

**ROCKABLE\***



**LinkedIn**  
*and lovin' it*

**Susan Johnston**



# ROCKABLE\*

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**1**

# WHY LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn is sometimes treated like the neglected child of social media. Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube get way more attention. Yes, those platforms can be fun for interacting socially, posting funny videos, or sharing articles. And yes, some of your followers may hire you based on personality.

But without the pokes, spider bites, trivia, and other silly features, LinkedIn lets you focus on building and maintaining your professional network in a strategic and targeted fashion. It allows users to send and receive messages, join groups around industries and common interests, ask and answer questions, stay in touch with colleagues and clients, view job postings, and a whole lot more.

Nine to fivers often turn to LinkedIn when they're searching for a job. But the site also offers tons of useful tools and features for freelancers, small business owners, and creative professionals, not just those interested in finding a corporate job.

Consider these stats:

- TechCrunch.com reported that as of June 2011, LinkedIn referral traffic dwarfed referral traffic from Twitter.<sup>1</sup>
- HubSpot also notes that LinkedIn is now the second most popular online social network, surpassing MySpace (is anyone still *on MySpace?*).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://techcrunch.com/2011/06/30/linkedin-traffic-twitter/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/19703/LinkedIn-Surpasses-MySpace-as-2nd-Most-Popular-Online-Social-Network-Data.aspx>

- An online survey conducted by the Business Marketing Association found that 48% of respondents said LinkedIn offered the highest marketing ROI (return on investment) for their organization.<sup>3</sup>

Still not convinced?

Just ask Marian Schembari, an Auckland, New Zealand, social media consultant turned digital account manager, who's landed tons of clients and found someone to redesign her blog, both through LinkedIn. Or Chris Perry, founder and chief evangelist of CareerRocketeer.com, who's used LinkedIn groups to connect with prospects for speaking and consulting gigs. Or Jenn Gerlach, an infographics designer in Ontario, Canada, who uses LinkedIn to share her work and position herself as an infographics expert.

You'll find case studies and tips from several freelancers and entrepreneurs sprinkled throughout this book. But right now, let's look more broadly at who's on LinkedIn and how they're using it.

## **Who Uses LinkedIn**

A new member joins LinkedIn every second.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the site hit the 100 million user mark in March 2011.<sup>5</sup> Half of all users are business decision-makers in their companies such as executive vice presidents, chief executives, or senior managers.<sup>6</sup> So if you're trying to land a new client or catch the eye of company influencers,

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3 <http://itracks.com/Resources/BMA-Social-Media-Survey-Results.html>

4 <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6147/LinkedIn-by-the-Numbers-Infographic.aspx>

5 <http://blog.linkedin.com/2011/03/22/linkedin-100-million/>

6 <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6147/LinkedIn-by-the-Numbers-Infographic.aspx>

LinkedIn is the place to do it. Plus, executives from all Fortune 500 companies are represented on the site.<sup>7</sup>

According to a LinkedIn infographic<sup>8</sup>, 44 million of those users are based in the United States and 56 million are in other parts of the world, with Brazil, Mexico, India, and France as the fastest growing countries based on 2010 year-over-year growth rates. Wherever in the world you do business, chances are good that you'll be able to connect with clients, colleagues, and other useful contacts both in your neck of the woods and in other corners of the world, since LinkedIn operates in over 200 countries. (See Chapter 3 for tips on adding connections and building your network.)

**ROCK\***  
**TIP**

*Did you know? 41% of people who use LinkedIn for marketing have generated business with it.<sup>9</sup>*

## How They Use LinkedIn

LinkedIn offers a huge network of influencers across virtually every industry. Headhunters and recruiters use it to search for highly qualified candidates, journalists use it to crowdsource for ideas, business owners use it to connect with like-minded service providers. But as with other online networks, success depends on how (and how often) you use it. You might be one of the lucky few who can put up a profile, leave it to gather cyber dust, and magically attract new clients and other contacts.

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7 <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6147/LinkedIn-by-the-Numbers-Infographic.aspx>

8 <http://blog.linkedin.com/100million/>

9 <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6147/LinkedIn-by-the-Numbers-Infographic.aspx>

But if you visit the site regularly (over half a million professionals visit the LinkedIn homepage each day<sup>10</sup>), join groups and post comments (LinkedIn Groups get 1.2 million posts and comments a week!<sup>11</sup>), give and receive recommendations, and otherwise engage with the community, it's much more likely that you'll make valuable connections and get noticed by prospective clients.

Here are a few of the ways that creative professionals are successfully leveraging LinkedIn:

- Staying in touch and top of mind with clients.
- Reconnecting with classmates, past clients, and coworkers.
- Spreading the word about articles, blogs, books, and other accomplishments.
- Connecting with collaborators and prospective clients.
- Positioning themselves as an expert.
- Building trust with prospective clients.

Ready to learn some of these tips and techniques yourself? Read on!

