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LinkedIn

With over 830 million members and over 58 million registered employers, LinkedIn is one of the most popular professional social networks worldwide. 87% of recruiters regularly use LinkedIn to recruit new hires. A LinkedIn profile allows a recruiter to learn more about you than just what is on your resume. LinkedIn is the top tool for creating a professional online presence for yourself.

Getting Started

1. Create a Free LinkedIn Profile

Include a professional photo, a compelling headline, an interesting summary, and information about your work and educational background. Customize your LinkedIn URL. Include your industry to maximize your search potential. Use industry appropriate keywords. Select a professional banner. Consider asking a supervisor, previous supervisor, or faculty member to write you a recommendation on LinkedIn.

2. Connect with Everyone You Know

Connect with friends, classmates, faculty, co-workers, work supervisors, teammates, members from clubs/groups that you belong to, and professionals in your career field of interest that you have met. Send them a personal note to *connect*.

3. Join Groups

Join industry specific groups related to your career interests. Join groups that you may be affiliated with including the Official Bridgewater State (College & University) Alumni Group and the BSU Student and Alumni Networking Group. The BSU Student and Alumni Networking Group is comprised of alumni who have joined the group specifically to provide career advice to BSU students and fellow alumni. Connect with alumni that you may have an interest in speaking with and request an informational interview.

4. Follow Your Favorite Companies

View posted jobs. Read posts to stay current on company news. Search within a company to see if BSU alumni are employed there.

5. Connect with BSU Alumni

Gain access to nearly 50,000 BSU alumni by checking out the Bridgewater State University page. Narrow down the list by conducting a keyword search or by using the pre-set filters. Connect with alumni you would like to reach out to by sending a personal note to *connect*.

6. Check out the Career Services Website for Tips and Resources

Having trouble getting started? Visit the Career Services website, click on *Site Map*, and then click on *LinkedIn & Networking*. Find articles on how to build a great profile, how to build your professional brand, and how to network on LinkedIn.



Sample Connection Request Message to a BSU Alum (300-character limit):

Dear Susan,

While visiting the BSU Alumni webpage on LinkedIn, I came across your profile and was very interested in your career journey. As a psychology major at BSU, I was hoping to connect with you to learn more about your career path. If you are willing and able to share your experience, please accept my connection invitation or email me at student@student.bridgew.edu.

I look forward to connecting with you.

Kind regards,

Jennifer Taylor

Sample Post & Discussion Thread - BSU Student and Alumni Networking Group Post on LinkedIn:

Ann Smith, BSU Student

Currently, I am a junior at BSU pursuing a degree in management. I have developed an interest in the human resources field, and I am very interested in hearing from alumni in this field regarding their experiences, what type of entry level jobs are available in the field, and how to find internships. Please feel free to add your comments to this discussion or email me privately at student@student.bridgew.edu. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Stephen Wimmons, HR Manager at Reebok.

I would be happy to provide you with information regarding my line of work. Feel free to send me message through LinkedIn.

Ann Smith, BSU Student

Thank you, Stephen. I just sent you a connection request message. I hope that you will accept my invitation. I look forward to speaking to you regarding the human resources field.

Sample Direct Message to a BSU Alum or Professional on LinkedIn:

Dear Michael:

I recently saw your profile on BSU's Student and Alumni Networking Group on LinkedIn and am interested in speaking to you about the field of sales and marketing.

Currently, I am a sophomore at Bridgewater State University, and I am working toward a degree in marketing. Through my coursework and my part-time job at Home Depot, I have become interested in pursuing work in retail sales and marketing after graduation.

I would appreciate the opportunity to ask you a few questions about your work and the field in general. Is there a day and time that you would be available to speak to me for about 20 to 30 minutes? I can be reached through LinkedIn, via e-mail at student@bridgew.edu, or by calling 508-555-5555.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,

Joe Campbell

Bridgewater State University | Marketing Major | Class of 20xx

Professional Etiquette

Email

- Use a professional email address
- Use a descriptive subject line such as “BSU Student Requesting Informational Interview” or “BSU Student Requesting Career Advice”
- Keep your message professional, short, and concise
- Do not use casual language, abbreviations, all CAPS or emojis. Write in complete sentences
- Use an easy-to-read font
- Be sure to spell-check and reread your message before sending
- Thank the professional at the end of the email or LinkedIn correspondence

