

LEARNING MADE EASY



LinkedIn® Profile Optimization

for
dummies®
A Wiley Brand



Create a powerful
LinkedIn profile

Showcase your experience
and accomplishments

Discover your
personal keywords

Donna Serdula



LinkedIn® Profile Optimization

by Donna Serdula

for
dummies®
A Wiley Brand

LinkedIn® Profile Optimization For Dummies®

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Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: The Strategy Before the Siege	7
CHAPTER 1: Determining Your LinkedIn Strategy	9
CHAPTER 2: Getting Found on LinkedIn	15
CHAPTER 3: Understanding Skills and Endorsements	35
Part 2: Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started.....	47
CHAPTER 4: Optimizing the “Behind the Scenes” Sections	49
CHAPTER 5: Establishing Your Calling Card	67
CHAPTER 6: Impressing with the Right Profile Picture	87
CHAPTER 7: Developing a Compelling Headline	101
Part 3: Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression	113
CHAPTER 8: Getting Your Experiences Ready	115
CHAPTER 9: Creating a Powerful Experience.....	123
CHAPTER 10: Writing a Compelling Summary	147
Part 4: Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches.....	163
CHAPTER 11: There’s More to You Than Your Jobs	165
CHAPTER 12: Making Your Profile Personal and Unique	193
CHAPTER 13: Following Groups, Companies, and Influencers	223
CHAPTER 14: The Final Review and Reveal	253
Part 5: The Part of Tens	279
CHAPTER 15: Ten Profile Do’s and Don’ts	281
CHAPTER 16: Ten Tips for a Perfect Profile Picture	285
CHAPTER 17: Ten Tips to Expand Your Network	291
CHAPTER 18: Ten Tips to Leverage LinkedIn	301
CHAPTER 19: Ten LinkedIn Profile Resources	309
Index	315

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book.....	1
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
How This Book is Organized	3
Part 1: The Strategy Before the Siege.....	3
Part 2: Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started	3
Part 3: Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression	3
Part 4: Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches	3
Part 5: The Part of Tens	4
Icons Used in This Book	4
Beyond the Book.....	4
Where to Go from Here	5
 PART 1: THE STRATEGY BEFORE THE SIEGE.....	7
 CHAPTER 1: Determining Your LinkedIn Strategy	9
Determining Your LinkedIn Goal.....	10
Job search	10
Reputation management and branding.....	11
Sales and prospecting.....	11
Figuring Out Your Target Audience.....	12
Creating a Compelling Tone.....	14
 CHAPTER 2: Getting Found on LinkedIn	15
Using LinkedIn as a Search Engine	15
Using the search bar.....	16
Using Advanced People Search.....	17
Ensuring a Compelling and Attractive Search Result.....	18
Understanding the Importance of Keywords	21
Using Online Keyword Tools	25
Using Wordle.net.....	26
Using LinkedIn Topic pages	28
Using Google AdWords Keyword Planner	29
Ranking Higher with Profile SEO	30
Building Off Profile SEO	31

CHAPTER 3: Understanding Skills and Endorsements	35
Showcasing Your Skills	36
Adding skills	37
Rearranging skills	39
Obtaining Endorsements	41
Hiding an endorsement	41
Opting out of endorsements	42
Endorsing a connection	43
Removing an endorsement	44
Soliciting endorsements	45
PART 2: GETTING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE STARTED	47
CHAPTER 4: Optimizing the “Behind the Scenes” Sections	49
Managing Profile Changes	49
Turning off update alerts	50
Manually removing updates	51
Knowing when to allow update alerts	52
Turning On Your Public Profile	53
Creating a Personalized URL	55
Using your name	58
Oh no, my name is taken!	58
Marketing your public profile URL	59
Improving Your Profile’s Strength	59
Dealing with a lack of a current position	61
Adding a school without a degree	62
Expanding your network	62
CHAPTER 5: Establishing Your Calling Card	67
Using the Name Field Correctly	68
Editing your name	68
Adding prefixes to your name	69
Keeping your profile confidential	70
Filling Out Location and Industry	71
Choosing your location	71
Choosing your industry	73
Suggesting a missing industry	74
Including Your Contact Information	76
Adding your email addresses	77
Adding a phone number	79
Adding your IM address	80
Adding your work address	81

Adding your Twitter account	81
Adding WeChat	83
Adding websites.....	84
CHAPTER 6: Impressing with the Right Profile Picture.....	87
Why You Need a Profile Picture.....	88
Determining If You Need a New Profile Picture	88
Using a Photo Already Taken.....	90
Working with a Photographer	91
Taking Your Own Profile Picture	92
Understanding the importance of light	93
Finding the right background	93
Framing the shot.....	94
Finding the right outfit	95
Choosing and Uploading Your Profile Picture.....	96
Cropping to profile picture dimensions.....	96
Resizing and saving a high-res image.....	97
Uploading your photo.....	98
Changing photo visibility settings	100
CHAPTER 7: Developing a Compelling Headline.....	101
Grabbing Your Reader's Attention	101
Adding Flair to Your Headline	102
Saturating Your Headline with Keywords	106
Add your job title.....	107
Add your specialty.....	107
Add an extracurricular hobby	108
Add a happy ending	109
Creating a Benefit Statement Headline	109
Adding Your New and Improved Headline to LinkedIn	112
PART 3: DETAILING YOUR CAREER TRAJECTORY AND CREATING THE ULTIMATE FIRST IMPRESSION.....	113
CHAPTER 8: Getting Your Experiences Ready.....	115
Referencing Your Resume	116
Determining Which Experiences to Keep and Which to Merge	117
Keep your target audience in mind	119
How far back do I go?	120
Creating a Work History for Recent Graduates.....	120
Dealing with Employment Gaps	121

CHAPTER 9: Creating a Powerful Experience	123
Adding a New Experience	124
Making the start and end dates match your resume	127
Using month and year or just year	127
Getting the company logo to appear	128
Linking to the company page	130
Less Is More — Stop Disqualifying Yourself	131
Summarizing the company with a boilerplate description	131
Describing your roles and responsibilities	134
Crafting an impactful achievement	135
Giving your reader a call to action	135
Editing an Existing Experience	136
Reordering Concurrent Experiences	137
Removing an Experience	138
Reattaching Recommendations to Different Experiences	139
Optimizing Your Job Title with Keywords	140
Job title character limits	142
Making your job title pop with symbols	142
Examples of Great Experiences	143
Salesperson looking for a new opportunity	143
Salesperson looking for more prospects	144
Human resources professional using LinkedIn for reputation management	144
CHAPTER 10: Writing a Compelling Summary	147
Editing Your LinkedIn Summary	148
Writing in First Person	149
Avoiding Resume Speak	149
Revisiting Your LinkedIn Goals and Target Audience	151
Catching Your Reader's Attention	151
Creating Your Professional Manifesto	153
Explain your benefits	154
Highlight your top achievements	155
Keep the summary focused on you	155
Create a clear call to action	156
Formatting a Sleek LinkedIn Summary	158
Examples of Compelling and Engaging Summaries	159
Product management	159
Leadership	160
Retail	160
Accounting	161
Student	162

PART 4: ROUNDING OUT YOUR PROFILE AND ADDING FINISHING TOUCHES 163

CHAPTER 11: There's More to You Than Your Jobs	165
Showcasing Organizations.....	165
Uncovering Your Honors and Awards	169
Choosing the right honors and awards	170
Creating a strong description	170
Keeping your honors and awards updated.....	172
The Three P's: Projects, Publications, and Patents.....	173
Adding projects	173
Adding publications.....	174
Adding patents.....	176
The Two C's: Certifications and Courses	179
Importing certifications from Lynda.com	180
Adding courses	180
Adding the Languages You Speak.....	181
Creating a Profile in Another Language.....	182
Adding Your Education, or Lack Thereof	183
Divulging the year you graduated.....	184
Preparing activities and societies	185
Adding your education	185
Reordering education.....	186
Adding multimedia	187
Adding Volunteer Experiences	189
Pro bono opportunities	191
Causes you care about	192
CHAPTER 12: Making Your Profile Personal and Unique	193
Leveraging the Additional Information Section	193
Adding interests.....	194
Providing details that show you are human	197
Offering advice for contacting you	200
Blocking people from viewing your profile	202
Adding Multimedia to Make Your Profile POP!	204
Determining what to highlight with multimedia files.....	204
Resisting the urge to upload your resume	207
Reinforcing Your Brand with a Background Image	208
Finding the right image to showcase your brand.....	208
Using online graphic tools to create an image	209
Adding a background image to your profile	211
The Importance of Recommendations.....	212
Identifying people to recommend you.....	212
Asking for a recommendation.....	214
Ditching the default request text	217

Accepting a recommendation	218
Reordering recommendations	219
Removing recommendations	219
Recommending others	220
CHAPTER 13: Following Groups, Companies, and Influencers	223
Understanding the Importance of Groups	224
Determining the types of groups to join	225
Turning off group notifications	227
Joining recommended groups.....	228
Searching for groups.....	229
Deleting groups.....	231
Turning off group communication email.....	232
Choosing which groups to highlight on your profile	233
Cultivating Your Following Section	235
Choosing the right companies to follow	235
Following companies	236
Unfollowing companies	237
Following News	237
Showcasing Influencers on Your Profile.....	238
Deciding which influencers to showcase.....	238
Finding specific influencers	240
Discovering recommended influencers.....	241
Removing influencers	242
Publishing on LinkedIn	242
Showcasing yourself as a thought leader	244
Creating your first blog.....	244
What happens after you publish?.....	249
Marketing your blog post.....	250
CHAPTER 14: The Final Review and Reveal	253
Rearranging Profile Sections	254
Viewing Your Profile as an Outsider	256
Your LinkedIn Profile Checklist	257
To Pay or Not Pay for LinkedIn	259
Features of paid accounts	260
Unique features of premium accounts	262
Choosing the best plan for you	264
Benchmarking Your Profile's Success.....	265
Marketing Your Profile	266
Alerting your connections of your updated profile	267
Adding your profile to other social media sites	270
Getting views to your LinkedIn profile	272

PART 5: THE PART OF TENS.....	279
CHAPTER 15: Ten Profile Do's and Don'ts	281
Do Use a Professional Profile Picture.....	281
Don't Use LinkedIn's Default Headline.....	282
Do Turn Off Your Update Notifications	282
Do Use Eye-Catching Symbols Sparingly	282
Do Include Your Contact Information	282
Do Add Multimedia Files	283
Don't Stuff Keywords	283
Don't Go Back 30 Years.....	283
Do Get Recommendations.....	284
Do Add Interests	284
CHAPTER 16: Ten Tips for a Perfect Profile Picture.....	285
Hire a Professional Photographer	285
Use Lots of Light	286
Use a Nondescript Background.....	286
Dress to Impress	287
Adjust Yourself.....	287
Keep the Camera Close to Eye Level	288
Say No to the Mug Shot	288
Crinkle, Smile, and Jut.....	289
Use Photoshop Lightly	289
Crop Your Image	290
CHAPTER 17: Ten Tips to Expand Your Network.....	291
Import Your Address Book.....	292
Import a Contact List.....	294
Let LinkedIn Help You Connect.....	294
Join One Hundred Groups	295
Start a LinkedIn Group	296
Make Connecting a Process.....	296
Link to Your Profile	296
Brand Yourself a LION or Just Connect to Them.....	297
Join Open Networking Lists and Groups	298
Use an App	299
CHAPTER 18: Ten Tips to Leverage LinkedIn.....	301
A-B-C . . . Always Be Connecting	301
Connect and Stay in Touch.....	302
Gather Business Intelligence	303
Get the News	304
Get Social Proof and Credibility.....	305

Get Past the Gatekeeper	305
Rub Elbows in Groups.....	305
Find Assistance	306
Showcase Thought Leadership.....	306
Network in Your Pajamas.....	307
CHAPTER 19: Ten LinkedIn Profile Resources	309
Get Inspired and Excited	309
LinkedIn Headline Generator	310
Virtual Phone Numbers	310
Google Voice.....	310
Skype.....	311
Say No to AOL and Hotmail Addresses	311
Your own domain	311
Acceptable free domains	311
Symbol Variations	312
Stop the Typos.....	312
SlideShare.....	312
Photographer Directories.....	313
Background Image Libraries	313
Online Image Apps	314
INDEX.....	315

Introduction

People are researching you. Perhaps they are headed into a meeting with you, evaluating you for a job opportunity, or looking to purchase a product from you. Perhaps they met you at an event or are simply in the process of doing business with you. Whatever the reason, they want to know more about YOU.

People do business with people and with the dawn of the Internet, it's never been easier to learn more about the people we meet and do business with. All it takes is a couple clicks of the keyboard and you can get a full description of almost anyone or anything.

Not everyone has a personal website or websites devoted to them (well, unless you are a celebrity); however, the LinkedIn profile has become the de facto website for everyday professionals. A simple name search for most people returns their LinkedIn profile on the first page of search results. How does your LinkedIn profile portray you? Your LinkedIn profile is your online reputation, digital introduction, and first impression. The good news is that you have complete control over your profile and can shape how your reader perceives you.

Most people simply copy and paste their resume into their profile because it's easy, but a profile consisting of a copied-and-pasted resume impresses no one. To have a strong and optimized LinkedIn profile, you need to tell your professional story, strategically writing it toward your goals and target audience.

About This Book

This book is a how-to manual that shows you the steps to craft a strategic, compelling, and unique LinkedIn profile. I show you how to take your profile from nothing more than a simple outline to a robust, full-featured profile of you as a professional.

Although you can pick up this book at any point, I highly suggest, at the very least, reading Chapter 1 and Chapter 4. In Chapter 1, I discuss the importance of determining your LinkedIn goal and target audience. If you don't identify your goal, your profile cannot be written strategically and it will not perform adequately.

Likewise, you need to understand your target audience and write to what they need to know about you.

In Chapter 4, I show you how to turn off profile update notifications. You want to ensure that when you start making a lot of changes to your profile, LinkedIn isn't inundating your network with annoying alerts. This is especially important if you are still employed and optimizing your profile for job search.

Regardless of your LinkedIn goal, you will benefit from the information in this book. Although LinkedIn isn't rocket science, it isn't the most intuitive social network either. Plus, writing about yourself is hard! In this book, I break everything down to its core to make it easy for you to use LinkedIn and create an impressive profile that helps you achieve your professional goals.

Foolish Assumptions

Having worked with thousands of professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, and companies from all over the world, I am going to assume that like them you are optimizing your profile for:

- » **Professional branding/reputation management.** You know that people are looking at your profile and you want to showcase yourself in a professional and impressive manner. You recognize that people draw conclusions based upon what they read, and you want to ensure they see you as a thought leader and someone who deserves to be noticed and respected.
- » **Sales and prospecting.** You want to use your LinkedIn profile to help you prospect better and sell more. You know that prospects and clients are looking at your profile, and you want them to see you as a solution provider who can help them achieve their goals. You also know that people may be looking for a service or product that you sell and you want to appear in search results.
- » **Job search.** You are either currently working or displaced, but you are ready to spread your wings and find the next great opportunity that makes you want to get out of bed in the morning and go to work. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals are using LinkedIn to find candidates. You want to make sure that your profile stands out in those searches, and that when they click on your profile, what they read is compelling and makes them want to reach out to request your resume. Alternately, you have likely submitted your resume to various job postings and you know that recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals may look at your LinkedIn profile to learn more. You want to make sure your profile is an impressive introduction that compels them to call you for an interview.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into five parts:

Part 1: The Strategy Before the Siege

Most people just jump into writing their LinkedIn profiles, but not you! In this first part, I show you how to immediately stand out by determining your LinkedIn goals, target audience, and keywords.

Part 2: Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started

In this part I show you how to turn off profile change notifications, choose a professional profile picture, and create a compelling headline. I also show you how to create a personalized link to your profile that makes marketing a cinch.

Part 3: Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression

In Part 3, I walk you through filling out the two LinkedIn profile sections the majority of people find the most challenging: Experience and Summary. You'll learn how to craft impressive experiences that focus on achievements over pure job description. You also learn how to craft a summary that acts as a professional manifesto that engages and impresses your target audience.

Part 4: Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches

Part 4 is all about the extra flourishes you can add to your profile, such as with sample projects, publications, patents, organizations, and volunteer experiences. I show you how to spice up your profile with a background image and how to add multimedia work samples to take your profile to the next level.

Part 5: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is the traditional end of a *For Dummies* book and contains lists of ten items that will help you leverage your profile and LinkedIn even better. This part is packed with links to external websites that provide the tools you can use to create a powerful profile.

Icons Used in This Book

I use a number of icons in this book to draw your attention to pieces of useful information.



TIP

This whole book can be considered a series of tips! When I share information that I find especially useful for optimizing your profile, I indicate it with a Tip icon.



REMEMBER

This icon is used to flag information that may be useful to remember when you think about and work on your profile.



WARNING

Whenever something may cause unnecessary work or a headache down the road, I alert you with a Warning icon.



TECHNICAL STUFF

A Technical Stuff icon contains detailed or background information that is not necessary to know to optimize your profile, but is otherwise interesting.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading now, this book also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that gives you even more pointers on how to optimize your LinkedIn profile. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for "LinkedIn Profile Optimization For Dummies Cheat Sheet" in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

This book was written so that you could open up at any page and immediately get actionable assistance to crank up your profile. I highly suggest beginning with Chapter 1 because it's important to identify your goals and target audience before you begin writing your profile. Also, Chapter 4 shows you how to turn off profile update notifications so you don't annoy your network. After that, check out the Table of Contents to find the profile section areas you want to concentrate on immediately, or simply randomly open the book and see what chance predicts for you.

An optimized LinkedIn profile is more than just your online reputation. A powerfully written LinkedIn profile has the ability to change your life. After optimizing their profiles, I've seen people find amazing jobs and opportunities. They connect with more people and experience the full gamut of what LinkedIn has to offer.

I wish you the very best of luck — now go get optimizing!

1

The Strategy Before the Siege

IN THIS PART . . .

Understand your LinkedIn goals and target audience to give your profile purpose.

Learn how to use the proper tone in your profile to draw people in, not push them away.

Optimize your LinkedIn search results by discovering your keywords and infusing them throughout your profile.

Learn how to use LinkedIn as a search tool and how to ensure your search result listing catches a reader's eye.

Add skills to showcase your strengths to potential employers or clients.

See why soliciting endorsements and endorsing others boosts your credibility.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Deciding your LinkedIn goal
- » Understanding your target audience
- » Using the proper tone

Chapter **1**

Determining Your LinkedIn Strategy

When you register for a LinkedIn account, the first thing you encounter is the LinkedIn profile. Most people jump in and immediately fill out the fields of the profile, not giving much thought as to why they are on LinkedIn or who will eventually be reading their profile.

Profiles created without a goal or a target audience in mind lack purpose. These profiles don't catch readers' eyes and compel them to reach out to the person behind the online persona. You see these profiles on LinkedIn every day. Scanning the profile, nothing grabs you or makes you want to learn more about that person.

To experience success on LinkedIn, you must approach your LinkedIn profile strategically. In this chapter, I show you how to determine your LinkedIn strategy by looking at the three most typical goals people are trying to accomplish on LinkedIn. Once you've determined your goal, I show you how to figure out your target audience and discuss the importance of creating a compelling profile tone.

Determining Your LinkedIn Goal

To create a profile that has purpose, you must ask yourself, “What am I trying to accomplish on LinkedIn?” Many people get a LinkedIn account because they want to find a new job. Other people are interested in reputation management and branding. Still other people are on LinkedIn because they are in sales and want to prospect and increase sales through social selling.

To help you determine what you want your profile to accomplish, review the following three most common types of LinkedIn profiles.

Job search

LinkedIn plays a huge role in the job search process. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals search LinkedIn looking for potential candidates. They may perform broad-based keyword searches looking for a candidate that matches the skill sets the position requires, or they may already have certain candidates in mind. When they have a person already in mind for a position, a name search is performed on LinkedIn with the goal of learning more about that person than what is stated on his or her resume.

LinkedIn is also a job board. The LinkedIn Jobs section (www.linkedin.com/jobs) is where thousands of jobs from all over the world are posted. These job postings are promoted throughout LinkedIn as well. When you find a job posting that interests you, you can apply for the position by submitting your resume and LinkedIn profile.



TIP

Even if you aren't utilizing LinkedIn's job postings or hoping to collide with a recruiter, potential employers are still looking you up on LinkedIn and reviewing your LinkedIn profile. Think about it: If you are about to hire someone, and available to you is a database in which to look this person up and see a picture of the candidate, a listing of people he or she knows, and recommendations of his or her work ethic, of course you would use it!

Potential employers are looking at your profile. The good news is you have control over how you represent yourself and how they perceive you. A job search profile complements and echoes your resume without being a direct one-to-one copy. The profile is written to the job description of that next position you are targeting and showcases you as the perfect candidate for that role.

To find out more about how to create a powerful job search profile, see Chapter 9.

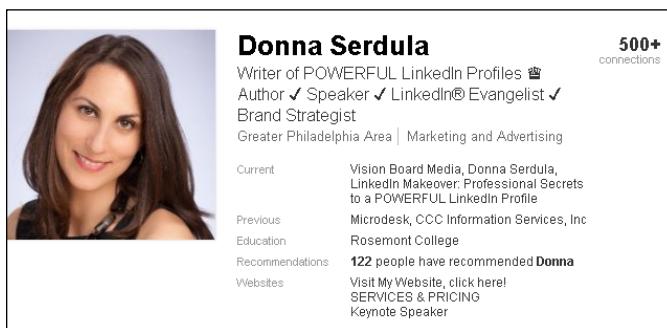
Reputation management and branding

It's a Google world. At one time, if you needed to find out information, you headed to the library to search the encyclopedias and other reference materials. Now, all you need to do is pull up a web browser and perform an Internet search to get more information than you could ever read or use.

This easy access to information has some side effects. People are doing more research than ever before and they are researching you! Going to the doctor? Most people search the Internet for the doctor's name to see the results that pop up in a search engine. Executives who find their names appearing in press releases or in magazine articles may find that views to their LinkedIn profiles skyrocket by readers wanting to know more about them.

Job candidates' names are entered into search engines all the time by hiring managers looking to discover more than what is provided in the resume. Similarly, hiring managers' names are searched by job candidates wanting to learn more about their potential new employer.

LinkedIn profiles rank high in search results. Not only is it usually the top result when a person searches for your name, but also it's sometimes the only result, as most people don't have a personal website. You create your LinkedIn profile. You choose what people learn about you. You have total control over how people perceive you. A reputation management profile is one that showcases your successes, honors, awards, and accomplishments, and leads people to see you as a credible, impressive professional. See Figure 1-1 for an example.



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Donna Serdula. The profile includes a photo of a woman with long dark hair smiling. Her name, "Donna Serdula", is displayed prominently at the top. Below her name, her title is listed as "Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles" followed by a pen icon. She is also identified as an "Author", "Speaker", "LinkedIn® Evangelist", and "Brand Strategist". Her location is listed as "Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising". On the right side of the profile, there is a "500+" connections badge. The "Current" section lists her employer as "Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula, LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile". The "Previous" section lists "Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc" and "Rosemont College". The "Education" section lists "Rosemont College". The "Recommendations" section shows "122 people have recommended Donna". The "Websites" section includes links to "Visit My Website, click here!" and "SERVICES & PRICING". The "Keynote Speaker" section is also present.

FIGURE 1-1:
A reputation
management and
branding profile.

Sales and prospecting

LinkedIn is more than just a job search tool. LinkedIn is a compendium of professional profiles with industry and contact information, which makes it a terrific prospecting tool for sales professionals. However, it's not just for sales people

looking for prospects. People use LinkedIn to search for service providers and consultants who can help them.

Most people prefer to do business with someone they know or someone with whom they share a connection. When searching LinkedIn for a service provider, you see how you are connected to that service provider through the degrees of connection. This ability to see shared connections provides a level of trust and comfort.

A sales and prospecting profile shines the spotlight on not just the salesperson, but also on that person's products, services, and company he or she represents. Most important, the sales and prospecting profile focuses on prospective clients and their needs, and solidifies the salesperson as someone clients can feel confident in working with. See Figure 1-2 for an example.

LinkedIn

My name is Donna Serdula & I love helping people tell their story and build a POWERFUL professional brand.

My mission is to help professionals take control of their Internet presence & present themselves in a way that inspires, impresses, & builds confidence in their abilities, products, & services.

Unfortunately, it doesn't matter who you are or what you do, it's not easy to write about yourself.

I hear it all the time, "I can... sell snow to an Eskimo / manage complex projects / lead exceptional teams... but sell myself? NO WAY!"

Besides, who can find the time to complete their LinkedIn profile on their own?

You know this... People are Googling you. Your LinkedIn profile is more often than not your digital introduction and first impression with the world. If your LinkedIn profile doesn't showcase your skills and portray you as a polished professional, you are letting the ultimate opportunity just slip away.

Do you know what makes a LinkedIn profile stand out from the crowd?

Well, I do.

As a LinkedIn Profile Writer & LinkedIn Profile Optimization Specialist, I craft engaging, targeted, & highly compelling LinkedIn Profiles that get you NOTICED & FOUND.

Stop trying to figure it out on your own and hire a LinkedIn Profile Writer to turn your LinkedIn profile into an amazing professional portfolio that sells YOU!

SERVICES

To learn more about my LinkedIn profile optimization services:

Visit <http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/order-today>

FIGURE 1-2:
A sales and
prospecting
profile.

Figuring Out Your Target Audience

Knowing your goal is only half the battle. Now it's time to figure out your target audience. One of the most common mistakes people make with their LinkedIn profiles is using it to tell the story they want to tell. Instead, you need to use your profile to tell the story your audience wants to read. Write for your target audience first.

When you are looking for a job, your target audience is typically recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals. In almost every case, they are armed with a job description. Recruiters want to know that you have the skill sets and experience required to fulfill the job. They also want to know that you are professional, respectful, and capable of doing the job. You want to make it clear in your profile that you are the perfect person for your desired position. After reading your profile, the recruiter should feel confident in your skills and abilities.

When you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting, your target audience is your client and prospective client. They are less interested in hearing about your sales expertise and more interested in knowing that you understand their industry and their needs, and can provide solutions to their issues. As you consider your target audience, think in terms of the solutions you offer them and provide them the information they need to feel confident with you as a potential partner.

The sales world has changed in the age of Google and social media. Buyers now educate themselves, researching products and services online. They even research the salesperson, wanting to make sure they are reaching out to someone they can feel comfortable working with. Knowing that you are under a magnifying glass, make sure you provide your target audience with the information they need to feel confident in you and your products or services.

When the goal of your LinkedIn profile is reputation management and branding, your target audience may not be as clear cut as it is with a job search or sale and prospecting. To figure out your audience, you need to determine the type of person you want to cater your profile toward. Is it the executive team and colleagues at your company? Audience members who watched you give a presentation? Readers of articles you wrote? Private equity investors? Once you pinpoint the type of person who you want to target, consider what that person needs to know to take that next step forward.

Do you want your target audience to connect with you on LinkedIn? Perhaps you want them to visit your website and download a whitepaper. You may want your target audience to email you to request your resume. Your target audience could pick up the phone and call you. Figure out what that next step is so you can build it into your profile as a clear call to action.



TIP

Strategically written profiles do not state what you want to say as much as what your target audience needs to know.

Creating a Compelling Tone

LinkedIn is a social network, and writing an impersonal profile filled with business jargon doesn't mesh. Social networks are all about you interacting with your network. And because your network will check out your profile, it's imperative that what they read is from your pen. You don't want to push people away by creating distance between you and your reader.

A powerful LinkedIn profile is written in first person narrative form ("I"). Draw readers in by writing about yourself in the first person. Writing in a conversational, natural tone is a great way to connect with your audience and start forging an easy rapport.

As important as it is to write in first person, you also must be careful not to overuse "I." There is nothing worse than a profile where every sentence starts with I. In my profile, I sometimes use the second person narrative form ("You") because it brings your reader in even closer by speaking directly to them, and it eases the potential overuse of "I."



TIP

The best way to ensure your profile is compellingly written is to read it aloud. Does it sound stilted? Does it sound like it's something you would never say to an acquaintance live in person? If so, the writing is forced and not conversational in tone.

Here is an example of stilted, hard-to-read resume speak:

Creating a clear strategy for leveraging resources to produce the maximum number of insights possible. Integrating contextual analytics to business processes. Centralizing deep analysis expertise for use across the organizational axis but mandating each individual department and line of business takes responsibility for their own reporting needs.



REMEMBER

You want to write your profile as if you are talking directly to your reader. Your words should sound professional yet natural. A profile written in corporate jargon or resume speak is a turn off. Demonstrate your human side and warmth by writing in a natural, conversational tone.

When you see profiles written in the third person, typically the reason is that they simply copied and pasted their biography or resume into the LinkedIn profile. That's a cop-out! Your LinkedIn profile is *not* your resume nor your bio. Your LinkedIn profile is your career future! It's who you are, how you help people, and why you deserve to be noticed. A powerful LinkedIn profile is strategically written for your goals and your target audience. It's not a copy and paste of some other document.

Next up we look at how to get found on LinkedIn.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Optimizing your LinkedIn search results
- » Determining your keywords
- » Creating a clickable search result
- » Increasing your search ranking

Chapter 2

Getting Found on LinkedIn

LinkedIn helps people connect with opportunity. Whether it's a new job, a sale, a media interview, a business partnership, or something else entirely, many times the connection starts with a LinkedIn search.

