Key Suggestions for Enhancing Your Networking Activity

Increase your visibility.

By adding meaningful connections, you increase the likelihood that people will see your profile first when they’re searching for someone to hire or with whom to do business. In addition to appearing at the top of search results, people would much rather work with people who their friends know and trust.

Improve your “connectability”.

Most new users put only their current company in their profile. By doing so, they severely limit their ability to connect with people. You should fill out your profile like it’s an executive bio, so include past companies, internship/co-op sponsors, education, community service, affiliations, and activities.

Increase the relevancy of your internship/job search.

Use LinkedIn’s advanced search to find people with educational and work experience like yours to see where they work. For example, a programmer would use search keywords such as “Ruby on Rails,” “C++,” “Python,” “Java,” and “evangelist” to find out where other programmers are work.

Make your interview go smoother.

You can use LinkedIn to find the people that you’re meeting. Knowing that you went to the same school, plays hockey, or shares acquaintances is better than an awkward silence after, “I’m doing fine, thank you.”

Gauge the health of a company/industry.

Perform an advanced search for company name and uncheck the “Current Companies Only” box. This will enable you to scrutinize the rate of turnover and whether key people are leaving the organization. If you’re thinking of working in a sector, use LinkedIn to find people who worked for competitors. For example, suppose you wanted to build a next generation online pet store, you’d probably learn a lot from speaking with former Pets.com employees.

Ask for advice.

LinkedIn’s newest product, LinkedIn Answers, aims to enable this online. The product allows you to broadcast your business-related questions to both your network and the greater LinkedIn network. The premise is that you will get more high-value responses from the people in your network than more open forums.