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LinkedIn - Dos and Don'ts

All the tips and tricks to an engaging profile.

LinkedIn is necessary for all professions and degrees, but particularly for law. It is absolutely essential for law students to network and create relationships with firms and professionals, in order to increase their commercial awareness and widen their network. LinkedIn is the ideal way to form these essential connections, and in this modern era, can even be used as a virtual CV. 70% of employers google their applicants, and if the first result is a strong LinkedIn profile then they're more likely to hire - and its free!

When creating a LinkedIn profile, a clear, professional looking photo is essential. Research shows that a profile with a clear profile photo is up to fourteen times more likely to be viewed than a profile without a photo. Along with your bio, your profile photo is the first thing potential employers will see, so make sure it reflects exactly what you want to be portrayed as professionally (i.e. a facebook pic of you holding a pint of beer is probably not a wise choice). Make sure you can clearly be recognised from your photo. This means that people you meet at events can easily recognise your profile and are more likely to connect with you.

Your bio is equally as important as your profile photo. Your bio must show all information about you that might be relevant to your potential contacts, without being too long winded. Your bio should include your current position, but it is not a list of achievements (thats what your experience/education/news feed is for). Remember: your aim is to stand out. Having your bio as "first year law student" doesn't really give away much information about yourself and what you're looking for, and can result in your profile being lost in a sea of students profiles. An engaging bio will include what you are interested in, or looking for from LinkedIn. For example, "Law student with a keen interest in corporate law, seeking summer placement scheme".

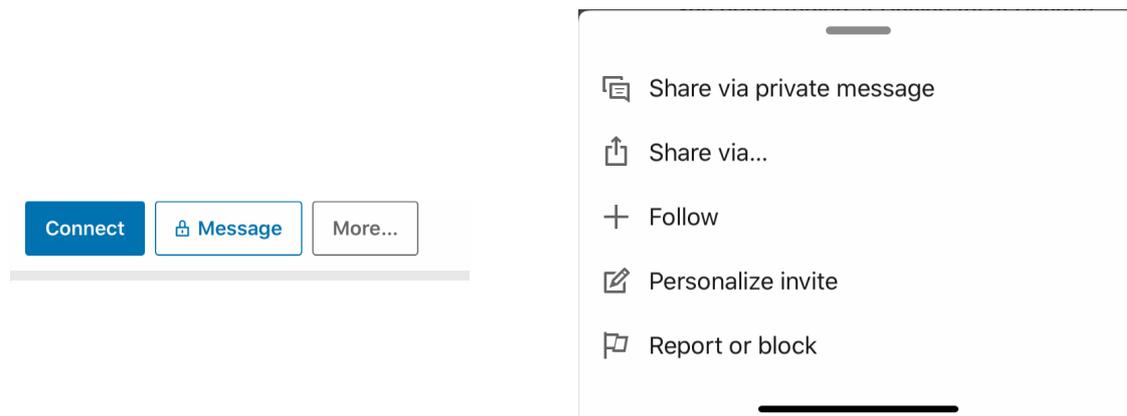
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Once your profile is established, making connections is the next step in your networking career. But who do you connect with? In basic terms - connect with anybody who you think you can gain something from, or can gain something from you. Think about what kind of LinkedIn posts you would like to see on your feed, and who might be able to aid you with opportunity. Having said this, be wary of ghost accounts or companies who are trying to sell something. LinkedIn is about increasing your network and commercial awareness and you don't want to clog your feed with adverts.

Something that is worth noting is the "personalised invite" feature. This can be found when you click on someones profile, under the "more..." section. Sending a personalised invite with details of why you would like to connect with someone shows much more initiative than simply clicking "connect" and hoping for the best. Use this feature to refresh your potential connections memory as to where you met, let them know why they will be of use to you. This feature has proven very useful to me personally and even landed me some wonderful work experience opportunities!



Don't be afraid of "stalking". Fortunately, the general rules of social media "stalking" don't really apply to LinkedIn. Do look up your potential interviewers, employers and guest speakers. While there is a feature which allows people to see who has viewed their profile, it doesn't work in your disfavour. In fact, quite the opposite. Employers are more than happy to see engagement from their applicants, and if anything, searching them shows initiative and puts your name in their head.

Lastly, remember to post. Like posts, engage with posts, but most of all make posts! Every event you organise, attend or engage with is relevant. Your connections want to see

what you've done, and what you're interested in. Make sure you engage with your connections posts, in order to get your name out there. In turn, they will engage with you! When you can, try to include photos in your posts - this makes them eye catching and interesting, and generally illustrates what you're saying, allowing people to get a better overall image of what you're trying to portray.

Happy networking,

Mhairi