build a professional online presence

You can get a professional LinkedIn photo taken at Hiatt.

Summary
The summary should outline key skills or competencies that are relevant to career fields that interest you. This might include professional interests, personal strengths and accomplishments, collegiate activities, community service, leadership, or experiences.

Example:
Strong background in writing and editing; including experience as an editor of the literary magazine, a reporter for The Justice (campus newspaper), and an intern for the Boston Globe newspaper. Capable writer and producer; effective at developing content for print, audio, video and social media. Demonstrated leader and cooperator; active in student government and Waltham Group with an interest in a career in non-profit administration, advertising and public relations.

Specialties
This section allows you to include key words so that potential contacts will be able to see your abilities. These can be skills, languages, or technologies.

The following example is from the LinkedIn Grad Guide:
Proficient in Outlook, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, LexisNexis, iNews, digital photography, Internet, and Web 2.0 marketing and communication, blogging, event planning, and Facebook.

Education
Include Brandeis, the degree you are seeking or have earned, and major(s), and minor(s). Highlight academic honors, relevant courses and academic projects. Be sure to include activities and information that will help you connect to others that had similar campus involvements and interests.

Experience
In this section it is appropriate to include employment, internships, volunteer experiences, and involvement with clubs or activities, regardless of whether they were paid positions. LinkedIn provides the following headings to help you categorize your experiences.

These sections and applications are worth considering:
• Organizations
• Volunteer Experience & Causes
• Projects
• Certifications
• Courses
• Honors and Awards
• Languages
• Creative Portfolio Display

It is possible to upload your resume into LinkedIn to complete the experience section. Please remember to review your profile, post uploading, for formatting and accuracy. If you choose to upload your resume as a .pdf, consider removing your contact information from the resume, if you wish only to be contacted via LinkedIn.

“Experience” Is a Moving Target
Remember that your experiences are constantly changing and evolving. Because your profile on LinkedIn will be live 24/7, be sure it’s up to date. Also, as your experiences change, you may wish to re-categorize information to best show off your relevant experiences.

View Sample LinkedIn Pages
introduction

WHAT’S ALL THE FUSS OVER LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional online network with a presence in over 200 countries with over 200 million members. The site aims to unite professionals to make them more informed, productive, and successful. It differs from other social networking sites and alumni databases in that it is strictly professional in nature. In addition, LinkedIn is a live, up-to-the-minute, dynamic information-sharing portal.

As a Brandeis student or graduate, optimizing your use of LinkedIn is a critical way to make connections, network with fellow Brandeisians and other individuals, learn about different career options and find jobs.

ASK AND YOU SHALL RECEIVE

The Hiatt Career Center received many requests to create a Brandeis-specific LinkedIn guide. In response to these requests, and in recognition of LinkedIn’s benefits, Hiatt prepared this guide to help students and alumni like you navigate the many functionalities of LinkedIn to maximize your experience and presence on the site. Hiatt encourages you to use this guide, filled with Brandeis-specific examples, advice and group information, to further your networking endeavors.

You can use LinkedIn in a variety of ways. This guide will show you how to use LinkedIn to:

1. Build a professional online presence
2. Connect with alumni and other networking contacts
3. Research companies and industries
4. Join and engage with Brandeis University’s LinkedIn groups

CONTACT THE HIATT CAREER CENTER

For more information about LinkedIn, or to schedule an appointment with a Hiatt career counselor to review your LinkedIn profile or discuss networking strategies, please contact us:

Brandeis University
Usdan 15 - MS 204
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02454

www.brandeis.edu/hiatt
781-736-3618
hiattcenter@brandeis.edu

A Note About LinkedIn Premium

This guide will provide information on how to use the basic, free version of LinkedIn. There are upgrades available at a cost, but for most users and instances, the basic version is an effective networking tool.

