

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO

# LINKEDIN

FOR PhDs



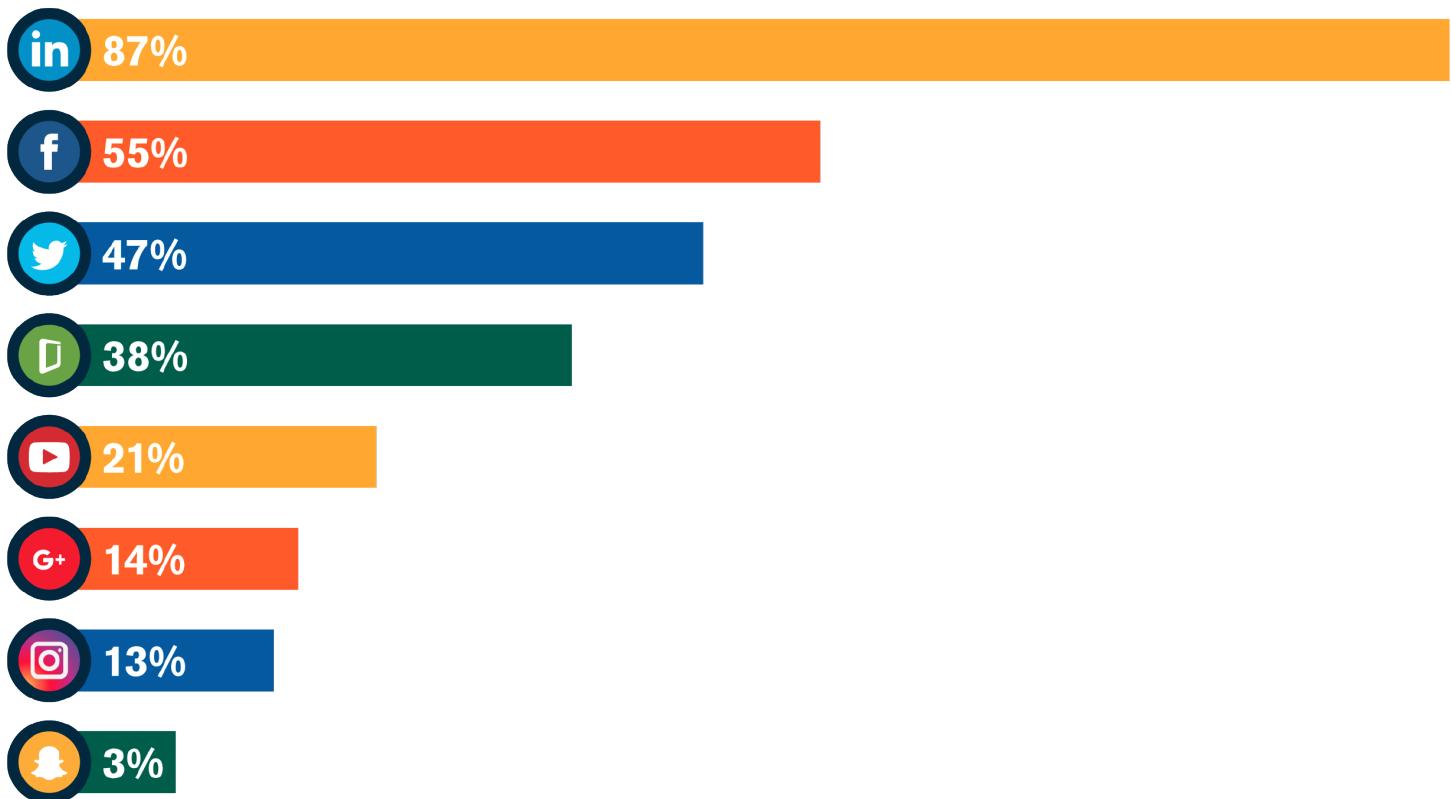


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# INTRODUCTION

In order to get noticed by employers and recruiters, you need to have a complete and professional LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn has reported that 546 million people are currently using this platform in over 200 countries. This means that by not having a profile, you are missing out on millions of opportunities to connect with potential employers, clients, and coworkers.





## 92% of employers use social media to find potential employees

Hiring managers use different social media platforms to find potential employees, but LinkedIn is the most used one, especially when it comes to hiring managers looking to fill high-level technical positions.

