



5 Social Media Tips for Graduates

Must-do tasks for a professional online profile



Provided by
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When I speak with students & student-athletes, they often want to know how they can prepare their online profile for the professional world. This guide will allow you take charge of your social media accounts, polish your personal brand and optimize your networks in 5 easy steps.

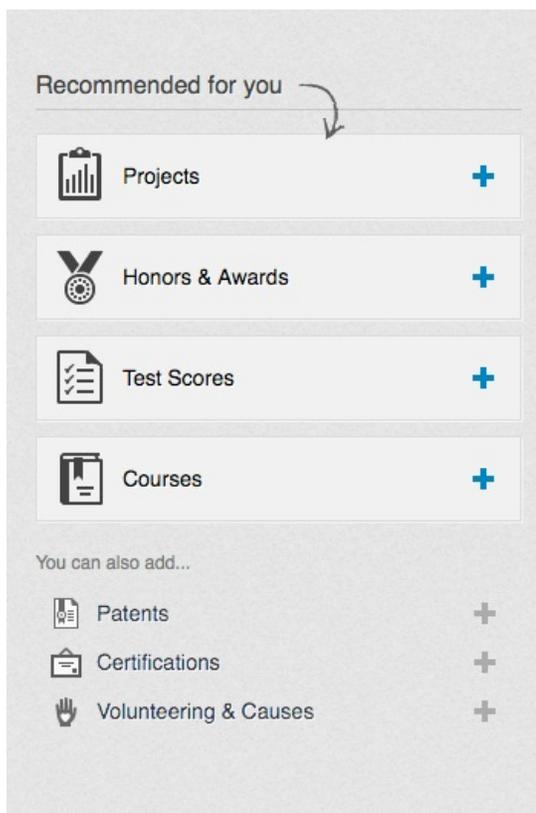




1. Set Up Your LinkedIn Account

LinkedIn Likes Students

In the spring of 2013, LinkedIn added several new features to its site to benefit students. There is an understanding that you will have less experience to add to the Experience section - BUT - what you cannot add in this section, you can make up for in your Summary and sections like Skills & Endorsements, Publications, Projects and others. When you go to edit your Profile in LinkedIn, look to the right for this menu:



LinkedIn will tell you what sections you should complete. Here's where you can really fill up your profile, despite not having lengthy work experience.

How your profile reads is up to you. If you feel you want your Honors & Awards to appear first under your Profile picture and information, then go for it. What is most impressive?

Make sure you pay attention to keywords you use in your Headline, Summary and your Experience section. Better strategy in these sections will help you get discovered in searches.

Start building your connections with professors and faculty, with professionals where you interned or held summer jobs. Work to get recommendations from them, or get endorsed for skills in the Skills section.

If you don't follow any other advice in this guide, at least get your LinkedIn account updated, active and boost your connections. I can't tell you how many times I've asked students, student-athletes and graduate students if they have a LinkedIn account to learn that none or few have. It's essential if you want to get a job. The first place recruiters look is LinkedIn.





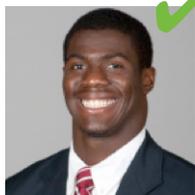
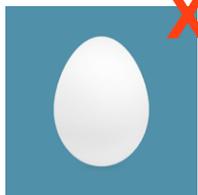
2. Update Your Profiles

First Impressions Matter

Hiring managers will be looking at your social media accounts. It is essential that you make an outstanding first impression AND that they know they've landed on the correct account. In fact, after you've followed the steps in this guide, you will be confident enough to give them the links to your accounts and welcome them to discover you!

Profile Picture

Use the same profile picture for all of your social media accounts. The photo should be a good headshot, one that looks professional. While it can show your personality, it should not include red cups, a party scene, other people in your photo, or be too revealing. Cover the girls up, ladies! If you can splurge, get some professional photos taken. Otherwise, have a friend take photos of you, wearing professional clothing and in a nice setting. No selfies! Some good and bad examples:



Unless you are a well-known, professional athlete, avoid using profile pictures of you at game time and wearing your athletic gear. Especially when a helmet covers your face!

Your photo will be seen by those who may want to hire you. Do you look friendly? Approachable? How will you represent their company? They want to see your smiling face!

Visual Real Estate

Along these same lines, pay attention to your Facebook Cover Photo, the new and very large Twitter Header, your Google+ Banner, YouTube Channel Art and other areas which visually represent who you are. Express your personality, but make a good impression!



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Update Your Profiles (continued)

Same Bio, Different Channel

While your photo is what we see first, your Bio or About section significantly impacts our perception of who you are and what you are all about. Just as your profile picture should be the same across all channels, take care to use the same information in the different Bio/About sections. You'll have to adjust for character length, but if you can accurately sum up in 160 characters (Twitter), you'll be golden. Express your interests and goals, and squeeze in some achievements if you can. Some good and bad examples. (While I've made up these examples, the bad ones are not far from what I have actually find online.)

