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**The 31 Best LinkedIn Profile Tips for Job Seekers**

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by

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*Tim Robberts/Getty Images*

Quick: What are the most important tools for a job seeker? You probably said your resume and your network. But what about the platform that combines them? LinkedIn allows you to share your experience, skills, and qualifications with future employers, while also allowing you to build and interact with your network *and* grow your brand as a professional. It can be as crucial to a job seeker as a well-written resume. When you’re looking for a new job, LinkedIn is “the place where you should be spending most of your time,” says Muse career coach [Jena Viviano Dunay](https://www.themuse.com/coaches/jena-viviano-705da3).

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There’s only so much information you can fit on a resume, says Jordan Hallow, a career consultant who advises college students on LinkedIn and other career topics. But your LinkedIn is much less limited. And even if you’re not actively hunting for a new role, the vast majority of recruiters use LinkedIn as a sourcing tool to find candidates to fill positions, Hallow says. So keeping your LinkedIn profile current could allow a great new job opportunity to come right to you. Plus, an up-to-date LinkedIn can help potential clients or people with other professional opportunities find you.

Here are 31 expert-backed LinkedIn tips for job seekers—from creating a profile that will help you land your next job or get noticed by recruiters to establishing yourself as an expert in your field.

[General Tips for Your LinkedIn Profile](https://www.themuse.com/advice/linkedin-profile-tips#80576656-97a1-4bd3-8cdb-7d4d87a62a24)

[Tips for Individual LinkedIn Profile Sections](https://www.themuse.com/advice/linkedin-profile-tips#4e64d444-b09b-49f8-af63-01f73aa563aa)

[Tips for Using Your Profile](https://www.themuse.com/advice/linkedin-profile-tips#e5e5b50c-7c0f-4891-8ef4-eb06aeda5ea1)

**General Tips for Your LinkedIn Profile**

**1.**

**Use Your LinkedIn to Tell a Story and Build Your Personal Brand**

When you’re building your LinkedIn profile, you need to think about your [personal brand](https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-first-step-to-building-your-personal-brand), Dunay says. Who are you and what do you want to be known for? What sets you apart from your peers in your industry? Once you know your personal brand, you can express it throughout in your LinkedIn profile.

“Your LinkedIn is your opportunity to give the broader narrative around your strengths and work style,” says Muse career coach [Heather Yurovsky](https://www.themuse.com/coaches/heather-yurovsky). “You have more room [than your resume] to showcase a wide range of experiences and skills which means a greater chance that there will be something in your profile that a viewer will connect with. That connection is key in a job search.”

***Read More****:* [*How to Create a Cohesive, Compelling Personal Brand for Yourself on LinkedIn*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-secret-to-building-a-linkedin-profile-that-gets-results)

**2.**

**Know Your Audience—and What Keywords Will Get Their Attention**

As you craft your profile, think about who will be reading it—likely other professionals and recruiters in your industry. What will those people specifically want to see in a job candidate? Are certain [technical skills](https://www.themuse.com/advice/technical-skills-resume-definition-examples) the most important? Or certain experiences or qualities?

To help figure out the answers to these questions, follow a similar process to the one you would when writing or tailoring your resume. Pull up a few job descriptions for the type of job you have or would like to have, Dunay says. “Take a look at what they keep talking about, common themes, what seems to matter to these employers.”

Think about which ones apply to you and your experience and which specific words and phrases are being used to describe them: These are your [keywords](https://www.themuse.com/advice/a-job-hunters-guide-to-getting-your-resume-past-the-ats-and-into-human-hands). They’re likely what recruiters are searching for when they’re looking for people like you. For example, maybe many companies you’re interested in are looking for a programmer “proficient in JavaScript” or a digital marketer with experience putting together webinars. If you’re struggling, look for people who have the jobs you want, Hallow says, and see what skills and experiences they emphasize on their profiles.

**3.**

**Work Keywords in Throughout Your Profile**

Once you know your keywords, weave them into your headline, summary, experience, skills, and anywhere else they make sense on your profile. But don’t overdo it, Hallow says. Make sure that your keywords flow with the rest of your writing, and aren’t just jammed in. And definitely don’t just write “Keywords:” in your “About” section and include a contextless list.

**4.**

**But Avoid Buzzwords**

Buzzwords are the words you see all the time on LinkedIn and job descriptions, but that don’t necessarily say a lot about an individual. Think “innovative,” “driven,” “hardworking,” “effective,” “successful,” and “motivated.” These words don’t mean anything by themselves, or they’re a given, Hallow says. (No one is going to admit on LinkedIn that they’re *not* hardworking.)