**Additionally, the highest quality applicants are on LinkedIn.**

**And employers know this information.**

**Being on LinkedIn shows that you are a high quality applicant.**

**And hiring managers go where the high-quality applicants are.**

When it comes to professional profiles, your LinkedIn profile is more important than your resume. It is one of the most powerful ways for you to get noticed and hired. LinkedIn gives you the opportunity to connect with people across countries, who work in your dream companies, and have interests similar to yours.

However, having an incomplete or unprofessional LinkedIn profile might actually hurt your job search. So you have to make sure to have a polished LinkedIn profile that portrays you as the professional you want to be before you start asking other people to connect with you.



# THINK OF YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE FROM THE EMPLOYER'S POINT OF VIEW

Your LinkedIn profile should showcase your unique combination of skills and experience that can be of value to a company – this is also called a personal brand. And you have to do this in a way that the employer can understand. It is your job as a jobseeker to make sure your profile has everything an employer is looking for, so they can find you and connect with you.

To achieve this, you need to understand not only what employers are looking for in a candidate, but also how they are looking for potential candidates. You probably only know the main LinkedIn platform, the one where you created your profile, but there are several LinkedIn platforms that serve different purposes.

For example, employers and recruiters use LinkedIn Recruiter to look for candidates.

LinkedIn Recruiter has three search fields: job title, locations, and skills. When an employer starts looking for candidates to fill a particular position, they will add



the job title they are trying to fill, the location where the job is based, and the skills—both technical and transferable—that are more relevant to the job.

Then, LinkedIn's algorithm looks for profiles that match those three categories to give a search result. This means that if you are not showing your desired job title, location, and relevant technical and transferable skills in your LinkedIn profile, you are not appearing in any search results.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Recruiter search interface. On the left, there are several filter sections:

- Job title:** Circled, showing "Project Manager".
- Locations:** Circled, showing "Greater Chicago Area" and "San Francisco Bay Area, Greater New York...".
- Skills:** Circled, showing "Business strategy" and "Analytics".
- Companies:** Current or Past, with an option to add companies or boolean search terms like "Google, Facebook, Evernote, LinkedIn, Ocu...".
- Education:** Any to 2012, listing "Northwestern University", "DePaul University", and "University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, P...".

At the top right, summary statistics are displayed: 1K total candidates, 71 have company connections, 230 engaged with your talent brand (which is highlighted in blue), and 27 past applicants. Below this, the search results are shown, sorted by relevance, with 230 results. The first result is Kenneth Rai, a 1st-degree connection who is a Project Manager at LinkedIn.



**Employer look for job titles, desired location, and skills. Not having these on your profile means you won't appear in any search.**

You might think that if you don't add a location, you will appear in all searches, but in fact, the opposite is true – if you don't add a location, you will appear in no searches at all. You have to provide those three pieces of information—job title, location, and skills—at the top of your LinkedIn profile.

*Main Takeaway: It is your job to add all relevant information to your LinkedIn profile so that employers can find you. Employers fill out three fields when searching candidates: job title, location, and skills. So make sure to add all of these at the top of your LinkedIn profile.*



# USE KEYWORDS THROUGHOUT YOUR PROFILE TO INCREASE YOUR NOTICEABILITY

The goal of your LinkedIn profile is to appear on searches made by employers and recruiters. To achieve this goal, you have to make sure to include the keywords they are looking for in all sections of your LinkedIn Profile.

As we previously mentioned, you should add your desired job title and location as well as the most important transferable skills and technical skills at the top of your resume.

But your job doesn't end there. You have to add relevant keywords throughout your LinkedIn profile. All the sections of your profile—even your education and volunteer experience—should include keywords relevant to your desired position. Without a keyword strategy, your LinkedIn profile will be lost in the crowd.

So how do you figure out what the relevant keywords are? You go through several job postings and identify the words that are repeated over and over



again. These are the relevant keywords for your position and, most times, they are technical and transferable skills.

Tools like Word Cloud and Wordle can help you pull out the relevant keywords. All you need to do is copy and paste the text from different job postings into the app, which will show you which words are used the most. You should use these exact words in your LinkedIn profiles because employers are looking for those exact keywords and phrases in the profiles of the PhDs that they are going to hire.

## Structure Of A Good Bullet Point



Add relevant keywords into your bullet points in all profile sections.



Once you have identified the keywords, you can't just add them to your profile without any context. Instead, include them into the bullet points that you will use to describe your previous experience, education, and volunteer work.

