

SOCIAL MEDIA QUICK START



5. LinkedIn



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Week Five: LinkedIn for Business

We've reached our final installment for this social media lesson series... and that's LinkedIn.

This used to be the network you used if you were job hunting. You could post your resume or CV and present yourself to employers.

It also served as an unofficial Business Directory -- a sort of "Who's Who" in the internet business world. For this reason, the demographic tended towards "young professionals", and felt formal and focused.

LinkedIn instituted some changes a couple of years ago, adding new features and expanding sharing options, and it has rapidly grown in popularity since then.

This is the one social media platform you should use no matter what your focus: People nowadays automatically check LinkedIn to see if you have a "valid" presence, as one person I surveyed told me.

In other words, if you're not in the "Who's Who" (a.k.a. LinkedIn) your trustworthiness goes down in the eyes of potential subscribers.

Step One: Setting up your Profile

It's easy enough to set up your LinkedIn profile. Once again, you'll be prompted every step of the way...

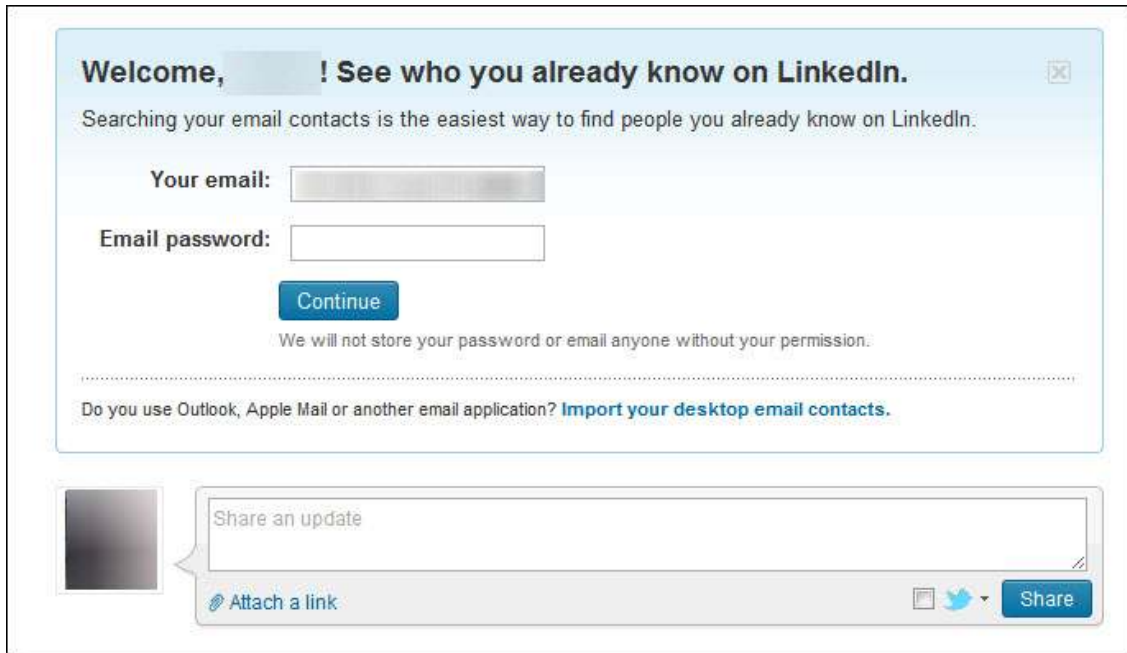
The image shows the LinkedIn homepage from around 2008. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, What is LinkedIn?, and Join Today. To the right of these links are input fields for Email and Password, and a Sign In button. Below the navigation bar, a large banner states "Over 135 million professionals use LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities". Underneath this banner are three icons with text: "Stay informed about your contacts and industry", "Find the people & knowledge you need to achieve your goals", and "Control your professional identity online". On the right side of the page, there's a "Join LinkedIn Today" box. This box contains input fields for First Name, Last Name, Email, and Password. Below the password field, it says "6 or more characters". A red arrow points to the "Join Now" button, which has an asterisk next to it. Below the button, it says "Already on LinkedIn? Sign in.". At the bottom of the page, there's a search bar with the text "Search for someone by name:" and input fields for First Name and Last Name, followed by a Go button. Below the search bar, there's a link to the LinkedIn member directory. At the very bottom, there's a small disclaimer: "* By clicking Join Now or using LinkedIn, you are indicating that you have read, understood, and agree to LinkedIn's User Agreement and Privacy Policy."