LinkedIn has over 400 million users in over 200 countries. Making sure your profile sticks out and pops up is important. In this chapter I show you how people use LinkedIn as a search engine. I show you the importance of your search result and how to make it attractive and clickable. I also show you how to discover your keywords and how to infuse them into your profile for higher search engine ranking. By the time you finish this chapter, you will have a list of your keywords and the knowledge of how to dominate LinkedIn search results.

Using LinkedIn as a Search Engine

Getting views to your profile doesn't always start through an Internet search. LinkedIn is more than just a professional network and profile listing. LinkedIn is a different type of search engine. Most search engines return websites. Searches conducted via a LinkedIn search return LinkedIn profiles, company pages, job

listings, reader-published blog articles, and LinkedIn Groups. LinkedIn search is also used to find potential customers, vendors, service providers, and employees.

Using the search bar

On the top of LinkedIn's website is the search bar. This is where most people enter their search terms. When people search LinkedIn, they search in two different ways: name or keyword. A direct name search is typically performed after a resume has been received or when a person has met you and is looking to connect on LinkedIn. The person doing the search is looking for one, specific person.

Most times, people are searching not for a specific person but for a type of person with distinct skill sets and strengths. In this situation, the person conducting the search enters those skill sets as keywords into the LinkedIn search bar. For example, Figure 2-1 shows the results of a LinkedIn search for the keywords "LinkedIn Profile Writer." The search results display profiles that contain those keywords. Your profile never displays as a search result listing if those keywords do not exist within the profile. Therefore, to get found in searches, your profile must contain the keywords a person is using in the search.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface with the query "LinkedIn Profile Writer" entered in the search bar. The results page displays 5,126 results. The search filters are set to "People" and "All". The results list includes profiles for Donna Serdula, Audra Hammer Ross, Carmen Lobis, and Wendi Blessing, each with a thumbnail, name, LinkedIn ID, connection status, and a brief description of their current role and background. A "Connect" button is visible next to each profile.

FIGURE 2-1:
Search results for
the keywords,
"LinkedIn Profile
Writer."

Using Advanced People Search

The LinkedIn search bar is not the only search field within LinkedIn. When recruiters search LinkedIn, they often utilize LinkedIn's Advanced People Search. See what the Advanced People Search page looks like in Figure 2-2.

A screenshot of the LinkedIn Advanced People Search page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, My Network, Jobs, Interests, Business Services, and Go to Sales Navigator. A search bar shows 'Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...' with a magnifying glass icon and an 'Advanced' link. Below the search bar, a message says '12,418,959 results • View results in Sales Navigator'. There are three tabs: '1st Connections', '2nd Connections', and 'Group Members'. A callout box with an arrow points to the 'Advanced' link in the top right corner of the search bar area, with the text 'Click the Advanced link to see the Advanced People Search page'. The main search area is titled 'Advanced People Search'. It has several input fields: 'Keywords', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Title', 'Company', 'School', 'Location' (set to 'Anywhere'), and a 'Search' button. To the right of these fields is a sidebar titled 'Upgrade to access multiple' which lists various filters: 'Groups', 'Rosemont College Alumni Association', 'Executive Suite', 'Food Service Professionals Network', 'Rosemont College Alumni Networking Group', 'CCC Alumni', 'Central Catholic High School', 'Years of Experience', 'Function', 'Seniority Level', 'Interested In', 'Company Size', and 'When Joined'. The sidebar also includes a 'Save search' button and a gear icon for settings.

FIGURE 2-2:
Advanced People
Search.

The Advanced People Search page provides additional fields and filters to narrow your search to exactly your target results. You can search by location, current and past company, industry, school, and language. You can also drill in even deeper by searching by First and Last Names or Job Titles. Premium LinkedIn members get access to even more filters such as Years of Experience, Function, Seniority Level, Company Size, and more.

Recruiters typically search by the job titles they are trying to fill. If they are looking for a candidate in a specific area, they will add the Location to make sure they are only finding people within that area.

BOOLEAN SEARCH STRINGS

When super users of LinkedIn, such as recruiters, use Advanced People Search, they often use Boolean search operators and modifiers to limit and widen the scope of their searches so that they can find profiles that more precisely match their target results. The Keywords, First and Last Name, Title, and Company fields support the Boolean search modifiers of quotes and parenthesis, and the Boolean search operators AND, OR, and NOT.

If a recruiter is looking for an account manager, encasing the words “account manager” in quotes ensures he or she finds that exact phrase and not people with simply the words “account” and “manager” in their profiles. To broaden a search so that it includes profiles with one or more specific terms, use the Boolean search operator OR. For example, Sales OR salesperson OR “Account Manager” OR “Business Development.”

Follow these steps to use LinkedIn’s Advanced People Search:

- 1. Go to LinkedIn.com.**
- 2. From any LinkedIn page, click “Advanced,” which is found to the right of the LinkedIn search bar.**

The Advanced People Search box opens.
- 3. Enter your desired search terms into any of the open fields.**

Filter the search results by a selected geographic area or industry.
- 4. Click Search.**

The search results page appears.

Ensuring a Compelling and Attractive Search Result



REMEMBER

People use LinkedIn to find other people. They are looking for job candidates, service providers, strategic partnerships, and many other professional relationships. When someone clicks the search button on LinkedIn, he or she is confronted with a list of search results. It’s important that your profile turns up in the search results, but it’s even more imperative that your search result listing catches the searcher’s eye and compels him or her to click your listing to learn more about you.

Your search result listing is comprised of the following:

- » Your profile picture
- » Your name
- » Your headline
- » Your location and industry
- » Your current job title and company
- » Total connections in common
- » A link to similar LinkedIn members' profiles
- » If you are a first-degree connection, a link to the searcher's connection list



TIP

LinkedIn search results show more detail for Premium members. This longer search listing features the last three past professional job titles and companies.

Looking through pages and pages of LinkedIn search results is a daunting task. It's important to make sure your search result listing showcases you in the best light. For example, many recruiters and hiring managers actually skip past profiles that do not have a profile picture. The omission of a profile picture typically means that the LinkedIn user doesn't take the social network seriously, provides little detail to his or her career trajectory, and won't respond when an InMail message is sent. (InMail is a message that you send to a member not directly connected to you. Only Premium members have the ability to send InMail messages.) By including a profile picture, you are proving that you are a serious LinkedIn user and networker. I show you how to upload a profile picture in Chapter 6.

Let's see what your search result listing looks like by performing a name search for you:

1. Type your name into the LinkedIn search bar and click the magnifying glass icon (or press Enter or Return).

While you are typing, LinkedIn may provide you with suggestions from a drop-down list. Do not choose any of these suggestions. Upon pressing Enter or Return, search result listings appear.

2. Find your search result listing.

Your search result listing may be the only result, or if you have a common name, your listing may reside farther down the list of search results.

SHOULD I PAY FOR LinkedIn?

There are two types of accounts on LinkedIn: the free and the paid version. The free account is a good starting point for most users. It allows you to do almost everything the paid version does, only in limited numbers and with limited visibility. For example, a free account can only message people within his or her first-degree network, whereas Premium users have access to InMail and the Open Profile option, which enable them to communicate with people outside their first-degree network.

There are various types of paid accounts ranging from \$15.99 per month (Job Seeker; <https://premium.linkedin.com/jobsearch>) to \$899.99 per month (Recruiter Corporate; www.linkedin.com/premium/switcher/recruiter). The higher the price, the more you are able to do with LinkedIn.

Although the free account is a good starting point, if you plan on using LinkedIn for prospecting, recruiting, heavy searching, or to communicate with professionals outside your first-degree network, upgrading is necessary.

Premium account members get a badge on their profiles that identifies them as paid users. This badge is a great way to signal that you are a serious LinkedIn user and someone who is responsive to opportunities.

The Premium plans have many selling points that make the monthly or annual fee reasonable. One of my favorite features of the Premium accounts is the ability to see the full 90-day list of Who's Viewed Your Profile and insights into your audience, such as where they work and their job titles. You also get access to the Open Profile option, which enables you to freely communicate with other Premium members outside your first-degree network.

Depending on the Premium plan you choose, you may get additional search filters, more search result listings, a larger search listing that features more of your profile summary, expanded top profile rankings, job and applicant insights, more saved searches and unlimited profile searches, a larger profile picture (240 x 240 versus 200 x 200), access to the LinkedIn background image gallery, and company page business insights.

My recommendation is to start with the basic, free account. Once you start using LinkedIn more frequently, you will begin to feel restricted by the limits of the free account and upgrading will make sense.

3. Look at your search result and determine if it showcases you in the best light.

Did you upload a professional profile picture? Is your headline engaging? Read through the chapters in Part 2 of this book to learn how to optimize these different areas.

Look at Figure 2-3 to see the difference between an optimized and an unoptimized search result listing and the differences between a free and a paid user listing.



FIGURE 2-3:
An optimized
search result
versus an
unoptimized
result.

Understanding the Importance of Keywords

To appear in search results, you must identify what words people are using to find a person like you. What words would they type into LinkedIn search to find you? These search terms are your keywords.



REMEMBER

Your profile never appears in search results for terms that do not appear in your profile. In order to appear, your profile must contain those keywords people use to search.

How many keywords do you need? I suggest choosing five to ten main keywords to pepper throughout your profile. When you try to rank for too many keywords, you lose keyword density and you end up not ranking for anything.

Keywords don't have to be just one word. A keyword could be a phrase. For example, *profit and loss* may be three words, but it is considered one keyword.

Keywords must be descriptive and exact. *Problem-solver* and *dynamic professional* are not good keywords. These words are too general and can describe anyone from a top executive to an office manager. Good keywords are specific and reflective of key skills, strengths, core competencies, specialties, and abilities that differentiate you.

Here are some questions to help you determine your keywords:

- » In what industries have you worked?
- » What positions have you held?
- » What certifications have you earned?
- » What skill sets were listed on your last job description or resume?
- » What computer applications do you know?
- » What languages do you speak?
- » What services do you provide?
- » What topics are you an expert in?
- » What products do you sell?
- » What additional strengths or skill sets do you have?

Answering these questions provides you with a starting point. Now that you have a few keywords, the next step is to use one of several online keyword tools to find additional, related keywords.

The following is a list of keyword examples to get you thinking. These are real meat-and-potato keywords. Highlight or star the keywords that seem to fit you and your role. Once you have that list, use the keyword tools described in the next section to dive in deeper and find more keywords that fit you.

<u>Accounting</u>	Financial reporting/analysis
Account reconciliation	Financial statements
Auditing	Fixed assets
Budgets/budgeting/budget control	General ledger
Contract management	Internal controls
Corporate governance	Inventory management

Investment finance	P&L/Profit and loss
Investor relations	Policy development
Tax accounting	Process reengineering
Taxation	Profit building
Engineering	Restructuring
3D modeling	Start-up operations
Assembly design/modification	Turnaround strategies
Conceptualization	Human Resources
Consistency and compatibility	Business reengineering
Data collection and analysis	Compensation management/analysis
Design methodologies	Deferred compensation
Efficiency control	Dispute arbitration
Integrated solutions and services	Employee relations
Job costing	Job description development
Mission-critical programs	Labor relations
Process development	Leadership development
Process improvements	New Hire orientation
Project management	Performance management
Prototypes	Recruitment/recruiting
Resource allocation	Succession planning
Executive	Talent management
Budgeting	US Family and Medical Leave Act
Business plans	Workforce planning
Change management	Information Technology
Deal negotiations	Data center operations
International business	Database administration
IPOs	Fault analysis
Joint ventures	Information security
Operational streamlining	Infrastructure development

IT risk management	Inventory management
Multiplatform integration	Loss prevention
Network administration	Marketing strategy
Process reengineering	Merchandise planning
Quality assurance	Merchandising
Solutions delivery	Planograms
Systems configuration	POS terminals
Technical documentation	Sales management
Web-based technology	Shrinkage
Yield management	Store management
<u>Professor/Teacher</u>	<u>Store operations</u>
Brain-based learning	Team management
Classroom management	Visual merchandising
Classroom planning	<u>Sales and Marketing</u>
Curriculum design	Account expansion
Curriculum development	Account management
Discipline strategies	Account retention
Educational leadership	Channel development
Educational technology	Client relations
In-service training	Competitive analysis
Interdisciplinary teaching approaches	Contract negotiations
Lesson planning	Lead generation
Peer mentoring	Market analysis
Process improvement	New business development
Teacher-parent relations	Post-sale support
Technology integration	Product rollout
<u>Retail</u>	Proposal development
Assortment	Prospecting
Customer service/interpersonal skills	Sales forecasting

<u>Supply Chain</u>	<u>Telecommunications</u>
Asset management	3G
Cost reduction	Audio visual and peripheral equipment
Demand planning	Broadband
Distribution management	Customer service
Inventory control	Integration
Logistics planning	Internet protocol (IP)
Loss prevention	Network installations
Procurement	Product management
Purchasing	Project management
Quality control/assurance	Telephony
Route management	Value-added service
Shipping/receiving	Voice and data networks
Six Sigma	Voice over IP (VOIP)
Vendor relations	Wireless technology
Warehousing	

Using Online Keyword Tools

Coming up with the right keywords is challenging. The good news is that there are tools designed to assist you in finding the right keywords.



TIP

One of my favorite techniques to determine keywords is the word cloud. A *word cloud* is a way to visualize data. It is an image composed of words used in a particular piece of writing. The size of each word is determined by how many times the word is used or the importance of that word. A word cloud generator is an application that scans through text and provides a graphic output of words. The more often a specific word appears in inputted text, the larger and more colorful the word is shown in the word cloud. (My favorite word cloud generator is found at Wordle.net, which I discuss in the next section.)

To use a word cloud generator, you first need text for it to analyze. Use text from your current job description in digital format or find a similar job description online. If you are looking for your next opportunity, do an Internet search for a job description that fits your dream job. Don't worry whether the position is in your location or already filled. Most job descriptions are the same — right now you are just after the text and not the actual opportunity.

If you are not a job seeker but instead looking to brand yourself more effectively or showcase yourself as an expert thought leader, use the content of your company's website or marketing literature. There are also industry-related articles and whitepapers that you can use. Also check out the LinkedIn profiles of people you admire and copy their LinkedIn profile content into the generator. (But do not copy their content into your own profile!)

There are a number of word cloud generators out there on the Internet. Here are a few examples:

Tagul (<http://tagul.com>)
Tagxedo (www.tagxedo.com)
Word It Out (<http://worditout.com>)
Wordel.net (www.wordle.net)
Wordsift (www.wordsift.com)

Using Wordle.net

Wordle.net is my favorite free word cloud generator. I love it because not only is Wordle.net super easy to use, but also the resulting word clouds are visually beautiful.

Follow these steps to use Wordle.net to generate a word cloud for keyword discovery:

- 1. Find and copy the text you want to visualize for keywords by highlighting the text and pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).**
- 2. Open your web browser and go to wordle.net/create.**

A large, empty text box appears with the words, "Paste in a bunch of text.". Figure 2-4 shows the text input area of Wordle.net.

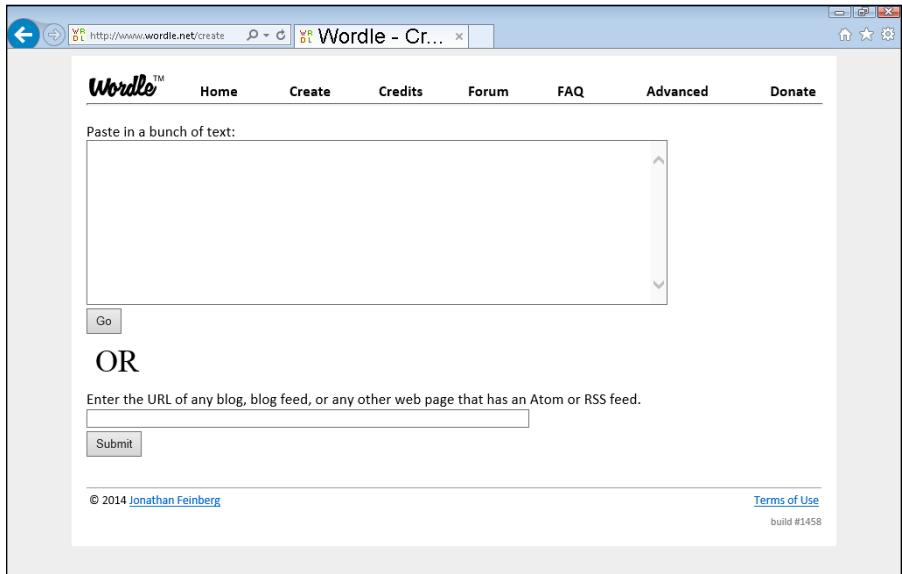


FIGURE 2-4:
Add text to
wordle.net to
create a word
cloud.

3. Paste the text into the Wordle.net text box.

Copy and paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing **Ctrl+C**/**⌘+C** to copy and **Ctrl+V**/**⌘+V** to paste.

The resulting word cloud visually shows you what words hold the most weight. These words are typically your keywords.

Check out Figure 2-5 to see what a word cloud looks like. I used a job description text to generate this word cloud. Clearly sales, management, business, and development are important keywords for this position.



FIGURE 2-5:
Here's what a
word cloud
looks like.

Hopefully your word cloud provided you a good strong list of keywords. If not, I have another keyword tool, and this one is found right in LinkedIn.

Using LinkedIn Topic pages

LinkedIn includes a section on its site devoted entirely to skill development called Topics. LinkedIn collects and analyzes the skills that are listed on the Skills & Endorsements section of members' LinkedIn profile pages. The most popular skills have Topic pages associated with them that present additional information. These Topic pages provide a description of the skill, the top companies where people with this skill work, other skills they share, and where they went to school. Additionally, you can see Lynda.com courses that help you develop the skill, posts members have written that deal with the skill, presentations on SlideShare that relate to the skills, and LinkedIn Groups connected to the skill. And at the very bottom of the Topic page, a list of related skills appears.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Lynda.com (www.lynda.com) is the leading provider of online video courses specializing in developing business, creative, education, and technical skills. LinkedIn acquired the company in 2015 and has integrated Lynda.com into the LinkedIn site. SlideShare (www.slideshare.net) was also acquired by LinkedIn (in 2012). SlideShare is a presentation slide hosting service where users can upload their presentation slides for others to browse and embed.

The related skills section of the Topic page is a great page to discover additional keywords. By visiting the Business Development Topic page, as shown in Figure 2-6, you'll see that other members with that skill also know: management, new business development, business strategy, strategic planning, and sales. These related skills may also describe your skill sets. If so, add them to your LinkedIn Skills section.

As helpful as the Topic pages are, LinkedIn doesn't provide an easy way to access the Topic page directory. To access the directory, follow these steps:

1. Go to www.linkedin.com/directory/topics/.

The LinkedIn Topic page directory appears.



TIP

Because LinkedIn doesn't provide an easy way to access such an important page, I recommend creating a browser bookmark.

2. In the **Browse By Name** category, click the first letter of the keyword you want to learn more about.

A new page displays with a list of keywords starting with that letter.

3. Click your desired keyword.

The Topic page for that keyword appears.

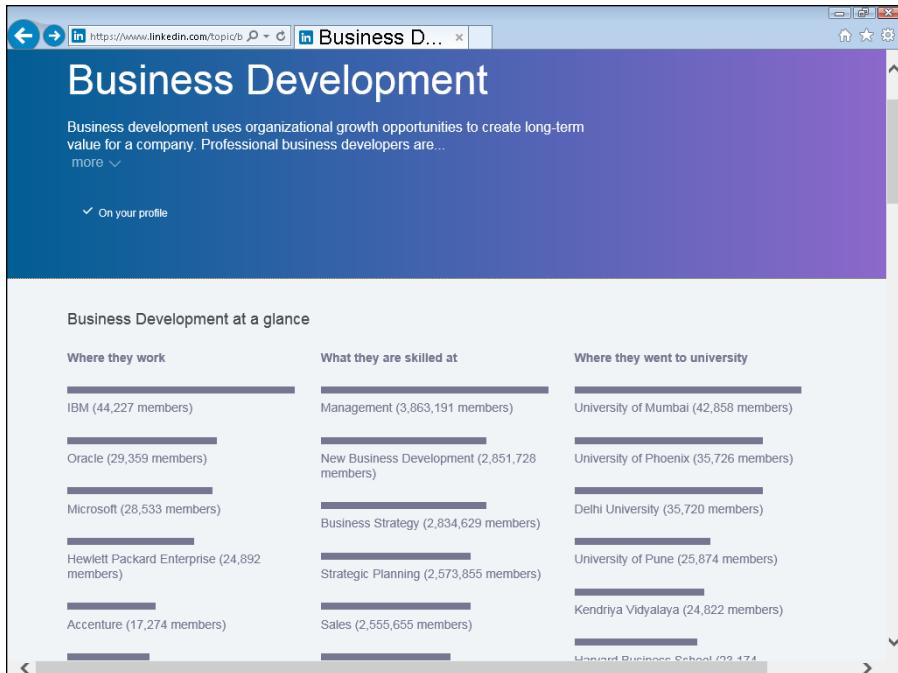


FIGURE 2-6:
Topic pages provide additional information on skills.

Using Google AdWords Keyword Planner

I have one more site in my arsenal of keyword tools to help you determine your keywords: Google AdWords Keyword Planner. This free online application helps you find keywords by utilizing Google's search history to determine related keywords.

To use Google AdWords Keyword Planner to find keywords, follow these steps:

1. **Go to <https://adwords.google.com/KeywordPlanner> and sign into your Google account.**
If you don't have a Google account, create one by selecting "Create an account" in the upper right corner.
2. **Once you are signed in, under the heading, "Find new keywords and get search volume data," expand the section that reads, "Search for new keywords using a phrase, website, or category" by clicking the right arrow.**
The area expands and you see a number of new fields.
3. **In the field marked, Your Product or Service, type the keyword you want to see more related keywords ideas.**

4. Click the Get Ideas button.

A graph displaying the average monthly search numbers appears.

5. Click the Keyword Ideas tab under the graph.

You see a list of related keywords.

By searching for the keyword, Conflict Resolution, Google AdWords Keyword Planner provides you with *conflict management*, *mediation*, and *dispute resolution*.

Once you determine your keywords, write them down. Don't make the mistake of trying to remember them in your head. It's important to keep these keywords in front of you so you can work them into your LinkedIn profile in an organic, natural manner. In Figure 2-7 is a blank form to use to jot down your keywords.

My LinkedIn Keywords

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

FIGURE 2-7:
Write down your
keywords!

Ranking Higher with Profile SEO

SEO stands for *search engine optimization*. It is the process of making certain strategic changes to a profile to boost its search ranking. By putting in a little effort, you can improve your profile's ranking so it appears more often and higher in search. Certain areas within your profile are highly sensitive to the addition of keywords. When you add keywords to these areas, the LinkedIn search algorithm treats these keywords with more weight and your profile ranks higher on the search results page. These highly sensitive SEO fields are:

- » Headline
- » Summary section

- » Skills & Expertise section
- » Job titles (especially current)
- » Job descriptions

Make sure these five areas are rich in your chosen keywords. Don't just list keywords in the summary and job description fields. Use your keywords intentionally yet naturally in your narrative. Write for your reader first and the search engine second.

The more times a keyword is repeated, the higher you may rank for that keyword in LinkedIn search results. Although repeating keywords is a good thing, it's easy to become obnoxious, so be careful not to overdo it!

Figure 2-8 demonstrates the difference between strategic keyword usage and obnoxious keyword stuffing.

Obnoxious Keyword Repetition

Sales, sales, sales, sales, sales, sales,
sales, sales, sales, sales, sales...

Unobnoxious Keyword Repetition

As an account manager & sales leader
who specializes in the sales & marketing
of EMR software, I utilize solution
selling and consultative selling in my
sales process.



You can rank higher by repeating your keywords ad nauseam, but when your target reader opens your profile and sees the repetition, they are turned off and exit from your profile and move on to the next search result listing. Keyword abuse doesn't impress anyone. In fact, LinkedIn has been known to delete profiles that are abusive in their keyword stuffing technique. Ultimately, you want to be strategic and smart when peppering your profile with keywords, not obnoxious.

Building Off Profile SEO

In addition to building a powerful profile enriched with keywords, another way to increase your LinkedIn search ranking is to have a large number of connections within your LinkedIn network.

When a person searches LinkedIn, they are not searching the entire LinkedIn database of users. They are only searching their LinkedIn network. Your LinkedIn

network extends three degrees. Your first-degree connections are the people who have accepted your LinkedIn connection invitation and ones you have accepted. Second-degree connections are those people who are first-degree connections of your first-degree connections. Third-degree connections are the first-degree connections of your second-degree connections. Additionally, any people who are in a LinkedIn Group that you belong to are also considered part of your LinkedIn network.

Figure 2-9 is a visualization of your LinkedIn network. Your network increases exponentially as you add more first-degree connections.

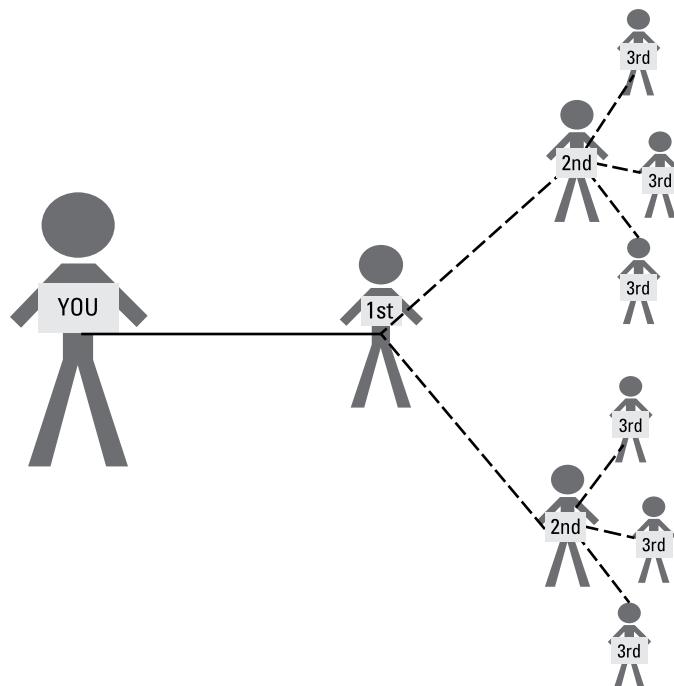


FIGURE 2-9:

There is a clear structure to your LinkedIn network.

When people perform a LinkedIn search, the resulting profiles are from their LinkedIn network. Every now and then you may see a person from outside your LinkedIn network; however, when that happens, you are prevented from seeing that person's full name and that person's profile may not be completely accessible to you.

LinkedIn ranks the profiles of people directly related to you first. This means the more people you are connected to directly, the higher you rank in a LinkedIn search.



WARNING

LinkedIn cautions that you should only connect with people you know and trust. I agree, but I believe you should remain open to all opportunities. I do not suggest aiming low and wide to connect with everyone and their brothers. However, if a person you do not know sends a connection request, visit his or her profile. Is this person in the same industry? Do you share a similar network of connections or belong to the same LinkedIn Groups? As long as the person doesn't look overly suspicious, it's okay to accept this person into your network. You never know if a connection of theirs may one day be searching for someone like you, and accepting the invitation today means you'll be found tomorrow for a fantastic opportunity.

In the next chapter, let's see how to take your keywords and add them to LinkedIn's Skills & Endorsements section.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Showcasing your skill sets and strengths
- » Leveraging your skills for SEO purposes
- » Soliciting endorsements and endorsing others
- » Hiding and removing endorsements

Chapter 3

Understanding Skills and Endorsements

The Skills & Endorsements section is a much maligned area of the LinkedIn profile. Whenever I speak to groups about LinkedIn, there is always someone in the crowd who jumps up and asks, “What is the point of Skills & Endorsements?” The crowd goes wild, and I am left defending this poor section of the profile.

As I show you in this chapter, the bad reputation of the Skills & Endorsements section is not deserved. This section is simply a place to list your skills and strengths and allow your connections to publicly validate them with an endorsement.

In this chapter we look at how to take the keywords you discovered in Chapter 2 and turn them into skills in the Skills & Endorsements section where your connections can endorse them. I show you how easy it is to add and rearrange those skills to expertly showcase your skill sets and strengths. I also show you how to obtain endorsements, how to hide or remove an endorsement you don’t necessarily want, and how to endorse others.

Showcasing Your Skills

The skills and strengths you list in the Skills & Endorsements section of your LinkedIn profile are the keywords you discovered in Chapter 2. Think of LinkedIn Skills as your expertise boiled down to just single words. LinkedIn Skills aren't just there to describe you; they are listed for your first-degree connections to validate and endorse. The Skills section is shown in Figure 3-1.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Skills & Endorsements section. At the top, it says "Skills & Endorsements". Below that, under "Top Skills", there is a list of ten skills, each with a blue button indicating the number of endorsements (99+). To the right of each skill is a grid of small profile pictures of people who have endorsed that skill. The skills listed are: Personal Branding, Public Speaking, Business Strategy, LinkedIn Profile Writing, Keynote, LinkedIn Profile..., Online Marketing, Marketing Strategy, LinkedIn Expert, and LinkedIn Profile Writer. Below this, it says "Donna also knows about..." followed by a list of six more skills: Social Media Marketing, LinkedIn, Social Media, Social Networking, Blogging, Facebook, Business Development, Online Advertising, Sales, and Web Design.

