

What is Linked in?

www.Linkedin.co.uk

Linkedin is a social networking site geared towards professional networking. The purpose of the site is to allow users to network with each other for business purposes; be it to stay in touch, advertise job opportunities, to recommend people for business or to discuss new ventures. It is the main professional network on the net in the UK with 4 million users: first recruitment agency!

What can I use it for?

You can use Linkedin in a number of different ways:

- To find people within your network who work in the industries/sectors you are interested in
- To identify potential providers, recruiters
- To get recommended by other people to advertise your capabilities
- To outline your profile so that people can see your experience and background; to build and support your personal branding
- To join networking groups, such as Alumni Linkedin groups
- To find out more about career paths in an industry that appeals to you
- To keep in touch with people who have become part of your network or reconnect with past colleagues

How does it work?

1) **PROFILE:** To begin with you must create your profile. This is as important as a CV as it will highlight to the reader your key skills and experience. It needs to be clear, concise and contain key words about your expertise. Add a good quality picture to your profile – it will increase traffic on your profile by 40%.

Your profile explores:

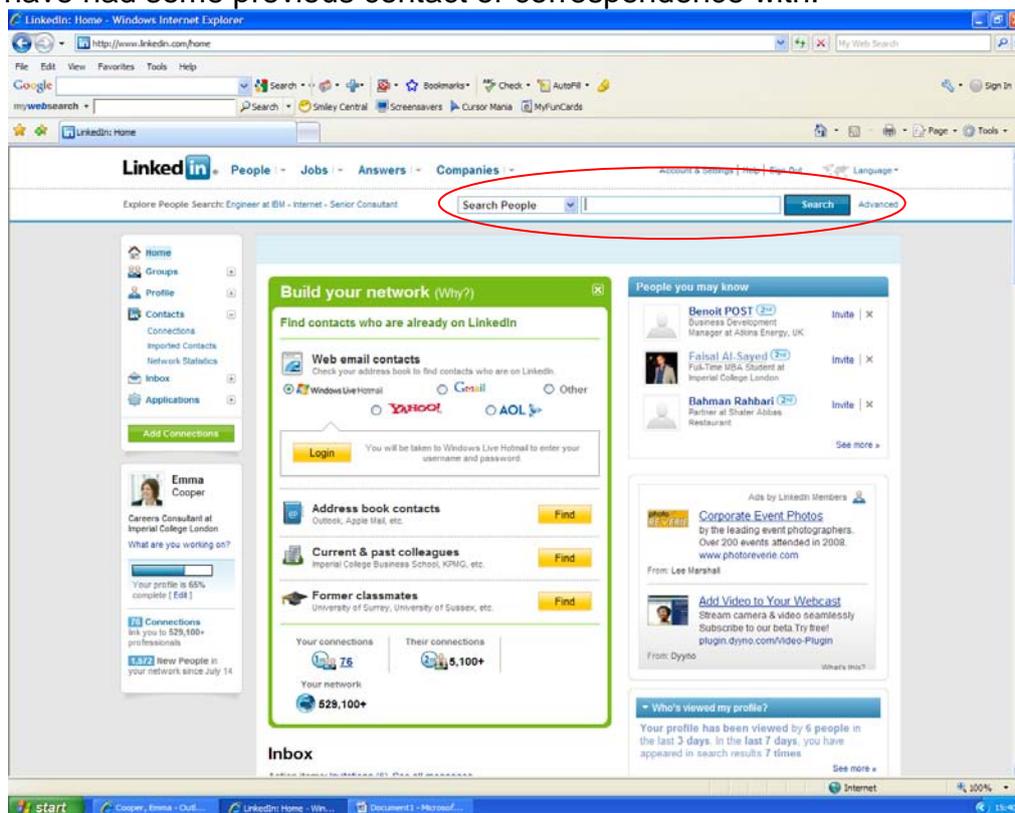
- Your experience; the work you have done in which companies during which times
- Your education; where and what you studied
- Additional information; this might include links to websites or professional blogs
- Contact settings; the information you are interested in people contacting your about

RECCOMENDATIONS: As with a CV make sure this information is accurate, well written and professional. In this section you can also ask for people to “recommend you”; so you might want to ask people you have worked with to send you a recommendation here.

2) **CONNECTIONS:** You must then build your connections.

By inviting people to connect with you, you are expanding your professional network. Start by inviting members of the careers team; this will then give you access to their network. Then invite the people you used to work with, people you went to school with and friends and associates. The more people you connect with, the more connections you have through their contacts. A useful way of adding contacts is to keep an eye on who the people you know add as contacts – if you know them too, then add them too.