Have your great profile photo handy. (Your resume or CV too, if you want it to be available to people.)

And write a short Summary that focuses on you only inasmuch as it relates to **what you can offer potential clients, followers, subscribers and employers**. (Remember -- people always read content with the attitude: "What's in it for ME?")

You will be ready to simply copy-paste your Summary into the Summary section, when setting up your profile.

You'll also be walked through **adding contacts**...



Ten Tips and Tricks

There are ten tips and tricks, however, which will greatly increase your visibility -- both in LinkedIn and Google's search engine...

- 1. Customize your public profile with your name:**
(<http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname>)

(If your name has already been taken, you'll have to get creative!)
- 2. Be selective about contacts.** People who don't really understand how LinkedIn works or people with totally unrelated interests can really drag down your status and clutter your feeds, so don't feel guilty about deciding not to add them to your connections.
- 3. Ask for recommendations** as soon as you've signed up and added your contacts. Don't be shy -- everyone does it and it's expected (just make sure you ask people who actually *know* you.)
- 4. Be selective about recommendations** - both when asking for and giving them. (After all, it's your reputation on the line.)
- 5. Optimize your keywords for SEO in your "Summary" section.** (You'll find this in your Profile.)
- 6. Join Groups.** This is a fast way to let LinkedIn know your areas of special interest and become part of your desired community -- but be sure to participate

in discussions, acknowledge comments on your posts or comment on others' posts.

- 7. Always add a personal note to a Network request (friend request).** You will increase your chances of acceptance -- especially if they've forgotten who you are or don't realize you're the same Joan Smith that partnered with them at the Arizona workshop last year.
- 8. Make sure comments you do make are *interesting* and *relevant*.** Consistently posting something lazy, like: "Good one, Bill..." may stroke the egos of those you reply to (not that most people on LinkedIn are looking for that or need it) but it won't exactly position you as an expert. And it will decrease your professional image.

Making sure you have a Profile on LinkedIn should be viewed as a business essential -- like having a business card. Think it doesn't really matter?

Check out how many people have viewed your profile lately, after 90 days in LinkedIn's database...



Compare that number to:

- Increases in your website traffic
- New subscribers
- New clients
- New network contacts

You can create a higher interaction rate simply by making sure you ***join groups aligned to your business mission and interests.***

What you end up as you ride on the coat-tails of each group's keywords is **targeted SEO** -- so the right people find you.

Step Two: Building Your Reputation

You've already started to build your reputation and niche authority by joining the right groups, including your best keywords in your Summary and asking for recommendations. But there's lots more you can do...

LinkedIn's "Answers" section

Another effective way to set yourself up quickly as an authority voice: Provide valuable responses to questions asked in LinkedIn's Answers section:



You'll notice you (and others) can Search Answers. You can ask a question. You can see a list of the latest questions requesting answers. And you can view a list of your own questions-and-answers (something that can come in handy, if you want to jog your memory for post ideas).

You can also see which questions and categories:

- Generate a high rate of interaction and response
- Fall flat and remain ignored



Now, granted, the example with 0 answers was only just posted nine minutes earlier... but so was the question that gathered 29 answers.

Monitoring new questions over a period of time does give a clearer indication of how popular or in current mindsets they prove to be.

Simply going to Answers and viewing the featured Questions in its feed can provide you with valuable clues about where to focus your energy.

