

**LinkedIn – IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT “FRIENDS”  
THREE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS  
By Peter R. McClung**

The emergence of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have exploded the opportunities for us to interact with others, but sometimes that barrage of messages overwhelms us from using a site like LinkedIn to its full potential.

Has LinkedIn become just another email or “friends” listing for you? How can you use LinkedIn for your business or job search? Do you have a project on which you want feedback? LinkedIn has all these capabilities and more!

Here’s how to immediately improve your usage of LinkedIn and your effectiveness online:

- **Ask for advice.** Join the PEBA group on LinkedIn to get free advice and specialized feedback on your next compensation or benefits project.
  - Log into LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com))
  - Join or click the PEBA Home page.
  - Click on “Start a Discussion.”
  - Fill out the free form box with your question or comment. Make sure the “Follow this discussion” option is checked to receive emailed responses.
  - When you’re ready to post, click on “Submit for discussion.”
  
- **Perform “blind” or “reverse” company checks.** Interviewers often use LinkedIn to check on specific results for an individual, but why not turn that on its head and perform a check on the position, manager, or company you are interviewing with or prospecting positions for?

Simple searches by name or company can give you a sense of whether a position has been a pass through doorway or a solid contributing spot for a company. Finding out more about your interviewer—where he or she went to school, interests, length in the position—can be helpful during the formal interview process. You can also view by company to see if the organization is expanding, contracting or if turnover is an issue.

For an additional fee, you can use LinkedIn’s Reference Check feature to scope out the references of potential employers and managers for your next job.

- **Share an article with the PEBA community.** Contribute the latest article from multiple media sources you read every day. Instead of emailing an article around the office or printing it, check to see if the media source allows for “sharing” on LinkedIn. PEBA members can comment on shared articles. (Since not all media outlets allow sharing, check your favorite online periodicals for their capabilities.)

To share an article (from USA Today, for example):

- Read the article at [www.usatoday.com](http://www.usatoday.com).
- Click on the “Share” feature, usually at the top right of the article.
- Click the “more” link under the “Share” heading, which will typically bring up LinkedIn as a choice.

- Sign in and click on the groups to which you'd like to post, such as PEBA.
- Add comments to the article or simply post on its own.

You can also set up a daily email with headlines posted throughout the day. PEBA's LinkedIn site automatically gets benefits and compensation-related headlines and articles from the New York Times, Kaiser, and the Philadelphia Business Journal, so PEBA can easily become your single source for benefits and compensation news on the web.

Be creative and see how LinkedIn can work for you!

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