Each bullet point should give relevant information about your previous experience, and it should include a transferable skill and a quantified result linked by a technical skill. The transferable and technical skills should be relevant keywords, and the quantified results should be something you achieved.

All the sections of your LinkedIn profile should include bullet points with this structure and relevant keywords. This will ensure that your profile shows in many searches, and you get contacted by hiring managers and recruiters.

*Main takeaway: Identify the most relevant keywords for your desired job and include them into bullet points in all sections of your LinkedIn profile.*



# FOCUS ON A PROFESSIONAL VISUAL CENTER

The visual center is the top section of your LinkedIn profile. It includes your profile picture, your banner photo, and your professional headline. The visual center is the most important part of your profile because employers will spend most of their time on it and, based on what they see, they will decide if they keep looking or move on to another profile. So all components of your visual center should be personalized and targeted to your dream position.





Smiling Headshot In Professional Attire

Add profile section

More...

## First Last Name

R&D Scientist | Project Management | Cancer research | Oncology | London | Fitness enthusiast  
London, England .[500+ Connections](#) .[Contact Info](#)

Company Name

Company Name

Targeted Headline Including:  
Job Position, Location, And  
Relevant Skills

These three parts of your LinkedIn profile should portray you as a valuable professional.

## Headshot

Your headshot should portray you as an industry professional that employers will take seriously. A bad or nonexistent profile picture is a definite way to have your connection requests denied and messages ignored.

Don't add a picture that depicts you as a student, like a picture of you in your lab coat or presenting at a conference. Instead, add a picture of you wearing the



same clothes you would wear to a job interview.

Put effort into this photo, the same way you put effort into the other parts of your job search – don't just take a selfie. You want to look confident and approachable, like someone who would be great to work with. A nice smile, good lighting, and high quality photography will give a great first impression to anyone you invite to your LinkedIn profile.

## Banner Photo

The long horizontal photo that appears at the top of your LinkedIn profile is your banner photo. LinkedIn provides you with a default blue background photo, but you can, and should, customize it.

This is where you can have some creative fun with your LinkedIn profile. Add a high quality banner photo that relates to your dream job and/or reflects your personality.

Some common images to put here include:

- An image from your research discipline – this works really well if you work in an imaging discipline
- An image of the cityscape or landscape of where you live or want to live
- An image of a hobby you are passionate about
- An image with an interesting pattern



# Headline

A lot of PhDs make the mistake of writing, “I’m a postdoc at so-and-so university” or “I’m a grad student at so-and-so university” in their headline. Don’t do this. The headline is the first text that you will add to your LinkedIn profile, and the keywords in this section factor heavily into LinkedIn’s algorithm. Don’t waste that valuable space on academic words no employer will look for.

Instead, your headline should answer the following specific questions:

***What do you want professionally?***

Answer this question by adding your desired job position to your headline. You can add one job title or many if you are open to different positions.

***Who are you professionally?***

Answer this question by sharing the technical and transferable skills you have that are relevant for the job.

***Where do you want to work?***

Answer this question by adding your preferred location. LinkedIn gives you the option to add a location to your profile, but you can also add one or more locations directly to your headline.

If you want to relocate, add the city where you want to work, not your current location. You can also indicate your willingness to relocate by adding “willing to relocate” to your headline.



## *Who are you personally?*

Add at least one hobby to your headline. Most hiring managers don't come from a technical background, so hobbies serve as conversation starters and differentiate you from other candidates who only mention their technical skills.

*Main Takeaway: You should have an impactful visual center that includes a professional headshot, a high-quality banner photo, and a targeted headline, including your desired job title, your relevant skills, your desired location, and a hobby.*

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# CREATE A CONVERSATIONAL YET TARGETED SUMMARY

Your LinkedIn summary is not a place to copy and paste your resume. This section is the hook of your profile. Here, you should write in the first person and let your personality shine instead of sounding robotic and boring. The summary is the first part of your profile someone will see before deciding if they continue reading or not.

That being said, you should still use keywords and maintain a professional voice in your summary. Add three bullet points explaining your major achievement to your summary, this will give you an opportunity to include important keywords and show an employer how you can contribute to their organization.

The layout of your summary should be clean and include lots of white space. Write in short paragraphs and leave enough space between your paragraphs and bullets. This will make your summary much more readable and will encourage the viewer to continue scrolling down.