Phone

- Record a professional voicemail message. For example, “Hello, you have reached _____. I am unavailable at the moment. If you could please leave your name, number, and a brief message, I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you.”
- Choose a quiet environment for phone conversations

In-Person

- Greet the professional with a firm handshake, introduce yourself with your first and last name, and express your interest in meeting them
- Show that you are listening. Nod your head, smile, and maintain good eye contact
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not answer your phone or text during any interactions with professionals

Virtual

- Choose a quiet location where you will not be interrupted
- Select a location that has a neutral background
- Be sure to download the virtual platform that is going to be used for the informational interview
- Test the virtual platform prior to the start of your meeting
- Test your Wi-Fi to ensure a good connection

Informational Interviews

Once you have made initial contact with a professional, you can request an informational interview. An informational interview is a 20-30 minute conversation that allows you to gain insights on a career path, an industry, a company and/or general career advice from a professional in your career field of interest. The purpose of an informational interview is not to ask for a job, although it is possible that an informational interview could lead to internship or job prospects.

How to Conduct an Informational Interview

1. The Introduction

Prepare and send an email requesting an informational interview. State how you found the professional and why you are reaching out. If you were referred by someone, be sure to mention that person’s name and position title as well as the name of organization where they work.

2. Follow-up Contact

If you have not heard back from the person that you sent the email request to within a week's period, send a follow-up email or call them if you have their phone number. Politely remind them of the request and ask if they would be willing to schedule a time for an informational interview.

3. Informational Interview Preparation

- Visit the professional's LinkedIn profile and send them a personalized connection request message
- Research the company and the industry and be prepared to discuss your newfound knowledge
- Create a list of questions (approximately 5-7 questions for a 20–30 minute interview). It is possible that a professional may ask for your questions in advance of the interview. Be ready to send your prepared questions if the professional requests that you do so.
- Practice your elevator pitch
- Choose professional attire that you can wear on the day of the meeting whether in person or virtual

4. The Informational Interview

- Dress professionally
- Arrive ten minutes early
- Bring a notebook, a pen, a copy of your resume and a list of prepared questions
- Choose a quiet place with a neutral background if you are conducting the interview virtually
- Begin the conversation by restating your objective and providing your background
- Maintain good eye contact
- Ask your prepared questions and take notes
- Respect the professional's time by sticking to the agreed timeframe
- Request a referral to another professional in the field that you may contact
- End the conversation by asking for a business card or contact information and expressing your appreciation

5. The Thank You Email

Within 48 hours of the informational interview, send an email thanking the professional for their time.

6. Stay in Touch

Once you make a new connection, stay in touch. Keep your contacts up to date on your job search. If your contact suggested reaching out to another professional in the field, inform them when you have scheduled an informational interview with the person they recommended.

Sample Email Requesting an Informational Interview:

Dear Janice:

Thank you for connecting with me on LinkedIn. After reviewing your profile, I was intrigued by your career path in the accounting field.

Currently, I am a junior at Bridgewater State University pursuing a degree in Accounting and Finance with a concentration in accounting. My recent internship with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP was very successful, and I have decided that I will be pursuing work in this field.

I would be excited to learn how you entered the field and what recommendations you may have as I start my job search. Would you be willing to meet with me for 20-25 minutes in person, virtually or by phone? I am available every Monday and Thursday after 1:00 p.m. I will follow-up with you next week to see if you would

be able to arrange a time to meet. If you would like to reach me before then, you can email me at student@bridgew.edu or call me at 508-xxx-xxxx.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Samantha Francois
Bridgewater State University | Accounting Major | Class of 20xx

Sample Phone Script Requesting an Informational Interview:

“Hello Janice, my name is Samantha Francois. We met a few weeks ago at the Careers in Accounting Panel at Bridgewater State University. I recently sent you a LinkedIn message requesting an informational interview. Would you be willing and able to schedule 20-30 minutes to speak with me in the couple of weeks?”

Sample Informational Interview Questions:

1. How did you get started in this field?
2. What is your educational and work background?
3. Describe your typical workday.
4. What part of your job is most challenging? What do you enjoy most about your job?
5. How would you describe the typical work environment for a professional in this field?
6. If you had to do it all over again, would you choose the same career path?
7. After reviewing your organization’s website, I learned that ... Could you tell me a little about ...?
8. What changes do you see taking place in your industry in the next few years?
9. Where can I find more information and resources about this career?
10. Are there professional organizations that you recommend I explore?
11. What do you think is the best academic and out of classroom preparation for this career?
12. What are typical entry level positions in this field?
13. If you were hiring a new entry level person, how would you describe an ideal candidate?
14. What type of internship opportunities exist in this field?
15. What qualifications are needed for entry into this field?
16. How do you recommend I find jobs (or internships) in this field?
17. Can you recommend another person with whom I should speak? May I use your name?