You can build connections through finding people from the organisation/education search or through your email address book. You can also use the “Search people” function at the top of the page. But you should **only** connect with people that you have had some previous contact or correspondence with.



- 3) **SEARCHING:** Once you have built your connections you can start searching for contacts that might be useful for you. You can also become a member of groups – in your industry, relating to your position/function or relating to your location.

Start by thinking about the area you are interested in and then type this into the “Search people” box at the top of the page. You might type in an industry, organisation name or job role here. The “Advanced Search” option (click on “Advanced” next to the search function) also allows you to do a more detailed search.

You will then see a list of people who have these key words in their profile (as overleaf).

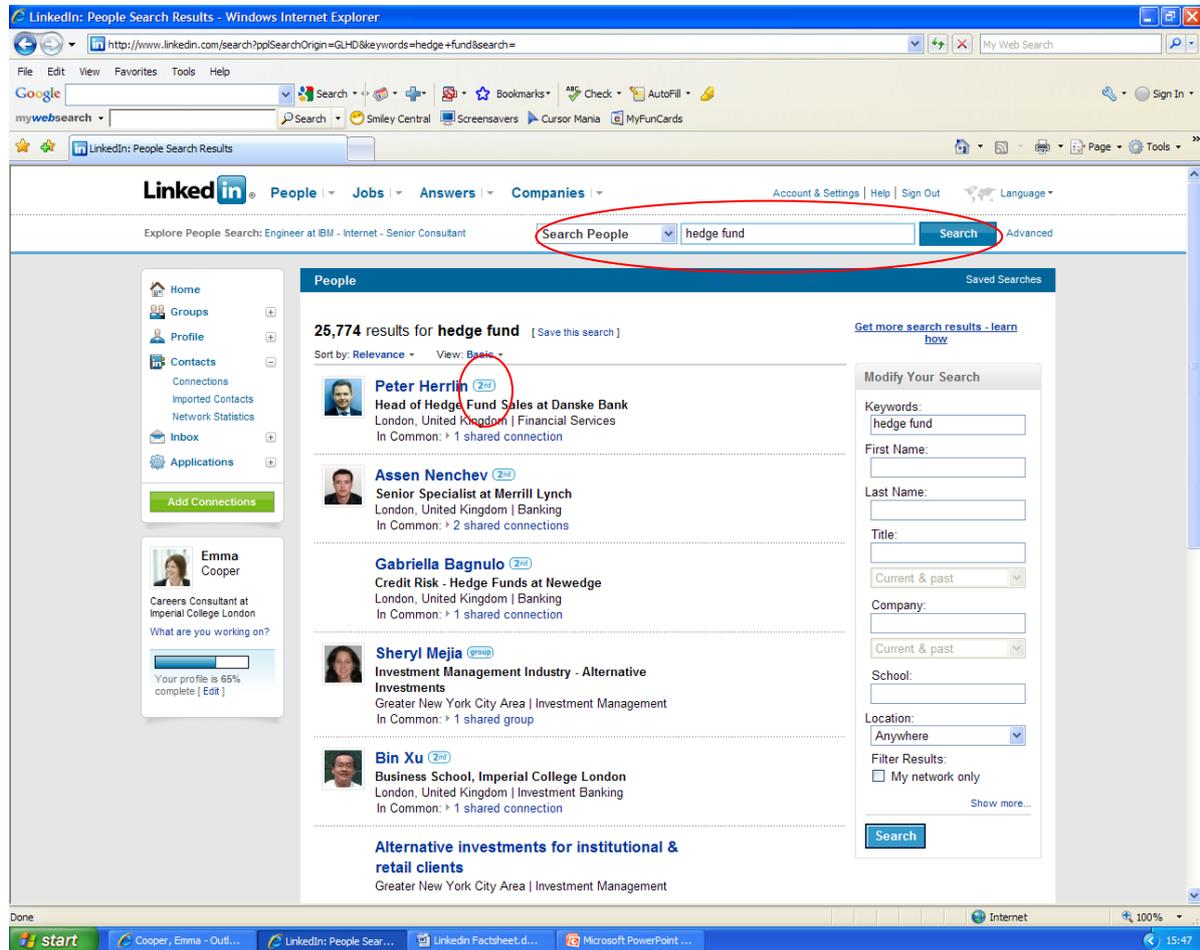
You may notice the following descriptions next to the person’s name:

- 1st This means you are directly connected to this person (they are a first contact).
- 2nd This means you are connected to someone who knows this person. If you click on the person’s name you will see how you are connected to them (under “How you

are connected to X”). You can also have third connections where there is another person in the connection chain.

