**CONNECTING WITH UIC GRADS ON LINKEDINTM**

**STEP 1: CREATE YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE AND JOIN THE** [UIC Alumni & Friends LinkedIn Group](http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=36167&trk=anet_ug_hm)   
Once you are a member, scan the group's Discussions, Members and Jobs for networking opportunities. For instance, join a discussion of fellow alumni talking about your industry, comment on an article someone has posted or introduce yourself to the Group Manager.   
  
You can also start your own discussion, perhaps posting an article with a few personal comments or posing a question to group members. Alternatively, you can introduce yourself and your goals: "Hi fellow Flames: I'm new to the group and excited to connect with fellow alums. I am currently looking for a job as a graphic designer and eager to connect with any other job seekers or design folks. I am happy to help anyone I can. Thanks in advance for your help!"   
  
Remember also that LinkedIn permits you to send a message or connection request to anyone with whom you share a group on LinkedIn (as long as that person has opted to accept such messages), which will help you build one-on-one relationships with individual group members.

**STEP 2:** **USE THE LINKEDIN ALUMNI TOOL**Your next stop should be [LinkedIn Alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/alumni), a tool that provides you with information about where your fellow alums work, what they do and where they live. The tool pre-fills the years you attended a school listed on your LinkedIn profile and shows you the classmates who attended at the same time. For a broader search, you can enter additional graduation years.   
  
You can search for alumni connections on any fields available in their profiles – location, current job/position, industry, college, and/or current employer. LinkedIn Alumni will show you the exact profiles of the alums who fit all of your criteria.

**STEP 3: REACH OUT (THE RIGHT WAY)**

Once you have identified some alumni in your desired field and location, it is time to make contact with them via email. While there are no guarantees, fellow alumni are more likely to reply to a networking request than a random stranger because you share a common experience. See below for a sample outreach message:   
  
*Hi Sonya,  
I am a fellow UIC alum and came across your profile. I graduated in 2012, also with a degree in History. I am currently job hunting and hoping to make the transition from student into a PR role at a nonprofit or university. I admire your career and am wondering if you would be willing to chat by phone to share any career advice? I understand you have a busy schedule and would appreciate any time you could provide.*

*Thank you for your consideration,  
Lindsey*  
  
Note that the message immediately mentions the alumni connection, is polite and professional and shows that you've done your research on the other person (signifying that you're not just sending out a generic message). You never want to sound desperate and you never want to ask directly for a job or to send a resume. The goal here, as with any good networking message, is to establish rapport and ask for general information and advice.