



HOW TO LINKEDIN

The *Unofficial Pocket Guide For Everyone

PHENYO MABOKELA



Hi there,

I wrote this guide especially for **you!**

The world is starving for an experience of your authentic brilliance. There is only one “**you**” in this world, it is important that you are constantly aware of this. When **you** don’t express “**you**”, the entire world is deprived of your light.

In all honesty, I believe that every single one of us has a story. Our only challenge is finding the best way to tell it.

*My ultimate goal is to help **you** make use of what **you** have, to express who **you** are, so that **you** may be able to get the best that **you** deserve out of life.*

Yours in branding,
Phenyo Mabokela

Phase 1: Key Fundamentals

Chapter 1: What is LinkedIn?

Chapter 2: Myths and Misconceptions

Chapter 3: The Future of LinkedIn - Why Now?

Chapter 1:

What Is LinkedIn?

If you were to ask, “*Professor Google*”, you would probably end up with answers like:

“LinkedIn is an American business and employment-oriented service that operates via websites and mobile apps. Founded on December 28, 2002, and launched on May 5, 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking, including employers posting jobs and job seekers posting their CVs”

or

“LinkedIn is a social network that focuses on professional networking and career development. You can use LinkedIn to display your resume, search for jobs, and enhance your professional reputation by

posting updates and interacting with other people”

These are both somewhat correct, but, they are probably the reason why so many people don't understand LinkedIn for what it truly is and the potential impact it could have on their personal, professional, and social brands, as well as their businesses and organizations of interest.

I would define LinkedIn as **“the place where everyone who has everything you need and will ever need, can be found.”**

Everything we need is either in the hands of someone else, or in the hands of someone they know. That is simply how the world works.

Imagine being able to know who the people in your circle knew, knowing who those people knew, and also knowing who those people also knew...how large would your network be? That is the power of LinkedIn.

Chapter 2: Myths and Misconceptions

Now that you have an idea of what LinkedIn is, we can tackle some of the myths and misconceptions which you might have. Whether you generated them yourself or you inherited them from others, all that matters now is that we disprove them.

#1 LinkedIn is only for adults

I usually get this from my student clients, mostly those who are in their first and second years of university study. I find it funny how the youth believes LinkedIn is only for adults, yet adults on the other hand, think that it is for the youth.

In fact, the only people who have the right to assume the platform is not for them, are 11 year old kids. I say this because there's a 12+ age restriction for the app, and I bet you there's probably a few hundred 11 year old's somewhere on the platform. There's no age in the world of opportunity.

One myth down! We've only got a few more to go.

#2 LinkedIn is only for getting jobs

If there was a hierarchy of myths, this one would come out on top. This has to be my least favorite myth of all. I am not disputing the fact that some people have secured jobs over LinkedIn, not at all, I just don't see it as the core function of LinkedIn.

Look at it this way; just because a key can come in handy when removing sellotape from a box or cutting through certain packaging, does not mean that it was intended for it.

LinkedIn is a networking platform. It just so happens that employers were able to pick up on its usefulness to their recruiting processes. If anything, I believe that LinkedIn is where one goes to **attract** opportunities and not necessarily where you wait for them.

#3 You need a “premium” LinkedIn account

A lady that was consulting with me once raised the question of whether or not she needed a premium account. According to her, having a premium account would be a good way to stand out and appear more “serious” or “professional” on the platform. So what’s it gonna be?

There’s an old saying that goes: “*It’s not what you have, but what you do with it that counts*”. Those words could not have been more relevant that day, especially in that particular conversation.

It may seem fancy to have a golden LinkedIn icon next to your profile, but that won’t translate to having exceptional networking skills, valuable content and better access to opportunities on the platform. The premium account does come with some benefits, but not that many are relevant, especially when you’ve just gotten

onto the platform. In my opinion, getting a premium account when your profile isn't up to scratch is a waste of resources. Premium accounts are a "nice to have", not a "must have".

Those are some of the myths and misconceptions that I come across frequently as I engage with various individuals on their issues surrounding LinkedIn. I know you might still have some questions in mind, but best believe they will be answered throughout this book.

Chapter 3: The Future of Linked In (Why Now?)

So why should you be on LinkedIn? And why now?

At the present moment, there aren't as many users on the platform as there will be in the coming months. This means the organic reach is still at its peak. What do I mean by this? It simply means that the chances of what you post being seen by thousands of people irrespective of your connection (or following) is still very high.

I got to realize this when a post I had made got over 5000 views within 24 hours. There were other factors at play, but you can't deny that at the time it was quite a large number - also considering that I had less than 200 connections back then. How much

would you need to pay Instagram or Facebook to get that same amount of reach?