# About

Write conversational paragraphs in the first person

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Leave lots of white space so it's easy to read

Complement it with bullet points with relevant keywords

Add images at the end

## Work on an appealing and to the point summary

In the end, you should have a conversational and targeted resume that showcases your personality, transferable and technical skills, and your results. Make your narrative future facing and focus on what you can contribute to an organization. This will help the employer picture you in the position they are trying to fill.



*Main Takeaway: You should create an engaging summary that is professional yet conversational and helps the employer to picture you working at their organization.*



# PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR EXPERIENCE SECTION

After the visual center and summary, your experience is the most important part of your LinkedIn profile. Here, you should add all your previous experience relevant to the job you are looking for. This includes work and non-work experience.

Include at least three bullet points for every experience in your resume. Remember, bullet points must start with a transferable skill followed by a technical skill, and finish with a quantified result.

Including quantified results is important because people's eyes stop on numbers. So employers will notice results if they are quantified. Focusing on your results will help hiring managers who have never worked with you to understand what you can achieve and what you can do for their company.

You might think that you have never produced any relevant quantified results as a PhD. But this is simply not true, if you optimized a protocol, established a collaboration, secured grant funding, presented at conferences, or patented a product during your time in academia, you can add these as quantified results to your experience section.



1	Number of <b>Publications</b>
2	Number of <b>Presentations</b>
3	Number of <b>Collaborations</b>
4	Number of <b>Optimized/Innovated Methodologies</b>
5	Number of <b>Discoveries</b>
6	Number of <b>Patents</b>
7	Number of <b>Grants</b>
8	<b>Amount of Grant Funding</b>

## Examples of quantified results you produced in academia.

People's eyes rest on images just as in numbers. So try to add an image at the end of each section of your experience. This is also true for your summary and all other sections of your LinkedIn profile.

You can use different resources as images. For example, an article or a document you created at your previous position, a picture of you doing your job, presenting your results, or interacting with collaborations, on the URL to a page you helped create or talks about your experience. URLs show the thumbnails of the pages they direct to, so visitors to your profile will see images.



*Main takeaway: Increase the time that explorers spend looking at your profile by adding relevant previous experience and backing it up with bullets points including quantified results. Also, add images at the end of each experience.*



# WORK ON YOUR ENDORSEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LinkedIn has two additional sections that are crucial to increasing your credibility as a professional: skills and recommendations. Here, you can add the skills that you possess, and your connections can endorse you for them. You can also show reviews from people you have worked with.

You might notice that LinkedIn will predetermine certain skills for your profile. You should make sure to personalize these so that you only include technical and transferable skills that are relevant to your target position because these skills have a high keyword weight in searches made by employers. Once you have determined these skills, you can ask people to endorse you.

The more endorsements you receive for a given skill, the higher you'll rank up in employers' searches. So make sure to have as many endorsements as possible. When someone visits your profile, they will first see your top three skills, if they want to look at other skills, they have to expand the section. As a consequence, you will get considerably more endorsements for the top skills. So make sure they are the most relevant for your target job.



You will have to network to get recommendations. The ideal situation is to have as many recommendations as possible from people who have managed you, people who have worked at the same level as you, and people you have managed.

A good way to get recommendations is by giving recommendations. You can write a recommendation for your previous coworkers and ask if they would be willing to write you a recommendation in return.

*Main Takeaway: Only include skills that are relevant for your job search in your skill section, especially as your top three skills, which will get the most endorsements. Network with previous coworkers to get recommendations.*

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# FILL OUT ALL SECTIONS OF YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

The more information you include in your LinkedIn profile, the more opportunities you will have to add keywords, and the more your name will come out in employers' and recruiters' searches.

Therefore, you should make sure to fill out every section of your LinkedIn profile following the recommendations we have already covered: only add relevant information, include targeted bullet points, and finish with an image.



Add a section to your profile – be discovered for your next career step.



### Education

Members with a school on their profile get 7 times more profile views.

Add school



### Language

This can help you find a new job, get a promotion, or transfer overseas.

Add language



### Volunteering Opportunities

Non-profit organizations could be looking for someone like you.

Add volunteering opportunities



### Organizations

Add more color to your professional identity to show who you are.

Add organizations



### Honors & Awards

Show the recognition you've earned.

Add honors & awards



### Test Scores

Here's another way to show your accomplishments.