Sample Thank You Email following an Informational Interview:

Dear Janice:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on Thursday to discuss your work at PwC. I was impressed by your knowledge of the industry and appreciated receiving a tour of your offices. I feel like I have a much better understanding of the accounting field now, particularly working for one of the big four accounting firms.

Your referral to Elizabeth Poole was extremely useful. I have arranged to meet her in two weeks and look forward to gaining additional knowledge of the field from her.

I will be sure to keep you updated of my job search. Thank you again for your help and valuable insight.

Sincerely,

Samantha Francois
Bridgewater State University | Accounting Major | Class of 20xx

LinkedIn Quick Start Guide

Customize LinkedIn URL

- Click on the “Me” icon.
- Click on *View Profile*.
- Click on *Edit public profile & URL* in the right corner.
- Click on the *Pencil* icon next to your current URL to shorten your LinkedIn URL and click *Save*.

Edit Profile

- Click on the “Me” icon.
- Click on *View Profile*.
- Click on the *Pencil* icon in each section that you would like to make changes to and click on *Save*. Click on *Add Profile Section* to incorporate new information on your profile.

Connect with People

- Type in a *name of the person* that you are looking to connect with in the *Search* box.
- Select *the appropriate person* from the list and view their *full profile*.
- Click on *Connect*. You have two options in trying to connect. Option 1 is to send the contact a message by selecting *Add a Note*. Option 2 is to simply click on *Send* to request to connect. Career Services recommends sending a personal note. The contact will then receive a message that allows them to *Accept* or *Ignore* the request.

Join a Group

- Type *your interest area* in the *Search* box. Refine your search by clicking on the *Groups* button.
- Review and click on the *groups* with which you have an interest.
- Click on *Request to join*.
- Join the *BSU Student and Alumni Networking Group* and the *Official Bridgewater State University Alumni*

Search Jobs and Internships

- Click on the “Jobs” icon.
- Type your *interest area* and *location* in the *Search* box. Select *All filters* to refine your search.
- Click on *Apply* if you are interested in submitting the required materials for application.

Post/Share

- Click on the “Home” icon.
- Click on *Start a post*. If you would like to share a status update or write an article, you can do so here.

How to Follow a Company

- Click on the “Home” icon.
- Type the *name of the company* you would like to follow in the *Search* box.
- Click on the correct *company name*.
- Click on *Follow*.

LinkedIn Quick Start Guide

Connect with BSU Alums for Career Advice/Informational Interviews

- Click on the "Home" icon.
- Type *Bridgewater State University* in the *Search* box and select the correct group.
- Click on *View page*.
- Click on *Alumni* toward the center of the page. You know have access to nearly 50,000 BSU alumni.
- Narrow down the list by conducting a keyword search or using the pre-set filters (location, employer, etc.)
- Click on *Connect* to those you would like to reach out to and send a personal note.

Please note: Be sure to include BSU in the education section of your profile.

Ask for a Recommendation

- Type the *person's name* that you would like to ask to write a recommendation in the *Search* box.
- Click on the appropriate *person's name*.
- Click on *View full profile*.
- Click on *More* and select *Request a recommendation*. Write a personalized note with the request.

Endorse Someone

- Type in the *person's name* that you would like to endorse in the *Search* box.
- Click on the appropriate *person's name*.
- Click on *View full profile*.
- Scroll down to *Skills*. Choose a *skill* and click on *Endorse*. Hopefully, the favor will be returned.

Who's Viewed Your Profile

- Click on the "Home" icon.
- One the left side bar, click on *Who's viewed your profile*.

View Current Connections and Groups

- Click on the "My Network" icon.
- View your connections, groups that you are a member of, pending invitations of those who would like to connect with you as well as suggestions on people you may want to connect with.

How to Upload Your Resume to Your Profile

- Click on the "Jobs" icon.
- Click on *Applications Settings* located on left side of the page.
- Click on *Upload Resume*. Be sure to save and upload your resume as a PDF.