LinkedIn Premium

Compiled by the Hiatt Career Center Networking Committee & designed by Lenny Schnier ’13
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1 build a professional online presence

PROFILE OVERVIEW

A LinkedIn profile is an organized, dynamic and continuously customizable way to present your experience to other professional LinkedIn users and beyond and enhance the networking process. LinkedIn lets you control your profile’s content and structure, and offers a variety of interesting sections and features to ensure your profile best represents your professional and academic experiences and interests. Since employers, friends, and colleagues may be searching for you online, it’s nice to know that you can fully control this piece of your online presence to ensure that you represent yourself in a professional manner.

Before you can begin to contact others on LinkedIn you must create your own profile. Log in at www.linkedin.com to create an account and follow the profile prompts to begin.

Your Email Address is Safe with LinkedIn

LinkedIn will ask you to provide an email through which you and your contacts will correspond; however, this information is not shared publicly. But, a word to the wise: your profile should avoid specific contact info and other things you are not comfortable having your contacts see. Also steer clear of information that is irrelevant, untruthful, or misleading.

Get Started with LinkedIn

Your profile is similar to your resume in that it is carefully and professionally written, including information that is relevant to your career objectives and job/internship search. In its most basic form, it will have sections that list your education, work experience, and skills.

It differs from your resume in that it does not have a length limitation, and may have sections and features not traditionally used on a resume. For example, a LinkedIn profile often includes a headline, photo (strongly recommended), interests, summary, and a contacts list.

KEY PROFILE SETTINGS

Explore key sections available for LinkedIn profiles below to help you create and individualize your own profile:

+ Professional Headline

Underneath your name will be a short “headline.” These words will define you on LinkedIn. This can be a short job title or a brief summary of your professional identity. Hiatt recommends a short phrase that highlights your career objectives and/or your skills, interests and experience.

Examples:

• Designer, writer, photographer
• Economics student at Brandeis University
• Junior in English seeking a summer internship
• Recent grad with experience in marketing, web design, and event planning

+ Photo

Though not required, a photo makes your profile more visually compelling and might remind someone that they have already met you. Also, it can be helpful for contacts to remember who you are, particularly if others share your name. Should you choose to include a photo, remember that it will be the first image students, alumni and other potential networking contacts have of you. The pho-
to should represent you as a professional; Hiatt recommends a headshot of you alone wearing professional dress.

You can get a professional LinkedIn photo taken at Hiatt. Stop by during drop-in hours or make an appointment.

**Summary**

The summary should outline key skills or competencies that are relevant to career fields that interest you. This might include professional interests, personal strengths and accomplishments, collegiate activities, community service, leadership, or other experiences.

**Example:**

Strong background in writing and editing; including experience as an editor of the literary magazine, a reporter for The Justice (campus newspaper), and an intern for the Boston Globe newspaper. Capable writer and producer, effective at developing content for print, audio, video, and social media. Demonstrated leader and co-operator, active in student government and Waltham Group with an interest in a career in non-profit administration, advertising and public relations.

**Skills & Expertise**

This section allows you to include key words so that potential contacts will be able to see your abilities. These can be skills, languages, or technologies.

**Example:**

Proficient in Outlook, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, LexisNexis, iNews, digital photography, Internet, and Web 2.0 marketing and communication, blogging, event planning, and Facebook.

**Education**

Include Brandeis, the degree you are seeking or have earned, and declared major(s) and minor(s). If you are a current student, include your expected graduation year. Highlight academic honors, relevant courses and major academic projects, such as a thesis. Be sure to include activities and information that will help you connect to others with similar interests and campus involvement.

**Experience**

In this section it is appropriate to include employment, internships, volunteer experiences, and active involvement with clubs or activities, regardless of whether they were paid positions.

LinkedIn provides the following headings to help you categorize your experiences:

- Organizations
- Volunteer Experience & Causes
- Projects
- Certifications
- Courses
- Honors and Awards
- Languages
- Creative Portfolio Display

**“Experience” Is a Moving Target**

Remember that your experiences are constantly changing and evolving. Because your profile on LinkedIn will be live 24/7, be sure it’s up to date. Also, as your experiences change, you may wish to re-categorize information to most effectively show off your relevant experiences.