All the social media platforms that are now charging high rates for paid ads, are doing so because the platform is over-saturated with content. The organic reach is minimal. Your number of followers really matters and those that have the highest following get seen the most. The good news is that you've still got a shot on LinkedIn. It's only a matter of time before people start flocking towards LinkedIn in search of greener pastures for their content. Your goal is to secure a spot now so you can take advantage of its rise.

The future of LinkedIn is massive. This may be old news in a few years, but best believe it isn't old news now. Plus, I would've probably published another book about the next big thing by the time it comes up. That's the advantage of digital technology. It's only a matter of time until I release a book that get updates, the knowledge will forever be relevant

I hope you're fired up as I am about LinkedIn at this point. This is where it gets real. In my experience as a personal brand consultant I can tell you this, some will choose to keep the knowledge I share in their heads, that shouldn't be you. You are cut from a different cloth. I know you're gonna go out and apply these insights in building an exceptional personal brand for yourself.

Phase 2: Networking Strategy

Chapter 4: Building Your Profile

Chapter 5: Connecting With Purpose

Chapter 6: Leveraging Off Connections

Chapter 4: Building A Profile

Your profile is the first impression you will make on anyone. It is like a hairdo, you can't just do it once and wait for kingdom come. You need to maintain it well and in some instances, change it altogether.

“Smile, you're on camera!” I'm sure many of us have come across such a sign or notice in our lives. It's also a popular one at filling stations and literally anywhere where there are surveillance cameras. Your profile will be seen a lot of times. In the early stages, most of your inbound connections will be attracted by the look of your profile. Either they will use it to connect with you, or they will use it to assess whether or not to accept your connection request. Having a bad profile is like having bad breath, no one

wants to talk to you.

Your profile typically consists of your profile photo, a cover photo, a brief overview of who you are, your experiences, your education, your certifications, skills and endorsements, accomplishments and recommendations.

Profile Photo:

Your profile photo gives you an opportunity to position yourself. The mood you set in the profile photo has an influence on how people will engage with you. Pay attention to detail. Consider your attire, facial expression, setting and the tone set in your profile photo. Everything seen has a role to play.

So what makes a great profile photo? It all depends on your objectives. The profile picture you put up should align with the brand you want to build and the type of people who's attention you want to catch. Does his mean there are no clear "*Do's* and *Don'ts*"? No, it means there are no set-in-stone "*Do's*", but there are some clear "*Don'ts*" I advise against.

Don't #1 - Do not have anyone else but yourself in it.

Don't #2 - Do not take a random photo and crop it to fit your face.

Don't #3 - Do not look mean unless you're a debt collector (smile!)

Don't #4 - Do not have weird things in the background...*you're on camera!*

Don't #5 - Do not face anywhere but towards the camera. No side views!

Cover Photo:

Your cover photo gives your profile a bit of spice. Used appropriately, it could create a feel of what you're all about for your audience. A great cover photo is one which complements your profile photo and summary. It makes a good first impression. It should not exist in isolation.

You need to get yourself a unique cover photo that speaks to what you're all about. I don't know about you, but I'm certainly not one to leave a default cover photo on my profile, neither should you.

One of the values of having a personal brand is distinction. Before you can separate yourself from the crowd by what you say (content), you have to separate yourself by how you look (appearance). I couldn't care less if you placed a black/white background as your cover photo (while you find a suitable cover photo of course) it will always be better than the default.

If Albert Einstein was on LinkedIn today, what cover photo do you think he would have had? What about Martin Luther King? Rosa Parks? Muhammad Ali?

Would you be surprised to see $E=MC^2$ for Einstein, mass gatherings for King and Parks, or a boxing arena for Ali, as their cover photos? No? That's because all of those are things you would associate with them, the same applies to your cover photo.

“About” Summary:

Now that we’ve gotten your appearance sorted, it’s time to move on to what you’re about. This is what will either get you sold or remaining on the shelves. We as human beings are inclined to connect to people and brands that resonate with who we are or who we see ourselves becoming.

What does this mean for your “about” summary? It means that what you say you’re about will attract people that resonate with it. If you state about your passion for pastry art, do not be surprised if you get faster connection request acceptance from chefs and pastry lovers than plumbers.

If you are building your personal brand around a specific industry, your “about” should be written in such a way that people from the industry will resonate with it. This also comes in handy when there are searches made for people in that industry.

Tip: Using keywords that are commonly found in your industry is a good way to improve your chances of being search located.

