Students, Are you LinkedIn?

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KOMISAR BRADY & CO, LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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Social networking has boomed over the last five years and more and more people are using social networking websites. The social networking boom started with Facebook and progressed to Twitter and LinkedIn, among other sites. While social networking is a great way to stay in contact with friends and family, it is also a great way to network with other young professionals and people that work in a business or industry you are interested in.

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 100 million members and it continues to grow rapidly. It is a place to publish your professional profile and is a great way to stay in touch with friends, family and colleagues on a professional level. It also opens doors to new networking opportunities through shared contacts. It is similar to Facebook in that you can view other peoples profiles and contacts and are able to converse with other professionals. The key identifying factor with LinkedIn is that it is targeted towards business relationships, including marketing, knowledge sharing, and career advancement.

Why should you join?

- It's free!
- LinkedIn estimates that more than 100,000 of its members are professional recruiters
- Stay connected with classmates after graduation as you collectively advance in your careers
- Stay connected with friends and family
- Learn about possible internships and job opportunities
- Access to articles and discussions about topics you are interested in
- Chance to connect with mentors or professionals met through presentations or seminars
- Opportunity to "show off" your talents, accomplishments and goals. Your profile is a more detailed and personal version of your resume.
- Research on companies, interviewers, and people who are coming to career fairs to be well prepared for discussion.
- Follow companies and find out more information than what their websites may offer

Not Convinced??

- ✓ Over 100 Million professionals
- ✓ Over 11 million "recent college graduates"
- ✓ Hiring Solutions used by 73 of Fortune 100 companies in 2010
- ✓ 1 million members added each week
- ✓ Provides "links" to decision makers

How do I sign up?

- Go to www.linkedin.com and select "Join today"
- Start setting up your profile and use your resume as guidance, personalize it and make yourself look marketable
- Start connecting with
  - Family, past and present professors
  - People you have interacted with during internships, jobs or school events
  - Accounting and other classmates who may be beneficial in the future

Maximize the Benefits of LinkedIn

Although LinkedIn is similar to Facebook it is important to remember that LinkedIn is a *professional* networking site. Make your page all about you, but remember that recruiters, colleagues and possible employers will be viewing your page, so sell yourself as someone that would be beneficial asset to company. Everyone has a social life, but it's vital to show that you can also maintain a separate, or partially separate, professional life. As a student who is looking into the future for a possible connection in their career, it is important to build bridges, not burn the foundation they will continue to be built on.

Remember to keep your professional and social life separate and use proper business etiquette when creating your profile. As with anything that is put on the internet, anyone has the capabilities of viewing the information. This site is used to show a positive representation of you as a future professional. Although we live in the day and age of more relaxed communication and presentation of ourselves, it's important to remember that the amount of respect you have for yourself and your reputation will play a large part in the amount of respect you see reflected back from other professionals.

Still Not *Convinced??*

- ✓ Nearly 2 billion people searches in 2010
- ✓ Over 2 million companies have LinkedIn Company Pages
- ✓ Over 140 different industries represented
- ✓ Did we mention it was free and easy to join?

Here are additional recommendations to keep in mind:

- ✓ Add a professional picture to your profile. This way people are able to put a name to a face when you meet them.
- ✓ Use your profile as a way to expand on your resume and to show off accomplishments.
- ✓ Remember to spell check and use proper grammar before finalizing your profile.
- ✓ Use key words throughout your profile to maximize your search potential. These key words could include words like: accounting, CPA (if that is a goal of yours), location, graduation date, internship, etc.
- ✓ The more involved you are in LinkedIn, the more it will benefit you, so join groups like the WICPA, AICPA, or college alumni groups. This provides additional opportunities to find other contacts, follow discussions, or have another positive aspect that will draw recruiters or future employers in.

There's No Time Like the Present

At Komisar Brady, we recommend all staff accountants join LinkedIn and establish sound profiles to help kick start their careers. Similarly, we recommend all students do the same and work to connect with classmates and other contacts. It will pay to be a leader and not a follower when it comes to social networking. Employers will likely view you as much more well-rounded, organized, and prepared for the business world if your LinkedIn profile displays as such. On the contrary, a lack of LinkedIn profile or professional contacts may indicate to employers that you are not prepared for the next level.

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