Ask yourself if a possible keyword or phrase needs more context to make sense. If someone came up to you and told you they were “effective” or “innovative,” you’d probably think, “At what?” or “Prove it.” You can use buzzwords in conjunction with more specific keywords when it makes sense but you’ll send a stronger message by *showing* you have these qualities. Which sounds best? *Successful and hardworkin*g, *Successful and hardworking SaaS fintech account executive*, or *SaaS account executive who has brought over $10 million in new business to various fintech startups*?

**5.**

**Complete Your Profile**

“LinkedIn’s algorithm rewards users with complete profiles,” Yurovsky says. You’re far more likely to show up in search results with a complete profile. LinkedIn assigns different strengths to profiles based on their completeness, and there’s a “massive advantage” to being at the highest strength, “All-Star,” Hallow says.

Recruiters and hiring managers are going to look at your profile whether you apply for their jobs on LinkedIn or anywhere else. “A barebones profile doesn’t make a great impression,” Hallow says. Plus, each section is an opportunity to add more keywords and tell a compelling story. “Why pass that kind of opportunity up when you’re job searching?” Yurovsky says.

***Read More****:* [*10 Steps to Becoming an All-Star LinkedIn User*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/allstar-linkedin-users-are-40-times-more-likely-to-get-contactedheres-how-to-score-that-rating)

**6.**

**But Focus on the Top Sections**

Recruiters are busy and so are most professionals. There are a lot of technical advantages to having a very full profile, but you can’t expect everyone who arrives at your page to read every word. You have to hook them from the start. Include your most important skills, experiences, and qualities high up in your profile. This means your cover photo, profile picture, headline, summary, and recent experience. Of those, your profile picture and headline are most important, says Muse career coach [Eilis Wasserman](https://www.themuse.com/coaches/eilis-wasserman), because these are the only two things “people see before they even click on your profile.”

So if you won a huge award or have a key certification, don’t wait until the “Accomplishments” or “Licenses & certifications” sections to mention them. Add them to one of your top sections—as high up as is appropriate. The same goes for your most important keywords. Don’t let your most marketable skill get buried in your “Skills & endorsements” section.

**Tips for Individual LinkedIn Profile Sections**

**7.**

**Get a Custom URL**

When you create a profile, LinkedIn automatically assigns you a string of numbers as a URL. But you can (and should) set a custom URL instead. Make sure your URL is easy for you to remember and share (because you should be sharing it *a lot*), Wasserman says. Most commonly people will use their name and initials in some format, though you might need to get creative or add numbers if you have a more common name. You can also add key certifications like CPA (Certified Public Accountant) or PMP (Project Management Professional) to better optimize your profile, Yurovsky says.

**8.**

**Add a Cover Photo That Reflects You**

The blank banner above your profile picture is where your cover photo goes. It’s the very first thing on your page, so you want to make a good impression with it. At a minimum, you should use an inoffensive image that means something to you—maybe a landscape view of your favorite place or something that showcases your brand, Dunay says. But you can also use a picture of yourself doing your job or customize a banner with words. You can add your personal website URL, a few of your key strengths, the services you offer, or even a meaningful quote, Wasserman says. Just keep it professional.

If you want a hand designing a cover photo, Canva has free, customizable LinkedIn banner templates. You can also find free stock photos on Unsplash to use as your background or a lower effort way to get rid of the plain gray box at the top of your page.

***Read More****:*[*23 Free LinkedIn Banners That Will Make Recruiters Love Your Profile*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/23-free-linkedin-backgrounds-that-will-make-recruiters-love-your-profile)

**9.**

**Choose a Professional Profile Picture—or Take a New One**

“Gone are the days of needing a professional headshot for your profile image,” Yurovsky says. Now, your iPhone or Android has a high-enough resolution camera to ensure your picture is clear and crisp. But just because you don’t need an image taken by a professional, doesn’t mean your picture shouldn’t *be* professional. You should be appropriately dressed and not at a party or a wedding. Don’t use any image where you have to crop other people out.

If you need a new picture, don’t overcomplicate it: “Get in front of a blank wall and take a picture,” Dunay says. You should be smiling and facing a natural light source (like a window). Look at the camera. If the person who finds your profile can’t see your eyes it’s hard “to connect beyond the screen,” Yurovsky says. Finally, according to LinkedIn, you should aim for your face to take up about 60% of the image once it’s cropped.

