

Jobs, Internships, and the Art of Sliding into LinkedIn DMs

Published 9 days ago by [Krishma Devendrabhai Chhagani](#)

Coffee chats are my parties, LinkedIn is my social media, and my idea of a weekend getaway? Probably a career event.

As an international student in Canada, one of the biggest opportunities you have is the ability to work while you study. Beyond covering expenses, it allows you to build experience, expand your network, and develop career skills before you even graduate. Whether you're applying for on-campus jobs, internships, or connecting with industry professionals, here's a practical guide to help you get started, and get ahead.

Step 1: Building a Personal Brand

Before you start applying for jobs, you need to establish your personal brand. Why? Because when employers Google you (and they will), you want them to see a credible, professional, and value-driven version of you. This is when LinkedIn comes in handy.

Think of LinkedIn as your digital resume. A strong profile makes you discoverable to recruiters and gives you an edge when networking.

How to optimize your LinkedIn profile:

- **Headline matters:** Instead of just "Student at Seneca Polytechnic," make it value-driven, e.g., "Marketing Student | Passionate About Sustainability & Digital Strategy"
- **Write a compelling summary:** Share your career goals, skills, and experiences in a brief yet engaging way. I personally like to add as many pictures and links as I could to every section.
- **Use a professional photo:** First impressions matter. A clear, well-lit headshot makes you look polished and approachable. [Seneca Works](#) hosts a photoshoot annually. Alternatively, you can book the [Seneca Sandbox](#) to click one yourself.
- **Stay active:** Share posts, celebrate achievements, and engage with content, it really boosts your visibility. Everyone has a different scheduling, however, for me, posting 1x

a week, led to 10M+ LinkedIn Impressions and 4000+ followers in 6 months. So, find out what works best for you.

Step 2: Landing On-Campus Jobs

Now that you've built your brand, it's time for some action. Working on campus is one of the easiest ways to gain Canadian work experience as a student. The hours are flexible, you're close to class, and it's a great way to get comfortable in a professional environment before stepping into the corporate world.

Where to Find On-Campus Jobs

I landed my first job at Seneca Student Life even before I arrived in Canada. How? By proactively searching while I was still back home. I came across the posting on Instagram and applied online. The process involved tasks and interviews, just like any other role. Read the benefits of on-campus jobs [here](#).

Checkout the following for job postings:

- Visit [Seneca Works](#), Seneca's job portal for all on-campus as well as off-campus opportunities. You can advanced filter for the role you're looking for.
- Follow [Seneca Student Life](#), [Seneca Student Federation \(SSF\)](#), [Seneca Applied Research](#) on Instagram for any new job postings.

Even if you don't land a role immediately, stay persistent. On-campus jobs often have rolling deadlines, and new postings come up every semester. Also, consider volunteering at campus events ([Enactus Seneca](#), [SSF](#), [Seneca Open House](#)) it helps you build connections that could lead to paid opportunities.

Step 3: Expanding your network

Now that you've secured an on-campus job and built your personal brand, it's time to expand your network. Why? Because your next opportunity will likely come from someone you know.

Leverage Coffee Chats

Coffee chats are the secret career hack no one often talks about. Seriously, I've learned more from my 50+ coffee chats than any career workshop. It helps you build a relationship with the person, and you get to learn from their experiences.

Before my Loblaw internship, I reached out to a former intern on LinkedIn for a coffee chat and, they shared insights about Loblaw's "blue culture", which it holds very dearly. When I highlighted these values in my interview responses, it truly made me stand out.

But where to find these networks? There are two ways:

LinkedIn DMs

LinkedIn DMs is my absolute **favourite networking tool**. If you're still sending generic "Hi, let's connect" messages, stop right there. Cold DMs work, only if you personalize them.

I always target +2 connections (shared connections or common experiences) for better acceptance rates. If they're in the same industry, alumni network, or part of Enactus, it's an instant conversation starter.

Here's the exact structure I use:

"Hi [Name]! I noticed you are a ___ alumni or if not...I came across your profile through [mutual connection or shared experience]. I'd love to connect and learn more about your journey in [industry/field]. Looking forward to staying in touch!"

Networking Events

Attending networking events is a great way to meet industry professionals and expand your network. There are many international communities that you could join. The two that I volunteer with and recommend are:

- **Re-defined**, which is a 500000+-strong community of international students, mentors, and recruiters. They have WhatsApp group chats and newsletters for constant updates on opportunities, including events, volunteering, workshops, jobs, and more.
- **Wayble** is another great platform to make international students easy job search. They also host 4-5 weeks of free cohorts to prepare international students to land a job.

I would also suggest checking out **Seneca Career Recharge** events for career-focused events with guest speakers and industry experts at Seneca. As well as **the Seneca Alumni** calendar for career fairs and other professional development sessions.

Read [this post](#) to learn more about the networking hacks I use to stand out!

Step 4: Securing Internships (Start Early!)

While you're expanding your network and gaining on-campus experience, it's time to set your sights on internships. If you're aiming for an internship or co-op, start applying 4–6 months before your WIL course even begins. Why? Because Big companies like Loblaw, Unilever, and Nestle start posting early. You can look for opportunities on job portals like [Seneca Works](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Indeed](#), as well as respective company websites. I would also recommend following industry recruiters on LinkedIn, as they regularly post and repost job opportunities.

Maximize Your Internships and Jobs

Landing the role is just the beginning, how you maximize it is what makes the difference.

Here are some ways to make the most of your internship:

Expand your internal network: Don't limit yourself to your team, have coffee chats with people from other departments.

Ask for stretch projects: Volunteer for cross-functional projects, it demonstrates initiative and makes you memorable.

Stay in touch afterward: Keep the connection warm, you never know when it could lead to future job opportunities.

Read my top 5 learnings to make the most of an internship [here!](#)

Just Do It

I get it; reaching out to strangers, attending networking events, and applying for countless jobs can feel overwhelming and even disheartening at times. But here's the thing: your career won't be built by luck. It's built by the conversations you initiate, the doors you knock on, and the risks you take before you feel completely ready.

So, the next time you're staring at a LinkedIn profile, debating whether to hit "Connect", just do it. Send that message. Slide into someone's DM. Ask for that coffee chat. Show up at that event, even if you feel out of place. Because you never know, the next conversation you start might just be the one that changes your career forever!

tags : international-students, ISS, krishma's-survival-guide