**RESUME UPLOAD**

LinkedIn’s resume upload feature could save you some time as you build your profile. You may upload your resume into LinkedIn to complete the Experience section. After uploading it, please remember to review your profile for formatting and accuracy. If you choose to upload your resume as a .pdf, consider removing your contact information from the resume first if you prefer to be contacted only via LinkedIn.

**Custom URL**

A custom, public profile URL is a short, clean, readable link that you can include in your email...
signature, on your resume/cover letter and other professional documents. A custom URL directs potential employers and others specifically to you, and not to someone who may share the same name.

Custom URLs are available on a first come, first served basis.

To customize your URL:
1. In Privacy & Settings, click Edit your public profile.
2. In the Your public profile URL box on the right, click the Customize your public profile URL link.
3. Type the last part of your URL in the text box. Your custom URL must contain 5 to 30 letters or numbers; do not use spaces, symbols, or special characters. Be sure to keep this address professional in nature.
4. Click Set Custom URL.

RECOMMENDATIONS & ENDORSEMENTS

A recommendation is a short reference written by someone who knows your work—like a faculty member, supervisor or colleague—that appears on your profile in conjunction with a specific position. You can formally request a recommendation from a connection via LinkedIn (see below).

An endorsement is an affirmation of your skills by a member of your network. You may list up to 50 skills in your profile; the most endorsed skills will show up first. Some endorsements may come from connections who cannot necessarily vouch for your skills. While in edit mode, you can show or hide endorsements in Manage Endorsements.

Requesting a LinkedIn Recommendation

When you request a recommendation through LinkedIn, keep in mind the following:

Ask Politely: When you request a recommendation, try to convey that the recipient shouldn’t feel like he or she is under any obligation. You can use phrases such as, “if it’s not too much trouble,” “when you have a chance,” or “if you are able,” to communicate that you are respectful of the other person’s time and preferences.

Provide Suggestions for What You’d Like Highlighted: This applies for both general recommendations and those that are specifically written for a particular position. You don’t have to give your contact a word-for-word rundown of what the recommendation should say, but you might list some qualities or skills that you would like mentioned. You’ll be able to preview the recommendation before it goes live; you don’t have to publish it.

Thank Your Contact and Return the Favor: When you receive a recommendation, don’t forget to thank the person and consider writing a recommendation in return if appropriate.

Both recommendations and endorsements can help you round out your online brand, as they validate the skills and attributes that you have put forward. To date, recommendations are more highly valued than endorsements; the difference in weight is similar to a substantive positive comment versus a “like” on Facebook.

Want advice on how to write a LinkedIn recommendation? The site below will give you sample recommendations, tips for what to include, and instructions to submit recommendations.

View Sample Recommendations

PROFILE SETTNGS

In addition to creating a custom URL, you may also control the information that is visible to connections and non-connections in your profile settings. Consider carefully what to make public; you want helpful contacts to be able to find and contact you, but you do not want to compromise your privacy in the process. For example, consider making your name, headline, summary, organizations’ names (current and past positions) and “interested in” public so that employers and alumni can easily identify you and your career interests.

Did you know that Hiatt can review your LinkedIn profile? Call us to learn more at 781-736-3618.
“Connecting” means much more than just adding someone to a list. LinkedIn is one way to engage with others in a meaningful way.

FINDING CONTACTS

Start With Who You Know
Friends, co-workers, family members, supervisors, faculty or professionals you meet at career fairs and other events can be great networking contacts. Add individuals you know and respect professionally as LinkedIn connections. When searching for a specific individual, simply type his/her first and last name into the search bar at the top of any page. Click on the names in the results to view the profiles and verify that this is actually the person you seek.

