

Optimising LinkedIn for Research and Networking



LinkedIn as a research and networking tool

LinkedIn is more than a tool to profile your professional self and a job board. It's a great research tool that can help you to be informed about the market, your industry and target roles.

Here are the many ways you can use LinkedIn beyond as a job search platform:

- 1 **Boolean Search Operators.** These are techniques used in LinkedIn's search bar to help you further broaden or narrow your search.
- 2 **Industry insights.** Find resources and discussions from industry experts from within Australia or a specific locale.
- 3 **Researching job requirements and potential employers.** Gain insight on how others were successfully hired for roles and industries you might be targeting through job ads, people in those roles or organisational pages themselves.
- 4 **Organisational structures, role titles, geographic targets.** What is your target role called in other organisations or industries? Which area do you intend to work in? Knowing these and utilising LinkedIn's search options can help you narrow down your search further.
- 5 **Alternative career options.** See what skills you have can be transferred into other roles, or identify what people with similar qualifications are doing now.
- 6 **Networking.** Perhaps the most common use for the website, LinkedIn serves as a platform to reach out and connect with others.



Boolean Search Operators

While typing in keywords and phrases usually work, Boolean Search Operators can help expand or narrow down your LinkedIn search results. This is done by using certain words or symbols, prompting the search system toward a more specific result.

PURPOSE	WORDS OR SYMBOLS TO USE	EXAMPLE
Exclusions	Use NOT or - in front of a term you wish to exclude	NOT assistant
Alternatives	Use OR between two search terms to bring up results for both terms.	Accountant OR auditor
Multiples	Using AND between two terms means both are required	Accountant OR auditor
Phrases	Use “ ” to keep words together to search a phrase	“Project manager”
Combined terms	Use () to make a separate combined term	Recruitment AND (manager OR consultant)

What kind of information are you planning to look for using Boolean Search Operators?

What keywords do you plan to use for your target roles?

Using LinkedIn for industry insights

LinkedIn has many whitepapers and common interest groups on the website. These resources, usually led by industry experts and thought leaders, have a lot of insight to offer to anyone interested.

By using Boolean Search Operators to refine your search, you can gain access to these resources:

■ Whitepapers and posts

Whitepapers are well-researched and data-driven papers released by organisations about practical, insightful solutions to a specific problem. Posts written by industry leaders are also plentiful on the website, so using your Boolean Search options help narrow down results.

■ Relevant LinkedIn groups

Many LinkedIn groups have a lot of discussions and insights to offer to their members. Think of keywords related to your interests and location of interest, use Boolean Search Operators, check group descriptions and number of members before choosing a group that suits your needs best.

What are you looking for in a LinkedIn group? What keywords will narrow down your search?

■ Find industry leaders and organisations of interest

Industry leaders and organisations often share valuable content and insights on their profiles. Follow relevant individuals and companies to stay updated on industry trends, news and opportunities.

■ Follow consulting companies for industry reports

Consulting firms often publish industry reports, information on current trends and insightful analyses on their LinkedIn pages. Stay informed by following these organisations and stay informed with upcoming trends.

Researching job requirements and potential employers

Learn how you can successfully secure in the areas you are interested in by looking at job ads, profiles of people already working in those roles or industries and pages of potential employers.

These can give you key information into what employers are looking for, what skills and experience are valued, the company culture and how others may have positioned themselves to get hired.

■ Job ads

Aside from the job qualifications itself, job ads can also tell you about other details that are just as important to the hiring recruiter.

Take a look at the language used and the way the job ad is phrased to assess company culture, or perhaps identify your skills transferable to the role to help leverage your application.

■ Researching profiles in your target roles

Looking at the profiles of people already working in your target roles can be a valuable way to understand what employers might expect.

What experience do they have? What unique skills might have helped them be hired for the role? What kind of jobs did they have in the past? These can help you identify gaps, spot trends in the industry and perhaps present your own skills and ideas in a relevant way.

■ Potential employers' pages

Checking the websites and social media pages of organisations you're interested in can offer useful clues about what matters to them. How do they present their work and the way they describe their teams output and goals? This kind of insight can help you decide whether the organisation aligns with your interests or even how to shape your application.

How do you plan to start your research into job ads, profile and employer pages?

Alternative career options

Starting in a different role doesn't necessarily mean starting your career all over from scratch. It may not be a typical career progression, but your skills and experience are just as likely to be valuable in the right roles.

■ Search jobs using transferable skills

Type in your transferable skills or general skills in the Jobs Tab and see what roles come up. Using Boolean Search Operators can also provide more relevant results, allowing you to identify jobs more relevant to you.

■ Take a look at what previous colleagues are now doing

Your previous colleagues may have taken roles that are different from the usual career path. Even so, it's still worth seeing how others have progressed or adapted over time.

What are these roles? What skills and experience do they have that helped them be hired for the job, and which of these are similar to your own set of skills and job experience? These may provide some valuable insight into your next steps.

■ Checking what others with your qualifications are doing

Seeing what others with similar qualifications are doing can open up ideas you may not have considered. It's a simple way to explore how people are doing in across many industries, or in identifying what skills seem to give other people an edge. This can help you spot alternative career paths or potential upskilling options that are still relevant to your current qualifications.

What are other career options you're considering? How can you position yourself as an ideal candidate for these roles?

Networking on LinkedIn

Staying active on LinkedIn helps raise your profile and makes you more visible in search results. It shows employers and recruiters that you are engaged, open to opportunities and comfortable using digital tools. It also signals that you're keeping an eye on the job market.

AREA	ACTIVITY
Connect with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Send connection invites to people you directly know <input type="checkbox"/> Connect with people relevant to you and your career <input type="checkbox"/> Find recruiters in your target market, send connection invites <input type="checkbox"/> Write a message to provide context and directly engage
Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Share content made by others, or publish your own <input type="checkbox"/> Send jobs to people you think might be interested <input type="checkbox"/> Connections and your network <input type="checkbox"/> Comment on others' posts
Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly check to respond to people's messages <input type="checkbox"/> Look at Notifications and comment on work anniversaries, new roles and others <input type="checkbox"/> Turn on job alerts
Represent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tailor your profile and complete your details <input type="checkbox"/> Be conscious of your brand and be consistent with it <input type="checkbox"/> Keep profile posts and details professional