I like to think of the “About” summary as an introduction to my brand story. I like to describe it as the guiding light for all the content I share on the platform. If it’s really what I’m about, surely it should be seen in what I post and engage with on the platform. There must be synergy in all the elements of your LinkedIn. If you find majority of your content deviating from your “About”, it may be a sign that you need to revise it.

Remember: One of the ways someone can prove that you’re really about what you say you’re about, is through the content you share and engage with daily.

Experience, Education and Certifications:

These are self explanatory, but, do not take them for granted. Merely listing your experience, education and certifications is not enough. It is important to note that not everyone in the world would know about the company, organization, initiative, committee or teams you have been in. Unless you are certain that everyone on earth would know about it, get into the details a bit more. This applies a lot to the “experiences” side of things.

How you phrase your experience matters.
Want proof?

Person A: Experience

“Academic Officer - Men’s Halls of Residence, Wits University
I served in the Executive Committee for 2017/18”

Person B: Experience

“Academic Officer - Men’s Halls of

Residence, Wits University

The House Committee is made up of 11 individuals elected by the 415 residents to lead the house and its activities in their term of office. I served in the Executive Committee for 2017/18

My duties included:

- Planning and hosting an Academic Awards dinner
- Facilitating the first year student's tutorial programme
- Coordinating the mentorship programme which pairs senior students (mentors) with first year students (mentees)
- Planning and Coordinating academic support programmes to ensure the residents perform well academically.”

Which of the two persons appears to have more experience? Both had the same experience, but one was able to communicate it better. Your “experiences” can also be used to obtain recommendations from colleagues, supervisors or any other relevant person in your connections.

Are experiences limited to only those gained from full-time employment? Not at all. I think of experiences as a way for you to display where you have been able to acquire and apply the skills you set out in your profile and also as a way to provide more evidence of how you have been living out your “About”. Just make sure that they are relevant to the brand you are building. The same applies for “Accomplishments” and “Certifications”

I will get into “Recommendations” in Chapter 6 of this book.

Chapter 5: Connecting With Purpose

So you know what LinkedIn is and you've also been able to setup a decent profile for yourself. It's now time to meet the neighbors. Take a walk around the neighborhood and you will begin to see some familiar faces. These are people you might have met through a learning institution, a work project, an event and so on. Connect with them! For those who may not be familiar with LinkedIn terminology, connections are the equivalent of "Friends" on Facebook. These can be formed either by someone accepting your connection request, or you accepting theirs. Connections are your most valuable assets on LinkedIn.

The First 500:

There are 3 levels of connections on LinkedIn, which are represented by the “1st”, “2nd” and “3rd” you might have seen on next to a profile’s name.

1st level connections are directly connected to you, meaning either you or that person accepted a connection request from the other. 2nd level connections are the equivalent of “Mutual Friends” on Facebook. These are profiles that are directly connected to your 1st level connections. 3rd level connections are what LinkedIn assumes to be strangers to you. This means they are neither in your network nor that of your 1st level connections.

Connections are important because they will be the ones sharing valuable content with you, engaging with your content and leading you to even more connections. It is very important to ensure that your first 500 connections are people you aim to learn

from, engage with and either add value to, or gain value from.

There are different stages in the connection strategy and with each phase comes opportunities and obstacles. Your first 500 connections are crucial, the rest are a result of algorithms (More on this in the next section)

Choose your connections who are interested in what you are interested in, who can help you progress in what you are interested in, or those who can do both. Your first 500 connections should also reflect who you are or aspire to become. If you're the "next big thing", it only makes sense to me that you get to know who the "current big things" are.

Remember, the goal is to have a strong network you can exchange value with.

The Connection Algorithm:

My intention is not to bore you with the details or science behind LinkedIn, so I'll keep it as simple as I can. For the purpose of this section, let's just say an algorithm is an angel that seeks to make your life easier by giving you more of what it thinks you like.

Why what it “thinks” you like? Well, it doesn't speak your language and so it relies solely on what it sees in your actions. If you eat a banana today, tomorrow it will bring you a banana. If you eat an apple the next day, it will bring you both the banana and the apple. If you eat a peach the day after that, it will bring all three on the following day.

The same applies to your connections. When you connect to someone, LinkedIn will begin to suggest more people like that person for you to add to your network. I hope you're beginning to see why your first

500 connections are crucial. LinkedIn will not only help you find people that resemble your current connections, it will also suggest you to the the people connected to them.

500 may seem like a lot of people for you to handpick, it's really not. Remember, there's an angel that will begin to bring them to you. Just make sure you keep giving it the right information by connecting with the kind of people you want it to bring to you.

So what if you're already over 500 connections? In the words of, C.S Lewis, "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are, and change the ending."

