Building a Great Student Profile on LinkedIn

Before connecting with professionals on LinkedIn, develop a strong profile to showcase your education and experience.

1) **Create a “Stand Out” Headline:** Utilize the headline to give people a direct, memorable way to understand who you are or what you are looking for. Examples: “Economics Student at University of St. Thomas” or “Senior Business Student at University of St. Thomas Looking for Full-Time Management Opportunities”.

2) **Select a Professional Profile Photo:** Do not choose a picture where you are with other people and have to cut yourself out. Have a professional picture taken, or simply dress up and stand in front of a white or solid colored wall and have your roommate or a friend snap a photo of you. (No selfies!)

3) **Develop a Professional Summary:** This section includes a brief overview of your education, experience and strengths in addition to indicating your career interests. Similar to a Bio, it describes who you are & what you do. View the summary section of professionals in your field of interest or other students to get ideas of what to include in your professional summary.

4) **Highlight Your Education:** At this point, your education is most likely your biggest selling point. Include all majors and minors. Add study abroad information under Activities and if you have a strong GPA, (3.0+) include that in the Grade section.

5) **Add Student Specific Sections to Your Profile:** The default sections in your profile will be the Summary, Education and Experience sections. You will want to consider adding the following sections:
   a. **Courses:** Include courses relevant to your career aspirations. You do not need “CHEM101,” you just need the title of the course.
   b. **Projects:** If you have research, independent or group projects that you have worked on you could highlight them in this section.
   c. **Organizations:** Instead of having your campus clubs and organizations in your education section, highlight them in their own section here – especially if you have held leadership roles in organizations.
   d. **Volunteer Experience and Causes:** Highlight any volunteer experience (VISION, Business 200) here.
   e. **Honors and Awards:** If you have received a number of honors and awards from various organizations then you could highlight them in this section.

6) **Sell Your Experience:** Any related work experience or internships should definitely be included on your profile along with a description that highlights the skills that you used/gained there and accomplishments. Even jobs that may be unrelated to what you want to do (Landscaper, Waitress, Lifeguard, Desk Attendant, etc.), think about transferable skills that you use(d) that would transfer over to jobs that match up with your interests (communication, team work, problem solving, etc.). Don’t just leave the descriptions blank.

   Where ever it is possible, upload or link to documents, photos, sites, videos, and presentations that display evidence of your experience.

7) **Add Skills:** Include both transferable skills and technical skills that are specific to the fields of interest. View profiles of professionals to get an idea of what skills are important in their occupation or what skills they highlight in their profile.

8) **Collect Recommendations:** Supervisors, advisors, teachers that you have had that are also on LinkedIn have the ability to post recommendations on your page for employers to see. These recommendations do not need to be long (paragraph or two). Solicit recommendations from a variety of people. The most impressive profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held.

9) **Personalize Your LinkedIn URL:** To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim your unique URL for your profile (i.e. www.linkedin.com/in/yourname). Click on Edit Public Profile to adjust this at any time.
Maximizing LinkedIn

Having a profile on LinkedIn but not using it is like getting dressed up and taking the time to attend a networking event and then standing in the corner and not talking to anyone. Here are some ways that you can maximize the benefits of LinkedIn.

When inviting people to Connect, always personalize your message, “Add a Note.” Briefly introduce yourself, indicate what you have in common with the person (a contact, group, UST), and let them know what your interests are and why you would like to connect. Remember that networking is a two-way street, so always offer to assist them in any way that you can as well.

1) **Connect with People You Know and People They Know:** Start by connecting with people in your immediate network. Once you are connected with them you will be able to see their connections. One of them may work in fields or companies that interest you, so you may want to Connect with them directly.

2) **Join Groups:** The purpose of joining groups is to connect with people that share similar interests and professions (e.g. career-related professional associations). Here, you can share information related to your interests.

St. Thomas groups that you should consider are: University of St. Thomas – Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK), University of St. Thomas #HireTommies, University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business, and University of St. Thomas Alumni Group. To find Groups, type keywords into the search box. Some groups are open and easy to join, while others are monitored and require approval from an administrator.

Utilize the Conversation tool to ask a question (information and advice) of the group, and identify referrals to people that might have information you need. Read and respond to other Conversations, too!

3) **Research Companies:** Look up companies on LinkedIn to learn more about them. See what connections you have within the company, learn about other employees in the company, see what jobs they have posted and research similar companies. “Follow” companies that you have a particular interest in to receive their posts and their name will show up on your Profile.

4) **Access Alumni:** Click on the name of your university listed at the end of your Profile page. Scroll to the Career Insights section, and then click “See all Career Insights.” Note: you can control your search by adjusting the years alumni attended.

The table will show you how many alumni are living in various cities, how many alumni work in a list of organizations and how many alumni work in certain fields. Click on the bars of various topics to narrow your search of alumni. Below the table, you will be able to access alumni profiles and connect with alumni that are working in areas and/or companies of interest to contact for informational interviewing or networking purposes.

5) **Apply for Jobs and Internships:** Click on the Jobs icon at the top of your Profile page. Use the Search box to type in a keyword, e.g. “Marketing Intern”, then include the City/State. Think about what people within your network could connect you to that job or company!

University of St. Thomas - Career Development Center
123 Murray-Herrick Campus Center - 651-962-6761