**10.**

**Write a Headline That Rocks**

Your headline is “not just your job title,” Wasserman says. Instead, use that space to concisely communicate the core of who you are as a professional in a sentence or a few phrases. The more specific you can be about what sets you apart from the competition, the better. “Highlight specific skills you want to be known for,” Dunay says. And try to write something “encompassing your professional career identity—who you are and where you want to go,” Wasserman says.

For example: *NYS-licensed chemistry teacher specializing in hands-on learning with lesson plans that draw on 10 years working in a research lab*

***Read More:*** [*How to Write Great LinkedIn Headlines (Plus, Examples)*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/does-your-linkedin-headline-suck)

**11.**

**Include a Current Job Entry, Even When Unemployed**

When recruiters search on LinkedIn, one of the pieces of information the platform uses to return results is your current position—and if you don’t have one, you might not appear, Hallow says. So if you don’t currently have a job, you should add the position or positions you’re looking for (*Social Media Coordinator/Assistant*, for example), but add a line in the spot usually reserved for the company name that makes it clear you’re not saying you’re employed, like “Seeking new opportunity” or similar.

**12.**

**Complete Your Intro**

Don’t forget to fill out the smaller sections of your profile intro when applicable. They include:

* **Former name**: Use this section (if you’re comfortable with it!) to be searchable by names you no longer go by, such as a maiden name. You can also select who your past names are visible to.
* **Name pronunciation**: LinkedIn first introduced this feature through its mobile app, Wasserman says. You might consider using it if you have a long, uncommon, or difficult-to-pronounce name.
* **Location:** If LinkedIn gives you the option, Hallow recommends using a metropolitan area here over a suburb or smaller city so that you show up in more searches. If you’re relocating, you can list your target city and expand in your summary.
* **Industry**: You can only pick one, so if you don’t have your search narrowed down to one specific industry, you can talk about additional ones in your summary, Hallow says.
* **Contact info:** You should definitely add your email address here so that recruiters can reach you, but phone numbers and addresses are more common for those selling services on LinkedIn than for individual job seekers, Wasserman says. She does not recommend including a personal cell phone number. When it comes to adding additional social media platforms, you should only add them if they’re professional and relevant to your job.

**13.**

**Use Your Summary Wisely**

Your summary or “About” section is where you can really show your personality and share your story, Hallow says. And it doesn’t need to be complicated.

Here’s how you might structure it:

* **Introduce yourself.** Who are you as a professional and what do you do? What value do you bring to the organizations you work for?
* **Highlight your key skills, experiences, and achievements** in paragraph form or a bulleted list.
* **Talk about who you are outside of work.** This is optional, but you never know which of your interests might resonate with a recruiter, future employer, or professional connection.
* **Call the reader to action** by asking them to connect with you to discuss growth marketing, contact you about job or speaking opportunities, or do whatever you’re currently looking to get from your LinkedIn profile.

Even if you follow this structure, there are infinite ways to write your summary. “The ‘About’ section is very personal,” Wasserman says. Use the first person, and don’t be afraid to talk about what really matters to you in your career.

***Read More:*** [*5 Templates That’ll Make Writing the Perfect LinkedIn Summary a Total Breeze*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-templates-thatll-make-writing-the-perfect-linkedin-summary-a-breeze)

**14.**

**Show Off Your Expertise or Best Work in the Features Section**

Just below the “About” section is the “Featured” sections, which allows you to showcase media, links, and LinkedIn articles and posts at the top of your profile. Sharing the work or mentions that are most relevant to your personal brand and LinkedIn goals is a great opportunity to show your skills in action, Wasserman says. If you have an online portfolio, the “Featured” section is a great, highly visible spot to link to it.

**15.**

**Tailor Your Experience**

While your resume should be tailored to each *individual* job you apply to, your LinkedIn profile should be tailored to the industry you work in or want to work in as well as the role you have or the type of role you’re hoping to land, Hallow says. In your descriptions, emphasize the elements of your past experiences that are most relevant to the types of jobs you want. You can also include relevant volunteer work or school projects both in your experience section and the dedicated “Volunteer experience” and “Education” sections lower down on your profile, Wasserman says.

