ZQS
Schlüsselkompetenzen

Leibniz
Universität
Hannover

APPLICATION SUPPORT
DIGITAL
NETWORKING

Tips for establishing and presenting a professional online network with XING and LinkedIn

Contents

1 The acronym DACH stands for the following 3 German speaking countries: Germany (D), Austria (A) and Switzerland (CH)

How to XING and LinkedIn

Professional social networks, such as XING and LinkedIn provide a good opportunity to

- build a network and thereby profit professionally from your contacts' relations.

- find positions, as many companies also share their job postings via these channels.

- contact others, inform one another and keep each other up to date.

- inform yourself about topics from your field or industry, as employers frequently provide new information here. Furthermore, recruiters are often very willing to enter into conversation via these channels. This can be an advantage particularly when it comes to applications and job interviews. Use digital networks as a source for learning about your new employer ahead of time and make initial contact with them.

- present yourself and your personal profile and show your network what professional environment/situation you currently find yourself in and when you are looking for a job.

In this brochure you find practical tips on how you can use the online career networks XING and LinkedIn for your career entry and a possible ensuing career.

We are also happy to counsel you in person – regarding this topic as well as the broader topics of how to write applications or finding internships and starting your career. Benefit from our open office hour on campus or make an appointment with us. All contact and further information are available at:

zqs.uni-hannover.de/en/kc/career-guidance-and-service →

We wish you lots of fun and success in your digital networking. Your team of the

ZQS/Schlüsselkompetenzen
Career Service

1 XING –
Social and professional network in the D-A-CH-region

The professional network XING is being used in the region of Germany, Austria and Switzerland (D-A-CH-region). In comparison to LinkedIn it currently (as of April 2022) has more users in the D-A-CH-region, although amongst academics, both websites are equally common.

Profile composition tips

On XING there are various profile sections that you can fill in. In doing so you can decide freely what kind of and how much information you want to share. The more diligently you construct your profile, the bigger the external effect and in turn the value that you can draw from your digital network.

Header

- Photo: uploading a photo is possible and recommended

  ▶ Ensure that your photo is appropriate (use a professional headshot of yourself).

- Business card: possible to choose two highlights from your timeline; even your studies or an internship can be a relevant information in this segment (comp. figure 1)

Jobseeker criteria

- You can provide your job-seeking-status (including salary expectations and preferred employer).

  ▶ Be sensible to adjust visibility: For whom should your job seeking preferences be visible?

About me

- Establish yourself: useful to describe yourself as a (professional) person, but not absolutely necessary

  ▶ A short personal introduction can be useful to stand out from other users.

Figure 1: Header with profile photo, cover and business card.
(Screenshot, Source: © New Work SE, xing.com)

Timeline

- Corresponds to virtual CV and should be filled out
- Provide career steps and education from your background (pay attention to relevance regarding your future professional life or the acquisition of skills).
- No separate section for volunteer work or apprenticeships; these can however be integrated into the timeline (e.g. through "volunteer" as job title)

  ▶ Alternatively: mention volunteer position in the section "organizations" (although here you cannot provide a description of your tasks)

Skills

- It is possible and recommended to provide your skills through the use of key words: soft skills (e.g. teamwork) and hard skills (e.g. Microsoft Excel).

  ▶ Pay attention here as well that the information you provide fits well with your professional orientation / career expectation.

- Assessing your skill-level not possible

Fähigkeiten und Kenntnisse

Top-Fähigkeiten Premium ∨

Coaching   Beratung   Training

Fachliche Kompetenzen

Karriereberatung   Kommunikationsseminare   Career-dating   Personalauswahl

Personalentwicklung   systemisches Coaching   Netzwerk   Bewerbungscoaching

Konzeption   Kommunikation   Vermittlung   Karrierecoaching

Figure 2: Skills in the profile section (Screenshot, Source: © New Work SE, xing.com)

Wants

- Keywords show own interest in using XING

- Can be useful for your own job search: desires regarding future jobs (e.g. type of employment: full-time or part-time), or general networking aspects (e.g. exchange or new contacts)

Interests and hobbies

- Information on hobbies and interests (private and professional) can give profile a personal touch

  ▶ Professional interests can be a good connection to potential employers and certain industries or sectors.

▶ Possible options: Mention topics on which you would like to exchange with other users (similar topics of other users are being shown automatically).

Ich suche

Menschen mit Freude an Veränderung	Menschen im Bewerbungsprozess
Personen mit Interesse an Verantwortung	Austausch zu Coachingmethoden
Menschen mit Interesse an Neuausrichtung	Austausch zu New Work

Figure 3: Wants in the profile section (Screenshot, Source: © New Work SE, xing.com)

Languages

- You can and should give information on your language skills including the respective levels.

Profile details

Here you can decide depending on the relevance of your provided information:

- Qualifications: possible to provide further degrees and certificates

- Awards: possible to list scholarships or similar things

- Organizations: e.g. to provide information on volunteer work

Portfolio

- Possible, not mandatory, to provide additional information in different formats (text box, image, video, files)
  - ▶ What else is important to know about me? What else do I want to share? (If you decide to use this it should provide significant information.)