✓	✗
ABC University Graduate with BA in Education. Searching for Asst. Teaching job in CA or AZ.	Teaching guru. Graduating this year. Hit me up.
Graduating @UCSB BioChem major. Completing 3rd internship. Starting 2nd base in softball. #GoGauchos	I played sports and graduated from UCSB. Looking for a job. #TeamFollowBack
Just passed the bar exam and look forward to entering field of corporate law in Bay Area.	Corporate law ninja. Surfing is the bomb. Lazy weekends. Follow me on IG: @lazysurfer
Avid rock climber who applies same determination in my field of study - Economics. Ready for new challenges. '14 SDSU grad.	Nature is awesome. I love hiking and camping and rock climbing. Anything outdoors. Coffee addict.





3. Clean Up

Delete, Delete, Delete

Get ready to start loving the delete button! How many photos have you posted on Instagram? Tumblr? Facebook? Twitter? What do those photos show? If a hiring partner saw one of these photos, what would they think? Is there a caption which gives the photo some context or will the partner begin to believe that you drink that heavily every Tuesday night?

It's time to start weeding out the photos which may damage your reputation. Don't forget to untag yourself from unflattering photos your friends have posted. If you really like that photo of all your besties on Spring Break in Cabo, then give the photo some context with a descriptive caption, "All my favorite peeps together for our last Spring Break on the beaches of Cabo."

Unfriend, Unfollow

While it seems harsh to disconnect with "friends" and followers, who you are connected to speaks volumes about who you are. You must care enough about yourself to unfriend and unfollow those who may stain or even damage your reputation.

Make sure to browse through the usernames on Twitter and Instagram. Unfollow those like @RealStonedPanda and other spammy-looking or questionable accounts. To unfollow inactive accounts on Instagram and Twitter, use this free tool:

<https://www.justunfollow.com>



You'd be surprised how many students and student-athletes I've found following and retweeting the account pictured. Not good for your image!

Additional Resources

These two videos can also help guide you in cleaning up your accounts (especially the number of Pages you've liked on Facebook):

Facebook Likes and Reputation Management: <http://goo.gl/baEYql>

Social Spring Cleaning: <http://goo.gl/P4arZL>



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4. Start Connecting

Unleash the Power of Social Media

Now that you've cleaned up your accounts, you can be more confident connecting with the right people. Look to follow industry professionals and actively network with them online. Spend time offline attending networking functions to help grow your contact base.



It's Easy on Twitter

Building your personal brand is easier to do on Twitter. You can search keywords to find people who are in your industry or profession. Use the simple search for broad terms, or use the advanced search to drill down to specifics.

Once you start following more people who share your interests, Twitter adjusts the "Who to Follow" list for you, so be sure to keep checking there.

Create a list to keep an eye on big or verified accounts - you don't have to follow them to list them. Go to Me>Lists>Create a List. Voila! (Additional Resource: my [Twitter List Tutorial](#).)

Once you start retweeting and conversing with the folks you've followed, you'll see that some of them will start following you back, and connections will deepen.





Start Connecting (continued)

Search on Facebook

If you are more comfortable on Facebook, you can use the platform's powerful search tool to find professionals to connect with. For example:



Follow on Facebook

If you find people you want to connect with, you can see if they've opted to allow Followers:



Allow Followers

In order to grow your network, you might choose to allow the public to follow you. Go to your settings, click "Followers" in the left column and then choose "Everybody."

Only your posts marked Public will be seen by your followers. You can strategically "feed" the public with information that improves your reputation. More about that in tip #5.

