



THE ULTIMATE LINKEDIN PROFILE GUIDE

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“LinkedIn is No longer an online resume. It’s your digital reputation” ~Jill Rowley, Social Selling Evangelist

Why Polishing Your LinkedIn Profile Matters

It is fundamental that your online presence is consistent with your desired image. Be intentional with putting your identity out in the professional world. Your LinkedIn profile is a bio and first-person introduction to you. Start with these tips to make your LinkedIn profile effective for networking and career enhancement.

Furthermore, **users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn.** A complete profile includes industry and location, current position, two past positions, your education, your skills (minimum of 3), a photo, and at least 50 connections.

In the past, resumes were undifferentiated summaries of experience and were often sent in advance of an informational meeting. Today, resumes are more tailored for a specific job.

When networking, LinkedIn is the key tool you will use to share who you are, your achievements, your leadership potential, AND your career interests.

Resume vs. LinkedIn: What's the difference?

Today's **resumes serve as a tailored document** used for a specific job search. **LinkedIn goes beyond a target role or search** – it serves as your personal brand and face to the world. LinkedIn should line up with your resume but tell us much more. On LinkedIn, you even have the ability to “prove” your big wins through skills endorsements and recommendations. If you're targeting multiple career directions, the profile you present on LinkedIn allows for a broader story.

[Resumes vs. LinkedIn: What you should know](#)

[4 differences between LinkedIn and your resume](#)

WAIT, BEFORE YOU START!

If you are making several changes to your profile, turn off your activity broadcasts so you don't overwhelm your contacts with updates. To do this, click your photo (upper right corner), then *Privacy & Settings/Choose whether to share your profile edits*. Make sure this option is turned off. You can return and check the box when you are happy with the changes.

Polish Your Profile: Step by Step

Photos: Be Professional but Personalized

Think about how you want a potential employer/colleagues/clients to see you.

Add a great professional headshot, which is high-resolution, pleasant smile, clear lighting with close crop, professional attire, pleasing background, and possibly interesting angle (head tilted or indirect stance).

You can use a unique background photo (1584x396 pixels) to differentiate your profile, but do not go crazy. Just make sure it looks good. Search for sites that have free stock images, such as [Stocksnap \(Links to an external site.\)](#) Or check out your own travel album and find one that can represent who you are.

Headline: Be Tailored

Start with your **headline** -- the most important piece of real estate on your profile -- and use it to promote the transition you want to make. The maximum length of your LinkedIn headline is 120 characters. **Should you use the full 120 characters?** It really depends on your career goal. *In search, headlines are weighted 40% and algorithms will index this first!*

You can check out [this video](#).

To write an effective headline, choose 2-4 succinct, jargon-free phrases or keywords (separated by commas or vertical line) that convey your personal brand *and* are well suited to the direction you want to go. *It does not have to be your current job title, particularly if you are hoping to make a career pivot.*

Here are two recommended approaches for writing your headline:

Choose personal descriptors: Similar to a job title, this is a descriptor of **you** that you would feel comfortable stating as true and is a relevant keyword for your target career direction. The advantage of personal descriptors is they pack a powerful punch and can quickly alert someone to your talents and experience. The disadvantage is you will need to pick something that closely reflects your experience.

Examples of headlines with personal descriptors:

MS Mechanical Engineering | 3D Designer | Technical Process Expert | Data Ninja

Product Manager | Cloud Technologies Wizard | MBA

Operations leader with 10+ years in top technology companies

Choose content areas: This is a category of knowledge or ability that describes **either** a skill/experience you have, **or** an area that you are interested in. If you're entering a job search or making a pivot, the advantage of choosing topic areas is you can use phrases that are right on target for your desired position, whether or not you have extensive background in that area. The disadvantage is they are a bit more general and don't specifically describe you.

Examples of headlines with content areas:

Engineering meets Business | Marketing and Product Development | MBA

Summary ("About"): Be Engaging

Next, write an engaging **Summary** that briefly explains what you are doing now. The LinkedIn summary elaborates on the brand and value proposition you put forth in the headline. Many people mistake this area for a place to list qualifications and experience. Instead, you want to create an engaging, catchy piece of writing that showcases your uniqueness and targets your desired direction. It's ok to be creative with this section (more so than on a resume!).

Your profile only shows the first 2 lines of your summary before a reader must click "See more." This is about ~200-250 characters (or 25-42 words) so focus on capturing interest early!