**16.**

**Use Strong Accomplishment-Driven Descriptions**

In some ways, you can approach your LinkedIn profile as you would your resume: Rather than just listing your job duties under each entry in your experience section, you should be detailing your accomplishments. Each of your bullet points should describe not only what you did in your past jobs, but also how you did it, what the results were, and how it impacted your team or company. Whenever you can, include keywords to show what vital skills you used and when. And [quantify](https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-quantify-your-resume-bullets-when-you-dont-work-with-numbers) your experiences and achievements. Numbers will help recruiters see the scope of your work and make your accomplishments feel more specific. What’s more appealing? Someone who says they’re proficient in Excel, or someone who says they’ve built Excel spreadsheets that use pivot tables and filters to streamline a process and save their company 20+ hours a month?

***Read More:*** [*How to Turn Your Duties Into Accomplishments*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/resume-revamp-how-to-turn-your-duties-into-accomplishments)

**17.**

**Add Links and Media to Your Work Experience**

You can add links, images, videos, and files to the entries in your “Experience” section as well as your “Featured” section. So use this to your advantage: Link to your company websites, projects you’ve worked on, articles or reports you’ve published, or anything else that can let recruiters see the work you’re writing about with their own eyes.

**18.**

**Make Sure Your Resume and LinkedIn Match**

Your resume and LinkedIn don’t have to be identical. But your past positions, companies, degrees, and licenses and certifications should match up—and so should the dates. Don’t contradict yourself, Hallow says. You don’t want hiring managers to think you’re being dishonest.

**19.**

**Add Licenses, Certifications, Projects, Volunteer Experiences, Accomplishments, or Languages**

Underneath your work experience and education are additional spaces to show off your background and qualifications. Are you fluent in another language? Did you win a well-known award or write an article for a well-known publication in your industry? Are you licensed to practice in multiple states? Adding this information to your profile is a great way to showcase what makes you unique and helps you get in some additional keywords as well. But remember that if these skills and experiences are important to landing your next job, you should also try to work them into an earlier section.

**20.**

**Add Your Skills—Everywhere**

Tout your [skills](https://www.themuse.com/advice/every-basic-question-you-have-about-your-resume-skills-section-answered) throughout your profile—not just in the “Skills & endorsements” section. As mentioned earlier, you should put them in context in your experience section, but make sure that your most relevant and marketable skills also appear in your summary and headline. And you should even try to get them into your recommendations (more on that below).

In the “Skills & endorsements” section itself, you can have up to 50 skills, but profile viewers can only see your top three, so choose the most important ones for these slots. You can also get other people in your network to vouch for your abilities.

**21.**

**Seek Out Strong, Relevant, and Recent Recommendations**

Recommendations “really enhance the credibility of who you are as a professional,” Wasserman says. You can ask people you’ve worked closely with for recommendations, but “be sure to give that person talking points that help shape the story you want your profile to tell,” Yurovsky says. Your recommender should know what your goals are for your next career steps as well as what skills and experiences you’d like them to emphasize. And keep your recommendations current. Yurovsky recommends setting a calendar reminder to secure new recommendations at least twice a year.

***Read More:*** [*How to Ask for a LinkedIn Recommendation That Works for You*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-ask-for-a-recommendation-on-linkedin)

**22.**

**And Give Them in Return**

“The best way to get a recommendation is to give one,” Yurovsky says. If you write a recommendation for a colleague, they’re likely to return the favor. Plus, it’s good practice to help out the people in your network.

***Read More:*** [*Your 5-Minute Guide to Writing an Amazing LinkedIn Recommendation*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/your-5minute-guide-to-writing-an-amazing-linkedin-recommendation)

**23.**

**Don’t Forget About Your “Interests” Section**

The “Interests” section all the way at the bottom of your profile is often overlooked, Yurovsky says, but it’s the secret to getting interesting—and shareable—content into your LinkedIn feed. LinkedIn will show you posts about topics in your “Interests” section and you can share and comment on these posts, or use them to find other professionals you’d like to network with.

**Tips for Using Your Profile**

**24.**

**Be Mindful of Your Profile Settings**

If you’re job searching, you can adjust your profile settings to let recruiters know you’re open to work. And if you don’t necessarily want your current employer to find out about it, you can tweak your settings further to hide this info from anyone working at the same company as you. You can also control who sees your updates, Hallow says.

**25.**

**Link to Your LinkedIn on Your Resume**

After you’ve put all this work into your LinkedIn Profile, don’t forget to direct people to it, Hallow says. You can add your URL right to your resume and even hyperlink it so that anyone reading your resume on a computer can immediately find out more about why you’re a great candidate.