To find people you already know on LinkedIn, you can also click “Add Connections” under the “Network” tab. By entering your email address(es), LinkedIn can check if your address book contains any registered LinkedIn users and can then facilitate the invitation process.

A Word of Caution
Be selective and thoughtful about adding connections. Although LinkedIn gives you the option to connect with your entire address book with one generic mass-message, consider sending individual invitations so you can personalize each message and up your chances of getting added.

Connecting With Brandeis Alumni
You’re part of a diverse, active and supportive community. LinkedIn can help you find Brandeis alumni in your field, company, school, or job of choice. You won’t be able to say “I don’t have any contacts” anymore!

Hiatt moderates the Brandeis University Career Connections networking group on LinkedIn. Members of this group have actively volunteered to help and engage with one another; this is a safe place to start your networking. Check out Section 4 of this guide for more information on connecting with Brandeis alumni in the group.

Under the “Network” tab > “Find Alumni,” you can quickly see where Brandeis alumni live and in what industries and companies they work. Easy-to-use filters narrow down your search results with just a few clicks. Click on a location to automatically limit alums to that geographic area or an industry to further refine your list. If you don’t immediately see the criteria you are seeking, use the “See More” or search function to suit your needs and pinpoint your search.

Advanced Search
Your best networking contact might not be someone you already know or affiliated with Brandeis. Use LinkedIn’s advanced search to identify additional contacts to help you with your career goals. You can search by keyword, school, company, title, and even zip code. You can also use additional filters—like industries, relationship to you, group membership, and more—to further refine your search results, see what you have in common, and determine how best to reach out.

REACHING OUT TO CONTACTS

Great! You’ve found some potential networking connections. Now it’s time to reach out to them in a personalized way.

A Note About Privacy Controls & Messaging
LinkedIn allows users to set their own unique privacy settings. This means that not everyone will grant you access to view their profiles, photos, or even their full names. You might be prohibited from sending direct messages or you might first require an introduction from a mutual contact to gain access to some LinkedIn users.
Dear John,

I hope you have been well! As you know, I will be graduating soon and I am trying to connect with individuals who know about inbound marketing. I noticed through LinkedIn that you are connected to Brad Dice at HubSpot. Since this company specializes in this area of communications, I would really appreciate the opportunity to speak with Brad about his experience in the field. Would you be willing to facilitate an introduction for me?

Thank you for considering my request. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

Best,

Hillary Career-Center

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**Request an Introduction**

Interested in connecting with someone who one of your contacts already knows? LinkedIn has a feature that facilitates introductions to a third party. To request an introduction, simply send a message to your contact. Mention that you are applying for a job and/or interested in learning more about a particular company/industry and that you noticed s/he was connected to someone that piques your interest. Then, ask if s/he would be willing to introduce you to that individual either through a personal or LinkedIn introduction. Make sure you give them the option to say “no.”

**Sample introduction email:**

I hope you have been well! As you know, I will be graduating soon and I am trying to connect with individuals who know about inbound marketing. I noticed through LinkedIn that you are connected to Brad Dice at HubSpot. Since this company specializes in this area of communications, I would really appreciate the opportunity to speak with Brad about his experience in the field. Would you be willing to facilitate an introduction for me?

Thank you for considering my request. Please let me know if there is anything I can do for you.

Best,

Hillary Career-Center

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**Send Messages**

If you are able, initiate your conversation using the “Send Message” button on the contact’s profile to write to him/her directly. You can also find the Send Message button when you hover over a group member’s name in the Members tab of a group to which you belong. Sending a message is the preferred way to connect because it allows contacts to respond to your questions if they don’t know you well enough to accept your formal invitation. If you don’t see the “Send Message” button on a contact’s profile and you don’t share a group, customize the message on the “Connect” page.

