



# Jelf LinkedIn for Businesses

Making the most of the  
business-friendly network

**Jelf.** SMALL  
BUSINESS

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# LinkedIn is a free-to-use social networking service that focuses on professional, rather than personal, networking.

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With over 277 million members across more than 200 countries and territories, it is the largest business-focused online network in the world. LinkedIn was set up in 2003 to connect professionals, giving them access to other business-minded people as well as job information, news updates, and other business insights to help them develop their expertise and business's reach.

LinkedIn's management team consists of executives from well-respected companies including Google, Microsoft, Yahoo! and PayPal.





## Who uses LinkedIn and what does it offer?

LinkedIn is used by professionals looking to make business connections that'll help them achieve their career or business goals, either individually or as a company. LinkedIn has great search tools to help those looking for a job or client, and for people looking to employ or partner with someone new.

LinkedIn is also a fantastic tool for people wishing to stay in touch with business acquaintances they already know. **Adding someone on LinkedIn** who you have recently met in person is recognised as a flattering and increasingly natural way to say you are glad to have met them and would like to keep in touch.

### **LinkedIn has a number of features that make it more than just a social networking platform:**

LinkedIn's Job Listings section lets users find employment opportunities, but also lets them research companies. This could inform users of anything from the location of the company's headquarters to statistics such as the ratio of male to female employees there. Users can even access a list of the company's present and former employees by looking them up on LinkedIn. These

features make it more likely that potential employees or business associates will look you up before they engage with you, making it important that your company has an up-to-date, accurate presence on the social platform.

**LinkedIn also provides a feature that allows companies to include an "Apply with LinkedIn" button on their Job Listing pages. This means potential employees can use their LinkedIn profile to apply for a position, rather than using their CV. As a business looking for an employee, this gives you access to so much more than the average CV information; a prime example being having easy access to their referrals and recommendations.**

Referrals and recommendations are possible because LinkedIn allows users to offer comment (only positive comments, however) on other users' profiles by **endorsing that user's skills**. In this way, creating a LinkedIn profile is a great opportunity to build a positive reputation in a world where online reputation management is an important consideration for any business and professional individual.





## What can LinkedIn offer businesses specifically on an individual basis?

### A profile that helps you get noticed

If someone were to search for you as an individual, Google or other search engines will pick up on the content of your LinkedIn profile, so having well thought-out, up-to-date information will tie you in with your business or industry in a positive way, and clearly display your field of expertise.

### A way to connect (and reconnect) to further your business's reach

Once you have a profile you are proud of, you can start inviting people to join you on LinkedIn, and become part of your network. LinkedIn makes this really easy for you to do by simply importing your Outlook contacts. However, if you want to get the best results, don't just send out a generic email to everyone asking them to join: take the time to make the invite personal, saying you'd really like to get or stay in touch with them. This will make them more likely to accept, which means you'll have more connections who could be out there **spreading the word** about you and your business. Simply making people aware of what you do will mean you are more likely to be thought of if an opportunity comes up - an opportunity too good to miss for the entrepreneur or small business looking to expand.

### A note on etiquette

While you'll no doubt be keen to extend your network as far and wide as possible, LinkedIn is really for connecting (or reconnecting) with people you already know - colleagues, classmates, friends, business partners etc - so contacting them on LinkedIn implies you know them well. You can normally search for people without needing their email address, but if someone tells LinkedIn they don't know you, you'll have to start entering email addresses.

### You're connected...what next?

The next goal is to get some testimonials or recommendations on your profile. This is basically where people who know you write positive things

about you for people (often those considering doing business with you) to read. For this reason, recommendations are a very important aspect of LinkedIn, so it's worth putting a lot of thought into who you ask and how, to make sure each testimonial glows. Forbes' '22 LinkedIn Secrets LinkedIn Won't Tell You' advises that you ask your contacts to endorse you for your top skills only, as having a high number of endorsements for these **'signature strengths'** will influence those looking at your profile more by reinforcing the positive reputation you want to create.

You can get recommendations by requesting them from your connections using a dedicated 'Ask for Recommendations' link in LinkedIn's Privacy and Settings page (search LinkedIn's Help Centre for specific instructions).

### LinkedIn Groups to widen your audience

LinkedIn Groups (where those with similar interests can engage in discussion with a specific focus) allow professionals to advertise and view jobs, ask and answer questions, and share content with others in the same industry or with the same interests. What's more, joining and participating in a LinkedIn Group discussion allows an individual to establish themselves as an industry expert - something that, if you choose to go forward with it, can only bode well for your business's status.

