerings and includes a place for viewers to provide online recommendations.

Getting Employees LinkedIn

The next step is getting your staff members added. Each will need to set up a profile (or you might want to do it for them using their individual email addresses and setting up initial passwords). When they each enter their current positions, the company name should now appear on the drop-down menu. Selecting the company will tie them to the company profile; however employees will not be linked to each other until connection requests are sent/accepted. Much of the information provided on the biographies page of the corporate website (if this exists) may be used in LinkedIn.

When employee profiles are completed and the customized URLs are available, you may wish to add these to the biography pages within the corporate website.

Add Connections

To add connections, search people for current employees. Once located, use the Invite to Connect feature. Only one of you needs to send the invitation to create the link. Choose how you know the person (in this case “colleague”). Note that in some cases to protect the individual’s privacy you must enter their email address. A default message appears but you may wish to customize the note.



After the invitation is delivered, the recipient may choose to accept, decline or just ignore it. If they do accept, you will receive notification and their profile will be viewable under your contacts.

Each individual may then add other connections, searching for people he/she knows using the quick search feature in the upper right corner or choose the advanced search option. Advanced search allows you to set location parameters, current or former employers, education, etc. If you worked with Mary Smith at ABC Manufacturing in Charlotte, for example, but cannot remember her married name, you may search for “Mary” with the company name and location as parameters and may be able to locate her in LinkedIn.

Have Others Follow Your Business

Once your business is added to LinkedIn, you can easily pull off a snippet of web code to add a widget to your company website, blog or other pages you control. The widget allows anyone viewing the site to click and follow your company. There is a tab that shows everyone who is following you. What fantastic information!



If you are a sales rep (or looking for a job), you can follow companies you may wish to do business with or where you might be trying to get hired. Learn who the key players are and more about the business.

Sample Company Search

So what do others see once your company and employees are on LinkedIn? The Bank of America profile is shown on the next page for reference. Note the following:

- Current employees in my network are listed with their titles. These may be contacts for garnering additional business. New hires are shown on a separate tab (you might use these names and titles to send congratulatory notes with a request for a meeting), followed by all linked employees.
- On the right side, I may see the number of people following the company, a “share” button to include others, a map showing headquarters location, the company website link, recent Twitter activity, stock information and recent mentions in the news.
- Recent activity related to the company shows in a separate pane at the bottom. This might include promotions or new status postings.
- A link to helpful statistics shows a breakout of job functions and a career path analysis of linked employees (available for larger firms).

Companies > Bank of America

Overview Careers



Bank of America is one of the world's largest financial institutions, serving individual consumers, small- and middle-market businesses and large corporations with a full range of banking, investing, asset management and other financial and risk management products and services. The company

Bank of America has 143,890 followers

Follow Company

Share

How you're connected to Bank of America

4 1st Connections

491 2nd Employees in your network

92,569 Employees on LinkedIn

Check out insightful statistics about Bank of America employees »

Your Network (495) New Hires (5) Employees (92,569)



VP, Service Delivery Consultant
Corinne F., Charlotte, North Carolina Area

Bank of America mentioned in the News

[Iranian Shipper Accused of Sneaking Money Through N.Y. Banks](#)

New York Times, Jun 20, 2011

Aussie B
Crisis: Au
BusinessW

Little Sign
Business In

VIDEO: F
BBC News

Victims in
New York

[See all News »](#)

Bank of America Activity on LinkedIn



Andy Thomas is now Head of ECS New Acco
was Head of Risk Mitigation Strategies
54 minutes ago



Deepak Narang is now Assistant Manager at
was Batch System Analyst at Hewitt Associa



Aditi Deshpande is now Technoloy Analyst
was Software Developer at UNCC

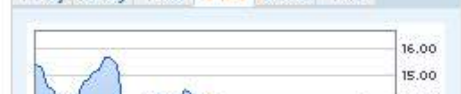
Headquarters

100 North Tryon Street
Charlotte, NC 28202
UNITED STATES



BAC: NYSE

1 Day 5 Day 1 Mo 3 Mo 6 Mo 1 Yr



16.00
15.00
14.00
13.00
\$13.46
1.39%)
35.1B
-44.5x
e info

Recent Tweets



Hot #Job : Bilingual Customer Service Rep #Ottawa , Canada. 1yr service exp req. Learn more about job GLO00427 here <http://go.bofa.com/u22s>

