



“I’ve Signed Up on LinkedIn. What’s Next?”

By Ted Janusz

Has this ever happened to you?

You are at a networking function and somebody runs up to you and announces, “Hi! I’m Joe! I fix computers. Here’s my card. If you ever need your computer fixed, call me!” Before you even have a chance to respond or look at his card, Joe has already sprinted over to the next attendee to repeat his spiel.

LinkedIn is a social networking site – a place to build an online community. But Joe’s way is **not** the way to network on LinkedIn. We’ll discuss six quick ways to maximize your participation on LinkedIn.

The Differences Among the Popular Social Networking Sites

MySpace is a social networking site for bands; and other music and entertainment.

Facebook is a site at which you can “poke” your friends, play games, and post photos on your profile and comments on your friends’ “walls.”

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is like the corporate boardroom. No fun and games here, this site means serious business.

A Brief History of LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional contact database that was launched in May 2007 by Reid Hoffman, formerly of PayPal. Its members can create a profile and network with its current 50 million members in 200 countries. Members include executives from all Fortune 500 companies.

Six Quick Ways to Maximize Your Participation on LinkedIn

A question I often get asked in my conference presentations is, “I’ve signed up on LinkedIn. What’s next?”

Though LinkedIn does not come with a user’s manual, you don’t need to be a computer whiz to derive immediate benefits from the site.

Here are six quick ways to maximize your participation on LinkedIn:

In the screen shot below of the LinkedIn application, on the left of the screen you will see the **Groups** link. Across the top of the screen, you will find the **People, Jobs, Answers** and **Companies** links.

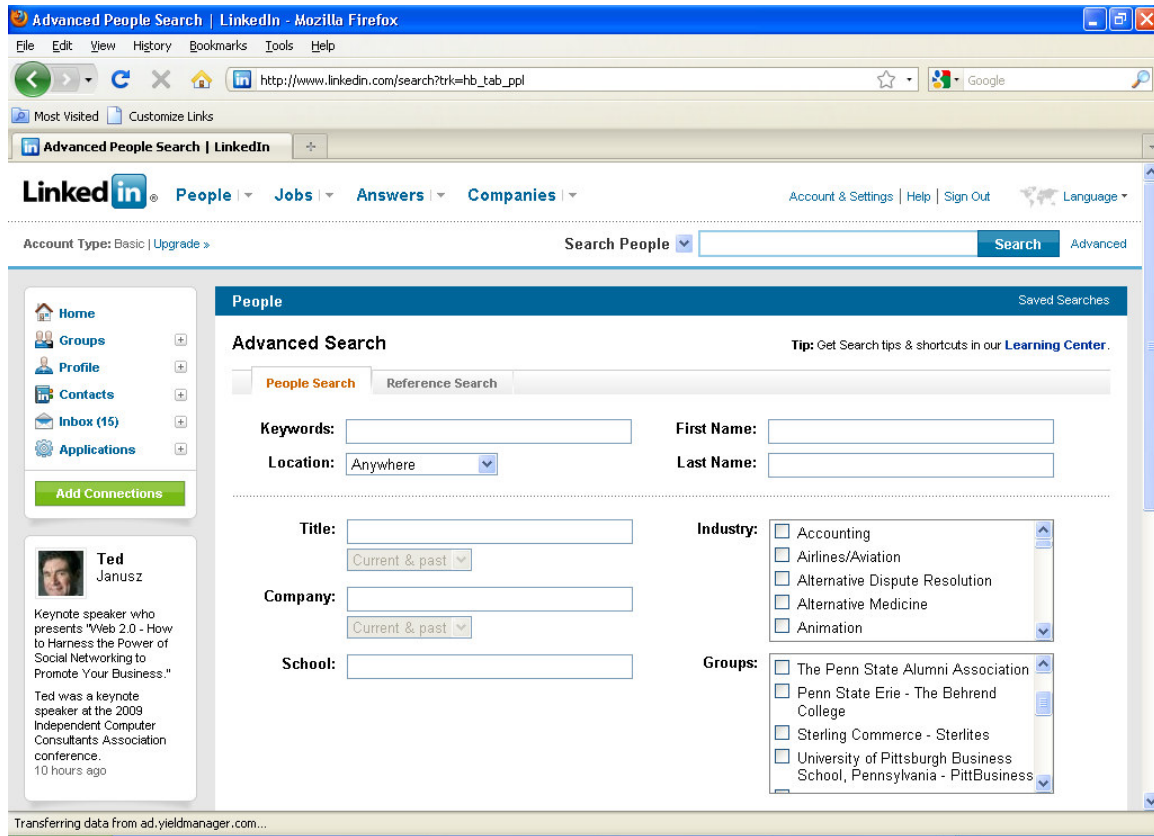
1) Groups – To network with as many people as you can, join as many relevant groups as you can.