If you are changing careers, don't leave it up to the reader to guess that you want to make a change. Keep your explanation concise and positive. Please see the articles below and connect with Career Management on tactics for writing this part.

To write an effective summary, make sure you:

- **Write for a specific (targeted) market or audience.** Orient what you say to the benefit and mindset of potential employers/customers/clients, rather than overemphasizing your own experience and background.
 - **If you are making a career pivot**, think about your target customer – the hiring manager for your new chosen direction – and what their interests and needs are. Do not make them do the translation – frame your experience and skills in terms of what they are looking for!
- **Begin with a strong opening statement that will "hook" the reader.** You can follow this with a brief background on your career including a relevant accomplishment.
- **Find a format that fits what you want to showcase.** Search your network for examples of profile writing styles that attract you; [here are a few style templates for ideas](#).
- **Build density in keywords** (generally nouns), industry-specific qualifications and job-specific skills and buzzwords. Find keywords in job postings and LinkedIn profiles of people in roles you are targeting (look at their skills, job titles, job duties, summary, etc.).
- **Tell your story and be personable.** This is an opportunity to show some personality and describe how you are different than everyone else.
- **Have fun and be creative!** Avoid jargon and make it conversational, personal and friendly in tone. It's ok to add some personal anecdotes if they help reinforce your brand.

Other Links:

<https://www.autodesk.com/industry/manufacturing/resources/mechanical-engineer/linkedin-tips-engineers>

Example Outline:

Hook: Say a bold statement about yourself or the world. Ex: "Engineering isn't just my career, it's my passion" or "Engineering design puts the function in the form." Quick follow up to answer why that is.

You can also start it simpler with something like "Self-directed and driven mechanical engineer with experience in process improvement, design, additive manufacturing, structures, finite element analysis, and project management."

In the same paragraph, share the type of work you do, what you're known for, and types of projects you work on (chemicals, SW languages, etc.) What's the biggest scope of project you've worked on? Where have you demonstrated success?

Create an Accomplishments section:

Using bullet points, describe top 5 accomplishments. Describe the scope or results you attained using measurable metrics if possible.

Create an Expertise Section:

In this area, you'll want to stuff it with keywords for your industry: types of projects, SW languages, software packages you use, etc. Doing this will show what you can do and also help increase you coming up in search results.

Example Profiles:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mechanical-engineer/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/productionsupervisorutilities/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/craig-mclane/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/tammy-phan-pro/>

Experience: Be Orientated Towards Accomplishments and Skills

The experience section is another opportunity to highlight your achievements *and* your potential. **Your first title is ranked 20%.** Make sure your position names are understandable and translatable outside your company. In addition, if your employer isn't a household name, make sure to illuminate what they do in the description area of that experience (and again, in terms relevant to your target audience!).

As much as possible, **emphasize** skills that you know are important in the industry or function you are moving toward. These “transferable skills” are skills you have that can apply to multiple industries or roles.

Not sure what these transferable skills are? Look at LinkedIn job postings and the profiles of people in your desired career for ideas. You can also see how well your profile matches multiple jobs of your choice with jobscan.co ([Links to an external site.](#))

To write an effective experience section, here are two possible approaches. Remember, both need to showcase your accomplishments!

Conversational and fun. This is a storytelling style that still highlights key accomplishments and the scope of your role. The advantage is that it can feel more interesting to read. The disadvantage is it may be harder for your viewer to find what they’re looking for.

Conversational experience description:

What a ride! I started the Monday following the IPO <sigh>. The excitement and growth had really just begun. During my time at [company], the company was in a true hyper-growth phase. I had engineering responsibility for the [insert group/team]. This group grew from [small number to big number] employees in two years and opened several international offices. Like other engineering teams at that time, my team was scrappy and moved quickly. Overall, I learned to create great products with limited resources and aggressive deadlines, and to size solutions--what is the minimum process needed, when is good enough good enough!

Bulleted and to the point. This format is similar to your resume – you’re getting straight to the point and focusing on the positive impact you’ve had on your team, department, company, customer, or bottom line. The advantage is a viewer can quickly see your potential and your value. The disadvantage is it may feel more conventional.

Accomplishment-oriented experience description:

FlipKey is a subsidiary of TripAdvisor, specializing in Vacation Rentals.

