



WRITER  
Angela  
Garry

# Better Connected

So, you're on LinkedIn. How do you use it to find a new job?

If you have followed the advice of the articles in Volume 1 Issue 1 and Volume 1 Issue 3 of *Executive Secretary* you will have by now have joined LinkedIn, created your own profile and personalised that profile accordingly. (If you haven't joined LinkedIn yet, please go to [www.executivesecretary.com](http://www.executivesecretary.com) to download the previous articles).

Now, here's how to use LinkedIn in your search for a new role.

## Stay Ahead

Employers and recruiters want to see current information. Make sure that your profile page on LinkedIn is as up to date as it can possibly be. Include details of your current employment and all previous roles. Even if you have been in your current role for a number of years, make use of the space available on your profile page to list your most recent achievements. Also include details of any training courses, colleges or universities attended. Giving as much information as possible will not only provide a potential employer with information about you and what you are capable of. It will also enable you to connect with previous colleagues and students – any one of whom may be the route to the perfect next role for you, or could

provide a written testimonial.

## Sell Yourself

Make sure that recruiters know you are available. Many sources of jobs are available on LinkedIn. Merely stating within your profile page that you are open to new opportunities can be enough – make sure that you turn on that setting at the foot of your profile. A savvy recruiter who uses the site to best advantage could turn you up in their search results when looking for a candidate with particular skills. If your profile states that you are open to opportunities they will know that they can then approach you.

## Join Relevant Groups

Joining groups that are relevant to your industry and profession can also be a fantastic source of new roles or, at least, a way in via other contacts. The discussion groups on LinkedIn are numerous and growing fast. As a bare minimum I would encourage PAs and EAs to join at least three or four of the following groups:

- *Executive Secretary* – the group for this magazine. An excellent source of training advice and job details;

- PAs, EAs, VAs and Senior Administrators – the group that I run, for admin professionals to share expertise, skills and knowledge;
- A networking group relevant to your location – for example, EUMA [European Management Assistants], IAAP [International Association of Administrative Professionals], EA & PA Australia, or Chinese Executive/Personal Assistants; and
- A group relevant to the industry you work in.

To search for a group, click the Groups link on the top banner, then enter your search terms. If there isn't a group relevant to you, your location or your industry, create one and invite like-minded contacts to join it. LinkedIn permits each user to join a maximum of 50 groups.

## Get Talking

Most groups include a job page and the discussion forum can hold a wealth of information about upcoming opportunities,

which organisations are great employers, what's happening in your industry, and so on. Don't just join a group and leave it at that – participate in some way. Get to know a few of the group members and let others know what you are looking for, as they may be able to assist or advise you in your search.

### Search For Jobs

Don't forget that there is also the Jobs section on LinkedIn. This area of the site is for recruiters and organisations to place paid advertisements for roles. A lot of people think they should just visit this area of the LinkedIn to look for their next role, but using the other areas of the site also could give you a heads-up on an opportunity that has not been formally advertised on the site for everyone else to find.

### Research Vacancies Or Companies

In addition to using LinkedIn to find new job opportunities, you can also use the site and your contacts to research a company that you already know has a role that you are thinking of applying for. For example, if you have heard that a company near you is expanding, you could check if any of your contacts work there. Their profile could provide background information about the company and also a possible way in to connecting with the relevant person, who might help you find a job there. This could mean your contact, who is an engineer at company XYZ, could give you both insight into working for the company as well as the contact details of somebody in HR, or within the Chief Executive's department.

### Ask Your Contacts

Always think about how you can use your contacts to serve your goals – find your way in, make contact and ask them questions, for example:

- What is it like to work there?
- Who would be the most appropriate person for you to speak with about progressing your career?
- What does your contact like about the

working environment and atmosphere?

- Do they know of any new projects that you could mention in an application or at interview stage, which would demonstrate your interest in working for this particular company?

A lot of questions you might otherwise only get the opportunity to ask at interview could actually be asked of a contact now, enabling you to put together a really well-informed application.

### Recommendations And Testimonials

An additional tool to help you get that fantastic new job would be to request recommendations from people that you currently work with or have done in the past. Recommendations are short testimonials, a paragraph or a few sentences, written by your contacts. You cannot add a testimonial or recommendation to your own profile – you ask others to write them for you. Like everything on LinkedIn, this should be a two-way process. I would recommend that you get into the habit of regularly writing testimonials for suppliers and colleagues who you trust and believe worked well with you, then you can easily ask them to reciprocate. To request a recommendation, go to your own profile page and click 'Ask for Recommendations' towards the top right. To recommend one of your contacts, use the 'Recommend [name]' link on their profile page.

### Stick With Who You Know

Whilst I have a network that extends massively across the globe and I am connected with an enormous number of people, I will only ever write recommendations for people I know and whom I have actually worked with. I'd recommend that you also do this. I don't believe that there is any point in writing a recommendation about someone you've never met, spoken with or worked with – or to include recommendations from them on your own profile page. From time to time I have received requests from contacts in my network,

requesting a recommendation. But if I do not know them I politely decline, in order to make sure that the recommendations I write about others (and those which are written about me) are genuine.

### Broaden Your Scope

Ask previous colleagues and suppliers (not just former bosses) for recommendations. Think about asking your colleagues from previous jobs, those who have moved away to another office, someone elsewhere within your organisation, your current manager, or a supplier or business provider with whom you have regular contact. Testimonials from any of these, providing comments on your work ethics and how you have worked successfully together, would be absolutely ideal.

### To CV Or Not To CV

When applying for a role, if the organisation concerned permits the inclusion of a CV to accompany the application, I'd recommend you include your LinkedIn profile. There's an easy 'Make a PDF' link on your profile page, which will create a ready to email document. The last section of this PDF will be your recommendations – be sure to point them out at interview, as a useful guideline of how well regarded you are by your current and former colleagues.

### Reciprocate, Share And Help Others

LinkedIn is a fabulous tool to connect with people, make contacts in your business community, find a new job, and a whole range of other things. But it only works when things are reciprocal. If you are approached by a contact who asks for your help in finding a new role, I would urge you to please give it to them – in this new world of networking you never know when they, or any of their contacts, could be the ideal person to help you in the future!

Get connected, make contacts, make yourself available, and collaborate with each other – and make LinkedIn work for you.



#### about the author

Angela Garry is the most connected Personal Assistant globally on LinkedIn, with over 13,000 direct contacts and a three-level network of over 21 million. She is currently the PA to the Principal at the Nottingham University Samworth Academy in the UK, and is the Deputy National Chair for EUMA UK, where she runs networking and training events for PAs. She will be speaking in November at the Executive Assistant Forum in Dubai.

