

Part 1



In our latest series of how-to blogs we explore LinkedIn for beginners and how you can make your personal professional profile the best it can be.

What is LinkedIn?

Founded in December 2002, LinkedIn is a social networking site designed for the business community, and is the world's largest professional network. The goal of the site is to allow members to establish networks of people they know and trust professionally. You can build connections with potential employers and customers alongside endorsing others for their skills and knowledge.

What can you do with LinkedIn

- Establish your professional profile
- Build and maintain your professional network
- Find and reconnect with colleagues and classmates
- Learn about other companies and get industry insights
- Tap into the knowledge of your network
- Create new career opportunities.

Here are some further facts about LinkedIn

- Total number of users is 380 million with over 10 million UK users (July 2015)
- There are 2 new members every second
- 97 million monthly unique visiting members
- It reaches a total of 200 countries and territories geographically
- 44% of users are women and 56% are men.
- There are 45,000 skills listed.

How do you join?

Like most social networks, LinkedIn is easy and free to join. Just head over to [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) and sign up. Remember while completing your profile to remain professional – from your photograph right through to your summary.

Choose a headline or phrase that sums up your professional identity and include a summary of your work experience, professional expertise and what you have accomplished. This is where others will see what you have achieved and what your current position is. Give as much information as possible and try not to miss out any of your skills, as these will get picked up on searches.

Keep yourself and your brand aligned as much as possible with other social media channels – you are aiming for consistency throughout. This channel is more about 'you' as an expert in your field rather than your business or brand; however it is still important that you are representative of your company.

Think carefully about what you write, and check it over to make sure your spelling and grammar are correct. Ask a colleague or friend to look over it and make sure it gives an excellent professional first impression. If someone is searching for you online your LinkedIn profile will be the first one that appears! That is why it needs to be polished, and therefore a great introduction to you.

Part 2



In our first part of this guide we introduced you to LinkedIn and showed you how to set up your account. In part two we will be talking you through how to build connections and gain endorsements.

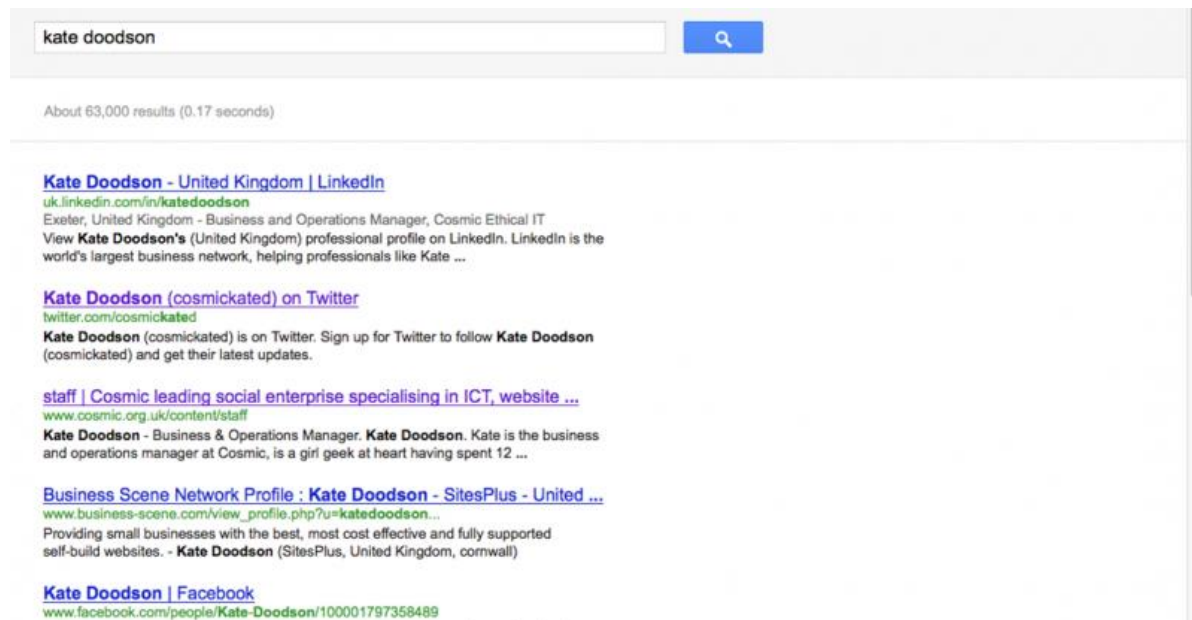
Endorsements are a vote of confidence, when others see your endorsements they send a strong signal out about your abilities and experience.