FIGURE 3-1:
The Skills &
Endorsements
section.

The following keywords are examples of excellent skills and strengths in the Skills & Endorsements section:

- Change Management
- Strategic Planning
- Conflict Resolution
- Customer Service
- Entrepreneur
- Employee Relations

WHY THE BAD REPUTATION?

Sadly, the Skills & Endorsements section has gotten a bad rap. One reason many people dislike the Skills & Endorsements area with such intense fury has more to do with how others abuse it. Rather than genuinely endorsing people for skills that a person is proud of, there are people who willy-nilly endorse people for any skill listed. This often leaves the person receiving the endorsement feeling slighted and misunderstood. For example, perhaps you listed Email Marketing as a skill on your profile. A person who has never worked with you or experienced your extraordinary email marketing skills endorses you for email marketing. Suddenly, what should be a compliment suddenly seems inauthentic and sycophantic.

Keywords that don't translate so well as skills include:

- Problem-solver
- Dynamic
- Professional
- Engaging
- Interesting
- Friendly



TIP

The excellent keywords are excellent because they are specific and could appear on a job description. Skills should reflect your expertise, competencies, specialties, or abilities that you possess. *Problem-solver, dynamic, interesting, and friendly* aren't great keywords to list. While they are all positive terms, these terms could describe anyone in any industry. The key is to be specific; your listed skills should describe you and your unique abilities and strengths.

Adding skills

To showcase your strengths and get endorsed for your expertise you must add skills to your profile. LinkedIn allows you to add up to 50 skills. If you completed Chapter 2 and have a list of your keywords, get that list out now. If not, no worries!

If you are a job seeker, simply locate a job description of your current position and review it to see the keywords that describe your abilities. For sales professionals using LinkedIn to prospect, visit your company's website. Scan through the pages

for words used to describe your service offering or products. Those of you who are interested in reputation management and branding, think in terms of your strengths and expertise.

To add your skills to your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

If you already have skills listed on your profile page, go to Step 3. If you don't have any skills listed yet, continue to Step 2.

2. Click the Skills section that appears toward the top of your profile to add the Skills & Endorsements section.

You may need to click View More to find this section. When clicked, the Skills & Endorsements section appears on your profile.

3. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section.

4. Move your cursor over Skills & Endorsements and click the +Add Skill button that appears.

An empty Skills & Endorsements screen appears, as shown in Figure 3-2.

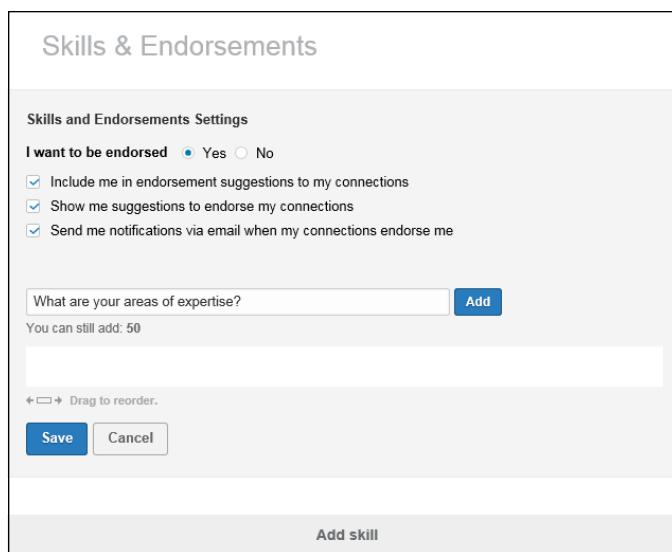


FIGURE 3-2:
An empty Skills &
Endorsements
section.

5. Type the name of a skill in the “What are your areas of expertise” text box or choose it from the drop-down list that appears after you type a few letters.

If your skill doesn’t appear, completely type in the skill name in the field. There is an 80-character limit for each skill.

6. Click Add.

The skill is added to your Skills list.

7. Click Save.



TIP

You can add up to 50 skills to your profile. Don’t focus on trying to list 50 skills. It’s quality versus quantity here. Concentrate on 15 to 20 core skills. When you focus on adding 50 skills, you end up adding some skills of lesser importance. Because LinkedIn allows others to endorse you, you may find some of these lower skills are endorsed and elevated on your profile. If you do get up to 50, that’s great, but don’t kill yourself trying.

Rearranging skills

Skills are listed in the order in which they are added. Once you start getting endorsements, skills with the most endorsements are listed first. However, you can rearrange the order of endorsed skills by drag and drop. Here’s how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll down to Skills & Endorsements.
3. Click the pencil (edit) icon next to the skill you wish to move, as shown in Figure 3-3.
4. Drag and drop the skills where you want them to appear in the list, as shown in Figure 3-4.

When moving skills, make sure you keep your mouse button pressed on the skill you wish to move, drag your mouse to the top or bottom of the list, and then release. Skills without endorsements can’t be arranged higher than a skill with endorsement.

5. When you have finished organizing your skills, click the Save button.

Click to enter edit mode

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage with the 'PREMIUM' banner at the top. Below it, the 'Top Skills' section is displayed. On the left, a vertical list of skills is shown with small edit icons to their right. To the right of this list is a grid of user profile pictures. Below the skills list, there is a section titled 'Donna also knows about...' followed by another grid of user profiles.

FIGURE 3-3:
Click any of the many pencil icons to get into edit mode.

Drag and drop to rearrange skills

The screenshot shows the 'Skills & Endorsements' settings page. At the top, there is a section for 'Skills and Endorsements Settings' with options for being endorsed and checkboxes for endorsement suggestions. Below this is a 'Add & Remove' section with a text input for expertise areas and a list of skills. The skill list includes 'Personal Branding', 'LinkedIn', 'Social Media Marketing', 'Social Networking', 'Blogging', 'Facebook', 'Business Development', 'Online Advertising', 'Sales', 'Web Design', 'New Business Development', 'Lead Generation', 'Networking', 'Marketing Communications', 'Digital Marketing', and 'Direct Marketing'. Each skill item has a small circular handle on its left side, indicating it can be dragged to rearrange the list.

FIGURE 3-4:
Drag and drop skills to arrange them in your desired order.

Obtaining Endorsements

Once you have skills listed on your profile, LinkedIn allows people to endorse you for those skills. By allowing others to endorse you, the Skills & Endorsements section provides credibility and validity that isn't available anywhere else. Sure, you can list your core competencies on your resume, but it's only on your LinkedIn profile where your first-degree connections can endorse you and prove that you really do possess that skill. The more endorsements you have for a skill on your LinkedIn profile, the more credible you appear.

As explained in Chapter 2, LinkedIn search is driven by keywords, and LinkedIn wants its search results to be relevant and valuable to the person searching. By allowing connections to validate skills through endorsements, it allows LinkedIn a way to determine search result listings via a manner that is independent of the owner of the profile. At one time, LinkedIn's search results rankings were based solely on keyword density. As long as you stated your keyword more than anyone else did in their profiles, your profile showed up first. Clearly, this was an easy way to hack and skew the search results in your favor. By providing the ability to endorse others and basing search results on an area that is outside the control of a user, results ranking is harder to hack, thereby creating a better search result.



TIP

There is no maximum limit to endorsements (although you are limited by the number of first-degree connections within your network); however, LinkedIn only shows up to 99. After 99, LinkedIn displays 99+. To display the total number of endorsers of a particular skill, just click the 99+ icon to see the full number and a list of endorsers.

Most people confuse endorsements and recommendations. I like to call endorsements "Recommendations Lite." Endorsements occur with a single click of the mouse. Recommendations on the other hand are a written testimonial from a connection and require much more energy and thought.



TIP

When torn between providing a person with a recommendation or an endorsement, determine how much time you have allotted and what you want to convey. If you only have a few seconds, endorsements work just fine. If you want to say more than just one word and truly convey a message about the person, a recommendation is in order.

Hiding an endorsement

Did someone disreputable endorse you for a skill? Hide that endorsement so it doesn't show on your profile. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section.

3. Hover your mouse pointer over an endorsement you want to hide and click the pencil (edit) icon.
 4. Click the Manage Endorsements link that appears to the right of Add & Remove.
 5. Click a skill to show the connections who endorsed you for that skill.
- In Figure 3-5 you can see all of the connections who endorsed me for *Personal Branding*.
6. Uncheck the box next to any connections whose endorsements you want to hide.
 7. Click the Save button.

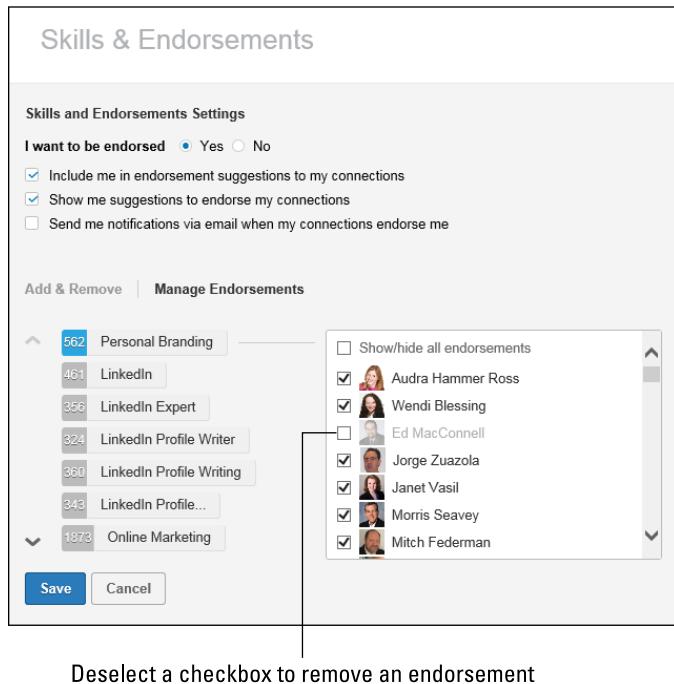


FIGURE 3-5:
Removing an endorsement is
as easy as
unchecked a box.

Opting out of endorsements

Although I highly recommend embracing endorsements, there are some jobs in which endorsements are frowned upon. Financial advisors, for example, often prefer to opt out of LinkedIn's endorsement feature for compliance and regulation reasons.

If you wish to opt out of receiving endorsements, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
 - 2. Scroll down to Skills & Endorsements and click +Add Skill button.**
 - 3. Under "Skills & Endorsements Settings," click No after "I Want to be Endorsed."**
- After selecting No, LinkedIn indicates that it will show your skills but not your endorsements.
- 4. Click the Save button.**

Endorsing a connection

Most people focus on getting endorsements, but it's just as important to give endorsements. Endorsements are a great way to remind connections that you recognize their strengths. By endorsing connections, you are showing acknowledgement and respect for their areas of expertise. Think of endorsements as a "thumbs up" from a business acquaintance. It's an easy way to say, "Hey, I remember you and respect your skill set."

When giving endorsements, read through the person's entire list of skills and endorse those skills that you are able to authentically validate from personal experience with that person.

Here's how to endorse a connection's skills:

- 1. Visit the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to endorse.**
- 2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsement section.**
- 3. Hover over the skill you want to endorse and click the plus (+) sign that appears to the right of it.**

You can endorse numerous skills; just keep clicking the plus (+) signs.



Endorse your first-degree connections honestly and genuinely. No one wants to be endorsed by someone who is only guessing at their skills. When you make a thoughtful endorsement of a connection you admire, that person is more likely to return the favor in kind.

There may be times you receive endorsements from people within your network that you don't know all that well or at all. This is especially true when you are an open networker and connect with people regardless of whether you know them or not. These first-degree connections that you don't know so well may endorse you

because they know of your work and wish to promote positivity in the world. They also may hope that you operate with a quid quo pro mentality and want you to endorse them right back. Do not feel strong-armed! Endorse people because you appreciate their work, not because you feel guilt.



REMEMBER

You are only able to endorse first-degree connections. When you visit a profile of a second-degree, third-degree, or Out of Network profile, you see their skills and endorsements but the plus (+) sign to endorse does not appear.

When viewing your LinkedIn home page newsfeed, every now and then LinkedIn may show you several first-degree connections and provide you the ability to endorse them for skills they have listed on their profiles (see Figure 3-6). This prompt is a great way to keep in touch with connections and show your appreciation for their strengths. By clicking the Show More link, you can cycle through more suggestions.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn newsfeed interface. At the top, there's a profile card for Donna Serdula, followed by activity stats: 54 people viewed her profile in the past day and 22 people viewed her post in the past 7 days. Below this, there are three endorsement suggestions:

- Isabel Aristizabal** for Social Media Marketing (with an 'Endorse' button)
- Sarat Nair** ✓ Let's co... for Business Development (with an 'Endorse' button)
- Steve Strickland, PMP** for Marketing (with an 'Endorse' button)

A blue banner above these suggests "20+ new updates". To the right, there's a sidebar with a headline "15 ways to keep in touch" and a snippet about Nora Frostbrink having a new job. At the bottom right of the main feed area, there's a "Show more >" link. The bottom of the screen shows standard LinkedIn navigation links: About, Help, Feedback, Privacy & Terms.

FIGURE 3-6:
Endorsing others
from LinkedIn's
newsfeed
prompt.

Removing an endorsement

Did you endorse someone only to learn that you would prefer to disassociate from them? Remove your endorsement from their profile by performing a few easy steps:

1. Visit the LinkedIn profile of the person you endorsed.
2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section.

3. Hover your cursor over the plus (+) sign next to the skill you endorsed.

The words “Remove Endorsement” appear, as shown in Figure 3-7.

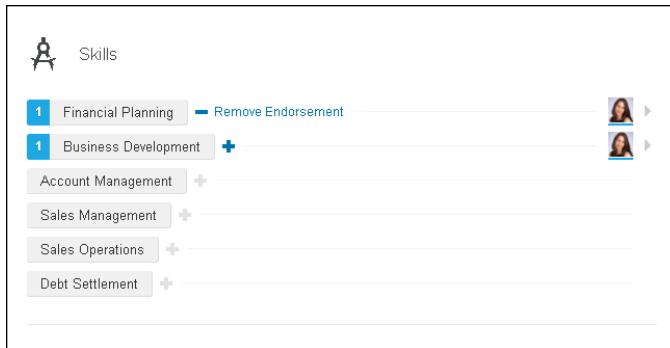


FIGURE 3-7:
Removing an
Endorsement.

4. Click Remove Endorsement.

Don’t worry; the recipient is not notified of the removal.

Soliciting endorsements

Are you not receiving endorsements from your connections? Sometimes all it takes is a nudge. Rather than sit and stare at your lonely Skills & Endorsements section, get proactive and send your connections an email. Send a simple LinkedIn message to a few of your close connections and ask them to endorse you. Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the oil!

Following are two sample messages to send to connections with whom you recently finished a project or whom you’ve recently endorsed. The first is an example of requesting an endorsement after finishing up a project or other work with a client:

If you were happy with my work I performed at Widgets, Inc., would you be so kind as to endorse me on LinkedIn?

It’s just a simple click of a button. The skills and expertise I would like to be endorsed for are Project Management, Leadership Team Building, and SEO.

All you need to do is visit my profile and scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section located under my Summary.

Here’s the link to my profile: www.linkedin.com/in/todonna.

The next is an example of requesting an endorsement using the power of quid pro quo:

I just endorsed you for Project Management and Leadership Strategy on your LinkedIn profile.

If you're comfortable with it, would you do the same for me?

There's 50 skills to choose from. All you need to do is visit my profile: www.linkedin.com/in/todonna.

When your connections do endorse you, make sure you reach out and thank them. Call them on the phone or send them a message via LinkedIn. Use LinkedIn as an excuse to get in touch. This is a great way to continue to network and forge strong relationships.

In the next chapter I show you how to jump in and start building your profile. Don't worry, the very first thing I cover in Chapter 4 is how to turn off profile updates so your entire network isn't alerted to the massive changes about to take place!



Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started

IN THIS PART . . .

Look at how to optimize the invisible nooks and crannies of your profile, including how to create a customized link to your profile and market your profile for more views.

Learn how to improve your profile's strength, even if you don't have a current position or don't have a school degree.

Set up your digital "calling card" — the upper most section of your profile — and give readers an optimized overview of who you are.

Understand why it is important to include your contact information and how and where to add it to your profile.

See why you need a profile picture and how to present yourself in the best possible light.

Craft a compelling headline to grab your readers' attention and make them want to learn more about you.

Look at how to add flair to your headline, including adding symbols and saturating your headline with keywords.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Keeping your profile changes a secret
- » Knowing when LinkedIn sends out an activity update on your behalf
- » Creating a customized link to your profile for marketing
- » Marketing your profile for more profile views

Chapter 4

Optimizing the “Behind the Scenes” Sections

Not every part of your LinkedIn profile is there for the whole wide world to see. In this chapter, I take you behind the scenes of your profile to make sure every invisible nook and cranny is optimized for success. You learn how not to bombard your LinkedIn connections with notifications that you updated your profile. You also discover when and how to turn notifications back on and how that helps you rank higher in LinkedIn search.

Managing Profile Changes

When you make changes to your LinkedIn profile, a notification is sent out alerting your network. Activity updates are broadcast to your connections’ LinkedIn home page newsfeeds and appear on your profile’s Recent Activity page. By seeing your profile updates on their newsfeeds, your connections are reminded of you and they may find themselves compelled to click on your profile to learn more.

LinkedIn updates are broadcast to your connections if you perform the following changes to your profile:

- » Upload or edit your profile picture
- » Add a new link to a website
- » Add a new job position
- » Edit the title of your current position
- » Add additional skills to your profile

LinkedIn also sends notifications if you perform any of the following additional activities:

- » Recommend someone
- » Add a connection
- » Follow a LinkedIn university page
- » Follow a LinkedIn company page
- » Join a LinkedIn Group
- » Post or comment on discussions within a LinkedIn Group
- » Have a current work experience anniversary
- » Upgrade to a premium account (with the exception of Job Seeker)
- » Follow an influencer, channel, or publisher
- » Share content on your newsfeed or as a published post
- » Comment on or like connections' shared content

Turning off update alerts

Regardless of the benefits, there may be times when you don't want people to know you are making changes to your LinkedIn profile. For example, if you are updating your LinkedIn profile in preparation of a new job search, it's best your employer isn't notified of such a change. Or you may be giving your profile page a complete overhaul, and you don't want to bombard your network with information about each and every change. Luckily, LinkedIn provides the ability to turn off the activity updates associated with profile changes and even delete your recent activity notifications.

To turn off LinkedIn update alerts, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Locate the Notify Your Network box located in the far right column of your profile page, as shown in Figure 4-1.
3. Toggle the Yes/No button so that it reads, “No, do not publish an update to my network about my profile changes.”

Now, changes that you make to your profile are confidential.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page for a user named Donna Serdula. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, My Network, Jobs, Interests, Advanced search, Business Services, and Go to Sales Navigator. The main content area has a 'Summary' section with a bio and mission statement. On the right side, there's a sidebar titled 'Notify your network?'. It contains a checkbox labeled 'No, do not publish an update to my network about my profile changes.' with the 'No' option selected. Below the sidebar, there are two thumbnail images: one for 'Business Insider SUCCESS LINKEDIN TIPS' and another for 'Business INSIDER WORKHACKER LINKEDIN TIPS'.

FIGURE 4-1:
Select No to turn
off update alerts.



Turning off profile updates doesn't turn off your profile visibility. It's the notification of your edits that is turned off; your profile is still on and any changes that you save are visible to visitors of your profile.

Manually removing updates

Did you get excited and start updating your LinkedIn profile without turning off your activity update notifications? Now these changes are on your recent activity screen and quickly hitting your connections' newsfeeds. Don't worry! You can manually remove these updates even after they are broadcast out. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Move your cursor over the down arrow icon that appears to the right of the View Profile As button.

3. Select View Recent Activity.

Your recent activity appears.

4. Hover your mouse pointer over the update you want to delete, and then move your mouse to the upper right corner of the update.

A down arrow appears, as shown in Figure 4-2.

5. Click the down arrow and then select Delete.

The selected update is deleted from the Recent Activity log on your profile.

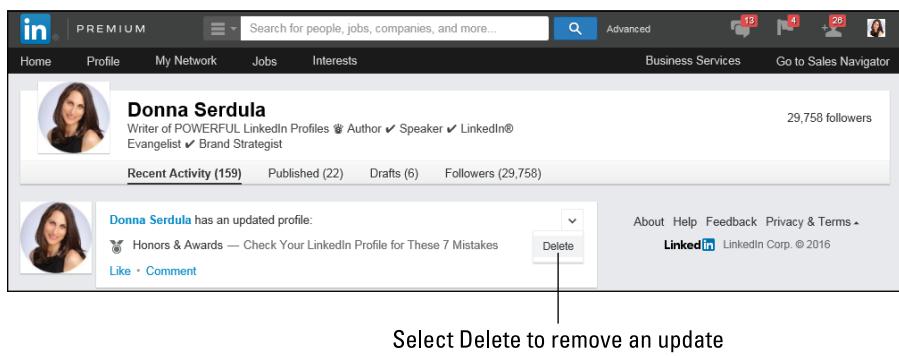


FIGURE 4-2:
Manually remove
an update by
selecting Delete.

Knowing when to allow update alerts

Once your profile is optimized and you are ready to unleash it into the world, scroll back down to the Notify Your Network box on the right side of your profile and toggle the button to Yes. Don't worry; all of the updates that you recently made to your profile are not broadcasted out to your connections. Only new changes to your profile since toggling the Notify Your Network box to Yes appear on your connections' LinkedIn home page newsfeeds and your Recent Activity page.



TIP

You may feel the temptation to keep those update notifications set to No all the time, but I highly suggest allowing update alerts. Often when people see you made changes to your profile, they are compelled to visit your profile. Most people want more views to their LinkedIn profile, and this is such an easy way to drive traffic to it. Don't feel shy. Your network wants to stay up to date on your professional career.

Once you are finished updating your profile, toggle the Notify Your Network button to Yes. Go back to your profile and make a single change to trigger an update. My suggestion is to edit the title of your current position. This way you are now alerting your network that a change has occurred, but you are not inundating them with a lot of changes.

CREATING A HIGH-RANKING PROFILE

As I discuss in Chapter 2, LinkedIn is more than a professional social network. It is also a search engine of profiles. As such, it is in LinkedIn's best interest to ensure that the profiles that appear in search results are relevant and pertinent to the person searching. Profiles that are freshly updated are often rewarded with higher placement in search results than a profile that hasn't been touched in years. LinkedIn wants to deliver the right results, and an old, out-of-date profile should never rank high in LinkedIn search.

Get into the habit of updating your profile at least once a month. Not only are you keeping your profile fresh, but also you are ensuring that your profile ranks high for those people looking for someone like you.

Turning On Your Public Profile

Your LinkedIn profile is not just visible within LinkedIn. You can allow the world the ability to see your profile by turning on public version of your profile. Once your public profile is turned on, it is indexed by search engines and returned as a search result for pertinent searches. Anyone can view your public profile regardless of whether they are logged in to LinkedIn or not.

Your profile on LinkedIn is your outpost on LinkedIn. Not everyone is on LinkedIn, and your public profile acts as your outpost on the entire World Wide Web.

If you want your public profile to be found and seen outside of LinkedIn, follow these steps to turn it on:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the LinkedIn profile URL located under your profile photo and click the gear icon that appears (see Figure 4-3).**
- 3. Under the section, “Customize Your Public Profile” located in the right column, select the radio button next to “Make my public profile visible to everyone,” as shown in Figure 4-4.**
- 4. Click Save.**

Your LinkedIn profile now appears in search engines and is visible to non-LinkedIn members.

Gear icon

FIGURE 4-3:
Click the gear icon to customize your public profile URL.

FIGURE 4-4:
You can control how your profile appears outside of LinkedIn.

In addition to controlling whether your profile is visible by the public, you determine the profile sections that appear for public consumption. Depending on your privacy needs, you choose what sections appear and which remain hidden.

As shown in Figure 4-4, some sections can be toggled on or off like honors and awards, organizations, interests, and so on. Other sections have enhanced controls.

For example, you can turn off your current experience but leave your past experiences on. You may choose to show your current or past job titles but not the job description details. This works well when you want to show your career trajectory, but not allow the public to see every accomplishment and responsibility.



REMEMBER

Although you can toggle sections off, remember, this is only your public profile. Logged-in LinkedIn members see all completed profile sections.

Here's how to preview your public profile and turn sections on and off:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the LinkedIn profile URL located under your profile photo and click the gear icon that appears.**
- 3. In the "Customize Your Public Profile" section, use your mouse to select each checkbox next to the sections you wish to appear in your public profile.**

Clicking a checked box removes the check and prevents that section from appearing. As you add and remove sections, you can preview what your public profile looks like to the outside world.

- 4. Scroll down to see a preview of your profile.**
- 5. When you are satisfied with your choices, click Save.**

You may feel compelled to turn off your public profile and prevent people from outside LinkedIn to view it. Your LinkedIn profile is intended to tell your story and control how others see you. I strongly advise you to take a deep breath and leave your public profile on and visible.

It's a different world out there, and people are interested in learning more about you. By providing them with your LinkedIn profile — *your story told your way* — you are allowing them to find something out about you on your own terms. By preventing this information, the person looking to learn more about you may decide to dig even deeper and find information about you that you cannot control.

Creating a Personalized URL

There may be times you want to send people directly to your LinkedIn profile. Most people include a link to their profiles in their resume letterhead, email signatures, website bios, or even on business cards. Providing a link to your profile is even more important when you have a common name. Without a link, a person

wanting to connect to you on LinkedIn must perform a name search. It's not easy finding the right John Smith or Peter Jones in 10 pages of search results. Alternatively, it's hard to find the right Charles or Jennifer. Did they list their name as Chuck, Charlie, Charles, Jenna, Jen, Jenny, or Jennifer?

Whatever you do, don't copy the URL in the address bar of your browser while in edit mode. It looks something like this:

```
https://www.linkedin.com/profile/edit?trk=nav_responsive_sub_nav_edit_profile
```

A person who uses that URL in hopes to find yours will visit their own LinkedIn profile instead. LinkedIn uses dynamic URLs that pull content from their database depending on user input. That dynamic URL works for you now, but it's not static and won't necessarily work in the same way if you copy it and paste it for someone else's use.

Instead, you want to provide a direct link to your public profile with a customized URL. LinkedIn automatically assigns your profile a static web address link. However, this default address is a jumble of letters and numbers that is not easy to remember or market. Luckily, LinkedIn gives you the ability to change this URL to one that is easy to remember and easy to promote, something that looks like this:

```
https://www.linkedin.com/in/firstname.lastname
```

Here's how you create a customized link to your LinkedIn profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the LinkedIn profile URL located under your profile photo and click the gear icon that appears.**
- 3. Under the section, "Your public profile URL," which appears in the right column, click the pencil (edit) icon next to your URL, as shown in Figure 4-5.**
- 4. Type your new customized URL in the text box that appears (see Figure 4-6).**

Your custom URL can have 5 to 30 letters or numbers. Spaces, symbols, or special characters are not allowed. The customizable part of the URL is case insensitive. This means DavidJones or davidjones take you to the same profile.

- 5. Click Save.**

Public Profile

Donna Serdula Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles. Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!

Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current	Vision Board Media LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula, LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile	500+ connections
Previous	Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc	
Education	Rosemont College	
Recommendations	122 people have recommended Donna	
Websites	Visit My Website, click here! SERVICES & PRICING Keynote Speaker	

Published by Donna See more »

Your public profile URL

Enhance your personal brand by creating a custom URL for your LinkedIn public profile.

www.linkedin.com/in/todonna

Customize Your Public Profile

Control how you appear when people search for you on Google, Yahoo!, Bing, etc.

[Learn more ▾](#)

Make my public profile visible to no one
 Make my public profile visible to everyone
 Basics
 Picture
 Headline
 Websites
 Posts

FIGURE 4-5:
Click the pencil icon to edit your URL.

Type the new URL here

Public Profile

Donna Serdula Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles. Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!

Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current	Vision Board Media LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula, LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile	500+ connections
Previous	Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc	
Education	Rosemont College	
Recommendations	122 people have recommended Donna	
Websites	Visit My Website, click here! SERVICES & PRICING Keynote Speaker	

Published by Donna See more »

Your public profile URL

Enhance your personal brand by creating a custom URL for your LinkedIn public profile.

www.linkedin.com/in/todonna

Save **Cancel**

Note: Your custom URL must contain 5-30 letters or numbers. Please do not use spaces, symbols, or special characters.

Customize Your Public Profile

Control how you appear when people search for you on Google, Yahoo!, Bing, etc.

[Learn more ▾](#)

Make my public profile visible to no one

FIGURE 4-6:
Customize your public profile URL to one that is easy to remember.



TIP

Recruiters often tell me that a personalized URL is a sign that the person has kept up with technology and is a true professional. Recruiters won't pass by a profile because of a non-customized URL, but they may pass silent judgment on that candidate.

Using your name

When choosing the text for your customized URL, don't worry about getting creative. Choose your name because it is *your* profile. Whatever you do, do not use your company's name for the URL. Your public URL is a permanent link to your LinkedIn profile. Companies are not permanent, and although you can change your URL, old links with the old URL may exist for some time. Create a URL that is permanent by using the one thing that is permanent for you: your name.

