

## Use LinkedIn to Start your Local Professional Network

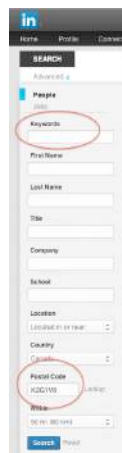
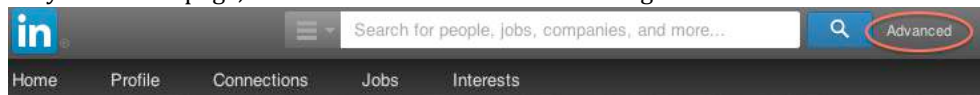
This is one approach to using LinkedIn to learn about the local job market: to know what companies hire people with your education and experience and to make contact with other professionals doing the jobs that you target. Through this process you will start to build a local professional network and conduct research interviews that will give you the information and contacts you need to get the job you want. **The objective here is to establish personal contact with other professionals in this area who can advise you and who will recognize the value of your skills and experience.**

***Initially, plan to use LinkedIn as a research tool only: as a way to identify and contact professionals for research interviews.***

1. If you don't already have a LinkedIn Account, you should have one, since LinkedIn is widely used in the Ottawa area (more so than Facebook, which may be more widely used in the US). Note that you should get a **free, basic account**. While LinkedIn will routinely suggest that you upgrade (pay a monthly fee), for this approach, you **only need the free account**.
2. At the start, just put your headline and summary there (based on your 30-second introduction). Don't fill in the details of your experience and education until you know more about the local job market: what's important to local employers, what tools or software are commonly used, etc.
3. Link to people you know, for example, colleagues and mentors. LinkedIn will send invitations to everyone in your address book, if you let it. You may want to do that. Make some rules for yourself about whom you will invite., for example, I only connect to people I have met face-to-face.

***Use Advanced Search to find 5 - 10 people in the local area who "look like you": they have, generally, the same education and experience and they are doing jobs that you target. For this research, you are not looking for HR (Human Resources) people, you are looking for other professionals who share your background and who have similar working experience.***

4. On your **Profile** page, click on the **Advanced** link to the right of the Search box.



5. On the **Advanced People Search** page, at Location, select **Located in or near:** and enter your **Postal Code**. This sets LinkedIn to search only for people who live around here. The standard setting is within 80 kilometers of your postal code.
6. On the Advanced People Search page, type your search terms in the **Keywords** field. You may want to try jobs (for example: java programmer) or education (for example: MSc Computer Science) or roles (for example: project coordinator).
7. Refine your Search:
  - a. Since you are looking for people like you, if you get hundreds (or thousands) of results when you click Search, refine your search terms.
  - b. Similarly, if you get people who are not doing jobs




you target, or who are at an entirely inappropriate level, refine your search terms.

**Review the profiles of the people your search has found. There is much useful information here: the names of the companies they work for, the skills and experience they emphasize in their summaries, the way they describe the jobs they have done, their contacts and groups.**

8. Note the way that LinkedIn presents the search results. Normally people who are your first level contacts (they have a little **1st** to the right of their names). These are people who are your contacts. Other people will have a **2nd** beside their names. These are people who are contacts of one of your contacts. Yet other people will have **GROUP** beside their names. These are people with whom you are in a LinkedIn Group. More about **2nd** and Groups, below.
9. Visit the profiles of people who look interesting. Note their headlines and their summaries (what skills and experience they emphasize, the words they use to describe their experience, etc.). See the names of the companies they work for. This is an excellent way to discover the names of smaller and medium-sized companies that you may not have heard of.
10. Scroll down the profile, for there are four more interesting things here:
  - a. **People also viewed** . On the right-hand side, LinkedIn shows you the profiles of people similar to the person you've found, but returned by different search parameters. You may well find interesting profiles in this section.
  - b. **How You're Connected**. Further down on the right, this section shows you a route to contact the person described in this profile. In the case of **2nd** , it will show you which of your contacts can provide you an introduction to this person. **Your second level contacts are probably the most profitable people to contact, for in every case you know someone who can introduce you.**
  - c. **People Similar to....** LinkedIn identifies people who it believes are similar to the person you found. Again, there may be interesting profiles here.
  - d. **Groups**. This area identifies LinkedIn Groups to which this person belongs. Groups are useful because they can put you in touch with other people who are interested in your specialty and they are also an excellent way to contact people with whom you have no other connection.



**Make Contact with professionals you have identified through the search process.**

11.  You can contact your **1st** level contacts directly, since they are your personal contacts. Send these people messages through LinkedIn. In sending an email to your contact, you may want to say something like:

*Hello .....*

*It's been a while since we've spoken, and I hope things are going well for you.*



*As you may know, I've recently moved to ..... (this new city) and I'm exploring my fit with ..... jobs.*

*Could we get together for half-an-hour or so over a coffee in the next little while? It would be great if I could pick your brain about pathways into the ..... industry here.*

*Send me an email or call me at ..... It's been too long since we've chatted.*

*Best regards*



12.   For people who are **2nd** level or more from you, LinkedIn suggests you send an **Inmail**. but, when you try to do that, LinkedIn will want you to **Upgrade your account**. This will involve your paying a monthly fee to LinkedIn. You probably don't want to do that -- let's stay with our free account. Here are other ways to contact the person.

