

LinkedIn Premium - is it worth it for job seekers?

Aside from the basic, free version of LinkedIn there are 4 paid levels of LinkedIn. For job seekers, it's really a choice between using the basic membership or upgrading to premium career. The other 3 levels are aimed more at business users trying to research companies or headhunt individuals in a more efficient way.

This article compares the basic membership and the premium career subscription.

The cost of the premium career subscription is around £25 per month. The main benefits you get for this membership are as follows:

InMail - you can send messages to people you aren't already connected to, this is useful if you want to directly approach someone at a company you are interested in working for. You get 5 InMail messages a month included in your subscription. They get rolled over to the following month if you don't use them.

Who's viewed your profile - on the free version of LinkedIn, you can see a limited view of who has been looking at your profile. On the premium career subscription you can see a lot more people. Whereas the free version may show 5 people, and then say "someone in London" or "someone at 10Eighty" has viewed your profile, you will get to see a much bigger list. The benefit of this is you can use this list as a potential target list. These people were looking at your profile for a reason. Have a look at their profile and see if they work in an area you are interested in, and if they can potentially provide you with some information or a lead. Think about using one of your InMail messages to contact them and tell them you had noticed they were looking at your profile, and if there's anything they would like information on, let them know what you're looking for in your next role and ask for any advice or insights into their company.

Job Insights - this can be useful when you are looking at positions advertised on LinkedIn. You will get informed of how you compare to other candidates - LinkedIn call it competitive intelligence about other applicants. Here's what you get told:

- **Top applicants** - where you are in percentage terms amongst the number of people who have applied (for example the top 25% of the 139 applicants). This is calculated by matching your LinkedIn profile to the job, by comparing past and current experience to the job description, as well as looking at the skills you have listed in your skills and endorsements section against the skills listed for the job.
- It then goes on to tell you how many of the top **10 skills** you have. Our advice is to make sure you update your skills section when you see jobs you are interested in - make sure your profile matches the job as much as possible, to push you higher up against other applicants. Recruiters rely heavily on good matches between profiles and job vacancies, so make sure you're hitting their requirements on LinkedIn as well as on your CV.
- **Seniority Level** is shown - you will see how many people have applied from entry level, Senior, Manager and Director. Don't let this put you off, a significant number of people just fire off applications they have little or no experience of.

- **Education** - you will be able to see the type of degree people who have applied have.
- You can also see the **Location** of other applicants.
- **A look inside the company** - premium allows you to see hiring trends within the last 2 years, how long people tend to stay there, where people moved from and more statistics on functions within the company.

Salary Insights - you can use the salary insights section to specify a job title and location, and it will show you the average salary for that role.

LinkedIn Learning - This is a great tool, elearning on a wide range of topics from business skills to software knowledge to career paths (for instance how to run a small business). It's an excellent resource, great for preparing for an interview or a new role where you might need to brush up on your skills.

So, back to the question... LinkedIn Premium - Is it worth it for job seekers?

Our advice is take out membership for a month. It's free for that period. You need to put in your credit card details, but you can cancel at anytime before your first payment comes out. Use it as much as you can in that period and then decide for yourself.

There are lots of useful features, but these also do rely on you having your profile being as strong as it can be. If you have a strong profile that matches closely jobs you're applying for on LinkedIn then you should be in with a good chance of being selected for the next stage of the application process. Better still, contact the job poster before you put the application in to talk about the role and get your name in there in advance. Generally speaking people are using the phone less and less, so anything you can do to differentiate yourself is key.

If you feel you're in a strong position to apply for a role, to shouldn't really matter how you compare to others.

Like most things, it's worth taking out the paid subscription if you're going to use it. A bit like joining a gym - just joining up is not going to change anything, you've got to use it regularly and in the right way to get the value from it.