Oh no, my name is taken!

Unfortunately, most common names are already taken. When this happens, you simply must find an alternative way of stating your name.

Pretend your name is David Jones. Here are some ideas of re-phrasing your name that might not yet be taken:

- » First initial and last name: Djones
- » First name, middle initial, and last name: DavidXJones
- » First and middle initial and last name: DXJones



TIP

I highly discourage users from adding numbers to the end of their customized URLs. When I see a number at the end of a URL, I think the person is just one of many. A number gives the feeling of an assembly line of professionals rather than a unique brand. When your name is taken and there is no other way of stating it, utilize a prefix rather than a numerical suffix.

Here are some ideas:

- » ToDavidJones
- » GoDavidJones
- » ImDavidJones
- » theDavidJones
- » SeeDavidJones
- » YourDavidJones
- » VisitDavidJones

Marketing your public profile URL

The beauty of your LinkedIn profile is that when people visit, they can connect with you. By connecting with you, they are subscribing to your activity feed. When you post an activity update or blog, they receive a notification. By driving people to your profile and asking them to connect, you are ensuring a long relationship with them rather than a once-and-done visit.

There are a number of areas you can place your public profile link:

- » Brochures
- » Business cards
- » Email signature
- » Facebook profile
- » Letterhead
- » Resume
- » Sales literature
- » Tattoo across your forehead (just teasing!)
- » Twitter bio
- » Website

Improving Your Profile's Strength

LinkedIn cares about your profile. It wants you to take your profile seriously and update it regularly. LinkedIn even provides a rating to your profile to show you how well you are doing. The Profile Strength meter, shown in Figure 4-7, is on the right side of your profile. This meter measures how well you optimized your profile.

There are five levels of profile strength:

- » Beginner
- » Intermediate
- » Advanced
- » Expert
- » All-Star

FIGURE 4-7:
Your public strength meter rates your profile.

The stronger your profile, the more successful your profile. LinkedIn has stated, “Users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn.” LinkedIn hasn’t revealed its search engine algorithms, but knowing how important it is for LinkedIn to provide relevant and complete profiles in search results, it would make sense that stronger profiles are rewarded with high placement on search result listings.

It’s worth noting that your profile strength is not broadcast out for everyone to see. Only you, logged in and looking at your profile in edit mode, can see it.



Your profile strength increases as you add more content to your profile. All-Star is the highest level of strength. In order to achieve a perfect LinkedIn profile that ranks as an All-Star, you must have the following sections completed on your profile:

- » Your industry and location
- » An up-to-date current position (with a description)
- » Two past positions
- » Your education

- » Your skills (minimum of three)
- » A profile picture
- » At least 50 connections

Unfortunately, some of the items that increase your profile strength are outside of your control. If you are a displaced worker looking for your next opportunity, your profile will only rate Expert because you do not have a current experience. Likewise, if you are an entrepreneur who dropped out of college to create a startup, you too are out of luck. Without a college to list on your profile, the highest strength your profile can obtain is Expert.

All-Star is the highest level you can achieve; yet when looking at the graphic LinkedIn uses to illustrate All-Star, the circle isn't complete, leaving a sliver of a gap at the very top. This leads many users to think there is another, higher level. Perhaps LinkedIn is subtly suggesting that one's profile is never truly 100% complete because as a professional, you are always growing and developing skills.

Dealing with a lack of a current position

When you are out of work and looking for a new job, having a strong, complete LinkedIn profile is important. You want your profile to rank high in search results when a recruiter or hiring manager is looking for candidates.

Having a profile that is at Expert level and not an All-Star won't decimate your chances of getting found or finding a new job, but it is certainly annoying. I often hear from job seekers wanting to know what they can do to obtain a 100% complete, All-Star profile.

In this situation, you may decide to add a current position that states you are looking for your next job opportunity. In Figure 4-8, you can see what adding a "seeking new opportunity" experience looks like.



WARNING

Adding a current experience works fabulously; however, I must caution you that adding a current experience also cloaks your unemployed status. I have found that recruiters are divided. Some don't mind seeing a current experience reading "Unemployed." Others find an unemployed current experience devious. Ultimately, there is no right or wrong answer; you must decide what makes the most sense for you.

Experience

Company Name *
Seeking New Opportunity

Title *
Financial Analyst ► Forecasting ◆ Investment Process ◆ Budgeting

Location
Greater Philadelphia Area

Time Period *
January ▾ 2016 – Present
 I currently work here

Headline
 Update my headline to:

Description
I am currently looking for my next opportunity to affect positive change within an organization that values a strong entrepreneurial spirit, creative problem solving, and a desire to succeed.

To learn more, please request my resume.
You can reach me at: 215-839-0008 or donna@linkedin-makeover.com

[See examples](#)

Save **Cancel**

FIGURE 4-8:
Adding an experience if you are currently out of work.

Adding a school without a degree

Whether you opted to not attend college or decided instead to hire someone who did, your profile is also stuck at the Expert strength level. Luckily, there are a few things you can do. My recommendation is to bypass the school list LinkedIn provides and write in your own. If you want to stay on the up and up, enter your high school information. On the other hand, you can get a little cheeky and add a school where you took a class. I have had clients list Sur La Table, Sip and Paint, and The Esteemed School of Hard Knocks. When adding a non-accredited institution of higher learning, leave the degree field empty; it's not a required field.

Expanding your network

The area of the LinkedIn profile that causes the most difficulty in getting to All-Star status is connecting with 50 people. It's important to have a strong network so you can earn an All-Star profile, but a strong network is also the backbone of the site.



REMEMBER

Connections are key to your success on LinkedIn. When you search LinkedIn for people, the results are comprised of people within your LinkedIn network who meet your search criteria. When people search for you or someone like you, you will appear in their search results as long as you reside within their LinkedIn

network. The more people you have in your network, the higher you rank in LinkedIn search, and the more often you are found.

LinkedIn uses connections to provide additional insight unlike any other social network. LinkedIn doesn't just show with whom you are directly connected. LinkedIn unveils how you are connected to other people.

Your LinkedIn Network consists of first-, second-, and third-degree connections. These degrees describe how a person is connected to another person. A first-degree connection is someone you have added to your network or someone who has added you to their network. A second-degree connection is a person connected to your first-degree connection but not directly connected to you. If a person is a second-degree connection, that means you have a mutual connection in common. A third-degree connection is someone who is connected to a second-degree connection. If a person is a third-degree connection, they know someone who knows a person you know directly. A person is considered outside of your network if you do not share any connections within three degrees of that person.

To truly leverage LinkedIn and get to All-Star profile strength, you must get your online network to reflect your offline network. Here are some ideas of people you can invite to connect on LinkedIn:

- » Alumni
- » Current colleagues
- » Current employer
- » Family
- » Friends
- » Past colleagues
- » Past employers

LinkedIn provides a tool to make connecting easy. It's called People You May Know. Rather than wracking your brain trying to come up with people to connect, the People You May Know screen provides suggestions based upon commonalities.

LinkedIn shows you the name, current job title, and profile picture of people who you may know. They base these suggestions off of similar profile information such as working at the same company or going to the same school. LinkedIn also looks at the contacts you've imported from your email and mobile address books and offers profiles with the same contact information.

To use People You May Know to help expand your network, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. From LinkedIn's main navigation bar, hover your mouse pointer over My Network and click People You May Know, as shown in Figure 4-9.**

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for a user named 'Serdula'. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'My Network', 'Jobs', and 'Interests'. A dropdown menu under 'My Network' shows options like 'Connections', 'Add Contacts', 'People You May Know' (which is highlighted in blue), and 'Find Alumni'. The profile page itself displays the user's photo, name, LinkedIn title ('POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles Author ✓ and Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!'), location ('Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising'), current employer ('Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula'), previous employer ('Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc'), and education ('Rosemont College'). Below the profile information, there's a 'View profile as' dropdown and a '500+ connections' link. At the bottom, there are sections for 'Test Scores' and 'Courses' with 'Add test scores' and 'Add courses' buttons respectively. A URL 'https://www.linkedin.com/in/todonna' and a 'Contact Info' button are also visible.

FIGURE 4-9:
The People You
May Know option
suggests profile
connections.

- 3. View the connection suggestions.**
- 4. When you see someone you know and would like to add to your network, click the Connect button.**

Clicking the Connect button immediately sends a default LinkedIn connection request.

You cannot personalize the invitation to connect message from the People You May Know page. If you would like to personalize your invitation to connect message, do the following:

- 1. Hover your mouse pointer over the person's name and click.**

This takes you to that person's LinkedIn profile.

2. Click the Connect button.

You are now at the Invitation screen. If the Connect button doesn't appear in the Summary section, you may have to select the down arrow next to Send InMail and choose Connect from the drop-down list, as shown in Figure 4-10.

FIGURE 4-10:
To send a personal connection invitation, you need to go to that person's profile directly.

3. Select how you know the person. Your choices are:

- Colleague
- Classmate
- We've done business together
- Friend
- Other
- I don't know



TIP

Choosing "Other" or "I don't know" prevents you from sending the invitation because LinkedIn only allows you to connect with people you know and trust. If you don't know the person but still wish to connect, you must choose Friend and hope to make it true in the future.

4. In the Include a Personal Note field, personalize the invitation as you wish (see Figure 4-11).

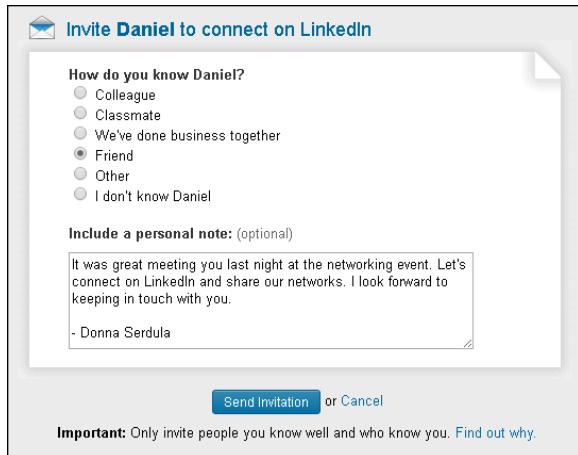


FIGURE 4-11:
Customizing your
connection
request.

5. Click the Send Invitation button.

By expanding your network, you will turn up more often in searches, have more views to your profile, and find more opportunities via LinkedIn. Next, we take a look at setting up your digital calling card.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Adding and editing your name
- » Selecting your field of business
- » Adding your contact information

Chapter 5

Establishing Your Calling Card

Think of the top part of your LinkedIn profile as your calling card. This upper most section of your profile gives your reader a quick overview of who you are and what you do. This area also provides the information a person needs to reach out to contact you. In a single glance, your reader sees:

- » Your profile picture
- » Your headline
- » Whether you are a premium LinkedIn member
- » Your location
- » Your industry
- » Your current company
- » Your previous company
- » The last school you attended
- » The number of first-degree connections you have
- » Your contact information

In this chapter, I show you how to set up this section of your LinkedIn profile in the most optimized manner to ensure the right people are able to find and contact you. Let's start with your name.

Using the Name Field Correctly

What can be easier than adding your name to your LinkedIn profile? Turns out, the name field is an area where people repeatedly make mistakes.



TIP

First, when adding your name to your profile, you don't need to use your full, official name. Instead, use your nickname. If your name is Christopher, but everyone knows you as Chris, use Chris on your profile.

Imagine going to a networking event or conference. You meet a man named Ricky. He hands you a business card that states his name is Rick. Later that evening, you log in to LinkedIn to connect with the people you've met, working off the business cards you collected. You type in "Rick" and click through pages of results to no avail. You try Ricky. It, too, yields no results. You try Richard and still nothing. You take a stab in the dark and try Ricardo and bingo!

Don't let this happen to you. Few people are as persistent as our example. Make it easy for people to connect with you by using the name you are known by on your LinkedIn profile.



TIP

A good rule of thumb is to make sure your name is consistent across your resume, business cards, website, email signature, and other social media profiles. Make it easy for people to find you by keeping a consistency with your name.

If you have a common name and want to differentiate yourself from others with the same name, adding a middle initial works great. However, don't just add the middle initial to your LinkedIn profile. Make sure you add it everywhere your name is used. It's a Google world out there, and you want to make sure you are easily found.

Editing your name

First things first, check out your LinkedIn profile. How does your name appear? I can't tell you how many times I see profiles that have the first and last name reversed. Once you see how it appears, decide if you want to change it. You may

decide to add your maiden name or update your first name to your nickname. Whatever your need, here's how to change your name on LinkedIn:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

2. Hover over your name.

The edit icon, which looks like a pencil, appears.

3. Click the pencil (edit) icon.

The name field becomes editable, as shown in Figure 5-1.

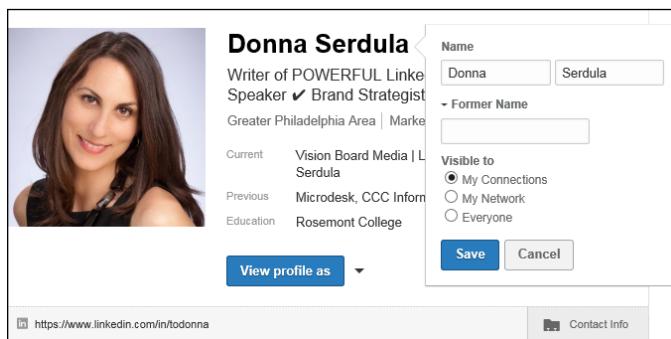


FIGURE 5-1:
Editing your
name.

4. Type your first and last names in the open fields.

If you have a former name, such as a maiden name, add it to the former name section and then choose who sees it by selecting My Connections, My Network, or Everyone.

The former name field displays on your LinkedIn profile encased in parentheses between your first and last name. It does not display on your public profile. This means that if a person performs a search using your former name, your profile will not turn up in the search results; however, if a person searches for you with your former name within LinkedIn, he or she will see your former name on your profile.

5. Click Save.

Adding prefixes to your name

Do you have certifications that you want to highlight on your profile? Lots of LinkedIn members like to add "MBA" or "SHRM" as a prefix to their last names. At one time, this was the only way to highlight your credentials on your profile. Now there is a Certifications section of the profile to display this information.

THE DOWN LOW ON LIONS

Some members of LinkedIn subscribe to the *LION connection* philosophy. LION stands for *LinkedIn Open Networker*. Rather than connecting with only the people they know and trust, they connect to anyone and their brother. There aren't any crazy hazing rituals or consideration panels to pass to be considered a LION. All you need to do is follow one rule: Never mark anyone who chooses to connect with you as I Don't Know or SPAM. To show that you are a LION, you simply state it in your profile. Many members add the word "LION" or their email addresses to their name fields. I highly caution against doing this. Not only is it against LinkedIn's user agreement to use the name field for information other than your name, but also doing so potentially makes it harder for people to find you.

I recommend keeping your name field clean. I know you want to shout your MBA from the rooftops, but hold off on putting it in the name field. When people search for you on LinkedIn, they aren't including prefixes. And because LinkedIn is matching the searched name with the name of a member, you want to make it match as best you can.

Keeping your profile confidential

Do you want to maintain your privacy and keep your LinkedIn profile confidential? There is an option that allows you to include only your first name and the first initial of your last name on your LinkedIn profile. Your first-degree connections see your full name, but everyone else sees your first name and last initial.

To access this option, you must first turn off your public profile. Once your public profile is turned off, the option to display your name with only your last initial appears within your Name field.



TIP

If you are on LinkedIn only to connect with a select few individuals and not looking for additional opportunities, displaying just the first initial of your last name may work for you. However, most people use LinkedIn to network and connect with people and to forge business opportunities. Displaying your full name shows you are serious in these goals. Unless you are using LinkedIn under confidential circumstances, my recommendation is to display your full name.

I often hear from people who want to turn their profile off entirely while they work on their profile. Unfortunately, LinkedIn doesn't provide the option to hide your profile. You can turn off your public profile so people outside of LinkedIn

can't see your profile. You can hide your last name so people searching for you can't find you. You can turn off your activity feed so people aren't notified that you made changes, prompting them to check out your profile. However, those who are already first-degree connections with you will see your profile if they seek your profile out.

Filling Out Location and Industry

At the top of your profile, right below your headline, LinkedIn displays your location and industry. This information also shows up in search result listings. Location and industry also are used in advanced search. When recruiters search for a candidate, they often filter the search results by location or industry.

If you were sourcing a position located in Texas that doesn't come with a relocation package, why see results with people located in Maine? When searching for a Medical Device Account Manager, a recruiter will narrow the results by industry to ensure they are not looking at Account Managers with backgrounds in Automotive, Telecommunications, or Machinery.

Although these fields would seem easy to fill out, I can't tell you how many times people forget to update their locations when they move or choose the first industry that looks good to them. Medical device sales reps often choose Hospital and Healthcare because it's the first choice they see. Rarely do they scroll down to Medical Devices.



TIP

Choosing your location

LinkedIn uses postal codes to determine your location. If you live just outside a major city, LinkedIn provides a couple options. You can choose the actual town and state or the closest major city. When I enter postal code 08075, I can choose Riverside, New Jersey or Greater Philadelphia Area, as shown in Figure 5-2.

Determining which location to choose, think in terms of your market and audience. A small business owner who services clients in a town may prefer to list the town and state. A professional who commutes to the city to work, might prefer to list the greater city location.

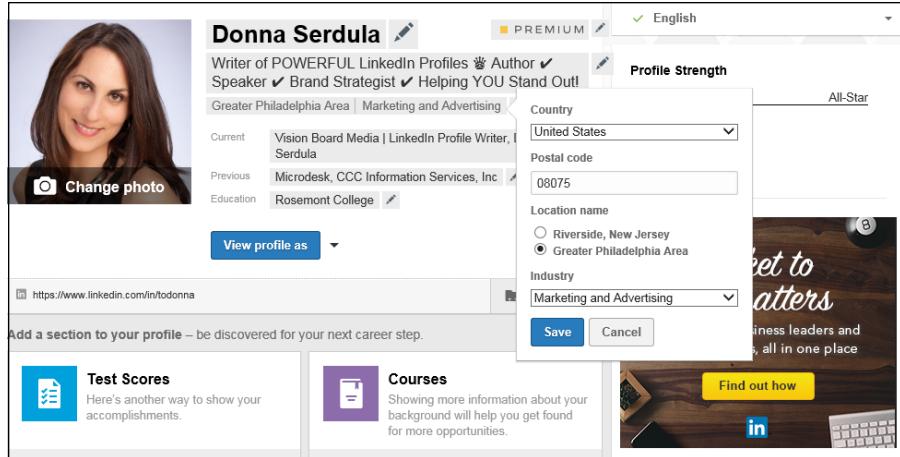


FIGURE 5-2:
Choosing your
location.

What do you do if you commute farther than LinkedIn assumes? There are many professionals who take the express train into New York City but live in the northern outskirts of Philadelphia. In this situation, use the zip code where your office is located. Here's how to fill out the location field:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the location title located directly under your headline and next to your location, as shown in Figure 5-3.**

The edit icon appears.

FIGURE 5-3:
Getting location
and industry into
edit mode.

- 3. Click the edit icon.**
- The industry and location fields become editable.
- 4. Enter your postal code, as shown earlier in Figure 5-2.**
- 5. Click Save.**

Choosing your industry

The industry section of your LinkedIn profile enables you to choose the industry that most aligns with your career. Remember, this area is used to filter searches, so when you select your industry, think in terms of the person searching for you. What industry would that person choose?

LinkedIn provides a long list of industries from which to choose. To select your industry, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Hover your mouse pointer over the industry title located directly under your headline and next to your location and click the pencil (edit) icon.
The industry and location fields become editable.
3. Select your industry from the drop-down list, as shown in Figure 5-4.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Donna Serdula. At the top, there's a search bar and a 'PREMIUM' badge. Below the profile picture, her headline is "Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ✎ Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!". Her location is listed as "Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising". A dropdown menu is open over this location field, showing a list of industries. The 'Marketing and Advertising' option is highlighted with a blue background. Other visible industry options include Internet, Investment Banking, and various business sectors like Law Enforcement, Legal Services, and Logistics. The right side of the screen shows a sidebar with a banner for "Marketing and Advertising", a 'Profile Strength' section (All-Star), and a stats summary: 22 profile views in the past day and a steady rank.

FIGURE 5-4:
Choosing your industry by scrolling through the drop-down list.

4. Click Save.

If you are a job seeker looking to make a career transition, you may wonder, “Do I choose my current industry or my desired industry?” When recruiters and other hiring professionals search LinkedIn to find potential candidates, the industry field is one area they often target, as it’s a great way to narrow results and drill down to the right people. To get found, choose the industry you are targeting in your job search. This way, you can collide with the right opportunities.

What happens if your work bridges two industries? Sadly, you must make a choice. LinkedIn doesn’t allow you to select more than one industry. And no, you can’t create a second profile for the other industry. LinkedIn’s user agreement forbids more than one profile per user. When you need to choose between two industries, imagine your target audience and what they would choose for you when searching.

Scrolling through the list, don’t stop at the very first matching industry you find. Keep scrolling through until you view the entire list. Most professionals find that they fit into multiple industries. Just because you found one industry that matches, that doesn’t mean it’s the best one. For example, if you are a resume writer, you may notice that there is a Marketing and Advertising industry as well as a Writing and Editing industry. Which one do you choose? You might think, “Well, I help professionals market themselves, so Marketing and Advertising is the best one for me.” Instead, think like your target audience. Most regular Joes would categorize a resume writer as a writer and editor, not as a marketer, so Writing and Editing is what you want to use. Don’t get too fancy or over-think the industry.



TIP

Still not sure what industry to choose? Visit the profiles of colleagues and competitors to see what they list on their profiles. If you are seeing two different industries listed, go with the one the most successful person has chosen.

Suggesting a missing industry

LinkedIn’s industry list is finite, and your industry may not yet be listed. In this situation, LinkedIn welcomes suggestions. To suggest an industry to LinkedIn, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll to the bottom of the profile page and click the Send Feedback link (see Figure 5-5).

The Send Feedback dialog box appears with two options: Go to Help Center and Send Us Feedback.

The LinkedIn interface shows a search bar at the top with the placeholder "Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...". To the right of the search bar are icons for notifications (16), messages (14), and profile (1). Below the search bar is a "PREMIUM" badge. A sidebar on the right contains a "Notify your network?" section with a "Yes" toggle switch. The main content area displays a grid of company profiles. From left to right, the first row includes Talent Tech Labs (Internet), SHANY Cosmetics (Cosmetics), and Business Blueprint S... (with a "See 86 more >" link). The second row is titled "Schools" and includes Arcadia University, Neumann University, Harcum College, and Rosemont College. The third row includes Bryn Mawr College, Villanova University, and Rowan College at Bu... (with a "Discover more" button). At the bottom of the page are various links for help, account upgrade, and legal information.

FIGURE 5-5:
Finding the link to
send feedback to
LinkedIn.

Click to send feedback to LinkedIn

- 3. Click the Send Us Feedback button.**
- 4. Enter your feedback in the Send Feedback field.**

You may write something like:

Dear LinkedIn,

Please include the missing industry, Super Villainy in the industry list of the LinkedIn profile. Thank you!

—Lex L.

- 5. Click Send.**

If you do send LinkedIn a request to add a missing industry, don't expect to get notification that it was added. LinkedIn receives zillions of requests to add industries. After making the request to add an industry, check the industry drop-down list to see if it was added. If after a few weeks it hasn't appeared, LinkedIn may not agree that it makes sense to add it. Go back through the industry drop-down list and see if there is another industry that applies.

Including Your Contact Information

The LinkedIn profile has a dedicated section for your contact information. The Contact Information section is located at the top of the LinkedIn profile on the desktop version and at the very bottom of the mobile version. Clicking the Contact Information box expands the section to reveal the full card of information, as shown in Figure 5-6.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Donna Serdula. At the top, there's a photo of her, her name 'Donna Serdula', and a 'PREMIUM' badge. Below that, it says 'Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ✍ Author ✓ Speaker ✓ LinkedIn® Evangelist ✓ Brand Strategist'. It also lists 'Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising'. Under 'Current', it shows 'Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula'. Under 'Previous', it shows 'Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc'. Under 'Education', it shows 'Rosemont College'. A 'View profile as' button is next to a dropdown menu, and a '500+' connections badge is on the right. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Visible to your connections' and 'Visible to everyone on LinkedIn'. In the 'Visible to your connections' section, there are fields for Email (donna@linkedin-makeover.com), Phone (215-839-0008 (work)), IM (Skype and Google Talk addresses), Address (Vision Board Media, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Twitter handle (@donnaserdula), WeChat address (Donna Serdula), and a 'Visit My Website, click here!' link to SERVICES & PRICING. In the 'Visible to everyone on LinkedIn' section, there are links for Twitter (@donnaserdula), WeChat (Donna Serdula), and three website links: Visit My Website, SERVICES & PRICING, and Keynote Speaker. At the bottom, there are links for https://www.linkedin.com/in/donna and Contact Info.

FIGURE 5-6:
The Contact
Information
section expanded
on your desktop.

The area that contains your email address, phone number, instant messaging (IM) address, and mailing address is only visible to your first-degree connections. This means that people who are not directly connected to you cannot see your phone number or email address within the Contact Information section of your profile.



TIP

You can also add your Twitter handle, WeChat address, and three website links. This portion of the Contact Information section is visible to everyone on LinkedIn. The only part of the Contact Information section that shows on your public profile (which is visible to people outside of LinkedIn) are the website links, as shown in Figure 5-7.

FIGURE 5-7:
The Contact Information section on the Public profile.
Notice only websites are listed.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Donna Serdula. At the top right, there is a photo of her smiling. To the right of the photo, her name "Donna Serdula" is displayed in bold, followed by "Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles" and a small LinkedIn icon. Below this, it says "500+ connections". Underneath, there is a brief bio: "Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out! Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising". On the left side of the profile, there is a sidebar with sections for "Current", "Previous", "Education", "Recommendations", and "Websites". The "Current" section lists "Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula, LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile". The "Websites" section lists "Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc", "Rosemont College", "122 people have recommended Donna", "Visit My Website, click here!", "SERVICES & PRICING", and "Keynote Speaker".

Adding your email addresses

It's important to add the email addresses you use on a frequent basis to your LinkedIn account. Whatever you do, don't just add your work email address. Work email addresses are rarely permanent. You can easily get locked out of your LinkedIn account if you forget your password and the only email they have on file for you is the work address that was turned off when human resources handed you a cardboard box.

Alternately, you don't want to just add your personal email address. When people upload their email address books to have LinkedIn autoconnect for them, you want to make sure that whatever email address they have listed for you matches your LinkedIn profile. If you list your personal email address but the person uploading his or her email address book only has your work email, you won't be matched and you will have missed an opportunity to connect. Instead, add all of the email addresses you use frequently, which for most people are their work addresses and personal addresses.

To add your email address, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info located in the lower-right corner of your profile calling card.**

The Contact Information section expands to show the contact information fields.
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the email field and click the pencil (edit) icon.**

You are now in edit mode.
- 4. Add your email address in the open field.**

5. Click the Add Email Address button.

LinkedIn sends a verification email to the new address.

6. Open your email client and check for an email from LinkedIn.

7. Confirm your email address by clicking the link in the LinkedIn email.

8. Go back to LinkedIn and click Done, as shown on Figure 5-8.

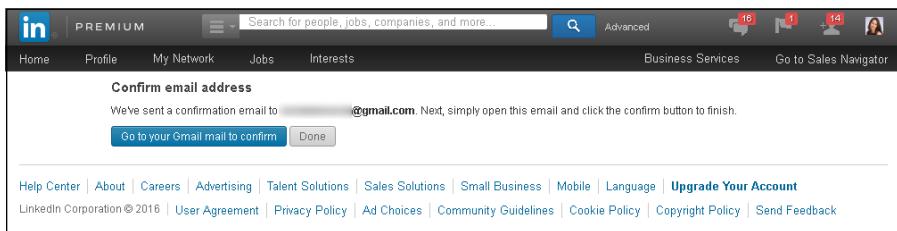


FIGURE 5-8:
LinkedIn's confirmation that a confirmation email was sent.

Within the list of addresses, note that the Send Confirmation link has changed to Make Primary.

9. Select Make Primary next to the email address at which you want to receive email from LinkedIn.

If you have additional email addresses, add them by following Steps 5–7.

10. Click Close when you have finished adding all of the email addresses you wish to add.

LinkedIn allows people to upload their email address books to find potential connections. Rather than connecting one by one, uploading your address book is a quick way to connect with many people all at once. However, you need to make sure you add all of your email addresses in your LinkedIn Contact Information section. When a person uploads his or her email address book, the email address he or she has for you might be an old or personal email address. If you don't have that email address associated with your LinkedIn account, LinkedIn will not make the match, and you will lose out on that connection request.

This might seem strange but this is exactly the reason why I also do not recommend removing past work-related email addresses. Sure, that old work email might not work, but that email address may still reside in someone's email address book. Keep it attached to your profile as a secondary email address, not primary. By doing so, people from your past work lives are still able to find you.



REMEMBER

Strong networks = a successful LinkedIn experience. Make it easy for LinkedIn to suggest you as a contact to others by including all your email addresses.

