Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today, we are talking about best practices for LinkedIn, as part of our "Quick Tips" series. Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the Law School Toolbox, the Bar Exam Toolbox, and the career-related website CareerDicta. Alison also runs The Girl's Guide to Law School. If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app, and check out our sister podcast, the Bar Exam Toolbox podcast. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the contact form on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Hi, this is Lee from the Law School Toolbox. Today, we're diving deep into the world of LinkedIn and how you as a law student can make the most of this powerful networking platform. Whether you're a 1L just starting your journey or a 3L gearing up for graduation, these tips will help you build a stellar online presence and open doors to amazing opportunities. So, grab your favorite snack and let's get started.

Lee Burgess: Alright, let's kick things off by talking about why LinkedIn is such a big deal for law students. You might be thinking, "Another social media platform? Do I really need this?" Trust me, when it comes to your legal career, LinkedIn is in a league of its own. LinkedIn is the go-to professional networking platform designed to help businesses, students, and professionals connect.

Lee Burgess: And here's the kicker: Every law student, no matter where you are in your academic journey, should have a LinkedIn account. Why? Well, it's a fantastic way to build your network throughout law school, which can lead to some pretty sweet opportunities like summer internships, externships, and even post-graduate jobs. Here's something to keep in mind: In our digital age, hiring employers rely heavily on LinkedIn to find suitable candidates for their open positions. So, following the tips we're about to dive into will give you a serious edge in networking and job hunting on LinkedIn.

Lee Burgess: Now let's talk about setting up your profile. This isn't like creating an account on other social media platforms. You can't just slap up a selfie and call it a day. Your LinkedIn profile deserves some serious TLC. Well, why? Because it's often the first impression you'll make on potential employers or connections. So let's break it down step-by-step. First up, your profile picture. This is your digital first impression, so make it count. Use an up-to-date professional photo. Think about how you dress for a job interview – that's the vibe you're

going for here. Avoid using a picture you'd use on other social media platforms. Remember, LinkedIn is for networking with employers and other professional connections, not for finding your next study buddy. Although, you know, that could happen too. Pay attention to your background too. It should be professional and not distracting – no beach selfies or concert crowd shots, okay? Pro tip: Keep an eye out for events at your law school. Many schools hold sessions throughout the year where they offer free professional headshots. If you can't make it to one of those events, don't stress. Many current phones have great cameras and self-timer capabilities. Grab a friend or set up a do-it-yourself photo shoot. Just make sure the result looks polished and professional.

Lee Burgess: Next up, let's talk about your headline. This is the prime real estate on your profile, so use it wisely. Your title should be specific, not generic. Why? Because it can be tough to stand out on LinkedIn from all the other job candidates. Avoid just putting "law student" or naming your law school on its own. Instead, say something specific about you. Use your most current and important title – for example, "Student attorney in the Disability Rights Clinic", "Law clerk for the Second Circuit", "Editor in chief" of your school Law Review. If you don't have a specific title yet, consider what you're aspiring to become, like "Aspiring estate planning attorney". Here's a little LinkedIn insider secret: If an employer searches for terms you used in your title, your profile will be more likely to appear closer to the top of their search results. A good title can be the difference in employers finding your page, because it's the first thing they see.

Lee Burgess: Now let's dive into the "About" section. This is your chance to really shine and set yourself apart. It's where you summarize who you are, what your goals are, and how you're achieving them. Think of it as your elevator pitch in written form. Your "About" section should include three main components: (1) who you are now – are you a law student, what law school do you attend, what transferable skills do you have; (2) who you were before – what did you do prior to law school, where did you work, did you receive any professional honors; and (3) who you aspire to be – what type of law do you want to practice, why do you want to be an attorney? Here's the secret sauce: Throughout this section, try to add your personality into the mix – in a professional way, of course. Many law students look the same on paper, and often when one gets the job over another, it depends on whether that student's personality is a match for the firm. Use this section to showcase who you are beyond your resume.