1 hour ago • Like • Comment

Hot #Job : Personal Banker. Central #Miami . 40 Hours. Bilingual English/Spanish Req. Check out <http://go.bofa.com/3xwy> for job 1100036687

2 hours ago • Like • Comment

Hot #Job : BofA Merchant Services Team. Merchant Sales Specialist. #SanFrancisco , CA. Check out <http://go.bofa.com/k2a4> for job 1100034057

3 hours ago • Like • Comment

Hot #Job : Personal Banker. North #Miami , FL. 1yr Sales exp. Creole Fluency Req. Check out <http://go.bofa.com/gzsw> for job 1100032660

4 hours ago • Like • Comment

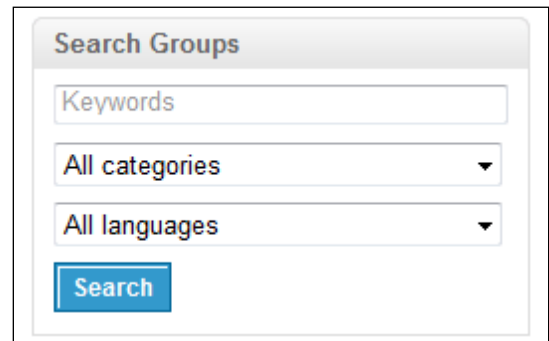
The Value of Groups

There are almost a million groups in LinkedIn ranging from a few members to thousands. Groups are broken out by type to make it easier to find. These include alumni, corporate, conference, networking, non-profit, professional and other.

To search for a group, click on the Groups link on the top navigation bar. Choose the Groups Directory to search available groups. Tabs at the top include My Groups, Following, Groups You May Like (looks for appropriate groups based on keywords in your profile), Groups Directory and Create a Group.

Hints:

- Limit the groups you join to those that really make sense for you. Some groups require approval, so don't waste your time trying to join the UCLA Alumni group if you didn't go there!
- Consider adding both undergrad and graduate alumni groups.
- Look for industry-specific groups that represent your current industry or future interests.
- Consider local professional groups; some of these groups have meetings in addition to a LinkedIn presence. Charlotte Business Professionals, for example, meets monthly and is open to all industries and job levels.
- The number of group members is generally represented next to the name. This may help you determine whether it is worth your time to join a group.
- You can decide whether to receive email updates from the group. If these get to be overwhelming, you can go back and turn off this feature.
- DO monitor value and drop groups that do not provide any benefit to you.



The image shows a screenshot of the LinkedIn 'Search Groups' interface. It consists of a white box with a grey header containing the text 'Search Groups'. Below the header, there is a text input field with the placeholder text 'Keywords'. Underneath the input field are two dropdown menus. The first dropdown menu is labeled 'All categories' and has a downward-pointing arrow. The second dropdown menu is labeled 'All languages' and also has a downward-pointing arrow. At the bottom of the search box is a blue button with the white text 'Search'.

Depending upon your business, you may wish to create a group that clients or prospects can join. You may also find groups that include many of your clients—join these groups to follow discussion strands. Optionally, you may create an “alumni” group for former staff members to keep in touch.

One benefit of group membership: you can use the advanced search feature to look for group members within a specific company. This gives you a way to get a contact name. Note that with an unpaid LinkedIn membership you can only page through the first hundred names, so utilize keywords where possible to limit search results.

Be an Expert – Get in the Conversation

Conversations are so important. It's key not only to monitor social media to know what people are saying about your business, products and services, but to also join in the conversation. You have undoubtedly acquired a tremendous amount of industry knowledge. With the technologies available today, you can readily share that knowledge and become known within your industry as an expert. Find groups that are relevant to you. Monitor discussion activity, and if you find the group is well managed and provides value, begin commenting to share your expertise. Note that many groups will drop you if you use the discussion forums to sell your products or services.

