



# Are You Linked In?

by John West Hadley

Many actuaries don't give a lot of thought to their visibility. This is an issue that is particularly prevalent among those in technical professions, where there tends to be an assumption that everyone will automatically recognize the quality of our work.

One easy way to raise your visibility is to create a profile on a business networking site—a very popular and useful one is LinkedIn.com. By setting up a profile focused on the value you can bring to the table in your field, for your current or prospective employers, you can equip contacts to bring you interesting opportunities.

Once you've set up a profile, you need to 'connect' to other people. This is where the real power of LinkedIn comes in. When you 'connect' to someone, your searchable network becomes your contacts, their contacts and their contacts' contacts—three degrees of separation. Thus if you 'connect' to as few as 50 people, your virtual network will likely be in the hundreds of thousands.

How do you make use of that virtual network? You can:

- Search and seek professional introductions to:
  - o People at companies you are interested in researching
  - o Practitioners in roles about which you would like to learn more
  - o Potential strategic business partners
  - o Professionals who might be interested in hearing about your product or service
- Track down past colleagues you've lost track of

- Get business and career advice
- Provide business and career advice, which will raise your own visibility and often cause others to reach out to you<sup>1</sup>

So how do you get started?

1. Go to LinkedIn.com and sign up for a free account. (You can decide later on if it's worth your while to upgrade to a paid account—the features available with a free account are quite robust.)
2. Set up your profile—essentially, an online resume. My recommendation is to enter every company you've worked for, but to focus on just the high level of what you've done.
3. Let LinkedIn import your Outlook (or whatever address book you use) contacts, from which it will then tell you which e-mail addresses are associated with LinkedIn accounts, so you can invite them to 'connect' to you. LinkedIn won't do anything with those addresses without your permission, and even your own e-mail address is hidden from everyone other than those who choose to accept your invitation to connect.
4. Think about who else not already on LinkedIn might benefit from its networking capabilities, and invite them to join and to connect to you.

Now you can start to work your network, searching for interesting connections within your three degrees of separation by company (past or present), job title, name, geographic area, etc.

And feel free to send me an "invitation to connect" at [John@JHACareers.com](mailto:John@JHACareers.com)! ☐



John West Hadley is a career counselor who works with job seekers frustrated with their search, and professionals struggling to increase their visibility and influence at work. He can be reached at [John@JHACareers.com](mailto:John@JHACareers.com) or 908.725.2437. His free *Career Tips* newsletter and other career resources are available at [www.JHACareers.com](http://www.JHACareers.com).

<sup>1</sup> A question I answered led directly to a new client in Scotland!