Chapter 6: Leveraging Off Connections

What good is a well if you can't drink from it? What power is in a weapon if you can't operate it? Making your first 500 connections is milestone worth celebrating with a pat on the shoulder, but there's more out there. You now need to learn how to benefit from your connections both on and off the platform.

Your connections will enable you to make even more connections, they will drive up your engagements, they will endorse and recommend you, they will afford you opportunities beyond the platform itself, but, none of it will happen without a sound strategy. By being deliberate about the value you want to extract from your

connections, you will begin to see more consistent results.

Using The 3 Levels:

Earlier on in the guide I mentioned the 3 levels of connections. It is important that you understand not only what they are, but how they impact your ability to connect with others. Have you ever wondered why some people take their time to accept your connection request? or why some never do? There are a number of possible reasons for it, and the connection level is part of it.

Suppose you meet someone you don't know at the grocery store and they waved hello. What would be the first question you ask yourself? - Where do I know them from, right?

Well, guess what? That's exactly what most of us would ask ourselves too.

How different would it have been if that was a person you had seen having a conversation with a good friend of yours a week ago? Very different, right? That's

because you would associate them with your good friend, which makes you more likely to wave back and possibly start a conversation with them.

In the first scenario, you had a 3rd level connection waving hello (a complete stranger), the second time around you had a 2nd level connection waving hello (someone who had a mutual connection with you) . The more you expand your network, the more people you become 2nd level connections to and the easier it becomes to grow your network.

LinkedIn is a networking platform and so you'll meet a lot of unfamiliar faces. The success of your connection requests will rely on being given the benefit of the doubt. There's a higher chance of having them accepted if you are connected to people they admire, trust, work with and/or positively relate with as this will get you the benefit of the doubt to enter their network. I do have to caution though, that this benefit of the doubt cannot be granted to you if

your profile is weak or dodgy, especially when connecting to high-profile individuals.

BONUS:

There's a domino effect of sorts when coming to connections. The more credible profiles you connect to, the easier it becomes to connect to other people in their network. I have also seen that the time taken for people to review or accept your request also decreases. Personally, I saw mine move from 24 hours+ to barely an hour (if not almost instantly) depending on whether or not they are online

As I said before, this is only one of the factors. Combining this with a strong profile makes the results far greater.

If you want to connect with the President, connecting with all their friends, staff and administration would somehow persuade

them that you are somehow worth knowing or that you might be someone that might have just slipped their mind. With one President in your network, you will now be able to connect to the next President without needing to go through the same process. This will also apply to any other President after that. Before you know it, you will have a network of Presidents.

Engagement:

Engagement refers to the various interactions you make with other users on LinkedIn. This can be done in the form of liking, commenting or even sharing of posts and articles. Engagement brings life to your profile and puts you on the radar.

Unlike Instagram, Twitter or Facebook, LinkedIn allows you to see each others activity on the platform. Whatever you like, share or comment on will be visible to the entire network. Before you rush into thinking that this is a bad thing, observe how it can be benefit you. In addition to your profile info and posts you make, your interaction with other user's posts provides information about your interests.

By observing your engagements/interactions with the content on the platform, one can make assumptions about you. If you are always commenting on and liking posts related to finance, one

would assume that it's a field of that interests you and this may come to attract connections who share are also in finance. It is important that your profile info, your posts and your engagements are aligned. This consistency will help you establish your circle much quicker than if you were to be a jack of all trades.

There are different stages in the connection strategy and with each phase comes opportunities and obstacles. Your first 500 connections are crucial, the rest are a result of algorithms (More on this in the next section)

Choose your connections who are interested in what you are interested in, who can help you progress in what you are interested in, or those who can do both. Your first 500 connections should also reflect who you are or aspire to become. If you're the "next big thing", it only makes sense to me that you get to know who the "current big things" are.

Remember, the goal is to have a strong network you can exchange value with. It's really not about the numbers.

Endorsements & Recommendations:

Receiving endorsements for the skills you've listed on your profile and/or recommendations for work you've done (or your character) can help build your credibility.

When putting information into your profile, you are the voice speaking i.e It is your word against everyone else. Endorsements and recommendations, on the other hand, are more on what other people say about you.

[END OF SAMPLE]

Taking The Conversation Offline:

Thank you! I hope you've found value in the little bit I've shared with you (for now)
(If you've got feedback I would really love to hear from you! Email:
connect@phenyomabokela.com

Please keep an eye out on my social media for updates on the full guide's release date.
<https://Linkedin.com/in/phenyomabokela>
https://twitter.com/ourlove_m

Let's grab an eCoffee & chat about your personal brand?

<https://phenyomabokela.com>

TUNE IN:



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