Further specifications

- Other web profiles: linking to other profiles (e.g. twitter) possible

    ▶ Consider for which profiles this makes sense and what value linking them would add to your XING-profile.

- Activity: documentation of your activity on XING (posts are generated automatically and can be deleted at all times)

- Personal details: Under settings you can choose if and if so, which personal details you want to share.

Further functions and settings

- Applying directly to job advertisements partly possible

- You can save interesting or appealingly designed profiles in PDF format (you can find this function under the three dots at the top of a profile next to "Write message").

- It is possible to decide on the visibility of your own contacts for other users in settings.

    ▶ If in the beginning, you have less contacts it can make sense to set them to invisible in order for your network not to seem too small to others.

    ▶ In some industries such as consulting, users often set their contacts to invisible, in order to ensure confidentiality.

- Recommendation: Set to "not publicly visible" as long as you are making changes to your profile (otherwise your contacts will get notifications for each change).

- You can upload or share contents on your homepage (e.g. posts on specific topics that are of relevance for your network).

Features of XING premium

- Choosing cover photo in addition to profile picture possible (e.g. something matching your industry)

- Choosing five highlights from your timeline to be put on business card possible

- Choice of three top-skills (through this you will be found more easily in the search of recruiters)

- Feature "skills analysis" allows to check for most searched skills and aligning own information accordingly

- Possibility to add personal message to contact requests

- Possible to send five messages per month to XING users who are not part of own contacts

- Categorization of contacts possible

- Advanced search helps in finding job advertisements, people, employers and industries (similar to a type of database for your job search)

- Insights into who visits profile and access to statistics on how often and why you come up in other people's searches

- Possible to structure portfolio and job experience (what do you want your reader to see first).

2 LinkedIn – Interactive and internationally oriented network

The career and social network LinkedIn is used worldwide and is clearly ahead of XING in an international context. Above all it offers more opportunity to construct a more creative overall picture.

Profile composition tips

Header

- Profile photo: It is possible and useful to use a profile photo.

  ▶ Here you can use a less official photo – not just one suited for applications, ask yourself: How do I want to represent myself?

- Cover photo: can be adjusted to complement and complete your profile (if applicable choose according to your industry)

- Gender pronouns: You can provide your preferred pronouns (simplifies communication with other users from your network).

  ▶ Via the LinkedIn app you can also upload a recording of your name (simplifies pronunciation for other users).

- Headline: Advertise yourself with one sentence.

- Current position: provide information in the header also on education/training

- Contact info: possibility to alter URL of LinkedIn-profile and add further contact information (e.g. e-mail address or website)

- Job status: provide information, such as "looking for a new job"

- You can also share job advertisements or your own services for potential employees or customers in the header.

Figure 4: Header with profile photo, cover and business card.
(Screenshot, Source: © LinkedIn Corp., linkedin.com)

Core

- About: info text (up to 2.000 words) at the top, similar to a mission state-
  ment or elevator pitch; this text is also visible next to your profile picture on
  your own posts or comments
  - ▶ What do I want to say about myself? What do I stand for (personal
    values)? Which interests regarding specific industries or skills could be in
    particular demand?
  - ▶ Especially as someone changing careers and when you are searching for
    jobs in general, it can be very useful to provide additional information on
    yourself.
- Timeline: useful to present education, jobs and positions (to illustrate, you
  can also add different media, e.g. photos, videos or links to websites)
  - ▶ Career breaks can also be included in this section.

- Skills: You can provide language skills but also others, e.g. soft skills such as teamwork.

  ▶ It's best to set this section so that others can confirm your skills, thereby your statements gain a higher significance. Your skills are sorted by number of confirmations.

  ▶ By giving your skills in the form of keywords you will also be found more easily in the search of recruiters.

- Multilingualism: If you work in international contexts, you can create your profile in multiple languages (you need to translate it yourself).

Recommended by LinkedIn

- Featured: Section where you can upload contents, such as articles, posts, photos, videos or websites.

  ▶ You can use this section to present work samples or also to introduce yourself in a multimedia-based manner.

- Licenses and certifications: can be included as proof of priorly mentioned skills; also possible to link classes to specific steps of timeline

  ▶ Think about who you want to address with your profile and which certificates might be relevant for them.

- Recommendations: option to ask other users for recommendations via direct request/inquiry

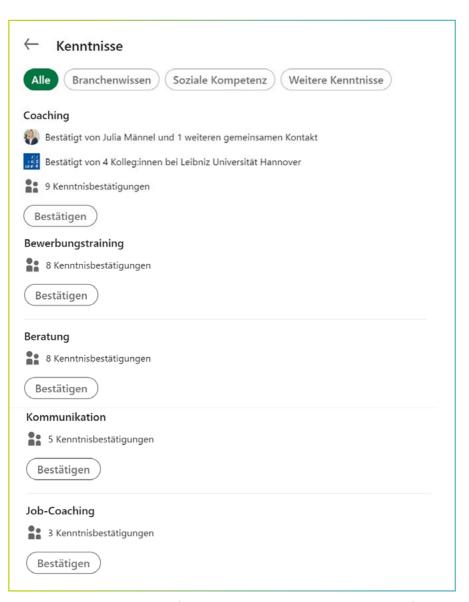 ▶ Important: Make sure beforehand that the respective person is willing to give you a recommendation.

