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Amateur's Guide to Using LinkedIn.com

How to Use Social Networking in the Business World

© [Pamela DeLoatch](#)

[Oct 12, 2008](#)

Business networking sites are not only for CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. Whether it's the low man on the office totem pole or CEO of a family, everyone can benefit.



The phrase "it's not what you know, it's who you know" is clearly the premise of [LinkedIn.com](#). Take friends, family and associates, and expand it to the people they know, and so on, to eventually form a huge group of contacts.

Launched in 2003, this online business meeting spot now boasts a network of 25 million users from around the world, and according to [Business Week](#) magazine, is expected to have up to 70 million members by the end of 2009. New members register and then connect with people they know or want to know. Personal accounts are free, but premium memberships offering additional services are also available for purchase.

Once the membership information is complete, invite friends and associates to join. The search function can show contacts who are already members so they can be invited to link, which sets up the foundation for each network. Next, as those immediate contacts add their own connections, the extended network gets bigger. Another feature of LinkedIn.com is the ability to join virtual groups with similar interests or ask questions of experts.

Who Uses LinkedIn.com?

Small business owners use it. So do mid-level managers in corporations. Heads of large companies are linked in. So are teachers, stay at home parents, retirees, artists and musicians. There's room on LinkedIn.com for anyone who wants to build a group of people who share similar job, career or business interests.

How Do You Use LinkedIn.com?

While your needs may differ, here are some common uses of LinkedIn:

- You are interested in pursuing a new line of work, but you'd like to get some advice on how to get started, so you go to the Answers board and ask your question, getting advice from experts in your immediate and extended network.
- You want to find other members from your college, so you do a keyword search on your school and see who else is there.
- You're a recruiter looking to fill a particular job. You do a search on the job title or keyword to see who in your network has that job experience. If you don't know them directly, you can contact the person who does, and get a recommendation before you pursue them.
- You want to work for Company X. Your foot in the door might be finding out who you know who already

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works there. You can do a search on Company X and identify a contact.

- As a stay at home parent, you want to keep in touch with the business world. Start your network and look for opportunities to make new connections.
- As a business professional, you want to increase your visibility. You build your network, participate in groups and provide answers to members' questions, establishing yourself as the expert.
- You are a teacher, and want to get an expert's opinion on a technical or cutting edge subject. Contact your LinkedIn network to see who can help.

So no matter your position in the business world, LinkedIn.com provides a simple way to expand your business connections, reconnect with others and discover that it is indeed a small world after all.

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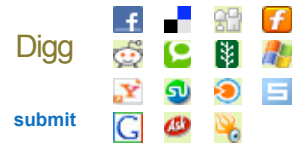
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