

7 LinkedIn Features to Make Your Job Search Easier

If you haven't used LinkedIn to look for a new job, you may not be aware of all the things you can do and all the resources that are available to help you find and apply for jobs that are a good fit. LinkedIn has made many updates to the platform in an effort to improve your job search. Here are seven LinkedIn features you should know about.

"See Your Commute" feature. LinkedIn announced a new module that allows you to evaluate the commute time for jobs you are interested in. When you find a job that intrigues you on LinkedIn's mobile app, you'll soon find the "See Your Commute" section. Enter your home address and your method of transportation and it will calculate your approximate commute time. There are many factors that go into evaluating a job opportunity and commute time is an important one. Being able to evaluate this, without leaving the job posting, makes it simple to eliminate jobs that don't meet your commuting criteria.

Make sure you match the job. LinkedIn job postings now include a feature called "How You Match." This allows you to see just how well your background overlaps with the necessities of the job. When you click on a job posting, LinkedIn shows you if your education level, skills, years of experience and current job title match with what a company is looking for in a potential new hire based on criteria the company shares when posting a job on LinkedIn. One of recruiters' biggest complaints is that candidates are not qualified for the jobs they apply for. You can save yourself and the recruiter time by applying only to the jobs you are best qualified for.

Ask for a referral. Being a referred candidate will increase your chances of landing an interview. LinkedIn says referred candidates are four times more likely to hear back from a recruiter. LinkedIn makes finding someone you know inside a company easy. You can filter LinkedIn jobs using "LinkedIn features" and select the ones that are "In Your Network." This shows you the jobs where you have a connection. Once you find a job you are interested in, click on the "Ask For A Referral" link and LinkedIn will help craft a message. The message asks your connection to refer your profile to the hiring manager or recruiter and includes a link to the job, but always personalize your message as much as possible to help your connection remember you and why you're qualified.

Let recruiters know you are open to new opportunities. If you are currently employed or a college student looking for an internship or job after graduation, there's a way for you to let recruiters know you are searching. It's called "Open Candidate." The good news is that recruiters who work for your current company cannot see this information, which means you won't jeopardize your job. To let recruiters know you're open for opportunities and refine your settings, go to the "Jobs" tab and you'll find the "Career interests" setting with a blue pen next to it. If you are using the mobile app, you will find "Career interests" on your profile's dashboard. Here you can indicate the job titles you are interested in, the cities you are open to and the type of work, such as an internship or full-time job, and when you would be ready to start a new position. This is one more way you can help let recruiters know you are in the market for a job.

No matter when you graduated, alumni connections make a great way to connect with company insiders. If you haven't tried the "See alumni" tool, you may be surprised by how much information is available. To access this tool from LinkedIn's desktop site, search for the school you attended and look for "See alumni." You can filter fellow alumni by the cities they work in, the companies they work for or

the type of role they have. You can even filter by the years they attended or graduated to find people you may actually know.

Use this feature to talk to people who can provide the inside scoop on what it's like to work for a company. Or you could connect with alumni in a city you want to relocate to and have an instant network.

Update your photo. You do need a headshot for your profile, but it doesn't need to be taken by a professional. LinkedIn offers you the ability to edit your photo by cropping and using filters to give it a more polished look. And did you know that having a profile photo can result in 21 times more profile views on LinkedIn as well as lead to up to nine times more connection requests, according to LinkedIn.

Location, location, location. If you plan to relocate, adding the right location to your profile "can help you be discovered up to 23 times more in searches by alumni, recruiters, former colleagues and others," according to LinkedIn. Recruiters typically use location as one of the filters when searching for candidates. Don't get overlooked because you haven't indicated the right metro area. If you are open to several different locations, you can specify additional geographic preferences in the "Career interests" section of your profile.

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