Lee Burgess: Alright, now we're getting into the meat of your profile – the "Experience" section. This is where you list all your relevant experiences, with the most

recent ones first. Include internships, externships, clinics, and other legal work. If you held other jobs before coming to law school, you can include those too, if they're relevant to your future goals or could help you make connections. Here's where LinkedIn differs from your resume. Instead of using bullet points, write a full paragraph, telling the story of your accomplishments, activities, and roles in each position. Be specific about your job title, the types of clients you worked with, the research you completed, how many cases you oversaw, and any other outcomes that support your experience. This is your opportunity to say more than what you'd be able to find on a one-page resume. Paint a picture of your experiences and let potential employers see the depth of your capabilities.

Lee Burgess: In the "Education" section, list all of your higher education, with your current law school at the top. But don't just stop at naming the school. Include the years you attended, the degree you're pursuing or have received, and any activities, societies, or extracurriculars you've participated in. Be specific about your roles. Instead of just saying "Law Review", say "Law Review associate notes editor". Include any awards you've received, like being a CALI recipient. This level of detail helps potential employers get a fuller picture of your academic achievements and involvements.

Lee Burgess: Now let's talk about "Licenses and Certifications". This section is your chance to showcase your commitment to learning and mastering specialized skills. Did you participate in a LexisNexis legal research certification course? That's gold for future employers, because most work a summer intern or a first-year associate does is legal research. Or maybe before law school, you got your real estate license. That could be super attractive for employers in the property law world. Remember, employers often search for candidates with specific certifications, so don't be shy about showing off your credentials.

Lee Burgess: Last but not least, don't forget about your publications. This can include work you've done as a research assistant, publications in a law journal, or even articles you wrote for your undergraduate newspaper. The cool thing about LinkedIn is that you can link directly to these publications. Unlike a resume, employers can actually read your work right then and there. This is especially helpful if your publication is related to the area of law you want to practice. It's like a built-in writing sample.

Lee Burgess: Okay, so you've built this awesome profile. Now what? It's time to put it to work. Start by connecting with people you know – classmates, family members, friends, old bosses, co-workers, and professors. Don't be afraid to go as far back as high school. Remember, the larger your network, the more likely you are to make that one connection that leads to your dream job.

Here's a pro tip: Use LinkedIn to connect with alumni from your law school who work in the area of law you're interested in. Most alumni are happy to connect with current students and chat about classes you should take, internships to aim for, or other connections you should make in the field. You can also reach out to attorneys who work at firms or organizations you're interested in, but remember, always keep it professional. Don't send cold messages, asking for a job. Instead, express your interest in their field and ask if they'd be willing to have a quick chat about their career path.

Lee Burgess: Now, building your network is just the first step. To really make LinkedIn work for you, you need to engage with your connections. Like and comment on their posts, but keep your comments professional and relevant. Share your own updates too. When you start a new internship, make a post about it. When you're selected for a publication in a law journal, celebrate that achievement with your network. These posts help you showcase yourself in ways a resume can't. And they can help you become more visible to potential employers.

Lee Burgess: Now, before we wrap up, let's go over some key best practices: (1) always maintain professionalism in every aspect of your profile; (2) avoid using slang, shorthand, or contractions in your writing; (3) proofread everything for perfect grammar and spelling. If I was working on my LinkedIn profile, I would put all of my work through Claude or ChatGPT to proofread everything. (4) keep your profile updated and current; (5) be selective with your connections – quality over quantity; and (6) use your law school's career center for profile reviews and advice. And if you'd like some more help with this, you can always reach out to our career counselor at Law SchoolToolbox.com.

Lee Burgess: Remember, LinkedIn is about your career, so take it seriously. Don't be afraid to let your personality shine through in a professional way. And there you have it, future attorneys. These LinkedIn best practices will help you build a strong professional presence online and set you up for success in your legal career. Remember, your LinkedIn profile is often your first impression with potential employers, so make it count.

Lee Burgess: If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website contact form on LawSchoolToolBox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk

soon!

RESOURCES:

Tutoring for Law School Success
Career Hep with CareerDicta
7 Ways to Use LinkedIn as a Law Student
Online Legal Networking: LinkedIn