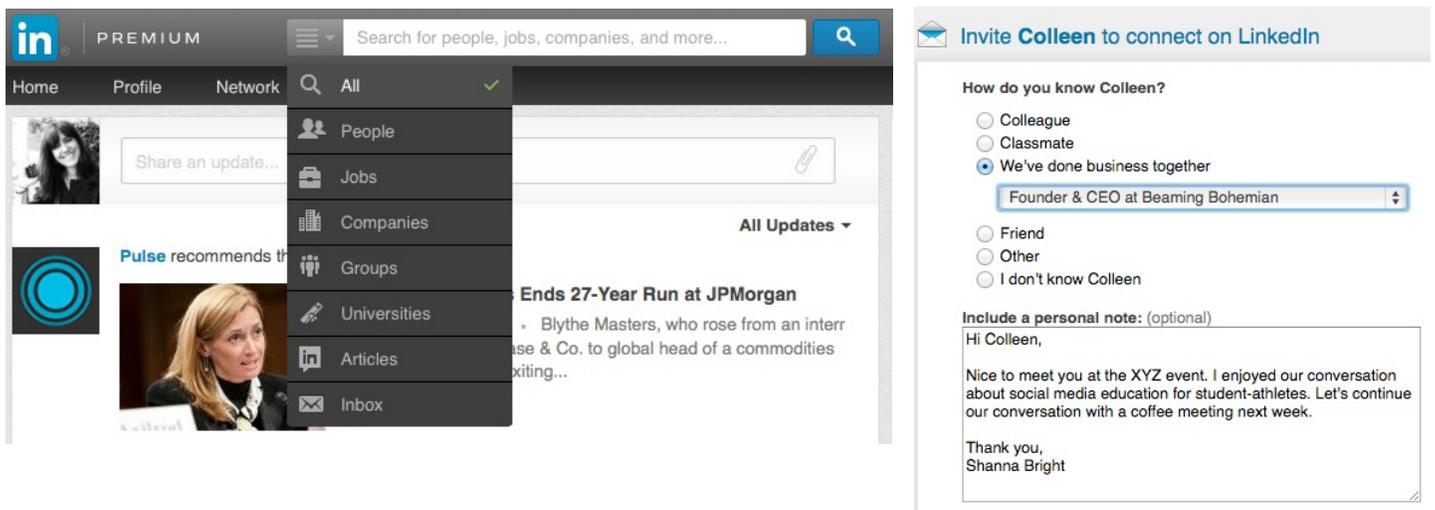




Start Connecting (continued)

Search People, Jobs and More on LinkedIn

You've updated your LinkedIn profile in Step #1, so let's put LinkedIn to work. Start by connecting with people you already know. Look for your professors, faculty and staff, coaches and advisors. If you served as an intern, or had a job while you were a student, connect with those colleagues.



LinkedIn allows you to search for people, jobs, and more. Use this as a resource to understand what jobs are available and who you are connected to who works for that company. Ask current connections to introduce you to 2nd and 3rd degree contacts.

Make sure you personalize your invitation to connect. Even if you know someone well, it shows your professionalism. And if they need a reminder of how they know you, the invite does the job.

Additional Resources

Get contact cards or business cards printed and get ready to network. I love the designs available at [MOO](#), but [Vista Print](#) may be friendlier on your wallet. Connect with your local Chamber, or seek out associations in your desired industry. You may just find a professional mentor.



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5. Build Your Expertise

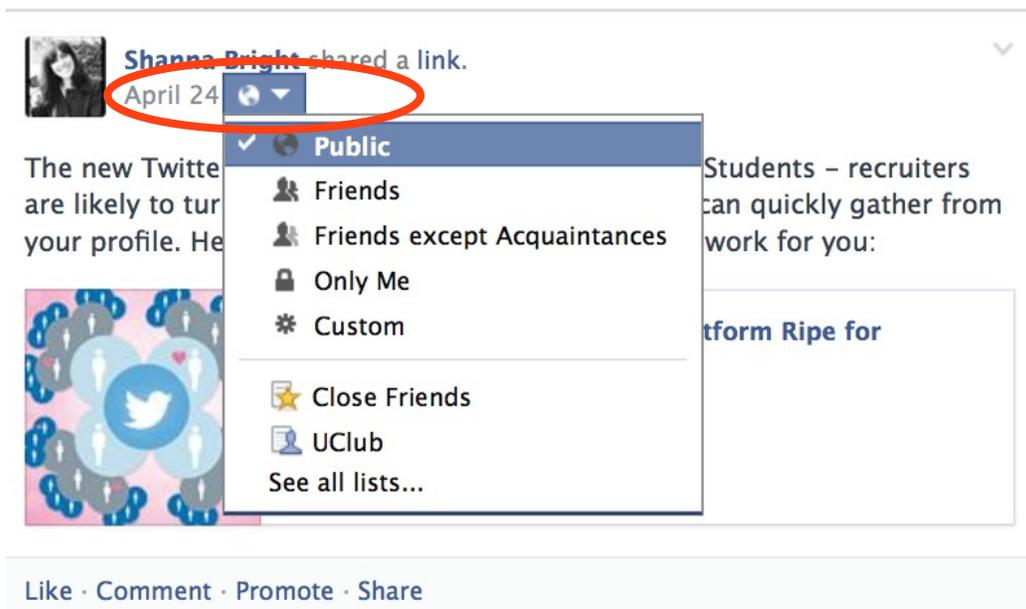
Start Sharing

Now that you've cleaned up your accounts, and have connected with influential people, it's time to start socializing with purpose! Plan to consistently post - at least once per day on Facebook and LinkedIn and several times on Twitter. You need to stay active.

Share news and information pertaining to your profession. Reply, comment, like or retweet posts from companies you'd like to work for. This will help you understand what issues are top of mind for them. Search for news and meaningful articles in trade magazines online and share across your channels.

Go Public

I'm hoping you also took time to clean up your Instagram account, so you can unlock it and show that you have nothing to hide. Same goes for your Twitter account. On Facebook, if you allow people to Follow you (see tip #4), you can share posts with the Public. Your followers will see only these posts. Make sure to always check the audience for each post.





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You are ready! Best wishes for you!



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Infusing communication with positivity and purpose.
Empowering you to build meaningful, personable brands
which connect and inspire people.

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