Joining a group allows you to connect with people who may be interested in your business products or services but who are not among your contacts. Being in the same group also gives you an acceptable reason to connect with them without having met offline.

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## What can LinkedIn offer businesses specifically on a company basis?

### An effective new way to research potential clients

The website The Joy of Business notes that if you have a meeting with a potential new client or associate, you can **look them up** on LinkedIn and find out if you know someone in common. You could then get in touch with that mutual contact and get any background information you can - specifically what approach you should take to engage their interest - and you might even be able to secure a recommendation from that mutual contact.

### A way to tell people about your brand

Joining as many groups as possible (provided they are related to your business's identity) gives you the opportunity to connect with more people who may

be interested in your brand, but simply seeing that you are a part of these groups also allows anyone looking at your profile to learn more about your brand. Search for groups focused on your industry, business passions and social causes, or anything else that's important to your brand's identity, and start joining!

### A Company Page dedicated to your brand or business

As a business, you can create a LinkedIn Company Page to spread the word about your brand, promoting your products and services and even advertising career opportunities within your business.

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## More about Company Pages

### Why create a LinkedIn Company Page?

A Company Page gives you a place to share news and updates about your industry as a whole, and your **business or brand specifically**. It is a place for you to promote any job opportunities to the business-minded individuals that populate LinkedIn. Since any LinkedIn member can follow a Company Page, it'll open your business up to an extremely broad potential audience.

The content you share has the potential to generate business leads and grow your business's relationships with your customers.

The **fundamental reasoning** behind creating a Company Page is to attract followers. LinkedIn explains: "Followers are your brand advocates. They are key to driving word of mouth, recommendations, and referrals. Develop a robust follower community – the more followers you have, the easier it becomes to get viral reach and engagement."

You'll find an **easy-to-follow guide** to creating a Company Page - and details of certain criteria you must meet - in the Adding a Company Page section of LinkedIn's Help Centre.

### How to use your Company Page

To get the most from your Company Page, you should post regular and relevant content which **viewers and followers** of your page will find interesting. LinkedIn refers to this content as 'Company Updates', and it could be original information - for example company news or details of promotions - or you could share articles, SlideShare presentations or YouTube videos that are relevant to your industry.

While followers of your Company Page will be informed of your Company Updates on their homepage, any LinkedIn member can comment on, like or share your updates. Once they have done so, your updates will then appear in their homepage feed too, so they can keep up with your content in future.

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## Should you encourage your employees to use LinkedIn?

Many employers don't allow their employees to go on LinkedIn because they are scared they'll search for a new job - or be approached by another business looking to recruit them. Yet having as many employees as possible on LinkedIn can actually be extremely beneficial to your company.

If your employees like or share your Company's Updates, they'll reach a **much wider audience** because all your employee's connections will be able to see them.

A study by BrightEdge, mentioned by Forbes' 'Why Every Employee At Your Company Should Use LinkedIn', found that companies with a greater proportion of their employees on LinkedIn have more followers on their Company Pages. BrightEdge also

found that a huge nine out of the top ten brands with the most followers on LinkedIn have 60 per cent or more of their employees on LinkedIn.

Forbes also notes that when your staff add your company as a place of work, LinkedIn automatically makes them a follower of your Company Page and includes their details on that page. It also places your company logo on their profile, with a link going through to your Company Page.

You may want to go as far as to provide training to help your staff create **professional-looking** profiles, as this will carry a positive message about your company as a whole to anyone who interacts with them.

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## Are there any drawbacks to LinkedIn?

Aside from the initial time it takes to set up your Profile Page and Company Page, you'll need to factor in some time every now and then to keep your profile updated, and to search for and contribute to any groups you belong to.

PCMag also notes the **"excessive" email** communication you receive from LinkedIn by default when you register, and the 25 'unsubscribe' or similar preference changes it takes to decrease this communication.

Having a LinkedIn profile opens your company up to being judged by potential employees, other

businesses and clients before having met them. However, since you are in charge of creating and adding content to your profile, and you can choose who you connect with and which endorsements and recommendations you include on your profile, it is a fairly **controlled way** to represent yourself compared to Facebook pages or Twitter, where others can add comments or similar about your company. Not being on LinkedIn may send out the message that you, your company or your members of staff are not as computer-literate as they could be - something that could count against you in the eyes of important business connections.