Adding a phone number

LinkedIn provides one field for your phone number. You can designate it as home, work, or mobile. Enter the phone number you want displayed on your profile and accessible to your first-degree connections. To add a phone number to your profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info.**

The Contact Information section expands to show the contact information fields.

- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the phone field and click the pencil (edit) icon.**

You are now in edit mode.

- 4. Enter your phone number.**
- 5. Select whether the phone number is Home, Work, or Mobile from the drop-down list.**
- 6. Click the Save button.**

LinkedIn can be compared to an old fashion Rolodex. People used a Rolodex to store their contacts' contact information. Nowadays, many people hop over to LinkedIn to find contact information. For this reason, it's imperative to include your phone number.

Believe it or not, there are some people who have concerns about adding their phone numbers on their profiles. You might think their concern is rooted in a fear of identity theft, but instead they are more scared of telemarketers!

Yes, by listing your phone number on your profile you may receive a cold call from a salesperson, but you may also receive a call regarding your dream position or an amazing partnership. Are you willing to dismiss potential opportunity because you would prefer to not get bothered by a salesperson?

Success on LinkedIn is getting off LinkedIn. Strong relationships are forged in the real world. Don't be afraid to leave the digital comfort of LinkedIn for a real-world connection. Add your phone number to your profile and make it easy for people to contact you.



TIP

There is another option if you aren't comfortable putting forth your phone number. Consider registering for a Google Voice number and listing that number on your profile instead. Google Voice (www.google.com/voice) is a free service that provides you with a virtual phone number. You may have it forward to your actual

phone number or go straight to voicemail. It's an easy way to provide a number while still maintaining your privacy.

Adding your IM address

The next information field is IM, which stands for *instant messaging*. Instant messaging is a way to send and receive short text-based messages instantly either by phone or by using a chat client on your computer. The instant messaging types that LinkedIn accepts are:

- » AIM (AOL)
- » GTalk (Google Talk)
- » ICQ
- » QQ
- » Skype
- » WeChat
- » Windows Live Messenger
- » Yahoo! Messenger

You may choose up to three IM addresses to list. If you have an old AIM username but never use it, don't add it. If you don't IM, leave the field blank.



TIP

Skype is a great IM to add. Not only is it free, but many companies use Skype as an integral part of the hiring process. Skype is used for virtual job interviews. By including a Skype username, you are showing that you are easily available to recruiters and hiring managers and you won't require much help to get up and running. That's definitely a bonus for busy recruiters or human resources professionals. If you don't have a Skype account, don't worry. It's easy to register. Simply visit www.Skype.com and register for a free account.

To add an IM address, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click Contact Info.**

The Contact Information section expands to show the contact information fields.

3. **Hover your mouse pointer over the IM field and click the pencil (edit) icon.**

You are now in edit mode where you see empty fields for up to three IM addresses.

- 4. In the first IM field, select the IM type from the drop-down list.**
- 5. Add your handle or username in the open field.**
Repeat Steps 4 and 5 to add up to two more IM addresses.
- 6. Click the Save button.**

Adding your work address

The Address field in the Contact Information section is for your work or office address. If you work from home, omit the street address and enter just your city, state, and zip. This way people can't get door-to-door directions to your house, but they will know where you are generally located.

If you work from an office complex, but are still hesitant to enter your address on your LinkedIn profile, you may leave the address field empty. However, I've found that the people who hate to add their office address on LinkedIn somehow have no problem tossing their business card into a fish bowl to win a golf club raffle.

To add your work address, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info.**
The Contact Information section expands to show the contact information fields.
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the address field and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**
- 4. Enter your office address information.**
- 5. Click the Save button.**

Adding your Twitter account

Not only can you add your Twitter account so people know how to find you on Twitter, you can also enable cross-posting between these two awesome social networks. By linking your Twitter account with your LinkedIn account, you are able to kill two birds with one stone. When you post a LinkedIn status update, you can have that status message go to both LinkedIn and Twitter.

This cross-posting only goes in one direction: from LinkedIn to Twitter. If you want LinkedIn to post your Twitter updates, you need to use a third-party social media aggregator such as Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com).

To set up this cross-posting ability, you must have a Twitter account already established. If you have more than one Twitter account, you are in luck — LinkedIn allows you to add multiple Twitter accounts.



TIP

If you use Twitter for primarily personal reasons, you should opt not to connect it to your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn is a professional network. You don't want to lead professional connections to your Twitter account where they can read your tweets about television programs, sports teams, or see pictures of your kitten. On the other hand, if you are tweeting your knowledge, providing advice, directing people to interesting articles, and adding value, absolutely connect your Twitter feed to LinkedIn. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info to expand the Contact Information section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the Twitter field and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**
- 4. Click Add Your Twitter Account.**
- 5. Click the Authorize App button to allow LinkedIn to access the Twitter account you are already currently logged into.**

Once your Twitter account is successfully linked, you may need to provide your Twitter username and password. You will see it listed in the Contact Information section.

- 6. Choose who can see your Twitter account by clicking the drop-down list under your Twitter account name and choosing Everyone or No One, as shown in Figure 5-9.**

I strongly recommend selecting Everyone unless your Twitter account is used for personal activity. In that situation, choose No One.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn interface with the 'PREMIUM' logo at the top left. The main navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'My Network', 'Jobs', and 'Interests'. On the right side of the header, there are icons for messaging (18), notifications (2), and LinkedIn services. Below the header, the main content area is titled 'Manage your Twitter Settings'. It lists two Twitter accounts: 'donnaserdula' and 'LinkedInMakeover'. Under each account, there is a 'Remove' button and a dropdown menu showing 'Everyone'. A link 'Add another Twitter account' is visible. Below the accounts, a section titled 'SHARING TWEETS' asks 'Which Twitter account would you like to share from?' with a dropdown menu showing 'donnaserdula'. At the bottom of the page, there are 'Save changes' and 'Cancel' buttons. The footer contains links to 'Help Center', 'About', 'Careers', 'Advertising', 'Talent Solutions', 'Sales Solutions', 'Small Business', 'Mobile', 'Language', 'Upgrade Your Account', and copyright information for LinkedIn Corporation © 2016.

FIGURE 5-9:
Managing your
Twitter settings
within LinkedIn.

- 7. If you add more than one Twitter account, select the preferred account LinkedIn uses to share status updates from the drop-down list.**
- 8. Click Save Changes.**

Adding WeChat

I had never heard of the WeChat chat client until LinkedIn added it as an option within the Contact Information section. WeChat is popular in China; it's one of the few mobile chat clients the government allows. If you are not familiar with WeChat and don't want or have a WeChat account, feel free to skip this section. If you are already a WeChat user, you can link your WeChat username and QR code to your LinkedIn profile. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info to expand the Contact Information section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the WeChat field and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**
- 4. Click Add WeChat account with QR code.**
A QR code displays on your screen.
- 5. From the WeChat app on your mobile device, tap Discover and select Scan QR Code.**
- 6. Scan the QR code displayed on your LinkedIn profile screen.**
A confirmation message appears across the top of your Settings page that says you've successfully connected your WeChat with your LinkedIn profile.
- 7. Click the edit icon next to WeChat to manage account visibility, and then place a check mark next to Display Your WeChat Account on Your LinkedIn Profile, as shown in Figure 5-10.**

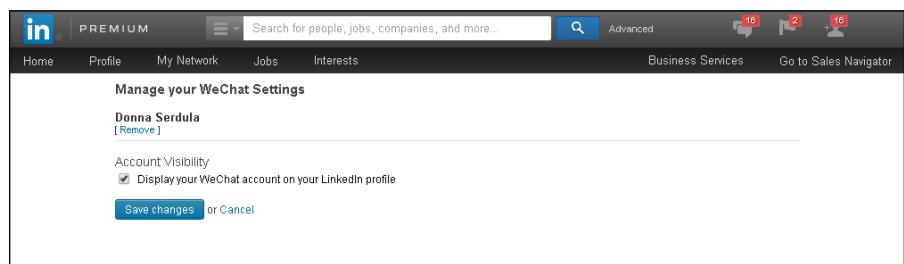


FIGURE 5-10:
Managing
WeChat visibility.

- 8. Click Save Changes.**

Adding websites

In addition to all of the other types of contact information, you can also add three website links to your LinkedIn profile. If you have a blog, a company website, an online portfolio, or some other Internet destination, this is the place to add the URL.

When you get into the edit mode of the website area, you see there are two text fields for each website, as shown in Figure 5-11. The first field is a drop-down list for the anchor text, and the other is a text field to enter the website's URL. *Anchor text* refers to the hyperlinked words on a web page. These are the underlined words you click that link you to another website. The drop-down list choices for the anchor text are:

- » Personal Website
- » Company Website
- » Blog
- » RSS Feed
- » Portfolio
- » Other

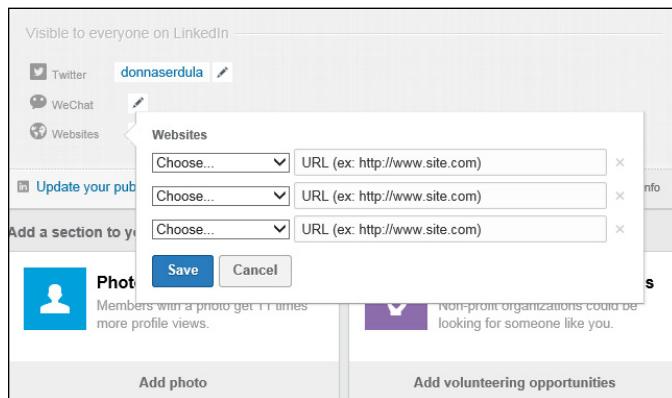


FIGURE 5-11:
An empty website
section.



TIP

You could choose from LinkedIn's drop-down list — it makes sense to choose Personal Website, Company Website, or Blog — but how boring and non-descriptive is that? Instead of accepting the default choices, my recommendation is to ignore all of those choices and instead go with Other. By choosing Other, you are able to enter in more descriptive text to customize your anchor text. Customizing the hypertext helps your reader identify the link easily and makes the link more attractive to click.

Instead of choosing Company, type in the name of the company. For example:

Vision Board Media's Website

Instead of choosing Portfolio, describe exactly what the person will find when clicking the link:

Portfolio of Business Headshots

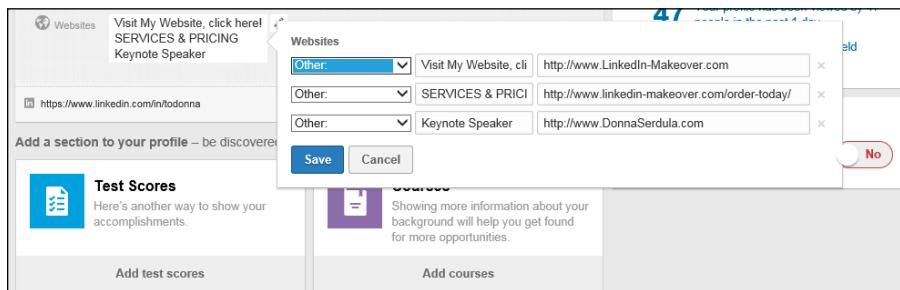
Instead of choosing Blog, get more descriptive:

Supply Chain Mgmt Articles

Notice how I abbreviated Management? You only have 30 characters available for anchor text so you must be brief.

Check out Figure 5-12 to see how an optimized website section appears in edit mode.

FIGURE 5-12:
This is how an
optimized
website section
appears in edit
mode.



To enter up to three website URLs to your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info to expand the Contact Information section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the Websites field and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**
- 4. Click the down arrow next to the first drop-down list and choose Other.**
An additional text box to enter your website title appears.
- 5. In the Website Title text field beside the drop-down list, enter the hyperlinked text.**

6. In the URL text field, enter the URL of the website.

Be sure to type the full URL including http://www.

7. Repeat Steps 4–6 for up to two additional websites and then click Save.

In the next chapter, get ready to *vogue!* I show you everything you need to know to take a professional profile picture that impresses. Let's go!

IDENTITY THEFT: FEAR IS LEGITIMATE BUT NOT CONCERNING

Identity theft is a legitimate fear. Having your contact information and career trajectory out there for the world to see could invite nefarious behavior from evil people. The thing to remember is that there are over 400 million people on LinkedIn. Identity theft could happen, but with that many people utilizing the service, there are better people than you to target. Plus, you aren't putting your Social Security number out there. (Never put your Social Security number on social media!)

My recommendation is to be smart. Don't list your home address. Instead, simply add your city, state, and zip code. Don't upload your resume to your profile. Instead, let people know they can request it via email or LinkedIn messaging. Don't add your birth-date. Keep the more important information secure, but don't remove the information that prevents opportunity.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding why you need a profile picture
- » Choosing and uploading your profile picture
- » Deciding between a selfie or professional photographer
- » Presenting yourself in the best professional light

Chapter 6

Impressing with the Right Profile Picture

Your LinkedIn profile picture is an integral part of your personal branding statement. It's imperative that you get it right, and yet so many people get it wrong. The highest-level executive uploads a snapshot of himself wearing a Hawaiian shirt. A smart entrepreneur uses a photo from her friend's wedding and crops out three-quarters of her date's face. The professional who can manage complex projects chooses a photo of himself holding the family pet.

Your LinkedIn profile picture should showcase you as a professional who commands respect. This chapter walks you through the steps of finding just the right profile picture that presents you in the most professional light and elevates your professional brand. You learn why you need a great photo, how to take your own photo, how to work with a photographer if you get a professional photo taken, and how to upload your photo to LinkedIn.

Why You Need a Profile Picture

Your LinkedIn profile picture can either help or hinder your success on LinkedIn. According to LinkedIn's official blog (<https://blog.linkedin.com>), profiles with profile pictures get 11 times more views than profiles without a photo. You are also 14 times more likely to be viewed on LinkedIn if you have a profile picture.

The inclusion of a professional profile picture shows the world you are a serious LinkedIn user and networker. It's hard to trust the authenticity of a profile without a photo.

Imagine you are shopping online and the item you want to purchase is for sale, but a photo hasn't been included in the listing. Would you buy it? Not usually! It's hard to trust a sales listing without a photo. The same thing goes for a profile without a profile picture. A professional picture shows your reader that there is a real person behind the profile, and that you are on LinkedIn for business purposes.



REMEMBER

Profile pictures are not just relegated to your profile. When your profile appears in search results, your picture shows up next to your name and subliminally implores your reader to "Read all about me!" Profile pictures also appear along with your LinkedIn Group messages, Network Updates, recommendations, and more.

Because your profile is used in so many places, it really is your digital stand-in. Your profile picture is your visual impression with your network. Although it's important to look good, you don't need to look like a supermodel. Your picture should capture the image of a professional person who looks friendly, clean, and well-adjusted.

Determining If You Need a New Profile Picture

Not sure if you are using the best profile picture? It is difficult to see yourself as others see you. I've created a list of questions to help you determine whether it's time for you to replace your profile picture.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROFILE PICTURES

Do's

Have a professionally taken photo.

Look straight into the camera.

Use a plain, indistinct background.

Dress professionally.

Zoom in close, frame your face!

Don'ts

Use a picture taken at a wedding.

Wear sunglasses or look away from the camera.

Have a distracting, busy background.

Wear a bathing suit.

Use a full-length shot or have others in the frame with you.

Open your LinkedIn profile and try to look at your profile picture objectively. Answer each question with either Yes or No:

- » Is your profile picture over three years old?
- » Was your profile picture snapped at a family gathering, such as a wedding?
- » Does your profile picture contain another person in addition to yourself?
- » Are there remnants of another person cropped out of your profile picture?
- » Are there animals in your profile picture?
- » Are you wearing a hat or sunglasses in your profile picture?

- » Is your profile picture of a cartoon character, business logo, symbol, or artistic representation?
- » Can you easily discern the background of your profile picture?
- » Are you looking up or down or anywhere other than straight into the camera's lens?
- » Is the quality of the image grainy or dark?
- » Do you look serious (not smiling)?
- » Are you wearing a T-shirt, bathing suit, or jeans in your profile picture?
- » Are your elbows or knees visible in your profile picture?
- » Did you have someone other than a professional photographer take your profile picture?

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions, it’s time to get a new profile picture. Even if you answered “no” to all of the questions, there is a good chance you still need a new profile picture. You may be happy with your current picture, but does it truly cast you in the best light? If you aren’t sure, keep reading!



A powerful LinkedIn profile picture is cropped, centered, and recently taken. The image is not too dark, grainy, or taken from afar. Most important, you are the focus of the photograph, and the image spotlights you as a professional!

Using a Photo Already Taken

There are rare occasions when people have a photo already taken that works well as a profile picture. Typically, they have already visited a photographer and had a business headshot taken. Sometimes people have a picture that was snapped at an event or while they were on stage giving a presentation. Perhaps you have a photo from your website’s About page that is part of your brand, and you use it across all your social media profiles.

At one time, the rule of thumb was to use the same photo across all of the social media sites — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on. Now, having that one consistent photo isn’t necessary. Each social media site has a different viewpoint and audience. If you use Facebook for family and like to stay more personal, use a personal, informal picture for your profile picture there. It doesn’t need to be the same one you use on LinkedIn.

As long as the photo you want to use is professional-looking and casts you in the right light, go ahead and upload it. However, if you are doing this because you are cheap or so busy you don't have time to get a new, better picture taken, stop and keep reading. Your profile picture is an investment in your brand and your future self. Many of my clients fight me over getting a profile picture, but once they have a great one taken, they are amazed at the results and how often they are able to use it even beyond LinkedIn.

Working with a Photographer

A professional photographer has the right equipment and a trained eye and knows how to capture everyone in the best possible light. And the real secret is that most professional photographers are quite affordable! Remember, this is an investment into your future, and it's worth spending money to make yourself look your best.

I know it's hard for busy professionals to find the time to schedule a session with a photographer. As tempting as it might be to ask the photographer to come to your office, resist that urge. Go to the photographer's studio where she has professional lighting and attractive backgrounds.

The right photographer is most likely just down the street from you. All you need to do is an Internet search for photographers in your city or town. Once you have a list of potential photographers, it is important you check out their websites and look at examples of their work. As you peruse their online portfolios, think in terms of the end results. Are you impressed with their work? Do they have good examples of business headshots they've already taken? The photographer may do impressive work with brides and children, but that doesn't mean he can do a professional headshot well.



WARNING

I have a number of clients who chose to go to a department store or a big-box store with a portrait studio for their headshots. In almost every case, the quality of the resulting headshot is embarrassingly bad. The reason for this is that although the photographer at these places is using professional equipment, often the person taking the headshot is not a trained, professional photographer.

Most surprisingly, when all is said and done, these sessions cost about the same as an independent photographer. My recommendation is to use a professional photographer and stay away from the shopping mall.

PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER RATES

Photography rates vary by region. A photographer in New York City is going to cost more than a similar photographer in Tupelo, Mississippi. Photography is a creative service, and most photographers set their prices by their reputations. The better the photographer, the higher the cost of his or her session.

Expect to pay somewhere in the ballpark of \$100 to \$500 a session. You may then have to pay extra for the actual retouched photo or any additional shots. In some instances, expect to pay even more than that. I once spoke to a photographer who charged well over \$1,000 for a session. She may have charged a lot, but she guaranteed you would get an amazing portrait that conveys your professional brand and truly impresses.

You may find that you are able to obtain a photographer at a much lower cost. In this situation, do make sure you get examples of his or her work before booking. Remember the adage: You get what you pay for.

Taking Your Own Profile Picture

Professional photographers are really not that expensive. The investment is worth it. Of course, I can say this until I am blue in the face and people still just want to do it themselves. If I haven't yet convinced you to hire a professional photographer to take your headshot, here's how to take a professional-looking profile picture yourself.

My motto when it comes to your profile picture is: Just say no to the selfie. When taking a picture of yourself, it's hard to get enough distance between you and the camera; arms are only so long. When taking selfies, people often look at their images on the camera screen, rather than at the camera lens, thus the resulting image looks slightly off. Plus, it takes a *lot* of pictures to get the right one. If your arm doesn't give up from holding the camera for so long, you might get tired running back and forth from the tripod holding your camera.

The solution is to enlist a friend to take the photo for you. This way you can concentrate on posing and smiling and leave the actual photography to someone else. The less stress you are under, the better you look.

Professional photographers have professional equipment. Sometimes you are lucky to have a digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera or know a friend with one. In that situation, consider yourself lucky. When you don't have access to good camera equipment, use what you own. A good point-and-click digital camera or

even your smartphone works. When working with amateur equipment, make up for it with good lighting, which I discuss next.

Understanding the importance of light

Good lighting makes all the difference between a great photo and a horrible one. When having your picture taken by a professional, studio lighting can work wonders. When you have a friend taking your photo, and professional lighting isn't available, find an area with lots of natural light. Avoid using the camera's flash or direct sunlight, as both cause harsh shadows.

Good professional photographers make sure to capture a reflection in your eyes from the lights. It's called a "catch light." Without that reflection, eyes look dull (see Figure 6-1). When taking the picture yourself, try to create your own catch light by turning on a nearby lamp. If you don't have a bright enough lamp, add the reflection afterward in a photo editor.



FIGURE 6-1:
A catch light
makes the eyes in
the left image
pop more than
those in the right.

Finding the right background

Distracting backgrounds can immediately derail a fantastic picture. When choosing the background, remember that you are the focus of the picture. The background should be as plain and indistinct as possible (see Figure 6-2). When you are taking the picture yourself or with a friend, look for a plain wall to serve as the background. If you are an avid decorator and can't find a wall that isn't full of pictures, consider taking the frames down temporarily. You can always use a photo editor if picture hooks show up in the final image.

When working with a professional photographer in her studio, there should be many different backgrounds available. Avoid backgrounds that are busy or overly colorful. Bamboo trees, laser light shows, and clouds are all backgrounds to pass

on. A plain, white background often looks great, but I've also seen black backgrounds look lovely. Use your best judgment when selecting. Take into account the color of your outfit. If you are wearing white, a white background looks odd. Feel free to ask photographers their professional opinions. They do this for a living and are able to guide you.



FIGURE 6-2:
The good, the
bad, and the ugly
of photography
studio backdrops.
Less is always
more!

Framing the shot

There are many considerations to make when framing your shot. The camera should be around your eye level. You do not want shots taken at too low of an angle or too high of an angle. Too low of an angle makes you appear looming; too high of an angle makes you look diminutive and subservient.



WARNING

Don't zoom in too close just yet. Keep space around your head so you have more cropping options later. The final image on LinkedIn is a perfect square, not a long rectangle. Zooming in too close or shooting with a long rectangle in mind may produce an image that can't be cropped later for LinkedIn's dimensions.

You will not get your ideal photo in one click. It may take hundreds of shots before you get the best picture. Time and time again, my clients come back and tell me that the winning photograph was taken at the very end of the session. It's not a coincidence. Right around the time you start to feel comfortable in front of the camera is when the best picture is snapped. So be patient and stay calm.

As the camera clicks, move around a bit. Keep your shoulders angled, not squared, with the camera. Jutting your jaw out may feel odd but it tightens your jawline and stops that pesky double chin. Vary your expression but always look at the camera. Think in your mind: happy, friendly, confident, calm.

Please smile. The goal is to look professional, not serious. Striving to look serious by not smiling only makes you look angry and unapproachable. When you smile,

let your eyes crinkle. A genuine smile engages the entire face. Scared your crow's feet will show? That's what you are aiming for! A smile without eye wrinkles isn't genuine.

Once you have worked your inner supermodel for about 5 to 10 minutes, ask the photographer to review the shots taken thus far. By checking the photos mid-session, you can see if what you are doing is working, and what changes you may want to make.

Finding the right outfit

The outfit you wear in your headshot can make or break your final profile picture. Luckily, a headshot is mainly just your head, so what you wear on the bottom isn't as important as what you wear on the top. Make sure whatever you choose fits well in the shoulders and neck because that is what shows in the photo. When deciding on what to wear, consider an outfit you might wear to a client meeting or a job interview. If you work at an office that does business casual, choose an informal outfit.

When I was starting out in my career, my mother told me, "Don't dress for the job you have, Donna, dress for the job you want!" So although your office environment is a casual one, you still may decide to opt for a more formal business outfit in your profile picture. This is especially true if you have higher aspirations for your career.

My recommendation is to bring two or three different outfits with you to your session. Often what looks nice in person, doesn't translate well to a photograph. By bringing a couple different outfits, you can salvage a studio session gone wrong by the wrong wardrobe choice.

When choosing your outfits, go with soft, neutral colors or stick with gray, navy, or black. If you like bold colors, go for it! Just keep it to one bold color rather than a huge palette of bold colors. Skip the ruffled shirts or crazy prints. Choose ties with either a solid color or simple pattern.



TIP

Here's a tip for men: wear a suit to the photography session. Take the first photos wearing the full suit. After a while, take off the tie, but keep the suit jacket on. Then for the final time remaining, remove your jacket and open the top button of your white shirt. By doing this, you get three different looks with one outfit: formal, semi-dressy, and casual.

People often think they need to remove their eyeglasses when getting their picture taken. I believe your glasses are a part of your brand. People are accustomed to seeing you in your glasses, and you should look familiar in your headshot.

Numerous studies have shown that glasses give the impression of intelligence and professionalism. You might not get a date as Dorothy Parker said, but at least you will get hired.



TIP

However, there can be a problem with glare. When you wear glasses in a studio, many times the glare of the lights reflect on the lenses. If you find this is the case, here is a solution: remove the lenses. Put the lens-free glasses back on your face and smile for the camera.

Choosing and Uploading Your Profile Picture

It's hard to see yourself objectively. When it comes time to choose the right photo for your profile picture, it's often best to ask for help. Friends and family or even colleagues often notice things you miss about yourself, and they can give you insight as to how you appear to others.

Photographers often provide you with a website that hosts all the shots from your session. Share this link with a friend and ask for his or her assistance.

Don't just ask any friend. Make sure you choose a friend who is business-minded and not afraid to speak the truth. There have been a few times where I had to very gently tell a client that the pictures taken were not of the best quality and they needed to be retaken. This is never a comfortable situation, but it's better to hear the truth than to upload a ridiculous-looking profile picture that has people wondering if you are possibly insane or a professional clown.

The final image should not depict a glamorous supermodel, but rather a friendly, happy, approachable, well-adjusted professional. Notice how I did not use descriptors like "serious" or "corporate." When striving for serious or corporate, people end up looking dour and sometimes even downright angry. Opportunities are not given to sourpusses who look sullen and disinterested. The final picture you choose should depict a person who is likeable, happy, and professional.

Cropping to profile picture dimensions

Once you have chosen your final image, it's time to crop it to the perfect dimensions for LinkedIn. When working with a professional photographer, it's a good idea to ask for high-resolution and low-resolution formats. The high-resolution image is for printing. The low-resolution version is for uploading to LinkedIn.



REMEMBER

The ideal image size for LinkedIn is 400 x 400 pixels. Photos over 20,000 pixels in either width or height will not upload. The maximum file size is 10MB.

Crop to maximize your face in the frame. Aim for the top of your head down to just above your collarbone, with only a sliver of shoulder showing. By zooming in, you are getting closer to the viewer of your profile. Subliminally you are drawing them closer to you, showing you have nothing to hide.

Another reason to zoom is that the profile picture gets even smaller when viewing on the LinkedIn phone app. By maximizing your face, you are making it easier for people to see and recognize you on the smaller device.

LinkedIn accepts three file formats: JPG, GIF, or PNG. Which one is best? Go with either JPG or PNG. GIF allows for only a limited palette of colors, and you may find your picture looks odd when saved as a GIF.

Resizing and saving a high-res image

Is your final image too big? Whether the image straight out of your camera is too big or the photographer is unable to provide you the image within the proper dimensions, all is not lost. You can always open the file in Microsoft Paint or another image editor and resize the shot yourself.

Follow these steps to resize a high-resolution image in Microsoft Paint:

- 1. Open Microsoft Paint.**
- 2. Select File ➔ Open and select the image you wish to resize.**
- 3. Click the Resize button that appears in the Toolbar.**
The Resize and Skew dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 6-3.
- 4. Replace the horizontal and vertical dimensions with smaller dimensions closer to 400 x 400.**
Do not skew the image! You must maintain its dimensions, otherwise the image may elongate or widen.
- 5. Click OK to close the Resize and Skew dialog box.**
- 6. Select File ➔ Save As and save the image as a JPG or PNG file.**

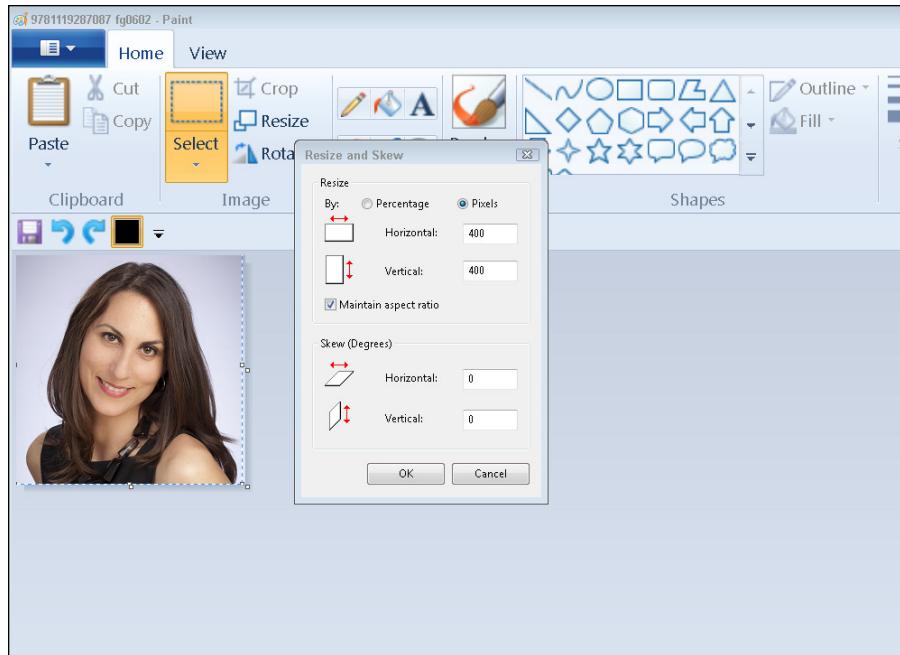


FIGURE 6-3:
Resizing profile
picture in
Microsoft Paint.



