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How law students should use LinkedIn

by [Leora Maccabee](#) on April 14, 2009

LinkedIn® There is no doubt about it – if you are a law student and do not have a vibrant, comprehensive, and frequently-updated profile on LinkedIn, you are missing an essential tool in your job hunting, professional networking, and personal branding tool box. [Kevin O’Keefe was spot-on in his post last Sunday about law students and LinkedIn.](#)

From one law student to another, here are the five B’s to mastering LinkedIn: the **B**asics, **B**eefing up your profile; **B**uilding your network; **B**randing yourself; and **B**est practices for job searching.

The Basics:

1. Every sentence on your LinkedIn profile is an opportunity for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Using common keywords, industry terms and active language makes LinkedIn and Google searchers more likely to find you. However, a LinkedIn profile should be more chatty (read: networking) than a formal resume (read: job search). Make sure your profile is completely truthful.
2. Describe your education and employment history in detail. The “summary” is your new elevator speech. “Activities” is for personal tidbits like your love for biking or singing. Include professional skills in your “specialties” and craft a pithy “title” for your profile that reflects your status and interests. For legal confidentiality purposes, do not mention current or former clients without their consent.
3. Add links to your websites, blogs or twitter feeds that you wish to make a part of your professional brand. Your LinkedIn “status” is immediately projected onto your connections’ home pages. Update your status once-a-week at minimum. Avoid mentioning in your status any non-public aspects of cases you are working on as doing so may violate your client’s confidentiality. A professional looking photo is a “must.”
4. Create a “Vanity URL” for your public profile. On the “edit profile” page, click “public profile,” and change the link from <http://www.linkedin.com/in/1234skdfjdfj> to <http://www.linkedin.com/in/leoramaccabee> (insert your name here). This will increase your profile’s Google ranking and will be easier to promote on business cards.

Beefing Up Your Profile:

1. Once you have filled in your LinkedIn profile basics, join Groups, add Applications, and get Recommendations. When you join a group, you can see the full profiles of all members, directly contact them on LinkedIn and search among the members using specific keywords (like law firm names, or locations). Join your undergraduate alumni/ae group. If your law school does not yet have a group on LinkedIn, create one. See the group I created for [Northeastern University School of Law](#) as an example.
2. Add applications to your home page (only you see it) and your profile (everyone sees it). Add the “Events” application. Add the “Wordpress” or “Blog Link” application to feed your blog posts directly onto your LinkedIn profile. Add “Company Buzz” to see who is tweeting about you or your potential employers.
3. A recommendation on your profile helps to make it 100% complete; gets you listed in LinkedIn’s “service provider” directory; and improves your professional brand. Never give false or misleading recommendations to others, and only ask for recommendations from people who knew you well in the capacity for which you are seeking a recommendation.

Building Your Network:

1. Connect backwards in history: send invitations to high school, college, graduate and law school classmates, former colleagues, family, friends and family friends, old teachers/professors, and anyone in your email address books. And then connect forwards: invite people you meet at conferences and trainings, reporters who interview you, and future colleagues.
2. DO NOT use LinkedIn’s generic language in invitations to connect. Make the subject line and the message personal and remind the individual how you know them. NEVER say “I do not know” to someone who asks you to connect with them. Doing so tells LinkedIn that the person may be a spammer. If you do not know a person, archive the message or send the person a note saying you forgot how you met, and ask him/her to refresh your memory.

Branding Yourself:

1. Brand yourself with your profile language and status updates; by creating groups; by asking and answering questions through the “Answers” tab; by giving and getting recommendations; by posting events; or by bringing your connections together (i.e. a job seeker and job hunter).
2. The “Answers” tab gives you an opportunity to answer questions in your field of interest by posting resources, links or advice. If the questioner ranks your answer as the best response, you are added to LinkedIn’s list of experts for that topic. The more “best” answers you give, the higher your rank. Subscribe to certain types of questions via RSS. Forward your questions to your connections to get their answers and simultaneously grow your relationships. As a law student, if you submit an answer to a legal question, make sure you include a disclaimer stating that your answer is provided for general informational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice.

Best Practices for Job Hunting:

1. If you're looking for a job, once your profile is ready, go to the "Jobs" tab, and search by keyword, industry or location. LinkedIn tells you which employers are "in your network" because you are connected to people who work there either directly if they are already a connection or indirectly, if someone you know is connected to someone who works there. You can then send a note to the person you know requesting an introduction to the person at the job you are seeking.
2. Use LinkedIn to get the inside scoop on potential bosses, colleagues and interviewers by looking up their profiles. Do a "Company Search" to find out who formerly worked at the employer you are looking for and then contact that person via LinkedIn, either directly if they are already a connection, or indirectly through an introduction request if they are one degree removed from one of your connections.

Now you are ready to take the online legal world by storm! Take a long lunch break and do it.

Tagged as: [job hunting](#), [job seeking](#), [law school](#), [law students](#), [LinkedIn](#), [networking](#), [social networking](#), [tutorial](#)

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04.27.09 at 8:58 pm

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Dannyesq [04.14.09 at 2:49 pm](#)

The 3 websites where job seekers got the best results (from about.com)-

<http://www.linkedin.com> (networking for professionals)

<http://www.indeed.com> (aggregated listings)

<http://www.realmatch.com> (matches you to the perfect jobs)

For those looking for legal work, good luck!



Aaron Street [04.14.09 at 9:10 pm](#)

Here's a little LinkedIn hack:

When adding your websites/blogs to your profile, do not use the default "my website" categories. Instead, select "other" and type the actual name of the site (or a description of it).

This will serve both to add some SEO to your site with a keyword-optimized link from LinkedIn, but will also be a more useful and interesting piece of information for viewers of your profile.



JohnAllison [04.22.09 at 9:10 pm](#)

I like the idea of remembering SEO and its usefulness.

This list is just as important to lawyers as law student. I am a 3L in the twin cities and found this discussion useful. While I have a long term job lined up for the next 5 years I will take these recommendations to heart. Things can change at anytime and keeping ones marketing up to date is a definite must.

Thanks for the tips.

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