- As product manager, I head the effort to transition from classified listings into a transactional e-commerce business model.
- Led a series of innovative optimization tactics that increased checkout pipeline conversion by 20+%
- Launched new mobile-optimized traveler experience using html5 and responsive design, which doubled bookings made through mobile

[More great ideas to make your Experience section dynamic and powerful](#)

Skills & Endorsements: Make Them Useful

Skill endorsements are a great way to recognize your 1st-degree connections' skills and expertise with one click. They also let your connections validate the strengths found on your own profile. **Skill endorsements are a simple and effective way of building your professional brand and engaging your network.**

Receiving Endorsements:

Scroll down to on your profile to see endorsements you've received. You can add any skill to this section. Accumulating a high number of endorsements for a skill adds credibility to your profile and shows that your professional network recognizes you have that skill.

Note: You do not need to ask for a skill endorsement to receive one. You'll also be notified by email when you receive an endorsement.

Giving Endorsements:

Endorsing others is a great way to recognize your classmates/colleagues for the skills you have seen them demonstrate. It helps contribute to the strength of their profile and increases the likelihood they will be discovered for opportunities related to the skills their connections know they possess.

Endorsing your colleagues also helps keep strong connections with the people in your network. You may find that after endorsing a colleague from the past, it is easier to reach out to them because you've recently been in touch.

Complete additional profile sections

Complete custom sections to round out your profile: Certifications, Language, Patents, Publications, Honors & Awards, Causes, and Projects (highlight something you're particularly proud of or that didn't fit with a particular position, AND that applies to where you're headed). You can "drag and drop" some of these sections to move to another location; if they're highly relevant to where you want to go, move them as close to the top as possible!

More ways to optimize your profile for search engine and human readers

- List full name and abbreviation for schools attended.
- Put common names for companies. Include a subsidiary and parent company name. List both company names if original company merged or was acquired.
- Allow others to see a lot of information on your Public Profile. To do this, click *Profile/Edit Profile/View Profile as/Manage public profile settings*.
- **Create a custom background for your profile.**
- Add Top Skills for more keywords and dimension in profile. 10 will show as predominate but you can have up to 50.

- Consider reordering sections of your profile. Move most valuable information closer to the top so that your audience sees these important elements of your brand.
- Look at integrating multimedia into your profile as proof of performance. Think about the things you've done: presentations, different course from school, etc. Find opportunities to integrate social media to prove to people what you're great at and what you want them to know about you. **Tip:** SlideShare is a valuable tool and powerful in Google searches.
- Consider including your contact information: phone number or personal e-mail (make it simple to find in Summary).
- [Create your own LinkedIn URL](#). This custom link is easy to add to your e-mail signature and personal business card. **Example:**
`http://www.linkedin.com/in/<name>`
- Give and receive recommendations as this adds to "validation" weight. Recommend contacts who you can professionally endorse. This also gets your name and link to profile on another profile. Secure recommendations. The best ones are specific, and they can mention key abilities for your next career step. Who to ask? Colleague, classmate, customer/client, direct report, someone you reported to.
- Follow leaders, companies, and "influencers."
 - Search for appropriate recruiters and hiring managers in target companies and note groups they have joined.
 - Join relevant groups of leaders and influencers in your industry and profession.
- Share thought leadership via LinkedIn blogging platform.
- Use these two features:
 - "Keep in Touch" box in the top right of the homepage
 - "Share an update" appears on home page
 - Promote blog posts, article, video, and events that are interesting and compelling to your networks. Show knowledge, expertise, engagement, and personality.
- Join and participate in Groups:
 - Find discussions you can join or start discussions and share news items. Get your name and message in front of a relevant audience.
 - Join groups where your peers and target audience are. Don't show all Group Logos on your Profile as this can look cluttered.
 - Allows you to message members directly and people can easily message you.
- Update your Profile every few months. Active participation on LinkedIn allows you to be known, be found, and find others!

More LinkedIn Resources

Headline:

- [Please Change your LinkedIn Headline, Here's Why and How](#)
- [How to Make Your LinkedIn Headline Way More Effective in Under 5 Minutes](#)

LinkedIn optimization:

- [How to Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile for a Career Change](#)
- [How to Use Your LinkedIn Profile to Power a Career Transition](#)
- [Change is in the Air: 7 LinkedIn Tips for Career Changers](#)
- [5 LinkedIn Summary Templates from the Muse](#)
- [This Google Expert's Top SEO Tips For Job Seekers in 2017](#)
- [A LinkedIn Profile that Works](#)
- [31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips For Job Seekers](#)