WARNING

The proverbial “airbrush” is a wonderful thing. If used properly, retouching can make a good photo even better. However, if used improperly, retouching is detrimental. Retouching is best done minimally. Use it to hide dark circles, but don’t zap away all of your crow’s feet. Use it to hide a zit, but not to reduce the size of your nose. The final image needs to be of you. You don’t want to upload an image of a stranger.

Uploading your photo

Now that you have your business headshot ready to go, here’s how to upload it to LinkedIn:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
 - 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the profile picture area and click Change Photo or Add a Photo if you don’t currently have a profile picture uploaded.**
- The Edit Photo dialog box appears.
- 3. In the Edit Photo dialog box, click the Change Photo link that appears above the silhouetted picture LinkedIn uses as a space holder or your**

current profile picture. (If you don't currently have a profile picture uploaded, click the Browse button.)

A window opens that enables you to select your photo from your hard drive.

4. Find your photo and click the Open button.

A preview of the selected photo appears in the Edit Photo dialog box, as shown in Figure 6-4. Crop your photo by selecting the yellow square on the lower-right corner on top of your picture and resizing the square so that it fits your face, neck, and the top of your shoulders. LinkedIn crops your photo along that yellow dotted line.

5. When you are happy with your photo, click Save.

Your picture now appears on your profile page.

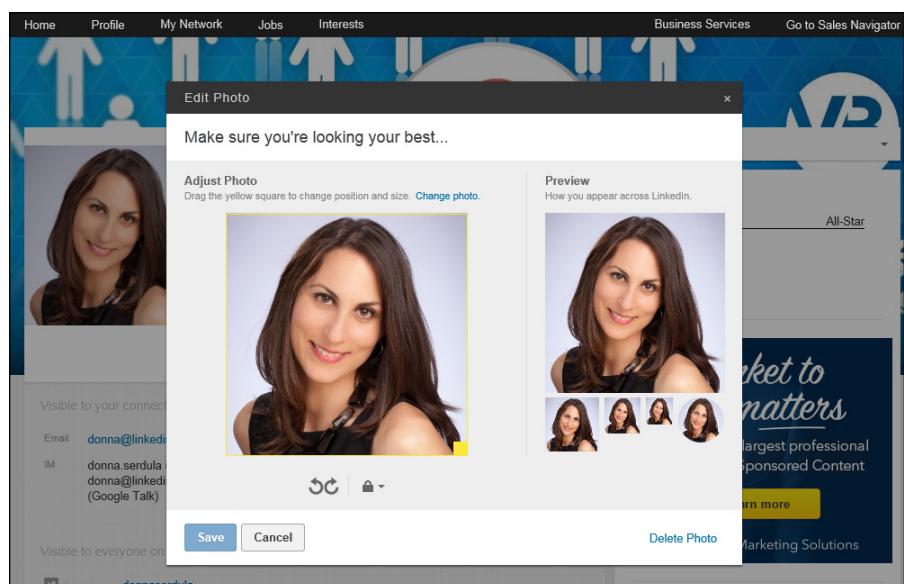


FIGURE 6-4:
Uploading your
new profile
picture.



WARNING

LinkedIn strictly forbids uploading a profile picture that is not a photograph of yourself. The idea behind the profile picture is that it is there to help people recognize you. In Section 8.2 of LinkedIn's User Agreement (www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement) it states, "You agree that you will not: Use an image that is not your likeness or a head-shot photo for your profile." Therefore, do not upload photos of company logos, caricatures, cartoon characters, landscapes, animals, illustrations, words, or phrases.

Changing photo visibility settings

Some people are simply uncomfortable having their pictures appear in an online, public forum. When clients of mine objects to uploading their profile pictures, more often than not they are comfortable with their network seeing their pictures but not the whole world. Although I highly recommend making your profile visible to all, LinkedIn allows you some control over who sees your picture. You can't change visibility settings on a person by person basis, but you can choose between your first-degree connections, your LinkedIn network, or everyone. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Hover your mouse pointer over your profile picture and click Change Photo.
3. Click the lock icon that appears below your profile picture, as shown in Figure 6-5.

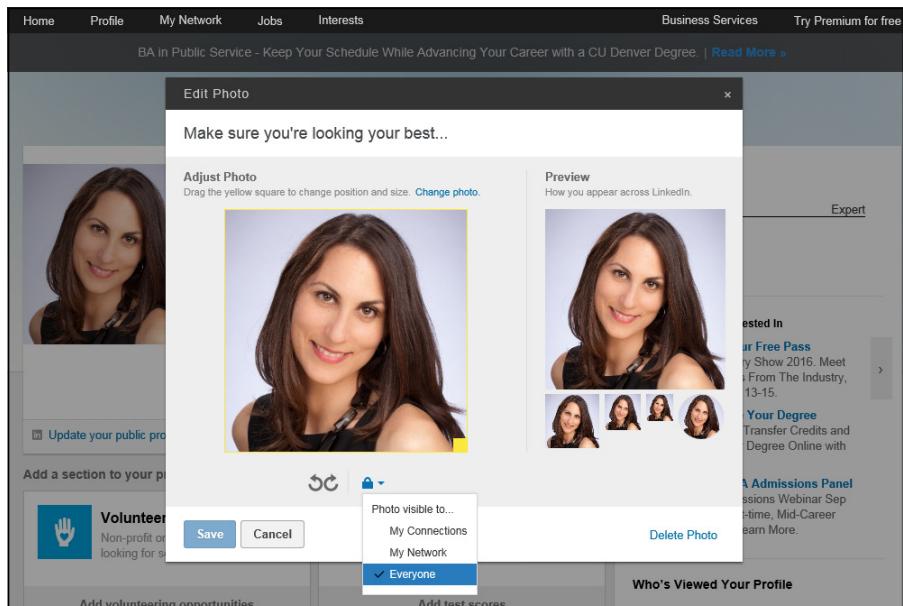


FIGURE 6-5:
Changing the
visibility options
of your LinkedIn
profile picture.

4. Choose between My Connections, My Network, or Everyone.

My recommendation is to keep it at Everyone, but if you only want people you are directly connected to see your picture, choose My Connections. If you would prefer only people within your LinkedIn network, choose My Network.

Now that you have an impressive profile picture, in the next chapter I show you how to maximize your LinkedIn headline for enhanced search and branding purposes.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Determining the type of headline you need
- » Paying attention to SEO
- » Creating a headline that impresses

Chapter 7

Developing a Compelling Headline

Your LinkedIn headline is extremely important. It is the shortened version of your profile. It shows up right underneath your name on the top of your profile, and it tells who you are in 120 characters or less. It is your readers' first impression of you, and it determines whether they read your profile or click to the next one. This chapter covers how to craft a compelling headline that grabs your readers' attention and makes them want to learn more about you.

Grabbing Your Reader's Attention

The LinkedIn headline is one of the main fields of a LinkedIn search result. It also appears at the very top of a LinkedIn profile. The headline also shows up on invitations to connect, above status updates, on LinkedIn messages, and within Group discussions, Pulse articles, recommendations, Who's Viewed Your Profile stats, and the People You May Know section. Since so many people have the potential to see it, you want to make sure your LinkedIn headline communicates your value and compels people to open your profile to learn more about you.

Your headline sums up your professional identity in just 120 characters (including spaces). You want this phrase to be catchy, bright, and clever. To grab your

reader's attention, the headline should alert people to what you are about and how you can help them.

When you first create a profile, LinkedIn automatically populates your headline by using your current job title and company name. Although LinkedIn creates the headline for you, you can override this default, boring headline and add your own.

Take a look at Figure 7-1. See the difference between the default headline LinkedIn added and an optimized one? Which profile would you rather read?

Default and boring

Donna Serdula
Owner, Vision Board Media
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula
Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc.
Education Rosemont College

Send a message **View in Sales Navigator** ▾

1st PREMIUM

500+ connections

Optimized and compelling

Donna Serdula
Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ✎ Author ✓ Speaker ✓ LinkedIn® Evangelist ✓ Brand Strategist
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula
Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc.
Education Rosemont College

Send a message **View in Sales Navigator** ▾

1st PREMIUM

500+ connections

FIGURE 7-1:
The default headline versus an optimized headline.



TIP

Ditch LinkedIn's default headline. Your headline should be like a headline in a newspaper — it should compel people to want to read more. Read on to learn how to make your headline a compelling brand statement.

Adding Flair to Your Headline

A great way to really make sure your headline attracts attention and helps you stand out from the crowd is to use symbols. Take a look at Figure 7-2 for an example of a headline that makes use of symbols. See how boring the first and third headlines are when compared to the second optimized one?

A screenshot of a LinkedIn search results page. It shows three profiles with their names, titles, locations, and a 'Connect' button. The first profile is Cheryl L Sayles, Human Resources Manager at US Foods, Jackson, Mississippi Area - Human Resources. The second profile is Howard Roark, Experienced Human Resources Manager ✓ Organizational Development ✓ Gourmet Foodie ➔ Read My Profile, Greater Philadelphia Area - Nonprofit Organization Management. The third profile is LinkedIn Member, Manager, Human Resources at Time Inc., Greater New York City Area - Human Resources. The middle profile's headline contains symbols like 'you' and '✓'.

FIGURE 7-2:
The middle profile pops because of the symbols in the headline.

Although there are workarounds, LinkedIn doesn't make it easy to add symbols. In fact, LinkedIn doesn't allow any formatting at all. You can't bold, italicize, or underline text. LinkedIn hasn't ever stated why it doesn't natively allow formatting, but I believe they don't want to become like the old, defunct social network, MySpace.

Back in the early 2000s when MySpace reigned supreme, they allowed not just simple formatting but full on CSS coding to their profiles. Before long, MySpace profiles were twinkling and flashing like the Las Vegas skyline. Most people aren't graphic designers and when given the opportunity to format and prettify, they tend to go overboard. By not providing the ability to format, LinkedIn is keeping their users' tendency to overdo things at a minimum and thus keep their site elegant in its simplicity.

So how do you add symbols to your profile? If you are looking for a magic symbol button, you are out of luck. Instead, the way you add symbols to your LinkedIn profile is through copy and paste.

I discuss adding symbols to your LinkedIn profile in more detail in Chapter 9, when I discuss adding them to your job title, but for now, the easiest way to add symbols to your LinkedIn profile is to visit my LinkedIn profile to find a list of symbols you can use, then copy and paste the ones you like into your headline.

To add symbols to your headline, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your web browser and go to www.LinkedIn.com/in/todonna.**
- 2. Once at my profile, scroll through until you get to the Projects section.**

I curated a list of different symbols you can use on your LinkedIn profile (see Figure 7-3).

FIGURE 7-3:
Here are the
symbols you can
copy and paste
from my profile.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page with the title "Bullets for Your LinkedIn Profile". Below the title is the text "Starting December 2009" and "Wondering how I spiced up my LinkedIn® profile with bullets? Simply COPY & PASTE into your LinkedIn® profile!" A section titled "Unicode Symbols" lists various symbols under categories: Stars, Arrows, Traditional bullets, Ticks, Email, Phone, Lines, and Emoji. There is also a link "... more".

3. Highlight a symbol you like and copy it.

Copy by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).

4. Open your LinkedIn profile and click the edit icon next to your headline at the top of your profile page.

5. Paste the symbol into your headline.

Paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac).

6. Click the Save button.

Your headline now includes the symbols you selected.

Although I have a curated list of professional symbols on my profile, it's by far not a complete list. If you want to see even more symbols, there are a number of sites to check out. Here are just a few:

Copy and Paste Emoji (www.copyandpasteemoji.com)

JRX (<http://jrgraphix.net/r/Unicode>)

Unicode Character Table (<http://unicode-table.com/en>)

Wikipedia Symbol Block List (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unicode_symbols#Symbol_block_list)



WARNING

Choose only one or two types of symbols to use in your LinkedIn headline. The more symbols you use, the cheaper and low level your profile appears. Remember, less is more!

Symbols may appear differently across the different devices and operating systems you use to access your LinkedIn profile. That means what you see isn't necessarily what another person sees when viewing your profile. Smartphones tend to take symbols and convert them to emoji. Emoji are small, colorful icons that are typically used to express ideas and emotions.

If you are viewing your LinkedIn profile on a PC, the symbols in your headline may appear black. Viewing your LinkedIn profile on a smartphone or on a Mac desktop, the symbols in your headline may appear colorful and almost cartoon-like. iPhones and Android phones use different art and so the symbols may look different depending on your smartphone.



TIP

When choosing symbols to populate your LinkedIn profile, the simpler the better. Stars, circles, squares, arrows, and check marks are universal and display with consistency across almost all devices. Using more complex symbols like those of folders, books, phones, paperclips, tools, and other items, you risk the symbol either showing differently on some devices or not at all.

Emoji are standardized, but the differences in display come from the different platforms (smartphone manufacturers, messaging apps, chat clients) designing their own emoji art and interpreting the standard differently.

I remember finding a symbol of a magnifying glass that looked lovely in my headline and on my PC's monitor, but unfortunately it didn't display for everyone. I received numerous emails from people telling me that instead of the symbol, they saw an empty block (see Figure 7-4).

Donna Serdula ■ PREMIUM
Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles Author ✓
Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising
Current Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula
Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc
Education Rosemont College

Donna Serdula ■ PREMIUM
Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles Author ✓
Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising
Current Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer, Donna Serdula
Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc
Education Rosemont College

FIGURE 7-4:
What happens
when a symbol
doesn't display.

As much as I loved using the magnifying glass icon, I had to replace it with a more universal Unicode character that displayed for everyone. When utilizing symbols, the best symbol may not be the right symbol. Choose simple symbols that display for everyone.

Saturating Your Headline with Keywords

As I discuss in Chapter 2, your headline plays a big role in LinkedIn search results. To enhance the likelihood of being found on LinkedIn, your headline should be chock-full of the keywords people are using to find someone like you. I've found that when performing a keyword search on LinkedIn, profiles that contain those keywords in their headlines turn up higher in the search results.

To create a keyword-saturated headline, you must first consider your target audience and why they are looking for someone like you. What are the keywords a person might type into LinkedIn search to find you? These are the words you want to incorporate into your headline. Get out that list of keywords you created back in Chapter 2. If you want to rank high for those words, it is important to work as many of them into your headline as possible.

If you are job seeker, it's important to add your job title to your headline. Your headline is extremely sensitive when it comes to search engine optimization (SEO). Many recruiters and hiring managers, when performing searches for talent, search for job titles. Make sure you include your title so that you increase your chances of being found on LinkedIn.

However, rather than simply stating your current job title, start with an adjective first and then add your title. Here's a bunch of adjectives to get you started:

Accomplished	Expert
Animated	Gifted
Certified	Holistic
Dynamic	Influential
Effective	Innovative
Energetic	Masterful
Engaging	Professional
Exciting	Skilled
Executive	Unabashed
Experienced	

Select one of these adjectives that you feel most accurately describes you in your current role. Then, it's time to add your job title.

Add your job title

Now that you have a good adjective to describe your current role, it's time to add your role/position/business title and follow it with a symbol. It should look like this:

Accomplished Sales Professional *

Experienced Human Resources Manager *

Creative Marketing Director *



TIP

If you are not a job seeker and don't have a current job title, generalize your position: Healthcare Executive or Client Services Professional. The reason to use your job title is for search and identification. Always think of your target audience and what they need to know about you. Using your exact job title isn't imperative; the right keywords to find you are.

Add your specialty

The next item to add to your headline is another keyword. If you are a sales professional, what do you sell? If you are writing your profile for reputation management, what is your specialty? What are you known for? If you are a job seeker, what is your differentiator? What do you bring to the table that would make a company hire you?

Here are some examples of specialties:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies *

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development *

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches *

If you are struggling to come up with your specialty, think in terms of how people describe you. Do you hear people say things like, "That Tom, he's amazing at customer service!" Most times other people see us clearer than how we see ourselves. If you are struggling, ask other people what they think you do well.



TIP

I have found that most people are blind to their own strengths. Because strengths come rather easily, we expect that everyone else has these strengths — that they aren't unique to us. Talk to other people to get their input. Once you know what they admire about you, stop dismissing your strengths and start developing them into your brand message.

Alternately, when we are good at something, we often describe it in complex terms. When writing your LinkedIn profile, you need to think in terms of the layperson. Talking to others is also a great way to get a simplified view of what you do.

Here are some ideas for specialties:

App Developer	Information Technology
Branding	Internet of Things
Business Development	Marketing
Client Engagement	Product Development
Cloud Computing	Product Marketing
Content Creator	Project Management
Customer Care	Prospecting
Electronic Medical Records (EMR)	Real Estate Development
Financial Forecasting	SaaS
Google Analytics	Scientist
	Social Selling



TIP

Once you have your specialty, add a symbol. You can always use an asterisk (*) or a pipe (|) in the meantime. When your headline is completed, go back and copy and paste real symbols.

Add an extracurricular hobby

Now it's time to take a step on the personal side and add an extracurricular activity. By including a hobby or cause you care about, you turn yourself from a boring corporate creature into a three-dimensional human being. People do business with people, and showing your human side allows people to empathize with you. Here are some examples of headlines that include an extracurricular interest:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies * Golfer *

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development *
Gourmet Foodie *

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches * Classic Film Buff *

Add a happy ending

The very last piece of a keyword-saturated headline is a happy ending. Conclude your headline on a high note or with a clear call to action. Here are some examples of ending phrases for your headline:

- » Best in Breed
- » Curious? Read On!
- » I Make Things Happen
- » I Move the Needle
- » Learn More, Click Here!
- » Let's Connect
- » Looking to Positively Impact a New Organization
- » Click to Read My Profile!

This is what your keyword-saturated headline looks like:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies * Golfer * Let's Connect

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development * Gourmet Foodie * Game Changer

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches * Classic Film Buff * Making Things Happen



REMEMBER

You only have 120 characters for your headline. If you didn't use all 120 characters and have more room, add more keywords! If you don't have enough room, remove the adjective and extracurricular activity.

Creating a Benefit Statement Headline

Instead of infusing your headline with keywords, another way to develop a compelling heading is to create a benefit statement headline. A benefit statement explains to potential readers exactly how you can help them and what they will get from working with you.

When crafting a benefit statement headline, ask yourself, “How do I help individuals or businesses?” “What benefit do others receive from working with me?” Think in terms of the outcome for your audience. If you are selling a service or

product, why would a potential client buy from you? What do they get from the service or product?

Benefit statement headlines typically start with an action. Here are some examples:

Accomplishing	Growing
Changing	Helping
Crafting	Maximizing
Creating	Promising
Delivering	Reducing
Developing	Saving
Directing	Teaching
Eliminating	

Once you have the action, what is the core value you provide to your target audience?

A customer service representative might state: “Helping Turn Unhappy Customers into Loyal Clients.” A sales person specializing in office supplies might state, “Keeping Offices Running Smoothly with a Complete Catalog of Office Supplies: Whatever You Need, When You Need it!” Individuals using LinkedIn to position themselves as technology thought leaders might use a benefit statement like: “Helping Corporations Embrace Cloud Computing Technologies to Enhance Workplace Productivity and Security.”



TIP

When crafting a benefit statement, consider how your target audience reacts to you emotionally. What is it that you do that makes life/work easier and better for your target audience?

Think in terms of your target audience’s need for:

Abundance	Peace of mind
Affordability/money savings	Prestige
Being liked	Productivity/time savings
Confidence	Respect
Convenience	Security
Ease of use	

Put these items together and voila! You have a benefit statement headline! To get you started, check out some of these examples of benefit statement headlines:

Insurance Broker & Agent ► Giving You Peace of Mind by Protecting Your Home, Car, and Assets

Financial Advisor ★ Taking Away the Guesswork from Investments ★ Helping You Plan and Achieve Your Future Goals

Real Estate Agent ► Helping Families in New York City Find the Home of their Dreams!

Sales Consultant ► Helping Businesses Develop Strong Sales Forces through Intensive Sales Training Programs

Are you looking for a new job? You can showcase your expertise and value through a benefit statement headline, too. You might be thinking, “But I am a job seeker; I don’t help companies or individuals. I just do my job, when I have one.” If you truly can’t come up with a benefit statement, move back to the keyword-packed headline and go in that direction. However, everyone — no matter what job he or she does, provides value — otherwise, you wouldn’t get paid.



TIP

If you don’t work directly with clients, consider your colleagues and how you help them. Think also in terms of your department and how it supports the organization and moves the business forward.

Differentiation is also a benefit to employers. Do you provide more than others because of a unique talent, interest, or ability? Your benefit might be that you are bilingual or you are really good with numbers. Perhaps despite being steeped in technology you can effectively interface with sales people and get them to understand complex programs.

Here are some headline examples for jobseekers:

Software Engineer ► Building the Applications that Make Your Business Life Easier

Project Manager with a Passion for Coding and Technical Writing, Looking to Positively Impact a New Organization

IT Specialist Devoted to Creating Stable, Scalable Solutions for Small Businesses

Business Analyst ► Helping Companies Translate Their Business Goals and Ideas to Operational Reality and Positive ROI

Business Advisor ► Helping Manufacturing Facilities Realize Significant Gains through Process Improvement

Interim CEO ► Solving urgent leadership problems. . . when your CEO steps down, I step up!

Adding Your New and Improved Headline to LinkedIn

Now that you have your new and improved headline, it's time to update it on your LinkedIn profile. To add a new headline to your profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
 - 2. Click the edit icon next to your headline at the very top of your profile.**
 - 3. Type in your new and improved headline.**
- As you type, if text isn't appearing, you went over the 120-character limit. This means you have too much text and need to cut back.
- 4. Click Save when you are finished adding your new headline.**

Don't forget to add symbols to give your new headline some eye-catching flair!

Your newly updated headline is now acting like a welcoming beacon, directing people to view your profile. In the next chapter, I show you how to make sure that all these new visitors see an optimized experience section that is impressive and interesting.

LINKEDIN HEADLINE GENERATOR

It can be tough coming up with a headline on your own. If you need additional help, I created a free online application that walks you through creating a keyword-saturated headline. In less than 10 clicks of your mouse, you'll have a compelling LinkedIn headline to immediately copy and paste right into your LinkedIn profile. The generator even adds symbols to your headline automatically. Access the app here: www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-headline-generator.



Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression

IN THIS PART . . .

Understand why you don't want to copy and paste your resume into your profile.

Determine the career trajectory you want to showcase in your profile and learn how to decide what to include and what to omit.

Learn how to craft the perfect job experience description, including how to add your company logo.

Optimize your job titles and accomplishments to increase your chances of being found on LinkedIn search.

Learn how to introduce yourself to your target audience with an impressive, compelling summary that makes your readers want to read on.

Understand why you should write your summary in the first person and how to format this section to make it easy to read and eye-catching.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Detailing your career trajectory
- » Deciding what to include and what to omit
- » Dealing with job gaps

Chapter 8

Getting Your Experiences Ready

The Experience section on your LinkedIn profile is where you explain your career path and highlight your background, successes, qualifications, and abilities. Most people immediately jump in and start adding experiences without thought to where they've been or where they are going in their career. Before you dive in and start adding your past positions to LinkedIn, it's important to take a step back and look at your complete career trajectory.

Many people, looking to save time, simply copy and paste their resume experiences directly into their LinkedIn profiles. Although copying and pasting from a resume does save time, it is also a huge mistake. The time you save will be made up in lost opportunity.

Not everyone is on LinkedIn for job search. It's important to make sure your Experience section matches your goals as well as your career trajectory. As soon as you paste in your old resume, whatever LinkedIn goal you have suddenly looks like you are desperately looking for a job.

However, when your goal is in fact job search, your LinkedIn profile and resume shouldn't be a one-to-one match. Instead they should work in tandem. The resume and profile should build off of each other.

When a person starts off reading your resume, he or she should want to check out your profile to learn more about you as a person. That profile should provide even more information and compel him or her to reach out directly to you. Conversely, if a person starts off with your profile, he or she should want to request your resume to learn more about your accomplishments and history.

When the resume and profile are a carbon copy of each other, the person reading them may ultimately become disappointed because you haven't shown them anything new or different, and he or she may suspect you have nothing more to provide them. In this chapter, I show you how to determine the career trajectory you want to showcase on LinkedIn. This chapter is all about the important strategic planning you must do before you begin the actual editing of your profile's Experience section.

Referencing Your Resume

As you sit down to work on the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile, it's a good idea to print out your resume. Your resume serves as a reference or outline — a tool to help you flesh out your experiences. If you don't have a resume, don't fret! It's easy to create an outline of your career arc. Simply get out a sheet of paper and create four columns with the following headings: Company Name, Job Title, Start Date, and End Date, as shown in Table 8-1.

TABLE 8-1 Career Template

Company Name	Job Title	Start Date	End Date

Then, fill in the chart with your current and past job positions. Start with your most current experience and then move backward in time. If you can't remember a date, don't worry! Skip it and keep moving, recording other positions. Once the list is completed, go back and research the dates and titles you can't remember.

The reason to get out your resume (or create an outline) first, is that it's important to have a master list. With a one-sheet overview of your career arc, you see how your career has unfurled and where it is heading. As you look back on your

career, do you have any gaps in which you weren't working? If you were out of work for a year or longer, make sure you provide context around that time off. (See "Dealing with Employment Gaps" later in this chapter for more information on dealing with job gaps.)

Determining Which Experiences to Keep and Which to Merge

Remember, your LinkedIn profile is *not* your resume. Resumes are targeted for specific positions that you apply for. Your LinkedIn profile is your digital introduction, online reputation, and first impression. It should tell your professional story and compel your target audience to take a specific action.

I often see profiles that list a single company multiple times just to show career progression, similar to what is shown in Figure 8-1. Although this is a great way to spotlight promotions, it can look like you jumped around from one company to another, especially if the reader does not notice that all those positions were at the same company.

On the other hand, listing a company multiple times provides you with more opportunity for keyword optimization and potential for higher ranking in search results. The more job titles you have, the more keywords you use, the higher your profile will rise in the search results for those keyword combinations. You have to decide what makes the most sense for you. Do you want to have a high ranking profile? Or do you want to showcase the time you spent with a company?



REMEMBER

How you trace your career trajectory differs depending on your LinkedIn goals. If you are a job seeker, you want to make sure your profile echoes your resume closely in terms of positions and time periods. Recruiters and hiring managers often compare the two, and if they notice a difference, that's a red flag. If you are on LinkedIn for reputation management, highlighting each promotion with a new experience reinforces your successes.

It's less important to dredge up every success when you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting or even if you want to be seen as a thought leader. Think in terms of your target audience. What's important to them? Do they need to see every promotion, or is it enough to know you spent time at one company and rose through the ranks?

Once you have an idea of what is most important to your target audience and your goals, go ahead and delete and merge experiences (see Figure 8-2).

Sales Operations Analyst
CCC Information Services
June 2005 – January 2006 (8 months) | Greater Chicago Area
CCC Information Services provides claims management software and auto body shop estimating software tools to over 350+ insurance companies and 20,000+ repair facilities.
Specialized in sales and service related projects to optimize and streamline processes to positively impact revenue performance.

Client Service Manager
CCC Information Services
June 2004 – May 2005 (1 year) | Greater Chicago Area
Handpicked by VP of Operations to spearhead the creation of Client Services department. Developed department infrastructure and managed team of customer service representatives supporting internal end users of company-produced software in Chicago, IL.

Business Development Specialist
CCC Information Services
January 2001 – June 2004 (3 years 6 months) | Baltimore, Maryland Area
Specialized in sales and service-related projects to optimize and streamline processes to positively impact revenue performance.

Senior Account Manager
CCC Information Services
January 2000 – January 2001 (1 year 1 month) | Greater Philadelphia Area
Consulted with customers and sold software applications. Provided technical support at customer locations and via telephone.

Account Manager
CCC Information Services
January 1999 – January 2000 (1 year 1 month) | Greater Philadelphia Area






FIGURE 8-1:
Keeping experiences separate.

Account Manager + Client Services Manager + Sales Operations Analyst
CCC Information Services, Inc.
January 1996 – January 2006 (10 years 1 month) | Greater Philadelphia Area
CCC Information Services provides claims management software and auto body shop estimating software tools to over 350+ insurance companies and 20,000+ repair facilities.

I spent 10 years working at CCC. Looking back, I am so grateful to have learned the ropes at such an amazing organization!

