

# Natalie Coaten

## Marketing Specialist, IBM

*After completing her studies at Sheffield Hallam University, Natalie began working for IBM. She discusses the importance of distinguishing the purpose of LinkedIn in comparison to other social networking sites. She also reflects on the benefits of LinkedIn during her placement year, how she used it as a research tool to prepare for interviews and the significance of LinkedIn as a networking website in her professional role.*

"Networking on LinkedIn is so important... before I'd even got to the interview I'd secured a reference that had gone to the managing director and had been able to prep myself by speaking to someone in the company... I was actually offered the job right there and then."

### Using LinkedIn on your placement year

Natalie joined LinkedIn after conversations with her tutors and careers advisors in her first year at university and found that it later helped her secure a graduate role. It was while Natalie was on her placement year that she realised the benefit of LinkedIn as a networking tool.

"On your placement year, people say, 'keep in contact' but they don't necessarily give you their email so LinkedIn is perfect because you can search them, connect and then they're in your network."

### Using LinkedIn to impress at interviews

Having a strong network of LinkedIn connections contributed to Natalie securing a job offer while she was still in the interview room.



Natalie studied Business and Enterprise Management at Sheffield Hallam University and now works as a marketing specialist for Software Acquisitions at IBM.

*Building up a network of LinkedIn connections throughout your time at University can pay dividends when you start to apply for graduate roles.*

After receiving an invite to an interview, Natalie sought guidance from her university's careers service. Her careers adviser suggested that Natalie included LinkedIn to research the employer and her interviewer to gain an insight into the company. As she carried out her research, she discovered that she had shared connections with two of the employees at the company.

"Through exploring my LinkedIn connections I discovered that a manager at my old job played golf with the managing director of the company I had an interview with."

She reached out to her previous manager and requested a recommendation that he provided, and this gave her an advantage over other candidates.

Natalie also discovered that a friend she met on placement was connected to a graduate on the programme for which she was interviewing. She asked for an introduction and was able to speak to the graduate, receiving pointers for the interview as well as a clearer awareness of the role.

"I was actually offered the job right there and then. That is proof of why networking on LinkedIn is so important."

## Further resources

You can find further information on how to build your network of connections on LinkedIn at <https://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students>

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