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**Getting Creative – Alternate Ways to Connect**

Depending on users’ privacy controls, you may not see the Connect or Send Message buttons. You may only know where someone works and his/her first name and/or last initial, so you’ll need to be creative. Seek out a company staff directory or alumni directory, or use internet searches to find contact information. It doesn’t always work out, but it pays to try.
RESPONDING TO INVITATIONS

Because networking is a two-way street, other LinkedIn members may invite you to connect with them, too. LinkedIn strongly recommends that you only accept invitations to connect from people you know. You may also be willing to accept invitations from fellow Brandeis students or alumni, co-workers, etc. simply because you share a common interest. Whatever your comfort level may be, it is important to remember that you have options when you receive an invitation to connect.

Accept

Click this button to add the contact as one of your first-degree connections. Other LinkedIn members will be able to see that you are connected.

Reply (don’t accept yet)

Click the dropdown on the right side of the Accept button to see this option and reply without accepting the invitation.

Ignore

Clicking this button will move the invitation to your “Archived” folder without accepting it. The other person won’t be notified that you’ve ignored their invitation, so they may try to connect with you again. After you click the Ignore button, you will have the option of clicking I Don’t Know [Name] to prevent that member from sending you any more invitations.

Report as Spam

Clicking this button will report the invitation as spam.

Things to Consider Before Responding to an Invitation

- Do you know the contact?
- Do you feel comfortable with the contact professionally and publicly?
- Do you know why the contact is inviting you to connect?
- Do you need to learn more about the contact?
Imagine how valuable this information will be to your job search!

- Employers appreciate an individualized and company-focused job seeker. Get insider information about the company to prepare for interviews, information sessions, career fairs, and other interactions with company representatives.

- Identify employees from whom you’d like to learn about career paths and critical skills. Expand your ability to get information directly from people in the workplace.

- Research the company using the information that is available right from your LinkedIn account. You can click on a link to follow the company, gaining up-to-the-minute news.

- Your compelling LinkedIn profile should reflect knowledge of the industry and issues, and contain key words and professional language. Following companies closely can help you enrich your own LinkedIn profile by providing a fuller picture of your career interests. Reading about the company gives you insights not only into that one particular employer, but the industry as well.
Are you unsure about your career direction and using LinkedIn to get more information about a particular field? Do you want to broaden your network and find more insider experts to talk to?

LinkedIn’s search bar at the top of any page offers an “Advanced” option that allows you to enter criteria—like field, geographic location, university, level of experience, and keywords—that results in a targeted search of LinkedIn profiles.

View professionals’ profiles to learn about the range of career paths that can lead to your target industry or role. You may also discover positions and career paths that are closely related to your interests, expanding the options you explore.

You can also see where individuals in your field have worked in the past to get more ideas about companies in your industry of interest as well as the many ways to get into your field and, ultimately, land your dream job.

**Influencers & Channels**

Another way to research industries, careers and other professional topics is to follow “Influencers” and “Channels.” Under the “Interests” tab > “Influencers,” you can follow people in leadership positions who write about their lives and careers. You can either choose to follow individual “Influencers” of interest to you or you can subscribe to affinity-based “Channels” (including industries, fields, sectors, hot topics, etc.). News from both of these sources will appear in your LinkedIn Today feed, which is the activity feed on your LinkedIn homepage.
The “Discussions” tab is a great resource for soliciting diverse perspectives. If you would like to pose a relevant career question to the full group, Hiatt suggests posting a discussion. In your discussion post, be sure to provide a brief summary of who you are and why you are seeking this specific information. Because this post will be visible to all group members, please be sure that it is free from typos and does not ask for a job/internship opportunity outright.

**Post a Discussion**

Identify individual group members in your field, industry or geographic area of interest by clicking on the number of group members link to the right of the group name. Individual members might be great candidates for informational interviews, or you may simply want to message them directly with more specific questions related to their career path and expertise. Because you share a group, you are able to send a message to fellow group members. “Send Message” appears to the right when you hover over a member’s name in the “Members” tab. If you are able, Hiatt suggests...
sending a message before inviting them to connect. Remember to customize your messages (see Connect with Others section).