Figure 5: Skills in the profile section (Screenshot, Source: © LinkedIn Corp., linkedin.com)

Additional

- Volunteer experience: You can provide extensive information on the organization, your position within the organization, period and field (e.g. environment, politics, etc.), additionally, there is a text box to add a description.
- Publications, patents, projects, honors and awards can be listed additionally

  ▶ This information is not absolutely necessary, think about whether or not possible publications or other, are relevant for the career path that you want to take and base your selection on this.

- Test scores: possible to add descriptions of specific tests in the context of your studies (e.g. when a test has a certain value)
- Languages can and should be listed under additional information, including the language level.
- Badge: with feature "open to" you can provide information on your desired job in short form, e.g. #opentowork or #opentonewopportunities

  ▶ If you are searching for a job, this can be a useful tool to signal to recruiters at first glance that you are interested.

  ▶ Further information on the kind of job you are looking for (location, start date, etc.)

  ▶ Further settings of visibility (for all users or limited)

  ▶ When using this feature your profile picture gets a green frame to emphasize your status.

Further functions and settings

- Your own profile is only visible for contacts of your own contacts (up until the 3rd degree); you can increase your reach by following other users (this way, your profile becomes visible to them), as thereby they also become contacts of the 3rd degree; Caution: by following others your contents are not also automatically shown to them

  ▶ Concrete example: I am person A and I know person B, they in turn know person C and they know person D. I am connected to person B in the 1st degree, in the 2nd degree with person C and in the 3rd degree with person D.

  ▶ Alternatively: If I follow person D, we are also contacts in the 3rd degree, in a way that my profile also becomes visible for person D.

- You can save profiles of others as PDF files (this way you don't need to go to their page multiple times).

- For some job advertisements you can apply directly via the "Easy Apply/Apply Now" button (the conventional "apply" button only redirects you to the application website of the company).

  ▶ In these cases, your profile serves as application. Therefore, depending on the companies and jobs you want to apply for, you should think about which information is absolutely necessary in your profile (e.g. education, work experience).

- Status is visible (actively online: filled green circle or logged in: green circle)

- On your homepage you can upload contents (newspaper articles, videos ...).

  ▶ Boundaries between private and professional get blurred more: Think about what you want to share with your network.

Features of LinkedIn premium

- Services (keywords) can be included

- Five messages per month can be sent to LinkedIn members who are not part of your own contacts; some requests per month via e-mail also possible without premium

- Unrestricted viewing of profile visits

- You can compare your own profile with those of other users.

- With a premium profile you show up at the top of lists for recruiters.

- You can benefit from free further education.

3 Individual and up-to-date – Final tips

As for application documents it applies that each and every social media profile can and should be created individually. It further applies that:

- Profiles should be kept as up-to-date as possible

- If you want to use both websites, you should pay attention to similar information, stringency and similar statements.

- Look at your own profile on a smartphone, to check its effect (many specifically use the smartphone apps).

- Employers are often present with a profile; information on their profiles can be of use to prepare for an application/a job interview

- Links to profiles can be integrated into application documents/applicant's homepage.

- It is recommended to generally work with keywords, by using for example well known and interesting skills through which you will then be found more easily in the search of recruiters.

If you are unsure regarding specific topics or aspects of your LinkedIn or XING profile, feel free to make use of our advisory services:

zqs.uni-hannover.de/en/kc/career-guidance-and-service →

4 Support during your studies – ZQS/Key Competencies

All services at one glance

Key competencies help you in mastering your studies and support you in successfully entering internships or your career. From their first semester on we support students on this path.

Formats:
- Seminars (with credit points) and workshops
- Individual counseling
- Programs to gain work experience in companies
- Contacts into the world of work / corporate contact fair

Topics (selection):
- Time management, techniques for learning and working
- Academic writing
- Digital skills / future skills
- Team and project work
- Internships and practical experience
- Career orientation, job application, career entry

All services and contact persons at:
zqs.uni-hannover.de/en/kc →

How to continue after graduating?
Support of the Career Service

Having a clear career goal, first practical experience and business contacts as well as a convincing manner and attitude throughout the application process: All these are considered to be important factors for a successful career entry. The Career Service supports students of all faculties and graduates up to one year after their graduation along their personal career path.

We offer support on the following topics:

- Assessment of personal skills and interests
- Practical experience and career decisions
- Job search and application
- Job interview (digital and in person)
- Social career networks (e.g. XING, LinkedIn)
- Self-motivation during the application process

zqs.uni-hannover.de/en/kc/career-guidance-and-service →

Notes