If a particular Category is highly active, explore that Category. Build your expert status by thinking up strong Questions -- or answering -- them for that particular Category (making sure, of course, that you are picking a category that is relevant to your business mission).

TIP: If you really want to build your "Expert" reputation, look for questions beginning with "**What are...**" or "**How do you...**"

Here's a question I found when exploring Business Development...

? **What are some of the better Twitter Hashtags you have found when it comes to Social Media?**

3 answers | Asked by David Murray | 16 hours ago in Business Development

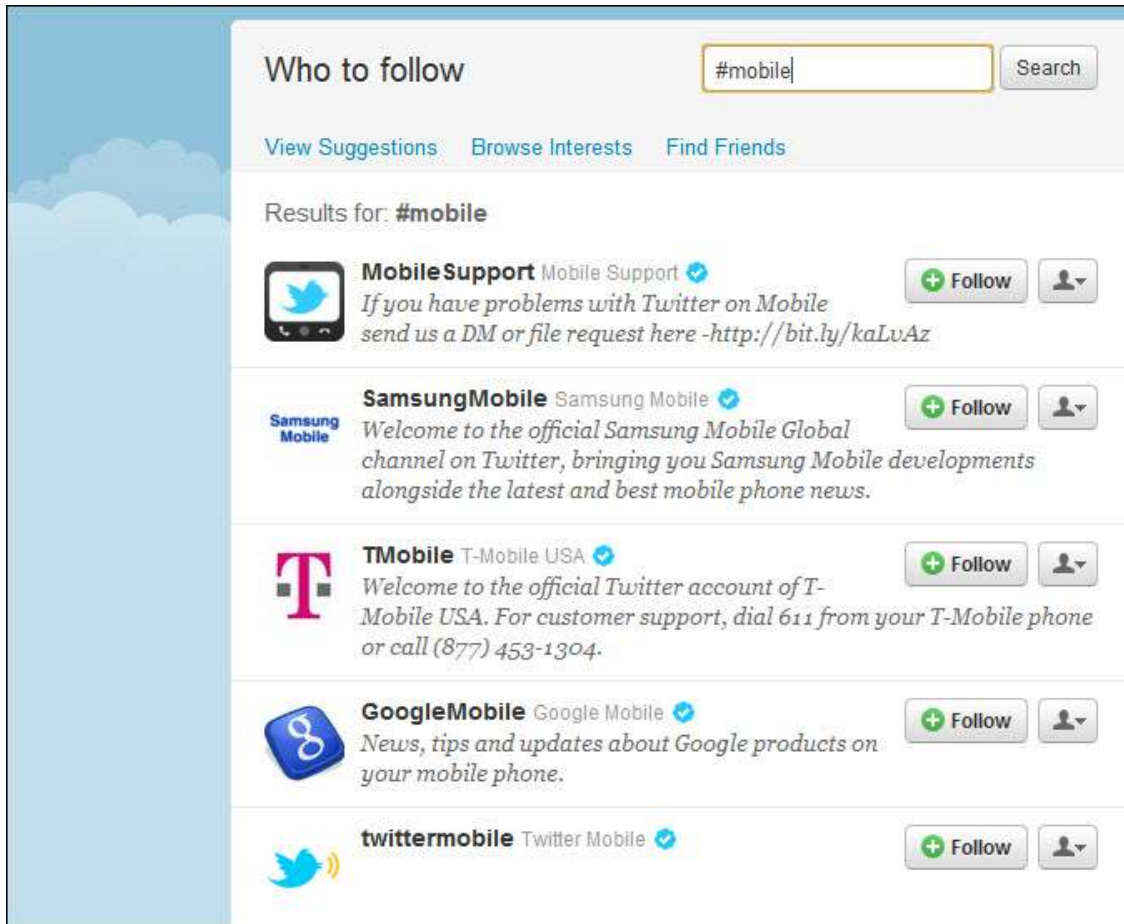
If nothing else, the answers others give can offer valuable tips and clues in increasing your own business effectiveness. For example, the question above promises to immediately give you strong Twitter hashtags you can use straight away.

