Building a Great Student Profile on LinkedIn

The first step to get connected with professionals on LinkedIn is to 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. Edit the headline to say “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 Picture:** 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.

3) **Develop a Professional Summary:** This section includes a brief overview of your education, experience and strengths in addition to indicating your interest. 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. Highlight your education at the top of your profile. 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 that are related to what you want to go into. You do not need “CHEM101”, 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 do match up with your interests (communication, team work, problem solving, etc.). Don’t just leave the descriptions blank.

7) **Add Skills:** Include both transferable skills and technical skills that are specific to the field(s) that you are interested in. View profiles of professionals in areas of interest 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) **Consider Adding Applications:** You can add applications to your profile that would showcase more of the work that you have done. Applications can include PowerPoint presentations uploaded in SlideShare or Google Presentations, posting writing samples using Box.net Files, having a link to your blog through WordPress or Blog Link, or if you have experience in a more creative field then you could add a portfolio display of your work to your profile as well.

10) **Claim Your 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).
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.

The most important thing that you need to do when making connections is to personalize your message. Don’t send the generic “I would like to add you to my professional network” message. 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 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 what other people they are connected with that may work in fields or companies that you are interested in. Ask for introductions from the people that you know, or if it is alright for you to contact one of their connections using them as a reference.

2) **Join Groups:** The purpose of joining groups is to connect with people that you have a similar interest or experience in common with and to share information related to that experience or interest. UST groups that you should consider are: University of St. Thomas – Alumni Sharing Knowledge, University of St. Thomas #HireTommies, University of St. Thomas Opus College of Business, and University of St. Thomas Alumni Group. There are many additional groups that relate to various areas of interest. Type keywords into the Groups search box to see what groups exist that relate to your interest. Some groups are open and easy to join while others are monitored and require approval from an administrator. I would suggest joining groups with less than 100 members unless it is a particular community of people that you are involved with.

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 for their new posts to show up on your Home page.

4) **Access Alumni:** If you scroll over the “Contacts” tab on the top, you should see University of St. Thomas in the drop-down list. Clicking on that leads you to the UST alumni database on LinkedIn. The original graph that you see shows you current students and alumni from the years you are attending St. Thomas (i.e. 2011-2015). In order to access alumni from earlier years, be sure to change the dates (i.e. 1960-2015). If you click on the box that says “Include people with no dates” this will add more people to the database.

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. You can use the search boxes or click on various topics within the table 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:** LinkedIn is not the best resource for searching for internships in Minnesota, but can be very valuable for searching for entry level jobs around the world. Use the LinkedIn search resource to see what opportunities are out there and 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