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10 <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6147/LinkedIn-by-the-Numbers-Infographic.aspx>

11 <http://blog.linkedin.com/100million/>

**2**

# SIGNING UP AND SETTING UP YOUR PROFILE

Now that you understand why LinkedIn is such a valuable tool to professionals around the world, this chapter will show you how to set up your LinkedIn account, fill in your profile, and adjust your privacy settings.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage. At the top left is the LinkedIn logo. Below it is a navigation bar with links for Home, What is LinkedIn?, Join Today, and Sign In. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column features a headline: "Over 100 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities". Below this are three bullet points with icons: "Stay informed about your contacts and industry", "Find the people & knowledge you need to achieve your goals", and "Control your professional identity online". The right column contains a "Join LinkedIn Today" form with fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, and Password (with a note "6 or more characters"). A green "Join Now" button is at the bottom of the form, with a link "Already on LinkedIn? Sign in." below it.

Signing up takes just a few minutes. Enter your name, email address, and password, then verify your email address by clicking on a link in the automatically generated email.

The screenshot shows an email confirmation message from LinkedIn. The header includes a star icon, the subject "LinkedIn Email Confirmation to me", a link "show details", the time "12:04 PM (1 hour ago)", and a "Reply" button. The main body of the email starts with the LinkedIn logo, followed by the text "Click here to confirm your email address." Below this is a paragraph: "If the above link does not work, you can paste the following address into your browser:" followed by a long URL: [https://www.linkedin.com/e/csrfacYh/om2v1v-go7bnuab-4m/cnf/TvEVBQoKqiiBPO5VUsNp4ype\\_I\\_s1ucVUsbpDG2MwUX](https://www.linkedin.com/e/csrfacYh/om2v1v-go7bnuab-4m/cnf/TvEVBQoKqiiBPO5VUsNp4ype_I_s1ucVUsbpDG2MwUX). The next paragraph says: "You will be asked to log into your account to confirm this email address. Be sure to log in with your current primary email address." The final paragraph states: "We ask you to confirm your email address before sending invitations or requesting contacts at LinkedIn. You can have several email addresses, but one will need to be confirmed at all times to use the system."

Next, you'll fill in a few more profile details, all of which you can change later on.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile creation form for a user named 'Joe'. The form is titled 'Joe, Let's get your professional profile started'. It includes several fields: 'I am currently:' with a dropdown menu set to 'Employed'; '\* Country:' with a dropdown menu set to 'United States'; '\* ZIP Code:' with an empty text box and a note 'e.g. 94043 (Only your region will be public, not your ZIP code)'; '\* Company:' with an empty text box; and '\* Job Title:' with an empty text box. A blue button labeled 'Create my profile' is at the bottom. A tip box on the right says 'A LinkedIn profile helps you...' and lists three benefits: 'Showcase your skills and experience', 'Be found for new opportunities', and 'Stay in touch with colleagues and friends'. A red asterisk indicates required fields.

After you click “Create my profile,” the site will prompt you to search your email contacts or invite contacts by entering their email address. I would skip this step for now, because you haven’t filled in your profile yet. (See Chapter 3 for tips on inviting contacts and building your network.)

The more complete your profile, the better. Take the time to do it right, then start building your network. Would you be impressed by someone who hasn’t spent the time to upload a photo or fill in their work history? An incomplete profile can seem half-baked, so read on for profile tips.

## ROCK\* TIP

### *Public vs. Private Profile*

*Your private profile<sup>12</sup> is only visible to your network of first-, second-, or third-degree connections and they must be logged in to view it. Your public profile<sup>13</sup> is a more limited version of your profile that shows up in Google or LinkedIn searches. You can manage your privacy settings so that your profile is completely private or only portions of your profile show up in searches.*

12 [https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/53/kw/%22private%20profile%22](https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/53/kw/%22private%20profile%22)

13 [https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/83/kw/%22public%20profile%22](https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/83/kw/%22public%20profile%22)

## Filling in Your Profile

A thorough profile builds credibility, showcasing your skills and experience. You can fill in your profile manually by clicking on each section. Here's what happens when you click on "Add a position," fill in company name, and other information:

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Add Position' form. At the top, the user is identified as 'Joe Freelancer' with an 'Account Type: Basic'. The navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'Contacts', 'Groups', 'Jobs', 'Inbox', 'Companies', 'News', and 'More'. Below the navigation, there are links for 'Edit Profile' and 'View Profile'. The main section is titled 'Add Position' and contains the following fields:

- Company Name:** Joe Freelancer Web Design, LLC [Change Company]
- More information about this company:**
  - Website:** [Text input field]
  - Industry:** Design [Dropdown menu]
- Title:** Founder & Lead Web Designer [Text input field]
- Time Period:**  I currently work here. Start: January 2000 to present.
- Headline:**  Update my headline to: Versatile web designer with 10+ years of experience [Text input field]
- Description:** [Large text area]

At the bottom, there is a 'See examples' link and 'Save Changes' or 'Cancel' buttons.