From our actual sample question above, those three answers generated the following concrete results:

- #measure - ROI and analytics
- #mobile
- #social
- #hcsn - health care social media
- #branding
- #SCRM
- #cmgr (community managers, who often deal with social media management)
- #HFChat
- #Tchat
- #socialmedia

These are hashtags you can instantly check out on Twitter, to get a focused picture on what is being discussed, real-time, about these topics... or to get tips and valuable links you can add to your personal Resource database.

To Find a Recommended Hashtag Conversation on Twitter -- Simply click "Who to Follow" in your Twitter top-menu bar; then enter the hashtag in the Search box:



In short, you can use LinkedIn answers as both a valuable resource in itself... and to help you boost your own "expert" authority status. (But be selective about questions you answer.)

And it can help you **manage and make the most of your other social networks!**

Step Three: Making the Most of LinkedIn's Unique Features

Once you've established a solid Linked in habit -- checking your inbox and feed every day, answer questions in Answers, studying Answers and joining well-focused Groups -- it's time to explore LinkedIn's lesser-known features.

This is a good time to do it, because most likely you will have added or imported at least fifty contacts by now. And when you have built up your network a little, it's time to take advantage of...

1. **InMaps** -- Logging in and allowing InMaps access to your Linked profile lets this app create a "map" of your unique connections. Linked in describes it as "an interactive visual representation of your professional universe, based on the relationships between your connections".

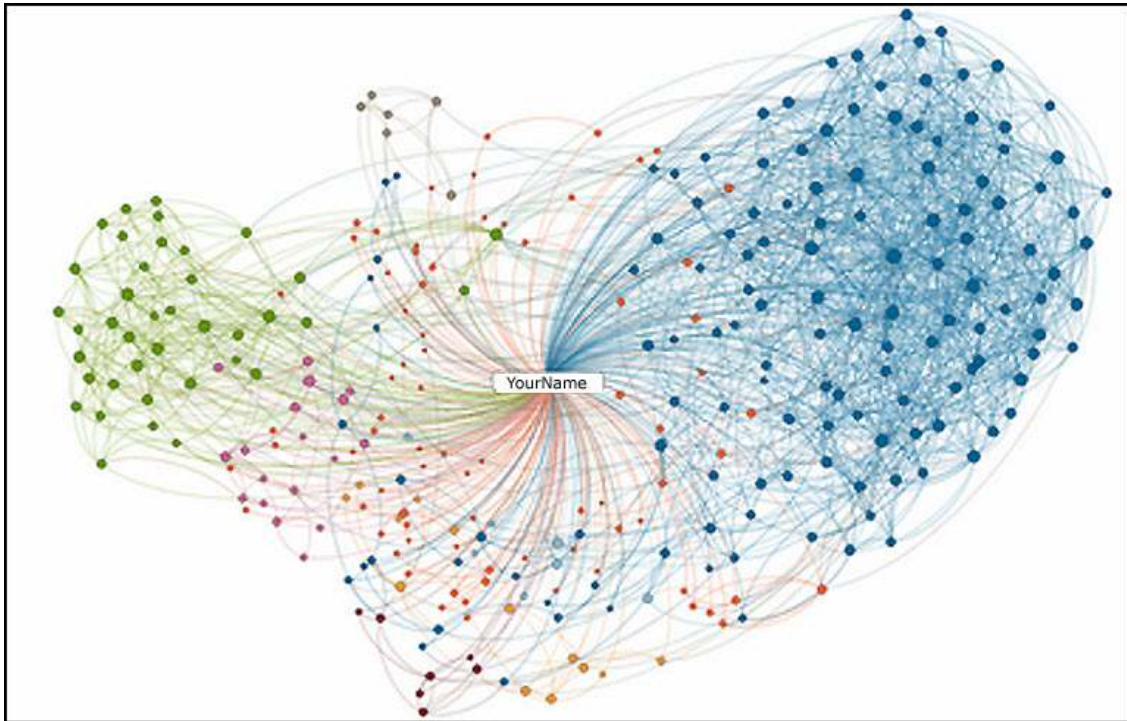


To get your own, personal InMap, you will need:

- At least 75% of your profile updated
- At least 50 LinkedIn connections

How InMaps Works... and What it Can Do for Your Business -- Your InMap will be alive and interactive. You can zoom in on "nodes" (by using your mouse wheel) to see who and what they represent.