 This means you are in the same group (i.e. Your University Alumni group) as this person. Normally you are only allowed to join a group if you meet certain criteria and are accepted into the group by the group administrator.

If there is no symbol by the person’s name it means you don’t have a current connection to them.



4) **CONTACTING:** Contacting the person.

If you are connected through another person, the easiest way is for you to ask that person to put you in touch. The best way is to do this directly by speaking to the person, but you can also do this via LinkedIn. To do this you can click on the person’s name and then choose “Get introduced through a connection”. If you do not have any connections with this person, you can also introduce yourself by “Send InMail”; but there is a charge for this service. It would be a better option to note the person’s name and organisation, and then make a speculative approach by working out their email address. Always personalise your invitations. You can also message people directly through LinkedIn if you are connected to them through membership of a Group.

5) **RESEARCH:** Learning about career paths and companies

Even if you don’t want to contact the person you can still learn a lot by reading their profile. You can look at the steps they have taken in their career to get where they are. This might give you a clue as to the steps that you need to take.

You can also do a company search by clicking the “Companies” tab at the top of the page. This will give you basic information about that company, as well as a list of people you are connected to who work there, used to work there, or who have just joined. It will also tell you if they are advertising any opportunities through LinkedIn. **EVENTS:** you can find out about events in your industry or create your own event.

6) **JOB SEARCH:** Finding a job

LinkedIn also has a jobs board; there are sometimes roles advertised here that aren't advertised elsewhere and for which you have to apply through LinkedIn. It also usefully tells you whether you are connected to the person posting the job, or anyone else within that organisation who might be able to refer you or give you further insight into the role or company. Technology, Mobile, Media and Web-Based companies seem to be particularly heavy users of the LinkedIn jobs board (e.g. eBay and Vodafone). Many high-end recruiters are using LinkedIn to post jobs and look for candidates.

Here are some other general tips/facts about LinkedIn:

1. Your contact information is hidden.
2. List past companies and jobs, not just the current one, in your profile. You never know who might be looking for you.
3. You can synchronize your LinkedIn account with Outlook, Outlook Express, Plaxo, Act, Lotus, Palm, etc. It will tell you who in your address book are already members. You also have the ability to choose whom from your address book you want to invite. You don't have to invite all or none. This is another function it is good to check every so often.
4. “Your network” gives you have access to the names in “their network” unless they blind them, which is very infrequently. It is also good to check changes in your “network” to keep up with people.
5. I like to keep an eye on the people added under network updates on the home page.
6. You have to work this network. It doesn't just come automatically. So plan time each day or each week.
7. Use the help tab if you have any questions.

Tips

- **Click on My Contacts on the tool bar.** When it goes to that page you will see Colleagues in the space right below the tool bar. This is a great way to find past associates from current or previous employers that you might have lost track of. The list it gives you is not all-inclusive as it only provides 20 or so names. But they update it frequently
- **Ask your network a question:** This is a newer feature that allows you to ask questions of everyone in your network. (Obviously the larger the network the better the response.) You can use this if you need help on a project or a talk you are giving or more information on a particular subject. You can come up with your own reasons for using this one.

- **Endorsements:** You can ask others in your network, former employers, clients, business colleagues, etc. to give you a recommendation. These show on your profile. Again these can provide you with a lot of credibility.
- **Identifying hiring managers or individuals to approach**
It is little known that you can view personal profiles outside of your network by searching in Google. This means you can develop a list of people to approach in a target market, knowing their background, in an instant. To do so, all you need to do is:
 1. Go to Google
 2. Insert 'site:.linkedin.com' into the search box (meaning Google only searches LinkedIn)
 3. Insert your search terms, e.g. marketing director retail
 4. Click search and interrogate the results
- **Access premium company information without paying a premium**
LinkedIn recently launched its company information pages. If you haven't yet clicked around the various links – give it a go. You'll find informative and unique data, including:
 - company description
turnover, number of employees, locations
 - latest news
 - analysis of the growth of the company benchmarked against the industry it operates within
 - the companies employees move onto when leaving
 - related companies
 - new hires and promotions
 - education levels of employees
 - proportion of staff per function benchmarked against the industry
 - testimonials from customers
- **Web Pages:** You can provide links to your web pages. This is especially helpful if you are a small entrepreneur or work for a lesser-known company.
- **Special Interest Groups:** There are all kinds of SIGs on LinkedIn that are composed of "like minded" people, i.e. project managers, product management, etc. If there isn't a group in an area you want one in it is very easy to start one.