LinkedIn TIPS

LinkedIn is an excellent resource for finding people in your industry, locating alumni, conducting industry research, and learning more about companies of interest.

Build a Great Profile
LinkedIn allows you to expand on your 1-page resume and include details about all of your experiences and qualifications. Take advantage of this opportunity by fully completing your profile.

Profile Headline
Think of this as your slogan for your professional brand. Check out headlines of other students and recent alumni for inspiration.

Headshot
Select a professional looking photo of you alone. That means no party photos, cartoon avatars, or cute pics of your puppy!

Unique LinkedIn URL
You can claim your unique “vanity” URL by going to the Settings page. This is the version you will want to use on resumes, etc rather than the one with a long string of numbers & letters.
Professional Summary
Your professional summary statement should be concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Use bullets or short blocks of text for easy reading.

Status Update
Just like Facebook, you can update your status on LinkedIn. This is a great way to stay on other people’s radar screens and enhance your professional image. Tell people about events you’re attending, major projects you’ve completed, professional books you are reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception.

Get Noticed for your Skills
You will be prompted to enter keywords for your Skills & Expertise. When searching for terms, you can type a general word, such as Marketing, and LinkedIn will provide a list of options related to that word. Include areas that you feel you have skills/expertise in. Keywords show up on the left side. When others see your profile, they will be prompted to indicate whether they would endorse you for that particular skill. On the right-hand side, you can see which people have endorsed you for each skill. Think of the value this might provide to a recruiter viewing your profile!
Recommendations

Recommendations are different from endorsements. You will only want to request recommendations from people who know your work and can attest to your skills/expertise/leadership. When you request a recommendations insert a personalized message in the text field indicating any particular projects, skills, or traits you would like for the recommender to highlight. Also, be aware that it is common courtesy to return the favor by writing a recommendation for anyone from whom you request one. Once a recommendation has been written, you have the option of adding it to your profile or not.

Join Groups

Groups are a great way to connect with others in your field or industry and to start following the latest trends. You can opt in to receive notice of conversations happening in each group you join. Another way to stay in the forefront of people’s minds is to add to these discussions – either by posting a question or adding a comment to a discussion about a topic your know about. Join Clemson’s group as well as the CBBS group and any major-specific groups first.

Following Companies & Organizations

You can also follow companies and organizations of interest to keep up with the latest news. If you have an upcoming interview, this is a great resource of information. Companies often give “insider” tips and sometimes announce job openings in their LinkedIn updates.
Adding Connections
Once your profile is complete, it’s time to start adding connections. Start with people you know – fellow classmates, recent alumni, internship/work co-workers and supervisors, family connections, etc. As you meet new professionals, you can begin adding them to your network.

Customize Each Message
One of the most important things you can do to increase your response rate if to write a brief, personalized note to each potential connection reminding them of how you met (if applicable) and explaining why you are interested in connecting (to ask for advice or to keep in touch after a meeting or event).

Q: How can I find fellow alumni on LinkedIn?
A: There are a couple of ways to search for Clemson alumni.
1. Conduct an “Advanced Search” and type in “Clemson” – you might also include your field to narrow down the results.
2. Another way to find alumni by typing in Linkedin.com/alumni (there is not yet a direct link to this from your LinkedIn homepage).
   a. Once there, you can refine your results by changing the date range.
   b. Under any column, click on the “See More” tab.
   c. You can then select an employer to see what areas people from Clemson work in at the company.
   d. OR, choose a field under the “What They Do” column to see where those people work.
   e. Click on the arrow at the right-hand side of the page to learn what major those people graduated with, and what skills they have listed.
   f. By scrolling on down the page, you will find a listing of the people your search pulled.

Linkedin.com/alumni
Here is an example of a search for Clemson alumni working in the Human Resources field. The search returned 299 alumni. The center column tells us how many alumni work at each of the companies/organization listed. The left-hand column tells us where those alumni are located geographically.

The arrow at the bottom shows the beginning of the list of alumni from your search. You can then click on a profile to learn more about that individual’s job duties, etc.
**Definition:** An informational interview is an interview conducted to gather information about a particular career field, job, industry, or company. It is NOT a job interview.

Informational interviews are part of the networking process and can go a long way toward helping you find a job in a field that excites you.

**Tips for Requesting an Informational Interview**

**How should I first contact someone I’d like to interview?** Opinions vary on the best method of first contact with a person you would like to interview. However, keep in mind that email or a LinkedIn message shows more respect for the person’s time and does not come across as pushy as a cold call may. Use your best judgment to determine whether the person might respond better to a phone call or an email message.

**How do I get them to respond?** Your chances of getting a response will be much greater if someone introduces you or suggests that you contact the person. Because of this, ask people if they know others in the field you should talk to and see if they will have facilitate an introduction.

**Do not ask for a job!** The purpose of an informational interview is to learn more about the field. If you frame your request as a job inquiry, you are not likely to get a response or the person will be hesitant to talk with you.

**Be appreciative and respectful of their time.** If someone agrees to sit down and talk with you, this is likely on their own time and in addition to a full workload. If you reach out to someone a couple of times without success, it may be time to cut your losses and seek out someone else. Chances are it isn’t anything personal against you, just that it is not a convenient time for them.

**Be prepared!** Prepare good questions for the informational interview so that you can gain valuable information from the experience while not taking too much of the person’s time. You will not want to take more than 20-30 minutes of the person’s time, so make every minute count!

**Sample Informational Interview Questions**

- How did you get started in this field?
- What was your job path?
- What do you find most rewarding about your work? What advice would you give someone wanting to enter this field?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- How quickly is the field growing?
- Do you have recommendations of organizations or certifications I should seek?
- What is unique about this field?
- Why do most people leave this field?
- What characteristics do you think an entry-level person in this field should possess?
- To what extent do you interact with customers/clients?
- How has your job affected your lifestyle?
- What courses were the most valuable in your college career?
- What attracted you to this field/company?
- What are your co-workers like?
- How does a person progress in your field?