You can create labels for each group...



...and share your InMap with others.

- 2. Pay Attention to Daily LinkedIn Headlines** -- You can quickly catch all the latest industry news here, right on your main feed page. And LinkedIn only serves up what your keywords and connections indicate is a good selection for your interests:

LinkedIn Today: [See all Top Headlines for You](#)

Twitter Just Fired A Cannonball At Facebook And Google+



An SEO Playbook For 2012

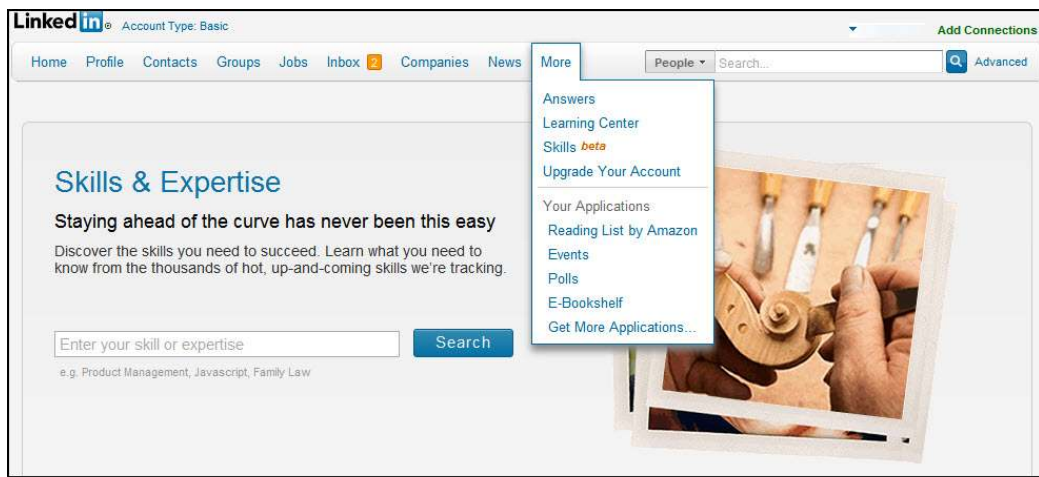


Twitter redesign offer big name brands more prominence

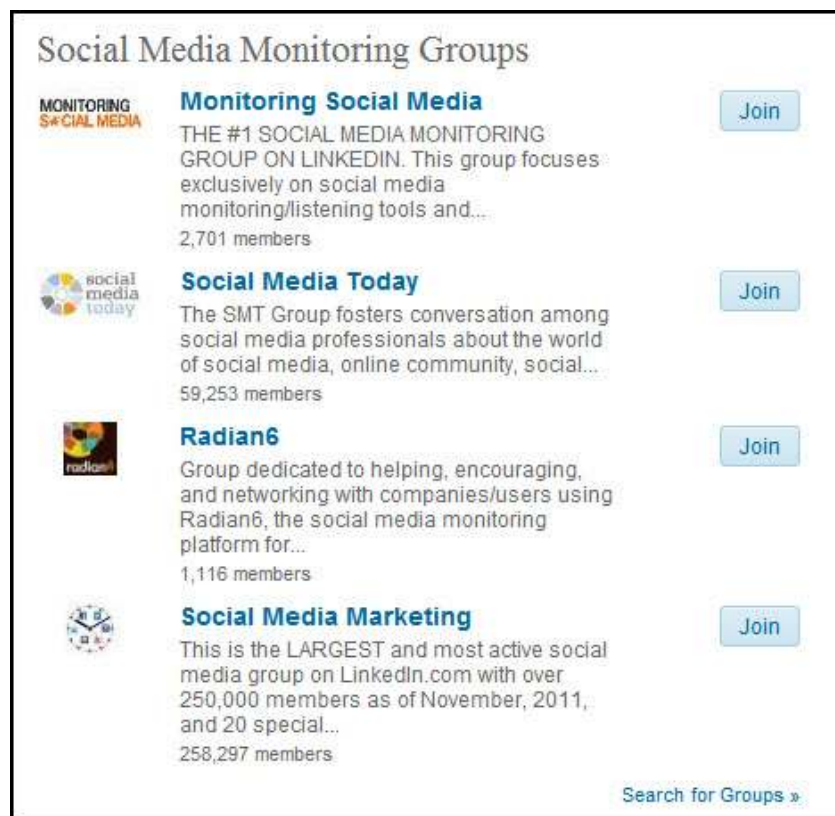