Add test scores



### Courses

Showing more information about your background will help you get found for more opportunities.



### Publications

Showcase your innovation and expertise.

Make sure to fill in all these sections to improve the impact of your LinkedIn profile.



**Education:** Add your highest level of education and one or two bullets about your experience at that institution.

**Languages:** Languages can serve as important keywords for certain positions. So make sure to include all the languages you speak.

**Volunteer Section:** The volunteer section is very important because it humanizes you and gives you a great opportunity to highlight your transferable skills. Make sure to add volunteer experience that is not related to your technical background.

**Publications:** You should add your academic publications to your LinkedIn profile – this shows that you can carry out complex projects. You should also link all publications to your collaborators to show that you are a well-rounded person that can work in a collaborative environment.

**Courses:** Online courses are becoming more popular every day, and employers like candidates who have taken these courses as it shows an interest in continued education. So make sure to add the classes you've taken that are relevant to your target position.

**Organizations:** Include all the organizations you are part of or have collaborated with. It is better if you have a healthy mix of technical and nontechnical organizations.

*Main takeaway: Make sure to fill out all the sections of your LinkedIn profile with relevant experience and keywords.*



# SEND PERSONAL AND TARGETED CONNECTION REQUESTS

Now that you have completed all the sections in your LinkedIn profile, it is time to start networking and sending connection requests.

The easiest way to start expanding your LinkedIn network is to search for people you want to connect with and send them a connection request. To do this strategically, decide on several target companies and start connecting with people who work there.

Always send a personalized note with your connection request. This note should not ask for anything and it should not be about you. Instead, make it about the other person and give a quick note about why you want to connect with them. You might be worried about saying something wrong or think it's weird to comment on the post of someone you don't know that well, but this is what LinkedIn is for!





## Always add value when sending connection requests

Keep your request professional and to the point. You shouldn't exceed 50 words, shouldn't ask for a referral or a job right away, and should include a question at the end. This will increase your chances of getting the connection and having a response from them.

A good way to increase your without having to send cold requests is by asking for introductions. If you want to connect with someone with whom you have a shared connection, you can ask your shared connection for an introduction. This



allows for the rapport process to move forward much faster, and it allows for you to generate a referral much faster.

The ultimate goal of networking on LinkedIn is to secure a job referral. The key to achieving this is through building rapport and trust in your relationships with industry professionals in your network. The best way to build rapport is through consistently adding value to your network, showing interest and commitment to their cause. If you do this constantly, your relationships will come to a level where asking for a referral comes naturally.

You can add value to your network through celebrating their success, sharing your knowledge or resources, connecting people in your network to each other and valuing their advice or contributions. Adding value to your current network will ensure that you will receive critical support in your job search when you need it. So build your network before you need it.

*Main Takeaway: Build your LinkedIn network by sending personalized connection requests, asking for introductions from shared connections, and adding value to your network.*



# INCREASE YOUR ACTIVITY TO GET NOTICED

The more active you are on LinkedIn, the more your profile will appear on searches and get noticed by others. There are different ways you can achieve this. Such as commenting on other people's posts, creating your own posts, and joining relevant groups.

Commenting on your connections' post is a great way to add value and increase your noticeability. You should give insightful comments on other people's posts, don't just say "great post!". You are a PhD, you are much more insightful than that.

Participating in a conversation in a post is also a great way to get more connections as other people following the conversation will notice your comments and want to connect with you.

The second way to increase your activity is by creating your own posts and articles. The more you post, the more people will see your profile. To increase this benefit even further, post things that contain relevant keywords.



You could write a review of a new industry development, a recent conference in your area, or an update that discusses your latest research in a way that is accessible to the general public.

Finally, you should join and be active in different LinkedIn groups. Do a search and find a few groups that are active and that are relevant to your professional career goals. Start by joining just a couple groups and formulate a plan to get active within these groups.

Engage with the group by commenting on posts from other people and sharing your own posts with your community.

*Main Takeaway: Increase your profile's visibility by commenting on other people's posts, creating your own posts and articles, and joining groups relevant to your target job.*



# Remember Your Value As A PhD

To access our free resume template and  
to learn more about transitioning  
into industry, go to:  
[https://cheekyscientist.com/  
association-learn-more/](https://cheekyscientist.com/association-learn-more/)



Isaiah Hankel, PhD  
Alejandra Viviescas, PhD