- ▶ Sales Operations Analyst, June 2005 - January 2006, Chicago, IL
Specialized in sales and service related projects to optimize and streamline processes to positively impact revenue performance.
- ▶ Client Services Manager, June 2004 – May 2005, Chicago, IL
Developed department infrastructure and managed team of customer service representatives supporting internal end users of company-produced software in Chicago, IL.
- ▶ Business Development Specialist, January 2001 – June 2004, Baltimore, Maryland
Specialized in sales and service related projects to optimize and streamline processes to positively impact revenue performance.
- ▶ Senior Account Manager, January 2000 – January 2001, Bucks County, PA
Consulted with customers and sold software applications. Provided technical support at customer locations and via telephone.
- ▶ Account Manager, January 1999 – January 2000, Bucks County, PA
Consulted with customers and sold software applications. Provided technical support at customer locations and via telephone.
- ▶ Contract Trainer
October 1996 – January 1999, Bucks County, PA
Trained customers on proprietary software. Provided technical support at customer locations and via telephone.



FIGURE 8-2:
Combining experiences.

Keep your target audience in mind

When you are on LinkedIn for sales or branding reasons (such as reputation management or thought leadership), having a profile that echoes your resume isn't necessary. Certainly you always want to make sure that the information you share on your profile is accurate. But always think in terms of your target audience. As a salesperson looking to prospect and network on LinkedIn, does your target audience of potential clients care that you were promoted three times or made President's Club or that you closed \$1.5M in Q1 of 2015, a 25% increase over the previous year? No! They want to know about the services and products you sell and how those services and products help them. In this situation, you don't need to fill your Experience section with a long list of accomplishments and job descriptions. Instead, you want to write for your target audience explaining your role within the organization and how you help your prospects and clients.

On the other hand, if you are a salesperson who is looking to switch companies and you are hoping to intersect with job opportunities, your target audience is now recruiters and human resources professionals. In this situation, you want your profile to align with your resume and show enough information to get your target audience interested in learning more so that they request a full copy of your resume.

Ultimately, when you are on LinkedIn for job search, make sure your resume and LinkedIn profile align and that you include three to five achievements for your more current job experiences. If you are on LinkedIn for executive branding or reputation management, you may not want to concentrate on achievements, but rather showcase your career trajectory and provide a high-level overview of your accomplishments. By providing a high-level overview and not drilling into minutiae, you are differentiating yourself from most other LinkedIn users, especially job seekers. Remember, it's all about what your particular target audience needs to know about you. If you are using LinkedIn for executive branding, your target audience isn't interested in granular, detail-oriented accomplishments as much as your full career trajectory and background. By providing too much information, you may seem like you are in job search mode.

Salespeople should show at least three total positions, but they don't need to go into detail as to their job descriptions or accomplishments unless they also have a desire to attract other job opportunities. Prospects don't want to know that you can sell snow to an Eskimo.

Salespeople looking to use LinkedIn to prospect and sell more effectively can use their current experience descriptions to instead talk about their company and the benefits of their products or services. The job description is also a great area to detail a customer success story.

How far back do I go?

If you have been in business for the last 30 years, it's not necessary to go all the way back to the 1980s. When you started your career, the Internet, technology, and business were different. Also, over 30 years, careers tend to shift and go in different directions. Look at your career path and decide what positions have helped you get to where you are today. Which positions continue you on a forward trajectory into the future? Those early, beginner positions can probably be merged into one position or discarded completely.

It's important to be smart when you identify and document your career journey. Even though you can decide when to start documenting, you always want to be authentic and as transparent as possible.



TIP

At the very least you should have one current position and two past positions. This helps you achieve an All-Star profile ranking, a way LinkedIn rates profiles. I talk more about profile ranking in Chapter 4.

Creating a Work History for Recent Graduates

A complete LinkedIn profile contains one current and two past positions listed in the Experience section. What do you do if you are a recent graduate just starting out in your career or a young professional with limited professional experience?

Don't worry; you can list internships and volunteer positions to flesh out your experience history. You may also consider grouping summer jobs together into one experience. By grouping low-level summer jobs together that are not relevant to your future job search, you are showing that you have employment experience, but you aren't shining a spotlight on jobs that aren't part of your career vision. It's far better to showcase non-paying internships and volunteer experiences over a summer job scooping ice cream. As your career develops, you can delete these positions when you add newer and better positions. Figure 8-3 illustrates an example of how recent graduates might fill out their Experience sections.



TIP

As a young professional currently working, you can break out your current experience to show any promotions you received so that it counts as two experiences rather than just one. By breaking out your experiences, you can achieve All-star profile ranking, which I talk more about in Chapter 11.

Social Media Marketing Intern
Vision Board Media
January 2016 – May 2016 (5 months) | Greater Philadelphia Area

As the Social Media Marketing Intern for Vision Board Media, an online executive branding firm, I was responsible for curating articles and scheduling social media posts for their Twitter and LinkedIn streams.

Accomplishments include:

- ✓ Assisted in the creation of a long term social media plan
- ✓ Grew Twitter followers by 5K through relationship building and enhanced audience engagement
- ✓ Increased Likes and Retweets by 25% through the use of strategic hashtags in posts
- ✓ Introduced a marketing calendar that increased social media content by 50%

Library Media Specialist Assistant
Rosemont College
September 2012 – May 2016 (3 years 9 months) | Greater Philadelphia Area

As a full time student, I worked at the Gertrude Kistler Memorial Library on Rosemont's Campus as the Library Media Specialist. In this role, I assisted students with research projects utilizing the Library's digital research and media center. Additionally, I logged new books into the computer system and organized and maintained library shelves.

Cashier / Retail Sales Associate / Restaurant Server
Assorted Summer Jobs
2012 – 2015 (3 years) | Wildwood, NJ

During the summer months, I held the following jobs:

- ✓ Rita's Water Ice, Cashier (May - Sept 2012 & 2013)
- ✓ Banana Republic, Sales Associate (May - Sept 2014)
- ✓ TGIFriday's, Server (May - Sept 2015)

FIGURE 8-3:
An example of
how a recent
graduate might
combine summer
positions.

Dealing with Employment Gaps

The dreaded employment gap often keeps people up at night, but I have a fool-proof way to deal with it successfully. Whether you took time off to raise your kids, went back to school, nursed an ailing relative back to health, experienced sickness yourself, or just needed to rest up and enjoyed a radical sabbatical, it's best to explain the employment gap but not dwell on it.

The thing to remember is that employment gaps happen. Hiring managers and human resources professionals know that gaps occur; they just want to understand the reason around it. Mention the gap in the Experience section of your profile and provide context for your reader. It's important to convey that during your downtime, you stayed active in your career and community. List courses you took, books you read, or organizations you participated in. This information can either go in the position listed prior to the gap, or you can create a new position for the gap.

For example, here's how a person with an employment gap caused by a health crisis can explain it on LinkedIn.

Company Name: Health Sabbatical

Title: VP of Marketing

Time Period: January 2009 to June 2009

Description: It was in January of 2009 that I was diagnosed with cancer. The next six months were spent going through treatment and getting myself back to health. During this time, I stayed active in my career by keeping up with industry trends. I read marketing books and attended a number of online webinars. I also mentored a young professional I had hired prior to my diagnosis and am overjoyed that using my advice and support, she received a promotion six months sooner than typical.

Lastly, I took an online course, “Leadership Communication in Organizations,” in which I earned a certificate. This four-week course delved into the different communication techniques innovative leadership uses within a corporate setting.

Once my cancer went into remission, I re-entered the workforce in June of 2009.

In this example, the title states *VP of Marketing*. You can’t leave a job title blank; this field must be filled in. VP of Marketing is the position she held prior to her sabbatical and most likely is the title she holds upon reentering the workforce. By using her previous title, she reinforces her position and level and increases the chances of ranking highly for that keyword in LinkedIn search. Keywords placed in the job title hold greater strength than in other profile fields.

In the next chapter, I show you the structure of a powerful job experience and walk you through how to optimize your Experience section to really wow your reader and rank higher in LinkedIn search.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Adding, editing, and removing experiences
- » Showcasing your career trajectory
- » Optimizing your experiences for LinkedIn search
- » Highlighting your accomplishments

Chapter 9

Creating a Powerful Experience

A powerful experience on your LinkedIn profile is different from a powerful experience on your resume. People are checking you out on LinkedIn to learn more about you. A powerful experience provides just enough information to compel your reader to want to learn more. For that reason, don't simply copy and paste your resume experiences into your LinkedIn profile. Instead, tell a story about your experience. In a conversational voice, explain to your reader your roles and responsibilities. Highlight a few accomplishments. Give readers something different from what they'd find on your resume.

If readers are so moved by what they see on your LinkedIn profile and they request your resume, the worst thing in the world is for your resume to look exactly like what they just saw on LinkedIn. You've left them wanting more only to give them a duplicate of what they already know.

In this chapter I discuss the perfect structure of a job experience description. I show you how to add a new experience to your LinkedIn profile and how to make sure the company logo appears on your profile. You find out how to optimize your job titles to increase your chances of being found. You also find out how to make your accomplishments stand out and wow your reader.

Adding a New Experience

Whether you are starting from scratch or updating your profile with your current position, it's important to know how to add a new experience to your LinkedIn profile. You don't need to worry about adding experiences in chronological order; LinkedIn automatically lists your positions by date, with the most recent on top, receding in time as you scroll down.

Here's how to add a new experience to your profile:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

If you already have added an experience to the Experience section, go to Step 3.

If you don't have this section on your profile yet, continue to Step 2.

2. Click the Additional Info section that appears toward the top of your profile to add the Experience section to your profile page.

You may need to click View More to find this section.

3. Scroll to Experiences and click Add Experiences.

When clicked, the Experience section appears on your profile within the Additional Information section.

4. Scroll through your profile until you see the Experience section.

5. Click the +Add Position link that appears in the top right corner when you hover your mouse in the Experience section.

The Experience section immediately expands to show all of the fields that make up a new experience.

6. Enter the name of the company where you worked:

a. In the Company Name textbox, begin typing the company name.

As you type the name of the company, a drop-down list appears showing all of the companies that have LinkedIn company pages in LinkedIn's vast company page network.

b. If the company appears in the drop-down list, select it from the list to link the company to the LinkedIn company page.

If several companies have the same name, choose the correct company by confirming the accompanying logo to the left of the name.

c. If the company is not listed, select Add as New Company at the bottom of the company drop-down list.

- 7. In the Title field, type your job title.**
- 8. In the Location field, type the major city closest to where you worked.**

As you type, a drop-down list of locations appears. Choose the location from the list. If the suggested locations are inaccurate, type in the city and state.
- 9. In the Time Period fields, enter the dates you worked:**
 - a. Click Choose to choose the month you started followed by a field for the year.*
 - b. Enter an end date. If you are currently working at this company, choose Current.*
- 10. In the Description field, briefly summarize the company where you worked, describe your role and responsibilities, and list a few high-level accomplishments.**
- 11. Click the Save button.**

Your new experience is added to your LinkedIn profile's Experience section.

Figure 9-1 illustrates a completed experience.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page with the 'Experience' section highlighted. At the top, there is a header with the text 'Click to add another experience' and a blue button labeled '+ Add position'. Below the header, the experience entry is titled 'Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer' under 'Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer'. The time period listed is 'August 2009 – Present (7 years 2 months) | Greater Philadelphia Area'. A descriptive paragraph follows: 'Vision Board - A vision board is a representation of your aspirations in life--its purpose: to depict and lead you to your desired future.' Below this, there are two bullet points: '► What is your dream? Who do you want to be?' and 'Whatever your vision, we at VisionBoard Media want you to embrace the new world out there—the ONLINE world—and put this powerful medium to work for you by shaping a strong digital identity.' Another bullet point states: 'You know that how you present yourself is integral to how people perceive you. In the 21st century, with billions of people logging on to the internet every day, your online presence is your digital introduction and first impression with the world.' Following this, another bullet point reads: 'Face it, prospective clients and employers are Googling you! Are they going to find something that sets you apart from the crowd?' A final bullet point says: 'It is not enough just to say you have a skill. You need to prove it with a digital footprint that showcases your accomplishments and achievements!' At the bottom of the experience entry, there is a concluding paragraph: 'We provide the full 360 of integrated services necessary to brand yourself and craft a strong presence online. We will help you take control of your Internet presence and truly present yourself in a way that inspires, impresses, and builds confidence in your abilities, products, and services.'

FIGURE 9-1:
A completed experience.

STOPPING LINKEDIN FROM OVERWRITING YOUR HEADLINE

When you add a new current position, LinkedIn updates your LinkedIn headline to match this new job title. As soon as you click the checkbox next to “I Currently Work here,” a new option appears directly below. This new option states, “Update my headline to:” and LinkedIn immediately fills in this field with your new job title, as shown in the following figure.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Experience' section. It includes fields for Company Name (Widgets XYZ), Title (Founder and CEO), Location (Greater Philadelphia Area), and Time Period (Choose... – Present). A checkbox labeled 'I currently work here' is checked. Below this, another checkbox labeled 'Update my headline to:' is checked, and the text 'Founder and CEO at Widgets XYZ' is automatically filled into the 'Headline' field. A callout box points to this 'Update my headline to:' field with the text 'LinkedIn automatically fills this in'. Another callout box points to the 'Update my headline to:' checkbox with the text 'Uncheck to leave the current headline unchanged'.

This might seem like a wonderful idea, but your previous headline will be deleted. If you spent time creating an optimized headline, all that previous work will be lost. In addition, as I describe in Chapter 7, your LinkedIn headline should be different from your current job title. Your job title is just that, a job title. Your LinkedIn headline showcases who you are and it compels people to read the rest of your profile.

I recommend unchecking the “Update my headline to:” box and do not allow LinkedIn to update your headline to your new job title.

Making the start and end dates match your resume

One of the biggest blunders I see on LinkedIn profiles are discrepancies between a person's LinkedIn profile and their resume's start and end dates. If you are searching for a job, it's absolutely imperative that the information on your resume match your LinkedIn profile. Rather than create a one-to-one copy of your resume on your profile, instead, have your profile complement the information on your resume.



TIP

As you add new experiences on your LinkedIn profile, make sure the start and end dates match your resume. When there is a discrepancy between dates, the person reading may wonder if you are simply not a stickler for details or possibly lying. If you can't get the dates right, what else are you fudging?

Using month and year or just year

People often ask if they should use the month and year or just the year for their experiences start and end dates. If you are on LinkedIn with the goal of job search, I highly recommend adding both the month and the year. When a job seeker omits the month, it may send a red flag to recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals. By using just a year, such as 2012, someone might think you started with a month or less left in the year. Most people omit months because they are trying to hide a gap. The best thing to do is own up to a gap and explain it in the job description section of your profile.

When people use LinkedIn for reputation management or to be seen as thought leaders and job search is the furthest thing from their mind, they may omit months if they so choose. When providing a simple trajectory of where and when, it's not important to get caught up in the exact month one's tenure began.



TIP

If you do choose to omit months, omit the months from all experiences. It looks sloppy and inconsistent when some experiences have a month and year and others only have years.

DEALING WITH AGE DISCRIMINATION

Age discrimination is a legitimate fear, and many LinkedIn users figure they can offset age discrimination by cloaking their age by omitting dates on their LinkedIn profile. A profile without dates is a profile that is clearly hiding something. Recruiters see this as unethical. In fact, when a profile is missing information, those who pass by it aren't discriminating against you because of your age, but because you aren't providing accurate information.

Omitting dates is not the right thing to do, but let's say you do it and manage to get asked to interview at a company that doesn't place value on age and experience. Your physical appearance gives away your real age when you show up at the interview. It doesn't matter how well the meeting with the hiring manager goes, you will never get the job. Age discrimination is out there and it's ugly. The good news is, just as there are companies that devalue age, there are plenty of companies who value your wisdom and experience.

Instead of hiding your age and experience, lead with it. Showcase your strengths, your knowledge, your experience, and your true self. You will get discriminated against by some companies and that's okay. Why waste your time on a company that doesn't respect you? The good companies that realize your value and strengths are out there and those are the companies to pursue. They will find your LinkedIn profile and love what they see. Don't hide your age; turn it into a benefit.

Getting the company logo to appear

Scrolling through a LinkedIn profile, it's hard not to notice the company logos sitting to the right of the experiences. These logos add flair and credibility to your profile. Most people assume that the way to get a logo next to their experience is to upload it. Truth is, LinkedIn adds the logo from the company's LinkedIn company page. What this means is if the company hasn't created a LinkedIn company page or didn't upload their logo to their company page, there is no way to add a logo next to your experience. And so if you long ago worked for a now defunct company, there is a very good chance you won't be able to add a logo. If you work for a company that doesn't embrace social media and they don't have a LinkedIn company page, you too are out of luck.

The good news is, it is easy to get a company logo to appear next to your experience as long as the company has a LinkedIn company page created and a logo uploaded. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll through your profile until you see the experience you want to edit in the Experience section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse cursor over the experience you want to edit.**

The entire experience is highlighted and an edit icon in the shape of a pencil appears to the right of each field within the experience.
- 4. Click the highlighted area or the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**
- 5. Directly under Company Name, click the Change Company link.**

A blank field appears in the Company Name textbox.
- 6. Type the name of the company where you worked.**

A drop-down list appears with companies that match the letters you type.
- 7. When you see your company name appear, click the name from the drop-down list to choose it.**

By selecting the company from the drop-down list, you are allowing LinkedIn to dynamically link your profile to the LinkedIn company page. As long as the company page has a logo uploaded, it shows on your profile next to the experience.

As shown in Figure 9–2, by typing the name of your company into the Company Name field, a drop-down list appears. Selecting the name that LinkedIn provides creates a link that enables the company logo to display on your LinkedIn profile.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Experience' edit screen. At the top, there's a header with 'Experience' and a '+ Add position' button. Below that is a 'Company Name *' field containing 'Vision Board Med'. A dropdown menu is open over this field, showing a result for 'Vision Board Media' with a small logo, followed by the company name and a brief description: 'Marketing and Advertising; 11-50 employees; HQ: Delran, NJ'. There's also a link to 'Add Vision Board Med as a new company'. Below the dropdown are fields for 'Location' (empty), 'Time Period *' (with dropdowns for 'Choose...' and 'Year'), and a checkbox for 'I currently work here'. Under 'Description', there's a large text area and a 'See examples' link. At the bottom are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons.

FIGURE 9-2:
Getting a
company logo to
show on your
LinkedIn profile.

Linking to the company page

By linking the company name to the company's LinkedIn company page, you are creating a link from your profile to the company page. When a person clicks the logo or the company name from within your profile, the company's LinkedIn company page opens. When you create this link from your current experience to the company page, LinkedIn recognizes and associates you as a current employee of the company. A section of the company page shows viewers which employees the company is connected to. If you are connected to the viewer of the company page, your profile picture may be displayed.



TIP

The How You're Connected section of the company page is a wonderful way to find inside connections at companies you are interested in. The true power of LinkedIn is that it makes invisible connections visible. Because LinkedIn keeps track of your network and your network's network, you are able to see deeper into relationships and find inside connections that may help you.

When viewing a LinkedIn company page, it's easy to see how you are connected to people within that company (see Figure 9-3). By choosing the Company Name from the drop-down list, LinkedIn is able to link people back to the company page as employees. That's how when viewing a company page, you see who works there and how you are connected to them.

How you are connected to people in the company

Vision Board Media
Marketing and Advertising
11-50 employees
248 followers **Follow**

Transforming Your Future Today

How You're Connected

1st 2nd 2nd 2nd

1 first-degree connection
19 second-degree connections
22 Employees on LinkedIn

See all >

Vision Board Media Showcase Pages

Vision Board Media
Marketing and...
11-50 employees

Profile Makeover
67 followers
+ Follow

Resume Makeover...

FIGURE 9-3:
The company page shows how you are connected to a company's employees.



TIP

There is a work around when you can't add a company logo. A client of mine worked at MTV China. When we went to add MTV China, only the mother company, Viacom, was available. It was important for my client to showcase his global experience and that meant displaying MTV China's logo. Because the logo wasn't available, only Viacom's, we simply added Viacom to the Company Name field and edited the display name to state MTV China. Then, within the experience we added the MTV logo to the experience. This logo didn't show to the right of the experience but right below the experience's description. It wasn't exactly what he wanted, but it was better than nothing.

Less Is More — Stop Disqualifying Yourself

I often see people filling their LinkedIn profiles to the brim with unending job descriptions and accomplishments. I never advocate an empty profile, but I do believe less is more. When you provide too much information, you may come across as desperate. Contrary to popular opinion, your LinkedIn profile does not qualify you for a position, but it may disqualify you. Saying too much may lower your chances of getting called in for an interview. The goal of your LinkedIn profile is to illicit action from your target audience.

As you write your job descriptions for each experience, write with the goal of getting people interested, whetting their appetite so they want to learn more. Don't give everything away upfront. You want to have enough information left in your back pocket for future conversations.

Summarizing the company with a boilerplate description

You have the company name filled in and the dates added to your experience. It's now time to start writing your company description. Rather than immediately opening with your roles and responsibilities, it's best to start by providing your reader with a quick overview of the company for which you work.

By providing a brief boilerplate description of the company, you are building credibility and providing your reader with important information. Everyone knows Apple, but not everyone knows Applebaum Associates. The best boilerplate language describes the company in the simplest and easiest to understand terms. It should be so clear that a child can understand.

Effective company boilerplate language may contain the following items:

- » Annual revenue
- » Headquarters location
- » Industry
- » Number of employees
- » Number of locations
- » Private company or publicly traded
- » Products and/or services



TIP

Don't wrack your brain trying to come up with this company boilerplate description on your own. Most likely this description exists elsewhere. You just need to find it, copy it, paste it, and then tweak it a little.

Let's find your company's boilerplate description:

1. In any search engine, type the name of your company into the search field followed by the word *is*.

For example, "Applebaum Associates is" or "Vision Board Media, LLC is."

2. On the results page, you should see a short description of the company:

Applebaum Associates is a Philadelphia, PA based accounting company that provides tax preparation services for thousands of small businesses located in the Delaware Valley area. Founded in 2011, Applebaum Associates has three offices and employees over 250 professionals. Applebaum Associates is often cited as a Great Place to Work by Philadelphia Magazine.

This brief description is nearly perfect and you haven't even opened up the company's website. Sometimes a search engine fails to bring up an adequate description, in which case you have to dig a little further and visit the company website's About page to find a company summary. You can also visit the company's LinkedIn company page to find a brief company description.

3. Copy and paste the company summary into LinkedIn's company Description field, as shown in Figure 9-4.

4. Tweak the company summary so it reads succinctly and incorporates just enough information to give your target audience the information it needs to know.

It's simple to add a company boilerplate description to the experience's Description field. Just a few sentences provide the context a reader needs to understand more about the company and the work you did there.

The screenshot shows a 'Experience' form with the following fields:

- Company Name ***: Applebaum Associates
- Title ***: Marketing Manager
- Location**: Greater Philadelphia Area
- Time Period ***: Choose... 2010 – Choose... 2016
□ I currently work here
- Description**:
Applebaum Associates is a Pennsylvania-based accounting company that provides tax preparation services for thousands of small businesses located in the Greater Philadelphia area. Founded in 2010, Applebaum Associates has three offices and employs over 250 professionals.

At the bottom are 'See examples', 'Save' (blue button), and 'Cancel' buttons.

FIGURE 9-4:
Give your reader context by adding a company boilerplate description to your experience.

By providing a brief company description, your readers now understand the context around where you work and it is easier for them to understand your roles and responsibilities as well as your accomplishments.

So what if you do work for Apple? Should you add a description that states:

Apple is a manufacturer of mobile devices and personal computers. With worldwide annual revenue over \$233 billion, Apple employs over 80,000 people with offices and store locations all over the world.

Absolutely not! It's silly to describe Apple. Instead of providing known information, focus in on the unknown by describing the department or division of Apple in which you work. Instead, mention the size of your department, the number of employees, what the division/department specializes in, and how it affects the overall business. Here's an example:

The Life Insurance division of Insurance, Inc., employs over 3,500 professionals and is responsible for 25% of the Insurance, Inc.'s total revenues.

KEEPING WITHIN THE EXPERIENCE CHARACTER LIMITS

LinkedIn gives you 2,000 characters to describe each position in the Experience section. This translates to between 300 to 350 words. Aim for around 200 words per experience. Remember, you are not writing a novel.

It's a balancing act between too much and not enough. Showcase your top-level achievements, but don't go overboard. A person who is interested in learning more can always request your resume.

Describing your roles and responsibilities

Now that you have a boilerplate company description, it's time to dive into your role and responsibilities at your company. It's okay to pull out your resume and take a look at what you have listed, but you don't want to do a direct copy and paste. Instead, speak directly to your reader and describe your role within the company. This is where you provide an overview of the scope of your position. Do not use resume speak or silly corporate jargon. Instead, write in a first person, conversational manner.

Here are some sentence starters:

In 20XX, I was brought on board to ...

I was handpicked for this position to ...

In this role, I ...

As the XXX, I specialized in ...

My role within the organization was to ...

During this time, I ...

I am most proud to have ...

My responsibilities included ...

It was during my tenure at XXX, that I ...

I was hired to ...

As the XXX, I was tasked with ...

By describing your position in just a few sentences, you create context for your reader. Through this description you are painting a picture for your readers and they begin to formulate an idea of who you are and your capabilities.

Crafting an impactful achievement

With your roles and responsibilities described, now it's time to showcase the times you went above and beyond. Achievements describe projects and actions you performed that were exceptional and positively impacted your colleagues, clients, and ultimately, the overall business. This seems so simple, but most people have a hard time telling the difference between an achievement and a responsibility. Responsibilities describe your day-to-day actions. These are those duties that are minimally required of you to keep your job. Achievements describe not just the task but the results of the task.

If you have an up-to-date, professionally written resume, take a look at the achievements that are highlighted. Think in terms of your target audience. Which achievements are the most important to him or her? If you have 15 achievements listed under one position on your resume, you do not want to list all 15 achievements on your LinkedIn profile. First, you don't want to give away the farm to every single viewer of your LinkedIn profile. Second, you want to spotlight only the achievements your target audience finds most interesting and impressive. Aim for three to five achievements per experience. By showcasing only the top achievements, you are whetting your readers' appetites and providing them with a reason to reach out to learn more about you. When you overload your readers with too much information, nothing is left to deliver later.

Once you have chosen your top achievements, you want them to stand out. Because LinkedIn doesn't allow any formatting such as bolding or italicizing text, we need to do something different. Remember those symbols that you used to separate the keywords from your job title in the Title field? Copy one of those symbols again and paste it into your Description field. We are now going to use these symbols to create a bulleted list of accomplishments.



TIP

Make sure you hit the spacebar between the symbol and the first letter of the accomplishment. Also, you want to hit the Enter or Return key on your keyboard twice between accomplishments. This creates an empty line between accomplishments. Whitespace is important and helps make your profile visually attractive and easier to read.

Giving your reader a call to action

Your experience is just about perfect. You have a company boilerplate summary, a description of your roles and responsibilities, and a listing of your greatest accomplishments. What's left? Just one thing: a clear call to action!

Remember how I said we want to whet your readers' appetites and leave them wanting more? We now need to give them a reason to reach out to you:

For a detailed list of accomplishments, please request my resume.

By adding this sentence, you are letting your readers know that you have other accomplishments than just what you listed. You are also letting them know you are open to talking. In fact, if you are interested in job opportunities, you may want to also provide your contact information as well. People outside your first-degree network can view your profile, but if they aren't directly connected to you, they can't see your contact information in the contact information section of your profile nor can they easily message you. By providing your contact information, you are making it easy for that recruiter, hiring manager, or human resources professional to reach out to you.

Editing an Existing Experience

When optimizing your profile, it's not always necessary to add new experiences. Usually you just need to edit older experiences you have previously entered. In this situation, rather than deleting and adding new, you simply want to edit the experience and update it. Perhaps you want to optimize your job title or add an end date or include additional, new accomplishments.

To edit a previously created experience, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll through your profile until you see the experience you want to edit in the Experience section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the experience you want to edit.**
- 4. Click the highlighted area or the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.**

LinkedIn uses inline editing to update information on the profile page. As shown in Figure 9-5, simply hovering your cursor over the experience you want to edit brings you into edit mode. All you need to do is click within the highlighted area to immediately begin making changes.

- 5. Make the edits to the experience by clicking your mouse and typing your new content.**
- 6. When you are ready to save your work, click the Save button at the bottom of the edited experience to save your work and go back to your profile page.**

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Edit mode' interface for the 'Experience' section. At the top right, there is a 'Edit mode' button. Below it, the 'Experience' section header is visible. A 'Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer' position is listed under 'Vision Board Media'. The position spans from 'August 2009 – Present (6 years 10 months)' in 'Greater Philadelphia Area'. To the right of the position, there is a circular logo for 'VB MEDIA'. On the far right of the row, there are edit icons: a pencil, a copy symbol, and a delete symbol. Below the position, a detailed description of Vision Board is provided, followed by several bullet points with accompanying icons. At the bottom of the section, there is a note about time constraints and expert advice.

Experience

+ Add position

Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer

Vision Board Media

August 2009 – Present (6 years 10 months) | Greater Philadelphia Area

Vision Board - A vision board is a representation of your aspirations in life—its purpose: to depict and lead you to your desired future.

► What is your dream? Who do you want to be?

