The Gamecock's Guide to
LINKEDIN LITERACY

Looking to expand your network, find employment opportunities, or even satisfy a class requirement? You've come to the right place!

LinkedIn is a professional social networking platform that allows you to:

- Highlight your professional accomplishments
- Search for jobs/internships or recruit eligible candidates
- Grow your network of professionals in your organization or desired field

The Career Center at the University of South Carolina is dedicated to helping our students be familiar with and engage with LinkedIn and its offerings. Below, you will find **strategies to elevate your profile** and **tips to strategically use the platform**.

MAKE A STRONG FIRST-IMPRESSION BY CUSTOMIZING YOUR PROFILE

CHOOSE A PROFILE PICTURE

- Choose a recent photo so your profile reflects what an employer could expect if they met you tomorrow.

- No group photos! Make sure you are the only subject of the photo.

- Wear attire appropriate for your job/industry.

- Take the photo from the torso up so your face is the highlight of the photo.

- **Need a headshot?** Visit the Career Center to use our Iris headshot booth!

Cocky's headshot game is strong!

CHOOSE A COVER IMAGE

- A photo that aligns with your job/industry is best. For example, as a student at USC, you may choose a photo of campus or the Columbia area!

CREATE A CLEAR HEADLINE

- LinkedIn allows users to write 220 characters of text to describe their interests, current positions, or goals.

- Your headline should allow you to stand out among other similar candidates in your field. Along with your name and photo, this is the most accessible information for other LinkedIn users when initially viewing your profile.

- Include information about your current area of study, future job/internship goals, or any positions you hold for a relevant organization.

- Below are some **examples of strong headlines** for different areas of interest:

  – Electrical Engineering Student at the University of South Carolina | Focused on Renewable Energy & Power Systems | Seeking 2026 Summer Internship

  – Psychology Student at the University of South Carolina | Research Assistant focused on social psychology | Eager to apply skills in clinical research

  – English and Communications Student at the University of South Carolina | Developing skills in content strategy and technical writing

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ENTER YOUR PREVIOUS WORK HISTORY IN THE "EXPERIENCES" SECTION

- Like your resume, the "Experiences" section allows recruiters to learn more about your work/involvement history. This section is formatted similarly to a resume, highlighting job title, location of position, length of position, and bullet points to describe what was accomplished during employment.

- Bullet points should be clear and concise. Best practices include starting with a strong action verb such as "managed," "implemented," "maintained," etc. and explaining steps taken to achieve a goal with results.

- For additional help reviewing the "Experiences" section or your resume, **make an appointment with the Career Center on** Handshake.

WRITE A COMPREHENSIVE "ABOUT" SECTION

- Think about the "About" section as a professional bio or virtual elevator pitch. This is a space for you to present more of your personality to employers or recruiters. Write about your interests or passions within the field, goals you are hoping to achieve through the course of your education and career, and how your previous skills and experiences will help you excel.

- The "About" section can vary in length, anywhere from one to three paragraphs – we recommend reviewing other professionals' profiles in your industry to get inspiration for how to format your About section.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK THROUGH CONNECTIONS

- Search for peers, professors and professional staff at your institution!

- Follow accounts related to your institution such as the University of South Carolina Career Center or the page for your specific College to see updates and features of professionals involved in that network.

- Keep an eye on suggestions in your feed to build your network of individuals with similar interests.

- When connecting with someone, you can send a note along with your request.

  - Consider expressing your interest in working with their company, how your goals align with theirs, or simply introducing yourself beyond what is available in your profile or passing along your resume if appropriate.

  - You have access to 5 personalized connection requests per month with the free version of LinkedIn!

POST YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR YOUR NETWORK TO SEE

- Posts on LinkedIn can range from job announcements and project execution to certificate completion or semesterly updates.

- When posting, choose a photo that highlights the event or position. This can include a photo of you and your team on-site, or of the company logo. A photo makes your post more appealing and grabs the attention of the audience.

- Questions to consider when posting:

  - Why are you excited about the opportunity?

  - What skills will you gain through the opportunity?

  - How will the opportunity influence your future goals?

  - What impact did your hand in the opportunity have on your industry?

ENGAGE, ENGAGE, ENGAGE!

- Now that you have successfully customized your profile, made some connections, and posted about your accomplishments, it's time to stay engaged! We recommend checking the platform frequently to see any new connections, opportunities or notifications.

- Stay up to date on posts from companies or profiles that interest you. Engage in those posts by leaving a like or comment!

- Send messages to profiles that you would like to make connections with.

  - **Pro-tip: looking to be hired?** Message a recruiter on LinkedIn and inform them that you have submitted an application and are excited about the opportunity.