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by Rowena Morais

What would you do if you saw in your LinkedIn feed this morning a request to connect by someone whose headline indicated they were either "jobless" or "unemployed"? Chances are that you would likely ignore the request or the profile and understandably so.

## "I'm jobless"

In the last two years, I've seen anywhere between seven and 12 connection requests or profiles that pop up on my feed that make me take a step back. It strikes me as odd that someone would highlight something that could be perceived negatively but it's likely that they believe they are just stating the obvious.

Yes, you may be jobless but you don't need to highlight it. This is not hiding or lying - this is simply positioning, and you are putting your best foot forward. You're getting people to focus on what is relevant rather than what just is.

## "I'm looking for a job, please help?"

There's nothing particularly wrong with reaching out to people to get help find a new job. But job-hunting can be a full-time job in itself. It takes significant time to find what roles are available, do the background research prior to application to ensure a good outreach and the whole application process - from cover letter, resume updates and communication with recruiters.

For that reason, be selective about who you reach out to and tailor your outreach. You simply do not have the time to reach out to everyone you are connected to. Generic outreach efforts that do not generate positive results are not only a waste of your time but also a drain on your positive outlook.

## Changes are not updated regularly

You'd be surprised to see how many people change positions or organisations yet fail to update their contact information on LinkedIn, making them unreachable.

Why? Unless someone has the LinkedIn app loaded on their smartphone and is able to directly access the messages through the app, they will access their messages in one of two ways. First, by logging into the LinkedIn website on their desktop or second, through email notifications they have set up to receive. Typically, if people do not load the app on their phone, they are not active users. Any messages you send may be periodically viewed or not at all. And those who signed up for email notification and fail to update their emails will not notice that they're missing messages. Further, LinkedIn does announce and implement changes at times. Periodic settings checks will keep you contactable.

## Not being open to new connections

LinkedIn is a business networking platform as much as it is an online resume service. That said, you want to be actively reaching out to people who you feel are relevant to you. And you want to be open to receiving connection requests.

There are a few options available on your profile page - you can have your profile saved as a pdf or shared, you can be contactable via InMail or you can be 'followed'. If you prioritise any of these as compared to the 'Connect' button, people may not reach out to connect. You also want to avoid putting restrictions on connecting i.e. making the person requesting enter your email address in order to connect.

# 10 Mistakes to avoid when JOB HUNTING

THESE aren't exhaustive but they will give you a reason to re-think your approach

## Not checking your LinkedIn

Whatever channels you have indicated you'd like to be contacted on, should be ones that you have regular access to. Make it easy for yourself by having these updates delivered to you via email.

## Not trying to grow your network

You are not likely to find any new roles especially on a platform like LinkedIn if you are not connected to others i.e. you have no network. You are invisible. While building a network takes time, growing your network has an exponential effect. Each time you connect with someone, you not only grow your direct connections but you also grow the network of 2nd degree connections available.

## It's not about what you want

Yes, in a way, it is. You're looking for a particular role, perhaps you have an idea of the kind of organisation and culture you'd like to embrace. However, when creating a profile or when reaching out to a potential organisation, it is less about who you are and what you care about and far more about who the organisation is, what they do and what goals they have. As such, you do not want to discuss what you want or which industry you're keen to work in. You want to position yourself in terms of what you can do, what you've accomplished and what you believe you can bring to the role instead. People are not interested in what you want, they are interested in finding what they want. The quicker you realise this, the better you will be at positioning yourself.

## Think outcome, not responsibilities

The last thing any recruiter wants to read is a list of the things you are responsible for. These do not focus on what you've accomplished, they focus on what you're supposed to get done. Hiring organisations are looking for results, outcomes and a differentiated service. Instead, focus on what skills you've picked up and experiences you can call upon - find ways to demonstrate that.

There are many others in similar fields and roles. You want this differentiation to not stick out for shock value but as a way to showcase what you say you can do. And you want to do so in an authentic, refreshing manner. How do you do this? Through how you present yourself both in person and digitally. Through your body of work which you make visible.

## Failing to leverage what is already available

We have moved largely from print resumes toward online ones. More and more providers provide a breathtaking array of options for you to develop a simple one-pager presence of yourself online through personal branding websites. All of which can be done, very quickly and for free. LinkedIn, as a resume and networking platform, allows everyone to publish today. This means the use of article writing as a means to position yourself or a way to share your insights.

You don't need to get a premium subscription to LinkedIn although for certain types of people, there are distinct advantages to having one. You can simply use the free version and reach out to make new connections. If you're starting from zero, you have a potential network to access whether you realise it or not. Past organisations you have worked at, friends, colleagues current and past, schoolmates and contacts you've developed at clubs, associations or volunteer work you've done. It starts with one and multiples from there. So remember that your failure to use all of these options which many others are not only using but leveraging sets you behind significantly.

## Not having enough clarity

One of the biggest setbacks however, would be a lack of clarity in terms of who you are, what you want, the kind of organisations you'd like to work for and the kind of work you'd like to do. It means you're open to anything but also, nothing. There is no direction, no desire, not outcome.

REMEMBER, IT STARTS WITH YOU.



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