3. Use the "More" Tab-- This is where you'll not only find LinkedIn "Answers", but a whole lot more besides. Including the Learning Center, LinkedIn Apps and the latest new features, such as "Skills"...



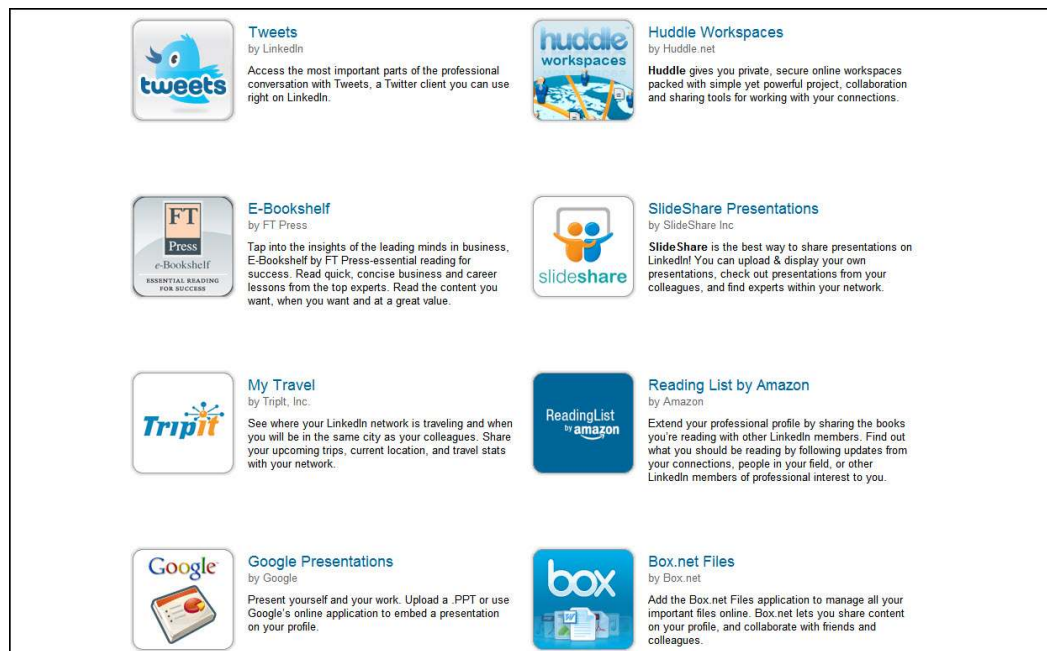
You can input and search a skill to learn about the latest news and resources -- and add it to your profile (voluntarily) to further boost your reputation and help the right people find you. Plus uncover relevant new groups you may wish to join!



4. **Check the "News" Tab** -- You'll find it on the right-hand side of your main menu bar.