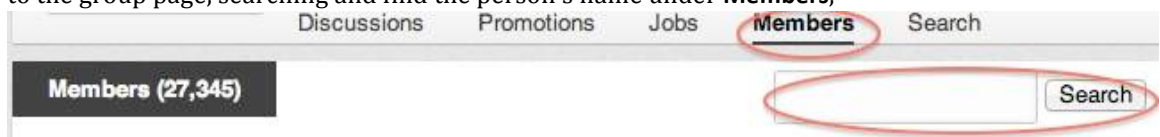
### Upgrade your account



- a. For people who are **2nd** to you, ask your contact for an introduction.
- Send your contact a message asking for an introduction. Perhaps something like this:
 

*Hello .....,  
I hope things are going well. It's been a while since we have spoken.  
Would you be prepared to introduce me to your LinkedIn contact, .....?  
As you may know, I'm doing job search and it would be really helpful to me if I could have a short meeting with ..... to explore my fit with the ..... industry here. I'm looking for a half-an-hour chat and will not be embarrassing him/her by asking him(or her) for a job.  
If you are able to do this, it would certainly help me a lot.  
Best regards*
  - You can make your contact's task easier by suggesting the wording of an email he or she can send to his or her contact. Perhaps something like:
 

*Hello .....,  
I hope things are going well. It's been a while since we have spoken.  
Recently I've been speaking with a contact of mine, ....., who is looking to explore his (or her) fit with the ..... industry here. I know ..... since we .....(something interesting about your background).  
..... has asked me to introduce him/her to you.  
What ..... is looking for is a half-an-hour meeting with you in which you can chat about current challenges in the industry, employer expectations and, generally, how things are done here. .... is looking for your advice and will certainly not be asking you for a job.  
If you are prepared to meet briefly with ....., let me know and I'll send a second email to put you two in touch.  
Best regards*
- b. For a person who is in a **GROUP** with you, send that person a message by going to the group page, searching and find the person's name under **Members**,



and then clicking on **Send Message**.   

*Group members can send each other messages without upgrading their accounts!*

Perhaps you would send something like this:

*Hello .....,  
As a fellow member of the ..... group on LinkedIn, could I approach you to help me better understand my fit with the \_\_\_\_\_ industry in \_\_\_\_\_?*



*I've recently come to ..... and am exploring my pathway to ..... jobs here, and you are certainly in a really good position to help me with your insight and experience. It would be really great if we could meet for half-an-hour to chat about current challenges in the industry, employer expectations and so on. Be assured that I am looking for your opinions and advice only and I will not be asking you for a job.*

*Best regards*

- c. To contact a person to whom you have no connection, scroll to the bottom of his or her profile, find a group to which that person belongs, and join that group. It may be that that group is one that is a useful group for you to join anyway. Once you are a member (in some cases the moderator needs to approve), you can send your fellow group member a message.

***When the person responds, arrange a research meeting at a time that works for your contact. I recommend that you structure the meeting along the following lines.***

13. Begin the meeting with thanks and your 30-second introduction:  
*Thank you so much for meeting with me to-day. Just as we get started, may I tell you quickly something about myself, so that you can know where I'm coming from?*
14. Start with general (industry-related) questions and then get more specific as the conversation develops. Only ask personal questions if good rapport develops.  
*What would you say are the current challenges in the ..... industry?  
Might I ask what kind of projects your organization is currently working on?  
When you hire people, what kind of qualifications do you look for?  
How long have you been with the company?*
15. Keep track of the time. As you approach the 1/2 hour point, be ready to say something like  
*Thank you so much for taking the time to see me to-day. It was so valuable.*
16. Ask for a referral.  
*Now that you know something about me, would you be able to suggest someone else I might speak to?  
Would you be able to email or phone that person to let him/her know that I'll be sending an email? He (or She) won't know me and may not want to answer my email.*
17. Send a Thank You card. *A card is an object, is suitable for a short, hand-written message that makes it clear that it's a personal message from you. Something like  
Thank you so much for meeting with me yesterday. I had not realized ....(something that you learned in the interview).  
I do hope that we'll get a chance to continue our conversation one day.*
18. ***Do not structure your meeting around your résumé.*** Take your résumé with you, if you must, although I think it's a better plan to send it along afterwards (with the Thank You Card) if the person asks for it. ***You are not asking for résumé advice -- your objective is to learn something about the industry and to be remembered by the person you interviewed.***

***Based on your research interviews, update your résumé and create the rest of your LinkedIn Profile to reflect what you have learned.***

2015-06-05