The Introductions Feature

Once you are linked to contacts and/or groups, you may use the introductions feature for a “warm” intro. Here's an example:

1. Search for the specific business.
2. Current employees who are in your network will appear on the first tab and show how you are connected. Let's assume you are looking to speak with the Marketing Director and you see an individual listed as VP of Marketing on this list. This looks like a good fit for the introduction. Click to view the profile of the person you'd like to meet and then choose “Get introduced through a connection.”
3. Follow the steps to request the introduction.

Some of your contacts are busy or may choose not to forward the introduction email. Even if they do so, not everyone will respond. Keep trying—it usually works!

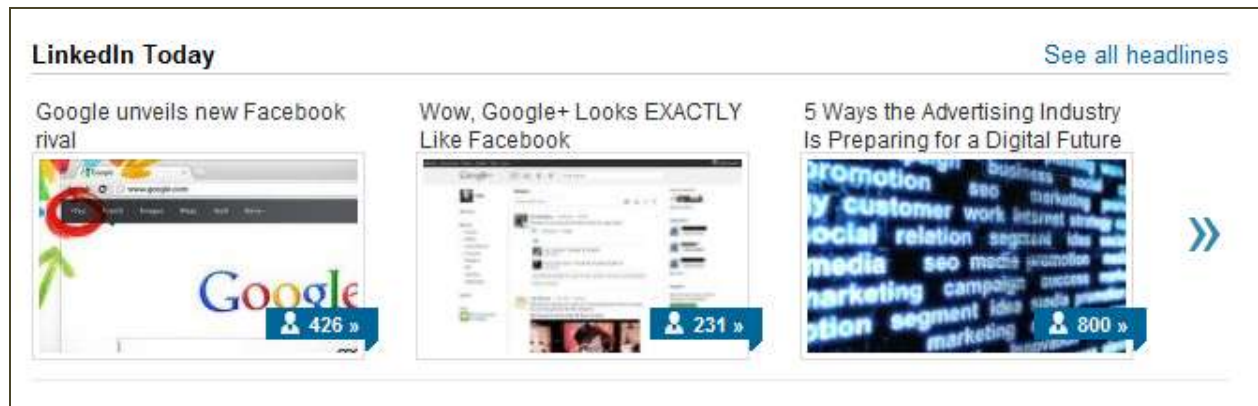
The Jobs Tab

LinkedIn offers job postings to members for \$95 per 30-day posting. [This feature is more valuable in some geographic areas than others.] To see jobs posted in your area, choose the Jobs link at the top and search by keyword, country and/or postal code. Alternately, when searching companies (see section above) you may filter to display only companies with jobs listed on LinkedIn.

Many LinkedIn group members will also “list” jobs that appear as comments in your group updates. This is a good (and free) way to advertise openings!

News

LinkedIn recently added a scrolling news bar to the home page that will display some of the stories that are relevant to you based on your profile. As an example, for a marketing profile, today's news is shown below. Note that I do have the ability to see all headlines. Each article offers share buttons to allow easy distribution to others.



Communicating via LinkedIn

The InMail feature is limited with the Basic (free) version of LinkedIn. There are three upgrade levels available that may meet your specific needs if you require additional access to LinkedIn members via email. Group members can be sent email by everyone in the group. Emails are delivered to the address posted in your profile, so make sure it is current. The messages also appear in your LinkedIn inbox. Note when you receive an email in your personal box that as a standard, LinkedIn is forwarding the message on behalf of the sender using a “nomail” return address that will bounce if you just hit reply. If the email has been sent on behalf of a contact, scroll to the bottom and choose the “reply to” link. This allows you to respond within LinkedIn.

Advertising on LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers pay-per-click advertising options that may be targeted by geography, industry, title, etc. Learn more by clicking on Go to LinkedIn Ads at the top of the home page.

Other Stuff

There are a number of LinkedIn applications and widgets available like SlideShare, Box.net, Polls, Blog Link or Triplt that can enhance your LinkedIn experience. Check them out and see how they can work for you.

LinkedIn is a valuable tool for professionals to keep connected and share ideas. Use it well!