

LinkedIn: Not Just Social Media Anymore

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With more businesses and recruiters seeking candidates through their online presence and an estimated 48% of jobs obtained through networking, it is more critical than ever to build one's brand online. LinkedIn is an essential tool to do so and access the "hidden job market," according to Kara Becker, career counselor and coach at Baruch College.

At a Financial Women's Association (FWA) event held at the Belgian Chamber of Commerce (Belcham), Kara gave the members in attendance a lesson on best practices for using LinkedIn as a personal brand management tool.

Some key takeaways from the night include:

- **Determine your brand message** — This is important because it determines what experience people will have when they do business with you. Be sure to include it in your profile header.
- **Create a custom URL** – You can put this on your resume and business cards so people can find you online with ease. When you have a custom URL, LinkedIn also counts you as a more active user and your profile will rank higher in searches.
- **Always include a photo** – Ever heard the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words?" Profiles with a photo are seven times more likely to be viewed. Hence, be sure to keep your overall brand image in mind when selecting one.
- **Ensure skills & terminology needed in a future role fall within your work experience summary.** Did you know that using verbiage leveraged from job listings that interest you may help you pop up in recruiter searches? Try it out.
- **Add strategic recommendations** — This is vital, but only use high quality endorsements from people you have actually worked with in the past.

More LinkedIn Features for Networking

Kara also discussed additional LinkedIn features to help in networking success. For example, joining groups is a great way to build connections to like-minded people. While normally you can directly message only first and second-level contacts in LinkedIn without a premium membership, the program allows you to contact members in your groups for free. However, one should continue to keep in mind a brand when joining groups, and join only those that make sense for that purpose.



Kara Becker, adjunct career counselor, Starr Career Development Center, Baruch College.



Being active by posting articles of interest or status updates is also a great way to stay “top of mind” in your network. Finally, creating original content such as articles and discussions will help you build online credibility in your field as well.

After the presentation, FWA Career Connections Committee Co-Chair Sara Bigwood commented: “I used to think that LinkedIn was social media. Now I know it is not just social media but really brand media.”

Elizabeth Hussey, co-chair of the FWA Career Connections/Transition Tuesday Committee; Kara Becker, adjunct career counselor Starr Career Development Center, Baruch College; and Sara Bigwood, co-chair FWA Career Connections/Transition Tuesday Committee.