For instance, I have joined alumni groups for the three colleges I attended, for the current and former companies for which I have worked, and for my business interests (such as “keynote speakers”).

I have also created groups and have asked others to join.

You may never know when these people could help you, or more importantly, when you may be able to help them.

To get started, simply click the “Groups” link on the left of the screen.



2) People – By clicking on the “People” link at the top of the screen, you can search for LinkedIn members by criteria such as:

- Name
- Company
- Location
- School attended
- Title

At one point in my career, I was interested in becoming a brand manager. Had LinkedIn been in existence then, I could have done a keyword search on the title of “brand manager.”

I could then look to see who was a direct or even a 2nd degree contact. (A 2nd degree contact is a direct contact of one of my direct contacts on LinkedIn.)

On a 2nd degree contact’s profile, I could click the “Get introduced through a connection” link. This will send an e-mail both to my direct contact and the 2nd degree contact.

On average, you will get a positive response from one or both of the contacts about 70% of the time. That percentage is a lot higher than if you tried to reach the 2nd degree contact on your own.

Once I have made a connection with my 2nd degree contact, I could ask for advice about the position: “What do you like about your job? Dislike about your job?” To use LinkedIn effectively, I would look *to build social equity*, rather than to directly ask for a job.

3) Jobs – Once I received some insights about being a brand manager and decided that it was a position worth pursuing, I could then click on the “Jobs” link at the top of the screen and, using the keywords “brand manager,” search for jobs in that field without going to a different Web site.

If you are an employer, you can also post a job. LinkedIn claims, “LinkedIn Jobs receive on average 35+ applicants.”

4) Questions – In the “Questions” section, after “Browsing” under your area of expertise, you might be able to help a fellow member.

For example, a current entry in the Questions section states, “[I’m looking for recommendations on beverage alcohol state compliance outsourcing - need someone to handle some of my brands.](#)”

Perhaps you are the one who could assist this LinkedIn member by clicking the “Answer” button. Even better, you might be able to click the “Suggest an Expert” button and recommend someone who you are actually seeking as a client.

If you are stuck, you can ask your own Question on LinkedIn. Many professionals find that spending time on LinkedIn answering such Questions for those who actually have a need can be a more efficient way to look for new business than to spend money advertising or time cold-calling others who may have no interest.

5) Companies – Let’s say you have been trying to get into Procter & Gamble. With a multinational corporation like that where do you even start? Click on the “Companies” link at the top of the screen.

When I did that, under the company profile, I noticed that a 2nd degree contact was listed, along with the name of my direct contact who knows her. Using the method described above, I could then request an introduction through my direct contact.

Also are listed 22,100 current P&G employees who I am related to through one or more of my Groups. (Now you see the benefit of taking action under Step 1, **Groups**, above.)

Below them are my direct and 2nd degree contacts who once worked at P&G. Should I get a job offer there as a brand manager, before I accepted the position, I could ask former employees for a truthful inside scoop, "What was it like to work there? Why did you leave?"

6) Service Providers (in the drop-down menu under **Companies**) – In this case, let's say you are a Dentist and you would like the 50 million members of LinkedIn to know about you and also how great you are. It's easy.

Simply click the "Request a Recommendation" link and, using the pre-filled form, ask one of your contacts to write a testimonial for you. This again is easy, because your contact simply needs to respond to the e-mail, no fancy stationery is necessary. Have him or her write the testimonial so that potential clients can easily see what could be in it for them to request your services.

If you are not a Dentist, choose your particular specialty from the Categories list on the right side of the screen.

99% Information and 1% Promotion

"The key to social networking tools is to have lots of connections," says Guy Kawasaki, the original Macintosh evangelist. "It's a numbers game. The more people who are connected to you, the more opportunities you have.

But people don't connect with you because you are promoting yourself to them. People connect with you because you *are informing* them."

Kawasaki concludes by saying, "You need to be informing people 99% of the time and then 1% of the time you can promote your company."

Somebody needs to tell Joe.

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Ted Janusz is a professional speaker, author and marketing consultant, who presents "Web 2.0 - How to Harness the Power of Social Networking to Promote Your Business." Janusz has been invited to appear on the Geraldo show on FOX News Network. A speaker at the 2008 International Association of Administrative Professionals conference, he has also presented dozens of Creative Marketing Conferences across the country for Rockhurst University and was a keynote speaker for the 2009 Independent Computer Consultants Association conference in San Francisco. Janusz was selected by eBay to conduct "eBay University" seminars nationwide. His Website is: www.januspresentations.com