Don't want to fill in each section manually? Speed things up by clicking the "Import your resume" link on the right side the "Edit Profile" page:

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Edit Profile' page for 'Joe Freelancer', an 'Independent Design Professional' in the 'United States | Design' industry. The page includes a profile picture placeholder with a '+ Add Photo' link, a 'Post an update' box, and sections for 'Current' and 'Past' positions, each with an '+ Add' link. On the right side, there is an 'Add a position' button and a section for 'Import your résumé', 'Ask for recommendations', and 'Create your profile in another language'. A '0% profile completeness' indicator is shown. A yellow arrow points to a 'Complete your profile quickly' section that offers to 'Import your résumé to build a complete profile in minutes'.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for 'Joe Freelancer' with a modal dialog box titled 'Import your résumé'. The dialog prompts the user to 'Upload Microsoft Word, PDF, text or HTML files of up to 500KB.' and includes a 'Choose File' button (noted as 'No file chosen') and an 'Upload Résumé' button. The background profile page shows a 0% completion rate and a list of tips to improve the profile, such as adding a position (+25%), education (+15%), and a picture (+5%).

This will auto-populate your profile with past companies and positions:

The screenshot displays the 'Review Experience and Education' section of a LinkedIn profile. It states: 'Your experience and education were extracted from your résumé and are displayed below with content from your LinkedIn profile.' Under the 'Experience' heading, the following information is shown:

- Title:** Web Designer
- Company Name:** Joe Freelancer
- Industry:** Design
- Time Period:**  I currently work here. Please enter a value. from  to Present
- Description:** [Empty text area]

Below this information are links for 'See Examples', 'Edit', 'Reset Information', and 'Remove this position'. A second entry is listed as 'Imported Founder & Lead Web Designer Joe Freelancer Web Design, LLC' with a description: 'Designing web sites for ecommerce companies, nonprofits, and other businesses. \*Providing an excellent client experience from the initial design discussion through implementation. \*Editing video and other multimedia components for the web.' and a link to 'Remove this position'.

**ROCK\***  
**TIP***Build Your Resume*

*Just as LinkedIn can build your profile based on your resume, it can also take your profile and reformat it as a resume using Resume Builder. Choose from templates including business, classic, and clean. Go to [resume.linkedinlabs.com](http://resume.linkedinlabs.com) to get started.*

Use the edit button on each section to make changes, then scroll down and click “Save Changes.” But don’t rely too heavily on your resume, because recruiters and prospective clients want to see some personality. As Kristen Fife, a Seattle-based recruiter and weekly employment columnist for *The Seattle Times*, points out, “if I like what I see, I’ll contact you and ask for your resume.” That’s why she likes to see profiles that are more personal than your resume and show what you’re passionate about. We’ll talk more about profiles in the next section.

## Writing Your Profile

Once you’ve filled in your profile with factual information on your work history, it’s time to punch it up with more details. We’ll start with your headline, as that shows up at the top of your profile and in searches.

### Headline

Note that your current job title and your headline are two different things. Your headline is one of the first things people see, while the current job title appears a little further down in your

**ROCK\***  
**TIP***Use Spell Check!*

*LinkedIn does not have a built-in spell check feature, so it’s easy to overlook typos in your profile or messages. But Jason DeVito, a manager at CM Access, a creative, marketing and interactive staffing firm in Boston, Mass., says typos can be a turn-off, especially if you’re a copywriter or editor. Avoid this pitfall and create a professional image by asking someone to read over your profile. Or copy and paste it into Microsoft Word, where you can spot typos more easily.*

# **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**



Susan Johnston is a Boston-based freelance writer whose articles have appeared in publications including AOL Jobs, The Boston Globe, DailyCandy.com, FreelanceSwitch.com, MediaBistro.com, PARADE Magazine, WritersWeekly.com, and WomenEntrepreneur.com. She also writes marketing materials for copywriting clients and created [UrbanMuseWriter.com](http://UrbanMuseWriter.com), an award-winning blog about the freelance life. For more info, visit her website at [susan-johnston.com](http://susan-johnston.com).

## *Unleash your business potential with LinkedIn*

You have friends, followers, and fans, but how strong is your professional network? **Susan Johnston** of Urban Muse Writer teaches you how to build a rock solid LinkedIn network that can be a constant source for recommendations and referrals.

Nine to fivers often turn to LinkedIn when they're searching for a job. But the site also offers tons of useful tools and features for freelancers, small business owners, and creative professionals, not just those interested in finding a corporate job. LinkedIn lets you focus on building and maintaining your professional network in a strategic and targeted fashion. It allows users to send and receive messages, join groups around industries and common interests, ask and answer questions, stay in touch with colleagues and clients, view job postings, and a whole lot more.

### "LinkedIn and Lovin' It" covers:

- Setting up every aspect of your profile for maximum response
- Building your network to reach your next top client, employer, or partner.
- Maximizing your LinkedIn presence to put your work in the spotlight.
- Doing research, finding jobs, following companies, gathering data.
- Using LinkedIn on the go, and much more!



**Get Good**

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