

Your Comprehensive Guide to Creating the Perfect LinkedIn Profile

By James Innes

It's been said that Facebook is like a college party, Twitter is like an office party and LinkedIn is like a professional networking event. All three social media platforms have a different place in our lives. There are millions of people on LinkedIn, and only a very small percentage of those people fully harness its power. But you shouldn't underestimate [the power of LinkedIn](#) in terms of how it can help you get a job, improve your career and therefore improve your happiness.

Many companies now simply ask for a link to your LinkedIn profile instead of your resume. This trend is only set to continue. Even if you do apply with your resume, **employers are extremely likely to look you up on LinkedIn to see how well-recommended and connected you are.**

With that in mind, here is a step-by-step guide to creating the perfect LinkedIn profile:

Your Name

Remember to make sure you own your name on LinkedIn. This means having your profile URL listed as www.linkedin.com/in/YOURNAME. This will make sure that people who search for you by name find you quicker.

Having a custom URL also helps you promote your LinkedIn profile in your email signature, resume, business card, blog, etc. in an attractive and easy-to-read format.

Your Picture

Get a professional photo! You need to show a smiling face; it needn't be a passport-style photo. You can get away with a photo taken by a friend, but it can't be on a night out! Get second and third opinions on your picture to see if it projects the right image.

Your Professional "Headline"

This is very important. It's a snapshot of who you are, what motivates you and what you're looking for. Your headline should include your unique talent and be very specific to you. Use the "|" symbol on your keyboard to separate different parts of your headline. I.e.:

Digital Marketing Expert | Recent Graduate Seeking Work at a Startup | Social Media Evangelist | Open Networker

Change your headline every few weeks to keep it fresh.

Your Summary

This is just as important as your headline, if not more so. **A LinkedIn summary is not the same as a resume summary.** The summary should encapsulate the following:

- Who you really are.
- Your passions.
- Your top career achievements.
- Goals you would like to achieve.

- A reiteration of what you're currently looking for in your career.
- What you could add to a prospective company.
- How and why people should engage with you.

The last point is something that many people miss. *What is the best way to contact you?* Via a contact form on your website? By adding you as a connection on LinkedIn and explaining who they are? Including your phone number would leave you open to getting spammed by recruitment consultants, so it's best to make yourself easy to contact online and give viewers of your profile a "call to action."

It's also best to write your profile in under 150 words. Try to write [in the first person](#), but without too many pronouns (I, we, they, etc).

Experience

This can be similar to your resume (you can even upload your resume with the option on the right of the screen). Be sure to make it readable by putting it in bullet points.

Link to Your Website or Blog

A quick tip is to go into the options on links, select "other," and you'll then be able to manually type the name of the website you want to link to.

Add Applications

By adding the Amazon application, you can share what books you're currently reading. This shows employers more about your personality, which is fantastic. (Be sure to have read the books, as you may get questioned on them at an interview!)

If you have a blog, remember to add that as well so that it feeds through snippets of your posts on your profile. This is excellent for adding more personality to your profile and driving traffic to your blog.

There's even a Slideshare application where you can show off your work or even add a YouTube video.

Get Recommended

Give, and you will receive. Social media is all about developing connections. **Relationships are built on giving and receiving**, and online, it's no different. To break through and make sure you stand out from everyone else out there, building relationships is the only way to get noticed.

Send out at least one LinkedIn recommendation a week. Friends, colleagues, ex-colleagues, whomever you know. Sing their praises; find the good in everyone. Don't presume or ask to get a recommendation back; you'll start getting them once you start sending them.

Master Connecting with Others

If you add just the people you know already on LinkedIn, chances are you won't get much beyond 100 connections. It's best that you [expand your network to its maximum](#). The further your reach, the greater the exposure you have to opportunities and the greater ability you have to spread your messages.

You have to be careful about adding the right people, though, because if too many people press “I don’t know this person,” LinkedIn will delete your profile with no warning. You’ll then have to start all over again.

You want to get to 500 connections as quickly as possible and then be more strategic about who you add. Some tips for expanding your network:

- **Import your current connections** from your email contacts via “Add Connections.”
- In LinkedIn Groups, **search for “TopLinked.”** Request to join this group. Once you’ve been accepted (it takes about a week), you’ll be able to download a CSV file. You can then invite people and they will accept you with no questions asked.
- **Promote yourself as an open networker** in your professional headline (meaning you’ll connect with people you don’t know). You’ll need to put “LION” in your headline to do so, which stands for [“LinkedIn Open Networker.”](#)
- Always, always, always, when you add a new contact you’ve never met in person, **personalize your message to request to add them.** “I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn” gets a bit tedious, and people will start hitting the “I don’t know this person” button, which gets your account shut down.

Get Actively Involved in Groups

Join relevant groups and discussions to connect with major players in your industry by using the search tool to find groups by industry. Join groups, post relevant articles and participate in discussions. By asking and answering questions, you’ll be able to add more people to your network.

Do Your Keyword Research

If you want senior recruiters to find you on LinkedIn (or Google, for that matter), you need to figure out the keywords they’ll be using to search for you. Moreover, everything in your headline and your summary needs to be full of those keywords recruiters will be looking for.

You probably know some words that should be associated with roles you want—marketing executive, manager, creative, accountant, sales, etc. But you also need to understand that **there are a lot more keywords surrounding these words that different people will search.**

Use the [Google keyword tool](#) to find related keywords and search terms. This tool will also tell you how much search volume there has been for each word. You have to use your common sense, as not all search terms will be relevant or make sense if you use them in a sentence—use this tool as a very broad way to find related words and terms, not as the “be all and end all.”

The key is then to litter your LinkedIn profile with keywords without making your profile any less readable.

Make Sure Your Profile Is 100% Complete

Users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn, so complete an audit of your profile to make sure you’re using it to its full capacity.

What makes your profile complete?

- Your current position.
- Two past positions.
- Your education.
- Your profile summary.
- A profile photo.
- At least three recommendations.

Additional questions to ask yourself include:

Is your experience up to date? It's important to keep all experience listed on LinkedIn and your CV/resume up to date. There's nothing worse than someone looking for a job with gaps in their work timeline.

Do you have an uneven number of recommendations? Do you have more recommendations than you've given out? That's a good sign that you're a well-liked and reliable individual. Get as many recommendations as you can!

Have you got any stars on your profile? If your answer is the best answer in a discussion, then you'll get attributed a green star on your profile. These are very useful for showing your expertise

If you're looking for career advancement, LinkedIn is the best network to spend time on. Follow the above steps to make sure you're using it to its fullest potential!

Source: <http://www.careerattraction.com/your-comprehensive-guide-to-creating-the-perfect-linkedin-profile/>