JOINING GROUPS ON LINKEDIN

Joining and using groups on LinkedIn is a great way to build your brand and to network with industry professionals. You can be a member of up to 100 groups at one time.

Why should I join LinkedIn groups?

- ***Get answers to questions you cannot find online***. You may learn about companies' culture, best practices for connecting with individuals in your industry, and insider tips on how to get hired.
- ***Gain a better understanding of what goes on in your industry.*** Once you join a group, you will be able to read posts from other members and the group administrators. This will help to keep you up to date on current industry trends, news stories, and upcoming events. Use this information to ask industry specific questions during job interviews and informational interviews.
- ***Build your brand***. As you get more comfortable posting questions, commenting, or joining discussions in a group, you get noticed and invited to connect. You have the opportunity to boost your online reputation and build credibility (if you act professionally). Always read over content you plan to share before sending to ensure proper spelling and grammar.
- ***Build your network***. Once you have joined a group, you can view the list of members of that group. This is a chance to see who else is active in the industry and to connect with them. See sample email on back.

How do I join LinkedIn groups?

- ***Use the search feature at the top of your homepage.***
  - Type a word or phrase related to your industry in the search bar.
  - Scroll down and select, "See all results".
  - Then select "Groups" from the tabs at the top. Some groups you can join automatically and some groups you must "Ask to join".
  - Once you ask to join, the administrators of the group will review your LinkedIn profile and may grant you access.
- ***Access the "Work" tab on your homepage.***
  - Select "Groups" from the drop-down menu under "Work" to the right of the top tabs on your homepage.
  - Select "Discover" in the top tabs on the left to see relevant groups or groups in which you may have pre-existing connections.

Which LinkedIn groups should I join?

- ***See what groups other people have joined***. Look through your connections who are successful in the industry and see what groups to which they belong. When you are vetting groups, you can also see connections who are already members.
- ***Look at the numbers***. Join groups with higher numbers as that will give you access to more professionals and increase the likelihood that there will be more engaging discussions. If you contribute to discussions, your participation may be noticed by more people.
- ***Join alumni groups.*** By joining an alumni group, you can engage with people with whom you already have something in common. Some examples: *Wentworth Institute of Technology Alumni and Career Group* & *Wentworth Institute of Technology International Community*. Also, search for alumni groups specific to your major.

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- ***Search for professional associations***. Often, industry professional associations will have groups where members can engage in discussion and connect with each other for networking purposes. Some larger companies may also have groups you can join. There may be a national group and local chapters. Joining national groups gives you the advantage of access to a larger member pool and joining local chapters can lead to the possibility of local meetups and events for in-person networking. Local chapters can be especially beneficial for growing your network if you move to a new city or state and even abroad.

I have joined several LinkedIn groups. Now what?

- ***Network!*** Once you have joined a group, you can directly message all group members even if you are not first degree connections. This is a great opportunity to connect with other professionals, build your network, and then request informational interviews from people who may ignore connection requests. Search for alumni in your industry and then message them through the shared groups you belong to.
    - *How to find alumni*: Use the search bar at the top of the home page to access the Wentworth Institute of Technology page. Once on the page, click on the "See Alumni" tab. You can then search and sort through Wentworth alumni to find people in your industry or geographic area.
    - Once you have identified alumni that you would like to connect with, search your groups to see if they are a member or join groups of which they are already a member. Once you access the group member list, you can search, sort, and message any of the members.

- ***Engage!*** Contribute to discussions and post questions or comments to start relevant discussions in order to boost your reputation within the industry. Remember: always be professional!

Additional Resources

LinkedIn Groups Overview: https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/1164
LinkedIn Blog: https://blog.linkedin.com/

Sample Email for Networking with Group Members

Making your message very specific to the interests you have in common with the other group member personalizes your message and increases the chance that they will respond.

Dear Mr./Ms. **Last Name**,

I am a junior at Wentworth Institute of Technology studying Electrical Engineering. I noticed that we are both members of the 'Electrical Design Engineering-Power Systems and Lighting' group on LinkedIn. I am extremely interested in this area of Electrical Engineering especially energy conversion. I am hoping to learn as much as possible about it before I graduate. As the Technical Director of Energy Conversion Materials at Giner, Inc. (a company I have been following for a while), I feel like I could gain valuable knowledge from what you have to share about your experience.

I wondered if we might be able to set up a time for a quick 20-30 minute meeting where I could ask you some questions. We could meet in person, or speak over the phone/SKYPE.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your first and last name

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