

# BUILDING CONNECTIONS



## BUILDING CONNECTIONS leads to a network of individuals that can help you think about and explore career ideas.

Ever heard the phrase, “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know”? To expand who you know, start with making connections: develop and maintain relationships with people such as family, friends, former employers, professors and staff.

It’s often a concept that sounds more intimidating than it actually is. If you have ever asked a classmate for a suggestion on what class to take, then you have used your network. These connections are not always logical, and you never know who will lead you to the person you need. It’s not all about what your network can do for you; you also need to offer your advice or connections to your contacts.



## SUCCESSFUL TOOLS for building and maintaining your network.

### ■ Social Media

LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) is a professional networking site that allows registered users to maintain a list of people they know and trust. It is a great way to keep up with current contacts, join groups of interest, and also expand your network. Be sure to customize your message when requesting to connect with someone. Join the CSB/SJU Career Connections group!

### ■ CANE Database

CANE is an alumnae/ni database located in the XPD Resource Centers and available for use to search for alumni that have experience in a field aligning with your career interests. You can contact these alumni to gain advice and learn more about a certain career path or organization. Alums are encouraged to join the CSB/SJU alum online community for similar types of information (BenniesConnect/JohnniesConnect).

### ■ Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a thirty-second speech prepared for instances where you may run into someone working for the company you are interested in or someone with more information. Having one prepared will help you to say what you want in a few sentences. Be clear that you are seeking information and be prepared to ask open-ended questions to help you gain information. A sample elevator speech (for use at an internship/job fair or networking event) may look something like this

### ■ Career and Networking Events

Look on the XPD website to find out about scheduled events. Always have a customized resume (that’s been critiqued) prepared for use when attending internship/job fairs. Create a business card - it’s a convenient and professional way to exchange contact information with others (especially at a networking event where you might not bring a resume).

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Building connections is regarded as one of the most effective career exploration and job search strategies.
- Learn about careers from the inside and find out about internship/job opportunities that are not advertised.
- Build a list of contacts in your field of interest.
- Future employment: recruiting stats indicate 70-80% of jobs are landed using a network.

“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m a junior at the College of Saint Benedict with a Communication major. I have been working with the student newspaper, *The Record*, this year and have found that I am very interested in learning more about the journalism field. My faculty advisor, \_\_\_\_\_, suggested I contact you to learn more about possible summer internship opportunities at your paper.”

## BE PREPARED

Ask for additional leads and contacts; follow up with a “Thank you” note and do favors in return. Utilize MANGO Connects (on XPD’s website) to help you with email conversations.

### CSB OFFICE

Academic Services Building  
320-363-5707

### XPD – EXPERIENCE & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

[www.csbsju.edu/xpd](http://www.csbsju.edu/xpd)  
Open Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

### SJU OFFICE

Mary Hall 10 and 25  
320-363-3236



# HOW TO BUILD A PROFESSIONAL STUDENT LINKEDIN PROFILE

*NOTE: The following information is provided by LinkedIn. Visit: <http://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>*

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive business card. It is a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities - that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching for you online - recruiters, networking contacts, and graduate school admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market. So, let's get started...

## 1. Craft an informative profile headline

- Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as "Student, National University" or "Recent honors grad seeking marketing position." Check out the profiles of students and recent alums you admire for ideas and inspiration.

## 2. Display an appropriate photo

- Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook. If you choose to post a photograph - and we recommend that you do - select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Party photos or cute pics of your puppy don't fit in the professional environment of LinkedIn.

## 3. Show off your education

- Be sure to include information about all institutions you've attended. Include your major and minor if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. It's also appropriate to include study abroad programs and summer institutes. Don't be shy - your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to show off your strong GPA and any honors or awards you've won.

## 4. Develop a professional summary

- Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter - concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Remember to include relevant internships, volunteer work, and extra curriculars. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great too.

## 5. Fill your "Skills and Expertise" section with keywords

- This section is the place to include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want. Once you add keywords or key skills, your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at.

## 6. Update your status regularly

- Posting updates helps you stay on your network's radar and build your professional image. Tell people about events you're attending, major projects you've completed, professional books you're reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or on a quick catch-up phone call.

## 7. Show your connectedness

- Groups you join appear on the bottom of your profile. Joining some shows that you want to engage in professional communities and learn the lingo. Start with your university and industry groups.

## 8. Collect diverse recommendations

- The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors. Recruiters are most impressed by people who have directly managed you.

## 9. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL

- To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to "public" and claim a unique URL (for example: [www.linkedin.com/in/yourname](http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname) ).

## 10. Share your work

- Add examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments. What better way to sell your skills than to show employers exactly what you can produce?