**TIPS FOR INFORMATION PROVIDERS**

Networking is a two-way street; it is just as beneficial and rewarding to ask for advice as it is to give it in return. If you have joined Brandeis University Career Connections to “give back” to group members by offering career expertise, advice and leads, there are several ways to do so.

Group members, especially student members, will periodically post discussions to the entire group. As a “career volunteer,” Hiatt encourages you to respond to relevant discussions. You may even provide your email address if you would be willing to allow the group member to follow up directly with you for more information. You can receive updates about these posts by email (see below for setting your communications preferences) or you can proactively check the group for active discussions.

Group members may also send you direct messages or invitations to connect. We encourage you to respond to these messages and invitations in a timely manner. To ensure that you can receive these messages from group members, please see the Communications Preferences section below.

**COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES**

As an alumni or student member of Brandeis University Career Connections, it is important that you select how you want to receive updates from the group. You can manage these preferences within the group page under the “More...” tab > “Your Settings.” To make the most of your group membership, Hiatt recommends the following settings:

**Contact Email:** Select your preferred email to receive communications from the group. Be sure that this email address is current and valid.

**Activity:** Hiatt does not recommend checking this to receive an email for each new discussion posted in the group, as the number of individual emails you receive may be unmanageable. Instead, Hiatt suggests the digest emails below.

**Digest Email:** Hiatt recommends checking this box to receive a digest email of all activity in the group. You can specify the frequency as daily or weekly.

**Announcements:** Hiatt recommends checking this box to allow the group administrators to send you direct emails.

**Member Messages:** Hiatt recommends checking this box to allow members of the Hiatt group to send you messages via LinkedIn. This does not mean that the group members will have your email address, but it will make it easier to strike up a conversation via LinkedIn. If you do not check off this box, members of the group may not have the ability to send you a message directly.
Attending events is one of the most common ways to meet new people. Hiatt hosts many events on and off campus to help students and alumni network with each other and employers, including: industry career forums, information sessions, site visits, employer/alumni office hours, and more!

B Connect: Brandeis Alumni Directory

The Directory module in B Connect is a searchable Brandeis-only database of Brandeis alumni. Alumni can search the Directory for former classmates and potential networking contacts by employer, industry, geographic area, graduation year, and more.

Current students do not have access to the alumni directory. Students get access upon graduation.

Wisdom Wanted

Wisdom Wanted ads are specific requests for career advice that Hiatt sends to our alumni and parent volunteer e-mail list quarterly. Students write ads seeking advice on a variety of topics, from grad school applications to job opportunities in a specific field. When alumni/parent volunteers want to respond to an ad, they contact the student directly via email. To submit an ad, students must have a LinkedIn profile, complete Hiatt’s networking requirements, and fill out the online form. To be added to the Wisdom Wanted volunteer e-mail list, alumni and parents can subscribe online.

Events

Attending events is one of the most common ways to meet new people. Hiatt hosts many events on and off campus to help students and alumni network with each other and employers, including: industry career forums, information sessions, site visits, employer/alumni office hours, and more!
Learn how Hiatt can help you connect with recruiters and alums. Also, check out local calendars, professional organization websites, and University events to see if someone of interest is coming to your area.

**ADDITIONAL NETWORKING RESOURCES**

LinkedIn Learning Center

Hiatt’s Networking Website

Additional Brandeis Alumni Networking Groups

In-person & Online Workshops

**Visit the Hiatt Career Center**

Usdan 15 - MS 204
415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02454
www.brandeis.edu/hiatt

**Office Hours**
Monday - Friday, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
For appointments, please call 781-736-3618

**Drop-in Hours** (while classes are in session)
Monday - Friday, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Tuesday (extended hours), 5:00 - 7:00 PM

**HiattChat** (while classes are in session)
Monday - Thursday, 8:00 - 10:00 PM