Another great way to not only find up-to-the-minute news (topics presented based on your LinkedIn keywords and connections) but also to discover new sources you may wish to connect with. (It's an expanded version of your top main headlines, with more added for you to select from, gallery-style.

5. **Check out LinkedIn Apps** -- You can add apps to instantly connect you with other social media and resources you use -- all from within LinkedIn. This enhances your business performance by making things easy to manage: You keep a clearer overview with less confusion and less step-taking.



Most of all, LinkedIn is a vibrant, alive community. It's balanced. It's professional.

And it's there for you to make the most of!

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT:

1. If you haven't already joined LinkedIn, create a Summary (a short, 1-3 paragraph statement) of what you're all about. Don't focus on your accomplishments so much as show how these accomplishments can benefit potential clients or employers. Remember -- keep it punchy: Cut down the adjectives and adverbs. Keep sentences short. Ask yourself the question: "Why should this summary interest someone who wants to network with me?"

MY SUMMARY:

[Enter your text HERE...]

When you've finished, copy-paste the text only into your LinkedIn Profile's "Summary" textarea box.

2. If you already have a LinkedIn profile, make sure:
 - Your profile is at least 75% complete
 - You've added at least 50 connections
3. If you need to add more connections and groups, search:
 - Groups
 - Companies
 - Skills (under "More")
 - Answers

- 4.** Think of relevant personal connections you can search for in LinkedIn and add:

Send out invitations to as many relevant people you can -- today!

Happy -- and effective -- Social Networking!

Social Media in Business Checklist: Week Five (LinkedIn)

- ✳ I have a profile on LinkedIn
- ✳ I do not have a profile on LinkedIn -- but I am preparing right away to set one up!
- ✳ I have written a short Summary to copy-paste into my LinkedIn Profile:

[Enter your Summary Text here]

- ✳ I have included my best keywords in my Summary
- ✳ I have my favorite Profile Photo ready to upload
- ✳ I have decided which address books I'd like LinkedIn to import contacts from
- ✳ I have customized my Public Profile with my name, like this:

`http://www.linkedin.com/in/myname`
- ✳ I am practicing diligence and being selective about who I connect with. I understand indiscriminate choices can hurt my LinkedIn status and reputation

- ✳ I have asked people who have worked with me to give me recommendations and I understand this is a perfectly acceptable, expected practice on LinkedIn
- ✳ I have joined at least six relevant Groups
- ✳ I am committed to adding a personal note to connection requests I make
- ✳ I have resolved never to comment for the sake of commenting. I will do my best to ensure my posts are interesting, intriguing, enriching or relevant at all times
- ✳ I understand that LinkedIn is a professional network by tradition, and not the appropriate place to let my hair down
- ✳ I am committed to building my LinkedIn reputation. I have begun to do this by:
 - ✳ Getting into the habit of checking out LinkedIn "Answers"
 - ✳ Offering relevant, valuable Answers for questions that are perfectly suited to me and my area of expertise
 - ✳ Monitoring questions asked for clues on what my followers might like to hear more about
 - ✳ Exploring Answer Categories that are spiking with lots of action
 - ✳ Other _____
- ✳ I have updated at least 75% of my LinkedIn Profile
- ✳ I have made at least 50 connections
- ✳ I am now ready to sign up for InMaps! (I understand they can take at least a week to respond or post changes)
- ✳ I have analyzed my InMap Nodes
- ✳ I am monitoring chosen Headlines my daily feed serves up, to check for up-to-the-minute changes in my niche topics or ideas for content and posts
- ✳ I am getting into the habit of exploring and using the "More" tab in my main, horizontal menu bar
- ✳ I have checked out (and added) "Skills"
- ✳ I am regularly checking out the "News" tab to see the latest content for my industry and interests
- ✳ I have added LinkedIn apps that I think will be particularly useful

- ✳ I am participating regularly in this powerful, vibrant community (and adding more contacts!)
- ✳ I have completed my final Weekly Assignment. I am now ready to make the most of Social Media for my business!