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Leveraging LinkedIn for Urban Alums

by alumni parent Ted Congdon (May '13), Managing Principal of Granite Peak Advisors

LinkedIn is the pre-eminent professional social media platform of our day. Although it may lack some of the dynamic interactivity of some other social networking sites, LinkedIn has become an unrivaled resource for all professionals. And with the growth of the LinkedIn group for Urban alumni, and the LinkedIn Alumni tool, it's getting even more valuable for Urban grads.

My work for many years has been executive recruiting and personal career advising. Here are a few thoughts from my perspective on how Urban alums can use this tool effectively:

- LinkedIn is a huge user-generated database containing a vast amount of information on working people, including nearly 100 million users in the US and almost 300 million globally – how is that for a highly sortable and retrievable modern day rolodex? And you never need to update information on others; they do it for you.
- The exercise of creating your own professional public profile on LinkedIn is a great way to think through your professional identity and how you want to present yourself. Communicating who we are professionally forces us to focus and clarify. And as we grow and develop, your profile should change accordingly.
- Don't go to a meeting or an interview without knowing who you are meeting with. LinkedIn is a quick and effective way to gain important intelligence on others, which can be used to build bridges and relationships faster.
- Keep track of people in your network. When your connections update information about themselves, in most cases you'll get a notification. You want to know who is doing what and who is moving where.
- Communicate quickly and efficiently to a LinkedIn group or to your network by posting updates on your profile. This works; I gain new clients from this kind of activity.
- By using LinkedIn invitations and InMail, the site allows you to send private messages to a vast range of people you may want to reach when you have something important to share with them.

Career and Job Searching

LinkedIn is a great resource for gaining information on how careers develop in various fields and the job content of many kinds of roles. A targeted search will yield career profiles and job descriptions across virtually every kind of work.

- Let's say you want to learn something about a person, a kind of work, or a company. A quick search on LinkedIn will indicate whether you have direct or indirect connections that can be used as a contact point to begin your research.
- LinkedIn also has become a huge resource for hiring. Recruiters use it constantly to target and contact prospective candidates, and routinely post jobs on the site. Whether or not you are seeking a new job or career, you don't want to be left out!

The Urban Connection

- There are 404 members of Urban's alumni group on LinkedIn. By joining and participating in this group, you will gain access these folks with whom you share a strong common experience.

- Use the Education filter under interests. If you include Urban in the education field in your profile you can search among a group of Urban alums who have done the same, and sort on industry or location – a nice way to expand your network.



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