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This is Eastern Michigan University's Career Corner, hosted by the career coaches of the University Advising and Career Development Center. And welcome to Season 4, Career FAQ.

Hello, and welcome back to the Career Corner Podcast. Logann Dolan here, and back with another episode addressing the top questions our career team is asked frequently. This episode is all about LinkedIn and how to reach out and connect with people of interest.

First things first, if you haven't already, be sure to get on LinkedIn, create your profile, and fill it out completely. That includes a headshot photo, a catchy and relevant headline, and completed Education and Experience sections. A completed profile is incredibly important for a couple of reasons. The first being, it's a great way to represent your digital image and your personal brand. Employers will be actively searching for you, so be sure you have it filled out with accurate information.

Second, it allows your connections, colleagues, and future employers, to immediately recognize who you are and what you do, which is great for networking. For more information on personal branding and networking best practices, be sure to listen to season 1, episode 6. After a profile is fully completed, it's now time to start connecting with other humans of interest and growing your professional network.

This can be really tricky and may be challenging, which is completely normal. A great place to start is by adding any friends, family, or current colleagues that are already on LinkedIn. Then, start to consider connecting with alumni. Eastern alumni love helping and chatting with current students, and connecting with them is easy. In the search bar on LinkedIn, if you type in Eastern Michigan University and go to the main university page, there is a little button that says Alumni.

This tool allows you to sort and filter through 100,000-plus EMU alumni on LinkedIn. Some of these filters include what they do, where they work, what they studied, or even what top skills they have. This is a really great place to start, but LinkedIn also allows you to add more specific keywords to your search.

For example, if you are a computer science major and have an interest in working for Google in Silicon Valley, you could add computer science, Google, and Silicon Valley as search terms. This search actually narrows down the results to about 20 alumni. From there, you could reach out and connect with these individuals on LinkedIn by adding a personalized note and chatting more about their experience of working at Google. This is a great segue to an informational interview. And if you want to learn more about informational interviews, we touch more on them in season 2, episode 9.

So now that we talked about looking up alumni, you can also do a simple search on LinkedIn for the same things. This of course, will include those 20-ish EMU alumni, but also an entire untapped network ready for you to explore. But formatting what to say to a stranger or even an EMU alumni, can be tough.

So with that being said, I have a few different options for sample personalized connection requests. If you're a current student who was hoping to connect with an alumni, try a message that's along the lines of this. "Hi, there. I'm a psychology major at EMU and I see that you're an EMU alumni, Go Eagles. I would love to connect and chat about your work with the Ozone House. Thanks so much, and I look forward to connecting."

Now, if you're a current student who is interested in connecting with a recruiter you found at LinkedIn, you can edit the message a little bit to read this. "Hi, there. I found your profile while researching Google's LinkedIn page. I am passionate about innovation, especially in computer programming, and would love to connect and chat more about how my background might be a fit for any of your current openings. Looking forward to adding you to my network."

You might also meet a recruiter, an employer, or a hiring manager, at an event such as our job and internship fairs, or even an employer info session. If this is the case, you should always follow up via email and also consider connecting with them on LinkedIn after the event. A sample connection request could say, "Good morning. It was great to meet you at the Deloitte Rotational Internship Program info session yesterday, held at EMU. I truly enjoyed learning more about the program, the skills I would gain, and the mentoring possibility. It would be great to connect with you on LinkedIn and to continue our conversation." All three of these examples are really great options when connecting with professionals on LinkedIn.

But it's important to remember that LinkedIn is a professional site, so messages and notes should also remain professional. As much as you can, I recommend personalizing your notes and requests so that the recipient can immediately recognize who you are and what value they will get from your connection. And it's as simple as that.

As you continue to grow your network, you'll get even more comfortable with connecting with other humans of interest. If you need help crafting your LinkedIn profile, or are even interested in receiving LBC group 4 credit for completing it, you can make an appointment with a career staff member on Handshake, or call our office to schedule at 734-487-0400. As always, Eagles, stay safe and stay healthy. And we'll catch you on the next episode.

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