



For
Mechanical
Engineers

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Mechanical engineering is one of the oldest professional streams in engineering along with civil engineering. Traditionally the work of a mechanical engineer came with the connotation of a blue dress drenched in dark black grease.



However in the modern era the contribution of a mechanical engineer has moved beyond the domain of machines, automobiles etc., today's mechanical engineer has to work all round, from consumer electronics to nano composites, from peizo applications to electro



mechanical actuations, the role has changed and the engineer has **adapted**, with skills in CAD/ CAM and CAE, today's professional has moved out the grease and blue, and moved on to suits and tie's. The working environment has changed, and accordingly the engineer has had to adapt, to a world of video conferencing, PLM design integration, design concepts and virtual prototypes.

One such change is the advent of social networks, like Facebook, LinkedIn, Orkut etc which has taken communication to a different level. Today's engineer must also adapt to these, and rather than being a passive observer, should learn to proactively leverage for personal growth.

This article focuses on using LinkedIn, how to leverage it, and like we say in terms of a FEA element, how not to use it.

Is it really important ? Is it really important ?

The logical question that might come to a mechanical engineer is, I know my SOM, Machine design, CAE, etc, my career is progressing, do I really need social network platform, I think I am well off without heeding to it.

Well, yes, whether you are on a network or not, it does not substitute your core knowledge, for that matter nothing can, but it can be the difference between making through to the dream job or missing it by a whisker.



Here are some observed facts.

- LinkedIn has been marketed as a professional network, and today it boasts of millions of members, it is growing, which in turn means more and more professionals are becoming a part of it.
- JOBS: many are getting jobs via LinkedIn, and major recruitment consultancies are already paid members of the site, to get the premium data on the profiles
- References: increasing references are being sought through the LinkedIn network, which means that company HR are using it as an assessment tool already



Well I think most of you must have been converted at 'JOBS' itself.

So before you plunge into the network, plan ahead, and here are some tips



It is not facebook !!

LinkedIn is not FACEBOOK !!!, remember that, it is not a place where you want to join because you want to hangout with your friends, or one more avenue for interacting with friends, it is strictly a professional network..



So no discussing your favorite movie or pizza place or coffee hangout, every word coming out of your profile should be professional. Each social network has its own appropriate place and should be used accordingly.

Also do not just add someone to your network as they are your neighbor, or someone you met on your trip to Goa, or your distant cousin, or long lost school friend, for all of that [Zuckerberg](#) has already given you Facebook, so before you put in your photo vacationing on a beach, **check if the site background is blue, and not the LinkedIn white.**



If you are going to take the plunge, take a complete dive, do not sit on the shore and wet your feet. LinkedIn profile should be complete, there should not be any unexplained gaps, and contradictions.

Trust me I have seen profiles, where the experience is overlapping, like I was employed with ABC from June 2010 to June 2012, but then the next experience dates from November 2011 to current !!! a nice overlap for 6 months, seems odd.

Remember it is a professional reflection of you, and professionals do not have lapses of attention, otherwise you might miss the piston ring in the design, and poof the engine is gone.

Remember people are making judgments about you as they read your profile, so that conference paper you published better be complete with the date, location, and organizing institution, a link to an online publication will serve better, than just plainly saying 'published a paper on engines'.

Treat it as an extension of your resume. **It should scream that you are a**





Network

Be frugal in choosing who should be in your connections, as said earlier for other friends there is facebook

Do not add someone for the sake of being polite, tomorrow if you are shortlisted for an interview and the person who is your connection is not viewed favorably, that might go against you.

Also, it goes without underscoring, Do not add someone who will talk negative about you !!, just imagining an HR interaction with that person about you, will give you an idea whether to add that person or not.

SIZE of NETWORK: kindly leave 500+ connections to film stars and marketing guru's, nobody wants to hire a flashy engineer, they might want them for advertising promos, but not to work on CATIA and ANSYS.



Maintain a decent size of the network, in between 100 to 140, generally do not cross it. If the network size is small, do not go on adding people and just end up adding everyone you know, just to achieve a target you have set. You are not seeking votes for election, you are simply creating professional interactions.



Groups

Groups are direct indication of your interests, some basic rules would be

- Be frugal, limit no of groups you join, when someone sees your profile they should not have a long list of groups whose length is more than that of your profile, 5 – 10 is a decent number
- Avoid contradictory groups, for example if you are a job seeking engineer, better do not be a part of some Freelancers or Entrepreneur community, it gives a signal that you may leave the job sooner than later
- Avoid joining groups outside your professional activity, a chess players group is good for professional chess players and not for mechanical engineers.

- Always have group of your interest field, like if you are CAE field, being member of a group such as 'CAE engineers India' makes sense
- Be a part of alumni group, your college, professional institutes, and group of your former company, like an employee group,, it shows that you are someone who maintains contacts, and hence good as team members



Most important, 'BE ACTIVE' on the groups you join, be proactive, post something or the other, hitting the like button does not take much time !!!

Because when a recruitment agency take a premium subscription, they get detailed statistics on you, including the no of times you have posted, in which technical groups, and whether your post were found useful by other, and whether you have been updating you technical knowledge through the groups.

Professional Image



I am not just talking about your profile picture here, Image will be look and feel of your profile, and how professional and how organized it looks, So that slideshow that you made for your thesis project, can be a great add on for your profile. A good recommendation can serve you a lot.

Going beyond project titles and explaining a bit about them will be a logical step, follow common posting etiquettes, even when you are extremely upset using ALL CAPS IN POST IS A STRICT NO..

Overall be professional and

LOOK PROFESSIONAL