**26.**

**Become an Active User**

Once your profile is finished, you can’t just abandon LinkedIn until the next time you’re applying for a job: You need to be an active user. “That’s your number one way to start seeing more success on LinkedIn,” Hallow says. In the year after he started actively commenting on posts, engaging with other users, and writing content on LinkedIn, Hallow saw a 600% increase in his followers and connections and a 1,000% increase in profile views. Actively using LinkedIn will help you grow your network, be more visible to your existing network, and learn more about your role, industry, and potential opportunities.

**27.**

**Request Connections (and Do It Thoughtfully)**

“My favorite part about LinkedIn is that it’s the number one place to network,” Dunay says. You can start building your professional network online by connecting with people you already know, but you can also request connections from people you don’t know who might be able to help you grow in your career. LinkedIn’s alumni tool (under the “Alumni” tab on your school’s profile) can help you find other professionals who went to your college, for example. Or you might request to connect with people who work at companies or in jobs you’re interested in. You can even look for people by searching keywords within the search bar like “product marketer” or even “introvert,” Wasserman says.

No matter who you’re requesting to connect with, include a message, and “personalize, personalize, personalize,” Vivano says. Pay attention to what they have in their profile, and be very specific about what you hope to get out of connecting. Also, be conscientious—give people an out and don’t take declined connections personally.

Once you connect, you can continue the conversation: Consider [setting up an informational interview](https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-ask-for-an-informational-interview-and-get-a-yes) to learn more about what someone does or the company they work for or talk about new developments in your field. You’ll also start to see each other in your feeds so you can comment on their posts and updates.

***Read More:*** [*Want People to Accept Your LinkedIn Requests? Use These 10 Templates*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/want-people-to-accept-your-linkedin-requests-use-these-10-templates)

**28.**

**Don’t Just Network—Use LinkedIn to Learn and Grow**

Most people know LinkedIn is a networking platform, but it’s also a knowledge-sharing resource, Wasserman says. Users talk about what they’ve learned in posts, leading to discussions among professionals. If there’s a new development in your field, you can learn about it in a more interactive way than just Googling it—you’ll see what others think and can join in the discussion.

LinkedIn Learning is another great feature—you can learn and develop a range of new skills and add completed courses directly to your profile. Perusing the profiles of people who have the type of job or work in the industry you’re interested in can help you identify which exact courses you might want to take—or at least give you clues based on their skills and experiences.

**29.**

**Start Posting**

All LinkedIn users can write posts or even articles on the platform. These posts will help you build up your reputation as an expert, Dunay says. You can post your perspective about what’s going on in your field or weigh in on a recent industry development, and possibly show off your writing skills at the same time. You can even share relevant articles you’ve come across elsewhere online. Even if you’re a new professional or new in your field, “you have something to contribute,” and other users will notice, Wasserman says.

If you don’t feel ready to write your own posts just yet, start by commenting. Select relevant interests on your profile and follow experts, thought leaders, and others in your field who have careers you’d like to learn something from. Then, engage with their posts on your news feed. You’ll learn, gain connections, and get “food for thought for your own posts,” Hallow says.

***Read More:***[*4 Ways to Write LinkedIn Posts That Turn Into Career Opportunities*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/4-ways-to-write-linkedin-posts-that-turn-into-career-opportunities)

**30.**

**Join LinkedIn Groups**

LinkedIn Groups are an incredible way to find even more like-minded professionals in your job or industry. You can discuss relevant topics in a more focused setting and become more engaged in your field. Plus, the other group members are a large pool of possible connections.

***Read More:*** [*5 Ways to Get the Most Out of LinkedIn Groups*](https://www.themuse.com/advice/5-ways-to-get-the-most-out-of-linkedin-groups)

**31.**

**Don’t Only Pay Attention When You’re Job Searching**

There are many benefits to LinkedIn for people who aren’t looking to switch jobs—from developing relationships with others in your field to learning new skills that will help you in your current job. Plus, “staying active on LinkedIn after you’ve landed that new role and are no longer job searching helps make that next job search that much easier,” Yurovsky says. Build up your network and personal brand before you need to tap into it to land your next job. You’ll also stay top of mind for people in your network, Yurovsky says, and “when it’s time to find the next right role for you, you’d be surprised how many people will feel invested in your search.”

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