Like all social networks, you gain support from others by giving support to them. Try to take a few moments to go through your peers' profiles and give them an endorsement for a skill you know they have. It is likely they will then do the same.

Start by connecting with all your existing professional and personal contacts – friends, colleagues, ex-colleagues, people you follow through other channels, e.g. Twitter. Don't dismiss invitations from people you don't know initially, take a look through their profile and even if they aren't a potential employer or client they still have connections that may be. However, like all social media channels, don't just connect or follow people to build up your followers. You need to be using it strategically and to get the best out of it you need to be connected with the right people.

Think about how you want to be seen professionally – these are people that you are aiming to connect with, share ideas, collaborate with, even employ or be employed by. Not only is LinkedIn a great opportunity to showcase your CV, it gives across your online presence. When people search your name

online after picking up your business card, it is your LinkedIn profile which will come up first. What are the things you want them to see? You can't undo that first impression.



Make sure that all the good work that you do is publicly recognised by your peers and know that they can help you reach your potential opportunities. You need to think not only about what other people can do for you, but what you can do for them.

98% of recruiters and 85% of hiring managers used LinkedIn to find candidates. But apart from that, as a business owner you can build up your contact list using LinkedIn, and find the exact people that you want to work with. It is such a valuable networking tool, reaching those who will not only recommend you, but who you can also recommend to others.

Again, like other social networks, the more you invest into it, the more you will get out of it. Take time to connect with others and read through their profiles. They will have skills that you can endorse and maybe utilise or recommend to others. By engaging with them you will get engagement in return. Everyone is using the platform to build their own online reputation, so as much as you can help them with that then they will reciprocate.

However it does take time and persistence to use it correctly but don't let that put you off. Investing in LinkedIn will build up your influence and strategically that is what social media is best for.

Part 3



In our previous two posts we introduced you to LinkedIn and how to start connecting and interacting with potential employers and collaborators. This week we are going to look a little deeper into how you can maximise LinkedIn in your business, including day to day usage.

Like other social media platforms, you can post statuses on a daily basis, and this is important to let your connections know what you have been up to (in a professional capacity). If you have news with regards to your work, or you have found a blog post that your connections will be interested in then link to that.

Like other channels, it is important that you are sharing quality content, but keeping it in context with who you are, what you do and your area of work. The more regularly you are posting, the more visible you are in your connections feeds. To build your reputation, influence and increase your Klout, then LinkedIn is an excellent channel to do that. Remember that you want to be seen as the expert in your field and so sharing content that becomes shareable for others, as well as informing your connections about latest industry news will really help with that.

Groups are extremely useful, if used correctly. There are lots of groups full of spam but others are mostly valuable. There are many groups within your industry that you can access for advice and support. Also the groups give you another opportunity to connect with relevant organisations and people.

You can discuss ideas, share news, and build your professional network. But again– remember context!

Keep in mind that LinkedIn is an excellent business networking platform, which allows you to not only keep in touch with people and professions but also helps you to stay up to date with industry trends and then to share this information with others.

LinkedIn is very useful if you want to do your research with regards to an organisation or person you are looking to do business with. You can find mutual connections if there are any, or have that bit of background knowledge that can start a valuable conversation.

You can build your professional network, increase your visibility online and provide valuable information and content to your peers. LinkedIn also helps with that trust building that is key when networking.

Always remember to stay professional on LinkedIn, as this is your introduction to the business world. Keep in mind that potential employers, colleagues, collaborators and business partners will look at your LinkedIn profile before meeting you and they need to be impressed with what they see.

Good Luck! Let us know who you are online and we will come and follow you. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.