



## Networking while Physical Distancing: Tips for using LinkedIn from home

### 1. Tell your story:

Start building (or spruce up) your LinkedIn profile. Use our **Mini checklist**:

- **Photo and Background image:** Choose a professional, high quality headshot. **Pro-tip:** don't leave the background image blank! Your images help tell your story.
- **Killer headline:** Communicate the role you want and/or include key industry words.
- **Summary:** What makes you unique? Tell your story in an interesting and authentic way. Highlight your background, experience and skills as well as your leadership style, personality and long-term goals. Use short paragraphs. Include important hard and technical skills.
- **Experience, media, education, projects, honors, volunteer work:** Make sure your profile provides necessary information and details about your work, education, and involvement. The goal is to highlight your key skill sets.
- **Status update:** Regularly update so your network can see what you are up to, reading, thinking about. Post articles to practice your communication skills and engage your network.

### 2. Choose your paths:

Create a master list of industries and job titles that interest you and start building your list of options. Get creative and start thinking outside the box about roles within your skill set that may be particularly relevant right now. For inspiration, search titles and roles by filtering by degree, program, faculty, to get some ideas of things people have done with your degree – perhaps some options you've never thought of!

### 3. Build your web:

- **Seek it out:** Start thinking about who you might like to contact and speak with about their career paths and begin following or connecting with them.
- **Who are they following?** Building up your network of industry professionals will help fill up your feed with content you can learn from as you continue your search.
- **Engage and connect:** LinkedIn is a professional social space where individuals can also connect via engagement with posted and shared content. If you read interesting posts, you can choose to engage directly on their feed, repost to your own feed with a comment, or to use the content as a chance to connect with a potential contact. I.e. "I read the article you posted earlier this week," or "I found your post on x interesting."



#### 4. Join groups:

Join alumni groups, professional associations, and any industry-related groups. Groups are helpful and “warm” spaces where connections may be simpler by virtue of the size of community. Participate by answering questions, sharing links to interesting articles and engaging in conversation with other like-minded professionals.

#### 5. Pick your buddies, and start reaching out:

Informational interviews are usually a straightforward ways to connect with potential colleagues, employers, and mentors. Currently, however, most people’s work and personal lives are in flux. ***Reaching out to have a conversation with someone you don’t know is a big ask at this time***, but it doesn’t mean you have to stop networking. Instead you need to be sensitive when selecting, approaching, and connecting with your potential buddies.

- **Prioritize “warm” connections over “cold” calls.** Institutional and program Alumni (McGill Connect), and degree holders, etc.
- **Active and frequent LinkedIn posters are more likely to be “warm.”**
- Engage with content and users in your field on posts, **creating more “warm” connections.**
- **Reach out, one human being to another:** The world is an uncertain place right now for many people. Acknowledging that this time is difficult and that the situation may be unstable are just a few ways to approach networking in a humane and authentic way. When you gently ask for a conversation, make sure you give your contact an ‘out,’ or the option to reschedule.

#### 6. Be patient and grateful:

Now, more than ever, people’s time is precious. Showing you are thankful through your written words, in conversation, before and following up, is important to helping cultivate good connections that may blossom into meaningful relationships. This moment in time offers us an opportunity to slow down, give people space, and – if you haven’t already – to think about your networks as more than tools in a job search, as people with lives, responsibilities, and families. This is the *context* for their careers. Despite the current uncertainty and instability, life will go on. Deliberate, authentic, and meaningful connections will help move all of us into the next chapter.