

Becoming Buzzworthy

A GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR
STORE e-SAVVY

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GET CONNECTED WITH LinkedIn

More than simply a place to park your resume online, LinkedIn allows savvy professionals from all industries to connect with colleagues, co-workers, and friends around the world. According to its About page, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network on the Internet, with more than 150 million members in over 200 countries and territories (press.linkedin.com/about).

GETTING STARTED WITH **LinkedIn**

Like many social networking sites, it's easy to get overwhelmed by the amount of information available on LinkedIn, leaving you unsure where to start. Fortunately, LinkedIn offers a New User Starter Guide: learn.linkedin.com/new-users/. This Guide walks you through the initial steps of setting up your profile and connecting with people you already know.

PRO TIP:

Work towards “100% Completion” of your profile—this makes you easier to find and more available to opportunities.

YOUR GLOBAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Once you complete your profile, you can start taking advantage of LinkedIn's collective wisdom. Think of LinkedIn as a local chamber of commerce meeting, but on a global scale. Hundreds of other professionals and business owners gather there daily, all with the purpose of making connections and helping each other out. Just like at a local networking event, you can use LinkedIn to ask your network for business partner or professional service recommendations, such as technical support or tax advice. Knowing that you have a pool of resources available on LinkedIn can help relieve the feeling that you're alone and have to know and do everything yourself.

FINDING YOUR NICHE

Through LinkedIn's Groups, you can discuss topics related to your retail business and gather insights from other professionals with similar experiences. To find a Group to join, click Groups in the top navigation bar, and then click “Groups You May Like.” LinkedIn provides you with a list of Groups based on information in your Profile. You can also search for Groups related to your interests and business networking needs (linkd.in/xaZDx9). When you search for “retail,” you'll find groups related to Retail Management, Internet Retailing, Merchandising, and the National Retail Federation. Also consider searching for Groups related to your interests, such as jewelry makers, science-fiction writing, or your alma mater.

Once you join a group, jump right into the conversational stream. Respond to discussions already in progress, and request feedback on how others handle situations similar to those you face.

GET (AND GIVE) EXPERT HELP

Be sure to explore a feature called LinkedIn Answers, located under the “More” tab in the top navigation bar ([linkedin.com/answers](https://www.linkedin.com/answers)). This is a useful tool to crowd-source information when you don’t know exactly whom to ask. With categories such as Business Operations, Finance and Accounting, and Startups and Small Businesses, you’ll find literally thousands of expert resources with just a few clicks. You can also offer examples of your own business knowledge and expertise by responding to Questions.

Pro Tip: Every time the questioner picks your answer as the best, your Profile displays your expertise in the category of the question (ex. Expertise in Public Relations).

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Another useful feature is the LinkedIn Recommendation, where people in your network provide testimonials about what it’s like to work with you. While positive comments are always nice, LinkedIn Recommendations serve as credibility checks against what you say about yourself in your profile. These endorsements can help prove your case as a savvy professional to future business partners and investors.

CREATE A COMPANY PROFILE

If you have an email address at a company domain (ex. “Mary@beadstore.com”), you can create a Company Profile page for your business. Similar to a Facebook Page, your LinkedIn Company Profile provides a snapshot of what your business offers, who is on your team, and where you’re located. You can also post status updates about business milestones, which LinkedIn broadcasts out to your followers. A Company Profile is another way to add to your online presence, cementing your status as an expert in your field.

PRO TIP:

If you don’t see a Group that addresses your need, start your own. Owning a Group establishes you as a thought-leader, plus builds juicy SEO (search engine optimization) links to your own websites.

PRO TIP:

Every time the questioner picks your answer as the best, your Profile displays your expertise in the category of the question (ex. Expertise in Public Relations).

GROW YOUR NETWORK

The value of LinkedIn increases as you add more connections—the more connections you have, the more likely you’ll be able to get in touch with the right person for a specific situation. It’s most effective to keep things personal, however, rather than blasting out invites to just anyone. Start by connecting with people you’ve met personally and can vouch for their experience, work ethic, and personality. When you invite someone to join your network, customize the email note to include their name, and refer to how you know each other. This helps the recipient recognize you more readily, rather than dismissing you as an unfamiliar name. For example, after a trade show, follow up with connection invites to new contacts, and mention, “we met at the Retailer Roundtable at CHA-Winter.”

LinkedIn provides a great opportunity to connect with other professionals. If you haven’t already, consider joining the thousands who have taken advantage of this amazing networking tool. If you are already part of LinkedIn, explore its many facets to make sure you are getting the most out of your account.

PRO TIP:

The best way to get Recommendations is to offer them; people usually reciprocate in kind. If not, you can request a Recommendation from a connection’s profile.

RESOURCES:

LinkedIn Learning Center:

learn.linkedin.com/

“How to Network Professionally Online”:

careerservices.linkedin.com/Network-Professionally.pdf

“100+ Ways to Use LinkedIn”:

linkedintelligence.com/smart-ways-to-use-linkedin/