



JOB AND CAREER ADVICE

SHOULD I CARE ABOUT LINKEDIN IF I ALREADY HAVE A JOB?

In a word, yes. Now let's look at why you should care and what you should do about it.

I host a weekly LinkedIn workshop for job seekers. Each week I hear, "Well, I have a LinkedIn account, but I never really did much with it because I had a job." It's a common theme and, when you think about it, it makes sense IF you view LinkedIn only as a tool for active job hunters.

And while I don't want today's blog to seem like a shameless plug for LinkedIn, I think you're doing your career a disservice by ignoring the predominant online source of candidates for employers.

But what if you aren't actively looking? Doesn't being on LinkedIn show the world you're looking and send the wrong signal to your current employer? Well, no.

LinkedIn is a social medium, albeit one for professionals. People go on the site for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is to "belong" to something larger – a collection of folks networking and engaging in business-related discussion. Sure, job searching can be, and often is, a reason people choose to become active on LinkedIn, but simply being on LinkedIn is not an acknowledgement that you're looking.

So get on LinkedIn, engage with others, and post content. Doing so will help keep you front of mind among your network. You want to be recognized as an informed and engaged subject matter expert. And, should you suddenly lose your job or simply decide to proactively search, you'll already have that active network in place. Plus, your employer wouldn't be "tipped off" to your searching if you've been active on LinkedIn all along.

Let's take a minute to understand the two main reasons companies might go on LinkedIn to view your profile.

First, if you've already applied for their opening, at some point in the interviewing process they'll visit your LinkedIn page to vet you. They'll want to see that you not only have a page set up, but also what others are saying about you.

Sure, that first reason presupposes you're a job hunter. But the second reason is crucial – the employer's HR or recruiting person is using LinkedIn as a recruiting tool. They have no idea who you are. The company is simply conducting a key word search to discover people who match those criteria. Obviously, you want to be found in that search.

They can't find you if you aren't on LinkedIn. And, if they do see your page, but it's barely filled out and you're not very active, they might still call you... but think of how much more favorably they'd initially view you if you *did* have a robust page?

One more reason to have a robust page, even if you aren't actively engaging with other professionals – your company's customers and potential customers might want to check out your credentials, your tenure there, etc. So look at your profile as a way to assure them you're a capable and qualified service provider.

I've given you several reasons to care about your LinkedIn page – even if you aren't actively seeking your next great opportunity. Invest the time. It's worth it. Good luck!

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