Why Use LinkedIn?
LinkedIn is the world’s largest online professional network. LinkedIn has over 300 million users and is currently considered the best online networking tool for professionals, who use it to:

- Have an online professional presence (A complete LinkedIn profile will show as one of the first results of a Google search of your first and last name).
- Build and maintain a broad network with professionals, colleagues, and classmates.
- Learn about organizations and search for jobs in areas that interest you.
- Identify and reach out to professionals to talk about careers, organizations, and specific positions.
- Stay informed with up-to-date information from your network and industry of interest.

How Do I Get Started?
Creating an account on LinkedIn is very easy, and it’s free! Visit www.linkedin.com and fill in the information on the homepage. As you proceed through registration, there is an option for “Premium” accounts, which come at a monthly fee. The Basic account is free and is a great tool for students.

After you have created your account, the next step is to establish your professional profile. Your profile is where you present information about who you are as a professional. Your LinkedIn profile mirrors information on your resume including information about your education, experience, coursework, and skills. Remember to highlight your best qualifications as it relates to the positions, organizations and industries you are interested in. It is also important to choose a professional, close-up picture to display on your profile page.

Keep in mind that this information is seen by colleagues, potential employers, and recruiters—it should be clear and professional. An important note about privacy: LinkedIn is an international website and contains profile fields that you may want to exclude for a US job search, including your birthdate and marital status.

I’ve Setup My Profile. Now What?

Establish Connections
Contacts in LinkedIn are referred to as “connections”. Under the Contacts tab, you can view connections you already have, add connections, and search for connections by school. You can also use the “Search” prompt in the upper right hand corner of the page.

When you select someone to add as a connection, a dialogue box will appear where you will indicate how you know that person. It will also allow you to send a message with your invitation. There is a pre-written message that appears: “I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.” Always replace that message with something personalized. Here is an example of a professional, personal message to include with your connection request:
“Hello (Name), We met last week at the St. Paul Campus Job and Internship Fair while I was visiting the (company name) booth. It was very nice to meet you and learn more about your internship opportunities. I would appreciate having you as a member of my LinkedIn network, so I can learn more about (company name) and upcoming opportunities.”

Remember that LinkedIn is used for professional networking, not social networking. Be sure to add people you have or want a professional connection with. You can also ask your current connections to introduce you to their connections. Stay active both with updating your profile and your connections. You will always be meeting new people, and it’s best to add them as a connection shortly after meeting them instead of months later.

**Join Groups**

Joining groups is a great way to build connections, engage in discussions, and learn new information. Groups you select to join can be based on professional associations or organizations, interests, and skills sets, as well as many other categories. Utilize the “Search” prompt in the upper right hand corner of the page to search for groups you may be interested in. Groups to consider joining are your college and any professional associations you are a member of. A few suggestions include:

- University of Minnesota Alumni Association
- U of M College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Science; CFANS Mentor Connection
- University of Minnesota College of Design
- University of Minnesota College of Continuing Education.

*Keep in mind that some groups have a membership approval process that may take several days.

**Research and Follow Organizations**

The Companies page allows you to follow organizations in your industry of interest, as well as organizations you have worked for or would like to work for. Many organizations will post job openings, company happenings, and other news and research. By selecting “Follow” on an organization’s page, information the organization posts will be sent to your Homepage. On the left side of this page, LinkedIn will also pull in a list of organizations you may be interested in based on your profile.

Additionally, you can find specific people at organizations to add to your network. This is an excellent strategy to use when identifying professionals to connect with for information about careers, industries, and positions. To do this, go to the organization’s page, select the “Careers” tab, select “People at (Company Name),” and search for people you would like to connect with by keyword or by search parameters such as location and group membership. Please note that smaller organizations may not have a “Careers” tab.

**Search for Jobs**

In the Jobs section, you can view jobs that LinkedIn recommends for you based on your profile information. You can also search for jobs using keywords, organization name, type of work, and other criteria. If you find a job you are interested in, you can save it to view later. Saved jobs will appear on the right side of the Jobs page. Additionally, there is an option to save your job search criteria and receive an alert from LinkedIn when new positions are posted related to that search. That is also managed on the right side of the Jobs page.

**Additional Resources**

For further questions about using LinkedIn, use the Help Center (found under Accounts & Settings in the upper right corner with your photo). If you would like further assistance, please call our office at 612-624-2710 and schedule an appointment with a career counselor.