Whatever your vision, we at VisionBoard Media want you to embrace the new world out there—the ONLINE world—and put this powerful medium to work for you by shaping a strong digital identity.

You know that how you present yourself is integral to how people perceive you. In the 21st century, with billions of people logging on to the internet every day, your online presence is your digital introduction and first impression with the world.

Face it, prospective clients and employers are Googling you! Are they going to find something that sets you apart from the crowd?

It is not enough just to say you have a skill. You need to prove it with a digital footprint that showcases your accomplishments and achievements!

► Sound like a lot to handle? Don't worry, we've got you covered.

We provide the full 360° of integrated services necessary to brand yourself and craft a strong presence online. We will help you take control of your Internet presence and truly present yourself in a way that inspires, impresses, and builds confidence in your abilities, products, and services.

...
Don't have the time to write your LinkedIn® profile? Need expert advice on how to make your profile

FIGURE 9-5:
Inline editing
makes changing
your LinkedIn
profile a breeze.

Reordering Concurrent Experiences

I often get asked if it's possible to reorder experiences. The short answer is no. LinkedIn sticks with a straight chronological structure with the most current position at top and older positions cascading toward the bottom of the profile.

However, there is one exception to this rule: concurrent, current experiences. If you hold two current experiences at the same time, you can choose the order in which to list them on your profile. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll through your profile to the Experience section and hover your mouse pointer over the current position you'd like to rearrange.
3. Click and hold the Up/Down arrow to the right of your position name and drag it into the desired position.

When you reorder experiences, the top-most experience leads in the Current line in the top section of your profile.

Removing an Experience

Sometimes you want to delete an experience. Perhaps a job didn't work out and you don't want to highlight a short stint. Or maybe you added a promotion as a separate experience but now want to consolidate all promotions into one main experience. In these situations, you need to remove the experience. Here's how to do it:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll to the Experience section.
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the experience you want to delete and click the pencil (edit) icon that appears on the right.
4. Click the "Remove this position" link, as shown in Figure 9-6.

The link appears to the left of the Cancel button. When you select this link, a dialog box appears asking you if you are sure you want to remove this position.

A screenshot of the LinkedIn Experience edit page. The page includes fields for Company Name (Microdesk), Title (Account Executive • Sales & Marketing Professional), Location (Greater Philadelphia Area), Time Period (March 2006 - December 2008), and a Description box containing text about partnering with architects and engineers. At the bottom, there are Save, Cancel, and Remove this position buttons. Below the buttons are Add Media options for Document, Photo, Link, Video, and Presentation. A callout box labeled 'Click to remove a position' points to the 'Remove this position' link.

FIGURE 9-6:
Removing an
experience
is easy!

5. To permanently delete the experience, click Yes, Remove.

If you change your mind, click Cancel.

Reattaching Recommendations to Different Experiences

Recommendations are an important part of your profile. They create credibility and even respect. LinkedIn users should get at least a few recommendations for each experience they have listed on their LinkedIn profiles.

When it comes to optimizing their profiles and reorganizing and pruning experiences, the loss of an experience stops most people in their tracks. “I can’t delete this experience; I have a recommendation attached to it! I don’t want to lose those recommendations.”

The good news is that recommendations are never lost when the position they are associated with is deleted. They simply become “orphaned” and need to be reattached to a new position.

Here’s how to find orphaned recommendations and reattach them to a different experience:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll to the Recommendations section.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer in the Recommendations section and click the Manage button that appears on the right.**

This takes you to the Manage Recommendations page.

- 4. In the Received Recommendations section, find the recommendation you want to reassign, and click Reassign, as shown in Figure 9-7.**
- 5. In the resulting window, select the position you want the recommendation attached to from the drop-down list, as shown in Figure 9-8.**
- 6. Click Apply.**

Your orphaned recommendation is now reattached to a new experience.

Click to reassign a recommendation

You deleted the position these recommendations were associated with. Please click "Reassign" next to each recommendation to add it back to your profile.

You have 1 recommendation.
Checkmark indicates a particular recommendation is displayed on your profile



Howard Roark
 Experienced Human Resources Manager ✓ Organizational Development ✓ Gourmet Foodie ➔ Read My Profile
 « Donna was an exceptional widget manager. Detail-oriented, she was truly an inspiration to the widgets.
 Sep 5, 2016, You managed Howard directly

[Reassign](#)

Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer, Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer

You have 80 recommendations (79 visible, 1 hidden).
[Ask for a recommendation](#)
 Checkmark indicates a particular recommendation is displayed on your profile

FIGURE 9-7:
Clicking Reassign allows you to reassign an orphaned recommendation.

Reassign recommendation



Howard Roark
 Experienced Human Resources Manager ✓ Organizational Development ✓ Gourmet Foodie ➔ Read My Profile
 « Donna was an exceptional widget manager. Detail-oriented, she was truly an inspiration to the widgets.
 Sep 5, 2016, You managed Howard directly

Apply
Cancel

FIGURE 9-8:
Choose the position to reassign the recommendation from the drop-down list.

Optimizing Your Job Title with Keywords

The Title field of an experience contains your job title, right? Well, right and wrong. Although most LinkedIn users complete this field with their job titles, they are missing an opportunity to optimize their profile for search and branding purposes.



REMEMBER

The job title is one of those high impact search engine optimization (SEO) fields within LinkedIn. (I discuss SEO in even more detail in Chapter 2.) When a person searches LinkedIn for keywords, LinkedIn returns profiles that match these keywords. When those keywords appear in the job title, that profile turns up higher in search results than a profile that just states that keyword in another less sensitive area of the LinkedIn profile.

In addition, the Title field is at the top of the experience and in a larger font size, so the field pops out at people scrolling through your profile. Truly catch their eye by including more than just your job title.

What do you want to add in addition to your job title? That's easy, keywords!



TIP

A common mistake people make is using abbreviations in their job title. If you are a job seeker, you may choose to play it safe, and so if your title can be abbreviated, enter it both ways. You don't want to list yourself as VP and miss out on appearing in search results because a recruiter searched on Vice President. For example:

VP / Vice President of Marketing

Many companies use different job titles for similar jobs. Some companies prefer using nebulous job titles, while others use job titles that are non-descriptive of the role or responsibilities. Although you never want to lie, it is acceptable to add a more common job title with more description to make it easier for your reader to understand. By using a more common job title, you also improve your chances of getting found by recruiters looking for specific job titles.

I've stated it before and I must state it again: Do not exaggerate or lie when it comes to your job title. Instead aim for more description to assist your reader. For example, look at the differences in these job titles:

BEFORE: *Customer Development Team Member*

AFTER: *Customer Development Team Member ▶ Customer Service Representative
◆ Client Assistance Specialist*

BEFORE: *Lead Generation Specialist*

AFTER: *Lead Generation ▶ Cold Caller ◆ Telemarketer ◆ Business Development
◆ Prospecting*

In the first example, the "Before" title did not adequately describe the job seeker's function. "Customer Development Team Member" might be the official job title, but this is not a common job title used across Corporate America. By adding additional, lateral job titles that are more common, the person is now not only describing exactly his or her role but also making it easier to get found.

In the second example, the job title, "Lead Generation Specialist" is descriptive, but by including a few additional keywords, this person is making sure he or she matches different search terms a recruiter or hiring manager might use instead, such as cold caller, telemarketer, business development, or prospecting.

Job title character limits

There are 100 characters available in the experience Title field. Use as many of these characters as possible. As you type into the Title field within your LinkedIn profile, you will know you hit your character limit because you will suddenly find that no matter what you type, your cursor only blinks and no new characters are added. In this situation you must backspace the word that is incomplete and determine what keywords you want to keep and which you want to remove.

Making your job title pop with symbols

Reading through the job title examples shown throughout this chapter, you may have noticed that they all contained symbols that separate the job title from the keywords and separate keywords from each other. Symbols are a great way to catch the eye and provide flair to your job title.

You can't format your LinkedIn profile. Bold, italic, and underlined text is not allowed. You can't even include a bulleted list. There isn't even a bulleted list option. Even though LinkedIn doesn't provide you with the ability to format text, you can add pizazz by using symbols.

So where do you find these symbols? In addition to the numbers, letters, and punctuation marks that you see on your keyboard, there are additional characters you can use. These extra characters can be added to your profile bypassing your keyboard.

Because directions to get to these symbols vary depending upon your operating system, the easiest way to add symbols to your LinkedIn profile is to visit my LinkedIn profile to find a list of symbols you can use. Here are the steps to do so:

- 1. Open your web browser and go to www.LinkedIn.com/in/todonna.**
- 2. Once at my profile, scroll through until you get to the Projects section.**
- 3. When you find a symbol you like, highlight it, copy it, and then paste it into your profile.**

I curated a list of different symbols you can use on your LinkedIn profile. Copy and paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac) to copy and Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac) to paste.

In addition to using symbols in your job title and as a bulleted list, you can also use symbols for emphasis. For instance, add symbols around your call to action or use them to break up paragraphs.



Whatever you do, don't go crazy. Using too many symbols makes your profile look silly and juvenile. As they say in the fashion world, less is more. Choose one or two different types of symbols and use them sparingly throughout your profile. Symbols should spotlight your content, not detract from it.

Examples of Great Experiences

It's easy to describe how to do something, but it's not always so easy to actually take the instructions and do it. I'll try to get your creative juices flowing by providing some examples of optimized experiences. As you read each of these examples, take notice of the profile's goals, how each profile is written for the target audience, and how each incorporates keywords.

Salesperson looking for a new opportunity

Company Name: Corporate Leasing, Inc.

Title: Senior Business Development Executive ► Account Management ♦ Social Selling ♦ Prospecting

Dates: November 2007–July 2015 (7 years 9 months) Greater Philadelphia Area

Description: Corporate Leasing is one of the largest equipment finance companies in New Jersey. Providing commercial financing products and services focused on small and mid-size businesses, over 100,000 businesses have used our financing services.

I was initially hired as an Account Executive but in less than 6 months I was promoted to a Senior Business Development Executive. As a Sr. Business Development Executive, my primary job is to identify and close new business opportunities, collaborate with enterprise clients, and support existing clients.

Although I am thoroughly comfortable cold calling, I have found social media to be an amazing channel for prospecting. Utilizing Facebook and LinkedIn, I am able to forge online relationships that yield sales. Social Selling combined with traditional prospecting has allowed me to grow my territory by 200% over a three-year period.

Select major accomplishments include:

- Named Top Regional Performer for the last 2 years.
- My sales pipeline averaged 10MM. The typical deal size was 75K+.

- Closed the largest account in company history totaling over \$1.5M over 3-year period
- Consistently attained 100%+ of quota.

If you are interested in learning more about my involvement in these areas, please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn.

Salesperson looking for more prospects

Company Name: Corporate Leasing, Inc.

Title: Senior Business Development Executive ► Equipment Finance ♦ Commercial Financing ♦ Product Leasing

Dates: November 2007–July 2015 (7 years 9 months) Greater Philadelphia Area

Description: Corporate Leasing provides financing to businesses so they can acquire new equipment and technology while preserving capital. One of the largest leasing companies in New Jersey, Corporate Leasing is committed to helping small business grow.

In 2007, I came on board Corporate Leasing after having spent years focused on sales and marketing for small businesses.

As the Senior Business Development Executive for Corporate Leasing, I am responsible for providing small businesses in New Jersey with financial options that allow them to acquire the equipment and technology they need.

I love keeping in touch with my clients through social media and love providing learning opportunities for them as they grow their businesses.

If you would like to learn more about our company and services, please visit our website at CorporateLeasingInc.com.

Human resources professional using LinkedIn for reputation management

Company Name: Technology Startup, Inc.

Title: Senior Human Resources Manager ► Mergers & Acquisitions ♦ Retention ♦ Employee Relations ♦ Performance Management

Dates: 2015–2016

Description: Technology Startup, Inc., is growing by leaps and bounds. Founded in 2015, Technology Startup, Inc., provides the products and services that shape Startup growth.

In my role as Senior Human Resources Manager, I help support the successful integration of talent from newly acquired companies by focusing on successful onboarding and increasing employee satisfaction. In addition, I recruit top talent and specialize in employee development.

Accomplishments include:

- ✓ Managed the successful integration of over 100 newly merged employees by creating and delivering workshops and communication tools to educate this new staff of their role in our corporate culture. Attrition from the merger dropped by 75%.
- ✓ Introduced online tools and social media to the existing traditional tools of employment agencies and job fairs to recruit talent and successfully filled more than 250 positions in a record setting 3-month timeframe.
- ✓ Created and managed a new employee referral program, which resulted in higher employee referrals and new hires.

For detailed list of accomplishments, please request my resume.

With your Experience section optimized and brimming with impressive results, it's now time to turn to the Summary section of your LinkedIn profile. In the next chapter I show you how to craft a LinkedIn summary that acts as a digital introduction and striking first impression.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Writing an impressive LinkedIn summary
- » Showing, not telling, your strengths
- » Including a call to action
- » Formatting an eye-catching summary

Chapter **10**

Writing a Compelling Summary

The Summary section of your LinkedIn profile is where you introduce yourself to your target audience and tell your professional story in a conversational manner. The Summary section is your digital introduction and first impression.

When attempting to write the Summary section, many LinkedIn members are immediately rendered paralyzed. Others find themselves wandering into their kitchen or garage, intent to reorganize. Any task, regardless of how odious, is suddenly more attractive than facing a blank Summary section with the goal of writing about yourself.

In this chapter, I show you how to easily write an impressive, goal-oriented summary that attracts and satisfies your target audience. I discuss why it's important to write your summary in the first person, and I show you how to format your summary so that people find it easy to read and attractive. I also give you the tips you need to conquer the Summary section so that you can get this monumental task off your back.

Editing Your LinkedIn Summary

It's best to draft and edit your summary in a word-processing program rather than directly in the LinkedIn summary text field. My team and I have written thousands of LinkedIn profiles, and more than a few times computers have crashed, Internet connections were lost, LinkedIn went offline, and summaries written in the text field disappear in a blip. It is horrible when it happens, and no amount of cursing or crying brings unsaved work back to life. I know this through direct experience.

The most popular word-processing program in the known universe is Microsoft Word. If you don't have access to Microsoft Word, don't panic. If you are a Mac user, you can use Pages for Mac. Google Docs works great regardless of operating system. Open Office is a free word-processing program that you can download and install. Do try to make sure that whatever program you select, it comes with spelling and grammar check.

After you write your summary in a word processor, copy it and paste it into the Summary section of your profile. Here's how to add your finished summary into your LinkedIn profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll to the Summary section, hover your mouse pointer over the Summary section text box, and click the pencil (edit) icon.**

You are now in edit mode, as shown in Figure 10-1.



FIGURE 10-1:
Editing your
summary.

- 3. Click your cursor in the text field.**
- 4. Open the summary you composed in your word-processing program and copy it to the Clipboard by clicking Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).**

5. Return to your LinkedIn profile and paste your summary into the Summary text field by clicking Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac).
6. Click the Save button.

Now that you know how to add your summary to LinkedIn, let's look at how to draft your best possible summary to catch readers' eyes and compel them to reach out to you.

Writing in First Person

You've probably seen LinkedIn summaries that start like this: "John Gates is a respected executive with an impressive track record of accomplishments . . ." You know it's his profile. Either he wrote it himself or he copied and pasted it from a bio. Reading it, it feels strange and oddly off-putting. The reason you may react this way is because the profile was written in a third-person narrative voice. In a third-person narration, a narrator tells a story about someone else. Pronouns such as "he," "she," "it," or "they" are used to refer to the characters.

Because the LinkedIn profile clearly belongs to the person writing it, third person is inauthentic and disingenuous. As I mention in Chapter 1, LinkedIn is a social network, and its goal is for members to interact and forge strong relationships with their networks. By writing in third person, you create distance between you and your reader. Instead, be sociable and draw your reader in by writing in the first-person narrative form ("I"). Don't be afraid to use "I." Claim your story and tell it proudly in your voice.



WARNING

With that said, I must warn you, don't start every sentence with "I." It's a balance. Use "I," but don't overdo it. Check out the end of this chapter where I include examples of powerfully written LinkedIn summaries. All the summaries are written in first person, but none abuse "I."

Avoiding Resume Speak

It's hard to write about yourself. That's why so many profiles on LinkedIn are simply copied and pasted from old resumes. The problem then becomes the original resume. Few people actually work with a professional resume writer to create a succinct and clear history of their professional accomplishments. Instead, the

majority of resumes use generic, general descriptions that don't spotlight accomplishments or tell an engaging professional history. Here's an example:

Results-driven and goal orientated professional commanding over 10 years of progressive leadership success. Top-performing, dynamic manager delivering track record of consistent achievements. Recognized strengths include excellent interpersonal skills, strong client relationship building, and leadership in the effective implementation and use of technology. Exemplary commitment to company and personal success, exhibiting strong leadership, problem-solving, communication, and technical skills.

Reading that paragraph, do you have an idea what that person does on a day-to-day basis? Do you understand who this person is and what he or she loves to do? Do you have an idea of what industry this person works in, what type of job he or she has, or even what he or she is capable of accomplishing? Do you want to reach out to learn more? No!

That paragraph is a lot of gobbledegook words strung together simply taking up space. To create a powerful, compelling summary, stay away from resume speak. Write instead in a natural, conversational manner.



TIP

Read the paragraph out loud to judge whether it sounds natural or stilted. Ultimately, the goal is for readers to feel that you are speaking to them directly, telling them exactly what they need to know about you.

Even if your resume was professionally written, you still don't want to copy and paste it into the Summary section. Resumes are for job search. If your goal isn't job search, already your profile is portraying you in an inaccurate manner.

If your goal is job search, copying and pasting your resume still doesn't work. Let's say a hiring manager discovers your profile on LinkedIn after performing a search for the company's ideal candidate. The hiring manager is impressed and reaches out to you to request your resume. What happens when that resume is a one-to-one copy of your profile? That hiring manager is going to be disappointed.

Here's another scenario. Suppose you submitted your resume for a job listing, and the hiring manager decides to check you out on LinkedIn. Once again, the hiring manager wants to learn more about you, but he is getting the same information he already has in his possession. What a letdown! Here's your chance to make an impression and seal the deal, but instead, by recycling content, an opportunity may be lost.

By creating a unique and high level LinkedIn profile that extends your brand and delivers targeted content, each interaction with your target audience builds interest and confidence and propels the reader through to a successful conclusion.

Revisiting Your LinkedIn Goals and Target Audience

Before you begin writing your summary, it's important to remember why you are on LinkedIn and who is your target audience. As I discuss in Chapter 1, a powerful LinkedIn profile is written toward your goal and target audience. It's not what you want to say, but rather what your target audience needs to know. Your LinkedIn summary should connect to your audience and align with your objectives.

If you haven't already, write down your LinkedIn goal(s) on a piece of paper:

- » I want to find a new job.
- » I want to find new prospects.
- » I want to enhance my reputation.

Next up, who is your target audience? Try to be as explicit as possible. Who are these people, what do they do, what are they looking to achieve, where are they located? For example:

- » Recruiters and hiring managers looking for a data architect with experience in online banking applications located in Fort Worth, Texas.
- » Small business owners in Illinois looking to save money on their credit card processing.
- » Event planning professionals interested in finding oil and gas experts to speak at industry conferences.

Keep this list in front of you as you begin to write your summary. Look at it and write to your goal and write to your target audience. Ask yourself, "What does my target audience need to know about me?" "What do I offer that will get my audience to take notice and feel good about me?" Use that sheet of paper to jot down ideas.

Catching Your Reader's Attention

A strong LinkedIn summary needs to catch a reader's attention immediately. The best way to do this is to introduce yourself and summarize, in a sentence or two, what you do and how it affects your reader. This is known as an *elevator pitch*.

The reason it is called an “elevator pitch” comes from the idea that you are in an elevator with a VIP and you have just the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator a few floors to succinctly and compellingly explain a product, service, person, group/organization/company, or project to gain this person’s interest and buy-in.

Let’s say you have just met a person and she asks, “What do you do for a living?”

You could answer, “I am a realtor.”

Or, you might provide an elevator pitch that would draw the other person in and may even get her interested in you: “As a realtor in the Greater Philadelphia area, I partner with families, helping them get their house ready to attract buyers so that they can sell at the best possible price. I work hard to understand their needs so I can quickly and easily find them their dream home.”



REMEMBER

An easy way to get started crafting your elevator pitch is to imagine you are explaining what you do for a living to a small child. Simplify what you do down to the core concepts. Do not use words such as *contextualize*, *organic*, *synergize*, or *paradigm*. And stay away from silly corporate jargon. Instead, concentrate on the results you offer and how what you do helps people and businesses.

Here’s an outline to use to create your elevator pitch:

My name is _____ and I help
individuals/businesses/_____ create/discover/implement
_____ so they can achieve _____.

It may seem odd to state your name, but this introduction does two things. First, it gives your readers a sense that they are really talking to you. They immediately see the profile as coming straight from your pen and not from your boring resume.

Second, by stating your name, you are optimizing the profile for your name in LinkedIn search. Most people share their name with other people. By stating your name in your profile, you are providing more instances of your name than others with the same name. What this means is if a person is searching for your name, there’s a greater likelihood your profile will rank higher than others who share your name.

By including an elevator pitch in your LinkedIn summary, your readers will understand who you are and what's in it for them, compelling them to continue reading the rest of your profile.

Creating Your Professional Manifesto

Once you have your introduction and elevator pitch, it's time to tell your professional story. Your reader now has a general idea of who you are and what you do. Next you need to fill in the rest of the pieces. Think of the Summary section as your professional manifesto. Here are some questions to think about to help you create your manifesto:

- » Why do you do what you do?
- » What drew you to your current industry and position?
- » What are you most passionate about accomplishing?
- » What motivates you to succeed?
- » How do you view the future of your industry?
- » What's up ahead and what must a company do to find success?
- » What makes you credible in your industry?
- » What have you accomplished that makes you proud and builds credence to your brand?
- » What is your career philosophy?
- » What quote or concept guides you through your career?

As you brainstorm ideas for your summary, think of author and speaker Simon Sinek's quote:

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. . . . Very few people or companies can clearly articulate WHY they do WHAT they do. By WHY I mean your purpose, cause or belief — WHY does your company exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care?

You could create a summary that simply states what you do and how you do it. The issue with that is it's not compelling or interesting, nor does it portray you as someone who should command respect and notice. By diving deep and truly turning your summary into a professional manifesto, you are shaping your image into one that is high level, interesting, and attractive.

Explain your benefits

Your summary should explain *your* benefits. What strengths do you have? How do they help your reader? What does your reader want to know about you? What are they seeking? The answers to these questions determine what you should write.

Here are some benefit sentence starters:

- » One of my strengths is ...
- » I gain immense satisfaction from ...
- » I am equally comfortable setting up a ... or ...
- » My mission is to ...
- » My passion is ...

If you are looking for a specific job, find a job description for your desired position. Incorporate those skills and qualities the job demands into your summary. You can find job descriptions on the hiring page of a company's website or on a job listing site. By targeting your profile toward that job description, you show that hiring manager or recruiter that you are the perfect person for the job.



WARNING

Whatever you do, you don't want to come across as desperate in your summary. That's a surefire way of scaring off potential employers. How do you change desperation into motivation? Rather than talk about the job you need, tell your reader what you offer in strengths and quantifiable results that intersect with what that job requires. If you cast yourself as the perfect fit, you are ensuring the person sourcing for that job reaches out.

If your goal is sales and prospecting, your target audience is scanning your profile, thinking, "Can this person help me?" Tell your readers how they will benefit from working with you. Include a success story of a past client and what they were able to achieve by working with you. Make your value clear to your reader so that they feel confident in you and the solution you provide.

When your goal is reputation management, you may decide to talk about activities outside of your career's day-to-day functions. You might mention your involvement in your community and your commitment to continuing your education. Your profile is your digital persona. Include the best parts of who you are and showcase them on your profile.

Highlight your top achievements

Although your job experiences contain career successes and achievements, your summary is the place to mention one to three career highlights. A career highlight isn't a simple success, but rather an amazing accomplishment.

By including a few career highlights, you are providing quantifiable evidence of your abilities. You want your reader to come away with a feeling of confidence that you are who you say you are. But whatever you do, don't provide too many career highlights. It's important to leave some successes in your back pocket so there are things to discuss when a person reaches out to you directly. And, it is important not to get too detailed with the highlight — keep the description at a high level.

When you add a career highlight, ask yourself the question, "So what?" It's important the highlight answers that question. It's not enough that you set up a new department. You want to showcase the true impact: You set up a new department with 50 employees that immediately became profitable and brought the company an additional \$25M in revenue.



TIP

If you want to really set off your career highlights, preface the highlight with a symbol. (Check out Chapter 7 where I show you how to add symbols to your profile.) A star, arrow, or check mark act as great eye catchers, ensuring your reader pays attention to your accomplishments.

Keep the summary focused on you

I often see LinkedIn profiles that only describe products, services, or a business. It's a good idea to provide additional information for context, but remember, your profile is your own! People are reading it because they want to learn more about you. People do business with people. Your summary helps people see you as a real person. If your readers wanted to learn about your company, they would click to the company's LinkedIn company page or website.

For some people, it's scary to open up and talk about themselves. Realize that with your LinkedIn profile, you provide only the information you are comfortable providing. You never have to state anything that makes you uncomfortable. However, it is important to open up somewhat. Decide what you are comfortable sharing. Figure out what you want people to know about you. Once you know how you want to be perceived, create a summary that showcases that persona.

CHARACTER LIMITS

The Summary section can contain up to 2,000 characters. This roughly translates to 350 words. Don't feel that you need to fill your summary with 2,000 characters' worth of content. The most important thing is to tell your story at a high level and leave your reader wanting to learn more. If that's 1,000 characters or 2,000 characters, it's all good.

Create a clear call to action

A successful profile converts. That means the person reading the profile is compelled to do something other than click to another person's profile. If you are a job seeker, this conversion might occur with the reader calling you to request your resume to talk about a potential job opportunity. If you are in sales, the person reading your profile may visit your website to learn more about the products or services you offer. If you are a reputation seeker, the reader could follow you on LinkedIn to read your future long-form blog posts.

To compel your readers to do something after looking at your profile, you must provide them with a clear call to action. If you don't tell your readers what to do, often they just surf away.

What do you want your reader to do?

You have a number of options:

- » Visit my website.
- » Send me an email.
- » Call me.
- » Connect with me on LinkedIn.
- » Follow me on Twitter.
- » Download a whitepaper or marketing literature.
- » Listen to a podcast.
- » Watch a video.



REMEMBER

Any information you include in your summary is visible to the world. By providing your email address or phone number, it is available to not just the people in your network, but also to people outside your network and non-LinkedIn users.

Unless you have grave privacy concerns, I suggest including a telephone number or email address. The VIPs of this world are direct people, and when they want to contact you, they want to do it immediately. If they can't find your phone number, they may move on to the next person in their LinkedIn search results. You are on LinkedIn to network and find business opportunities. By trying to avoid the occasional telemarketer, you may also avoid real opportunity.

Once you have your contact method chosen, it's time to conclude your summary. Here's one example:

I am currently looking for that next position that allows me to grow revenue, develop strong client relationships, and affect positive change.

You can request my resume by contacting me either by phone 215-839-0008 or email donna@gmail.com.

Or:

I am on LinkedIn to forge strong professional relationships. Whether you know me directly or not, please feel free to send me a connection request.

Assisting other professionals and acting as a connector is a passion of mine. If I can help you, give me a call or Skype me.

Phone: 215-839-0008 / Skype: donna.serdua

Another way to craft this call to action is by tempting your audience with a carrot. Give your readers a reason to get in touch with you. Will you provide them with a free phone consultation? Do you have experience that you are open to sharing?

Here are some examples:

Call me today for a free phone consultation to see if your business can benefit from my services. Let's put the proper solutions into action and together we'll turn your goals into reality.

Or:

I'd love to share with you some of the insights I've gleaned from building and managing datacenters over the last 10 years.

Let's talk! My number is: (215) 839-0008

Perhaps you really don't want your reader to take any action. Some people are on LinkedIn to simply shape how people perceive them, and it's not important for the

reader to reach out. In this situation, gently end your summary in a positive way, leaving your reader feeling inspired and impressed.

Here are a few examples:

My success is my clients' success. I gain enormous satisfaction helping my clients optimize their marketing efforts. Building successful campaigns and generating positive word of mouth is what keeps me striving forward in my career.

Or:

The bottom line is I help my clients save money and plan for a secure future.

Or:

My focus moving forward is to continue to improve processes and affect positive change within this amazing organization.

Formatting a Sleek LinkedIn Summary

Formatting? There's no formatting allowed within a LinkedIn profile! That's true, but there are still things you can do to make sure your Summary section is easy to read and attractive to the eye.

For example, space between paragraphs means white space, which makes content look less dense and easier to read. To create an extra line of space between paragraphs in your summary, press the Enter or Return key on your keyboard twice after the end of every paragraph.

You can also use symbols to spice up your text. (I show you how to copy and paste symbols in Chapter 7.) Symbols can be used to create horizontal lines to divide your content. Stars, circles, or check marks can be used as bullets to show off your accomplishments. Check out Figure 10–2 to see how I used symbols to create what appears to be an underline and bullets to draw attention to my call to action.



TIP

A few, well-chosen symbols are a great way to amp up your content, but remember: overdoing symbols can take a great summary and make it look amateurish and tacky.

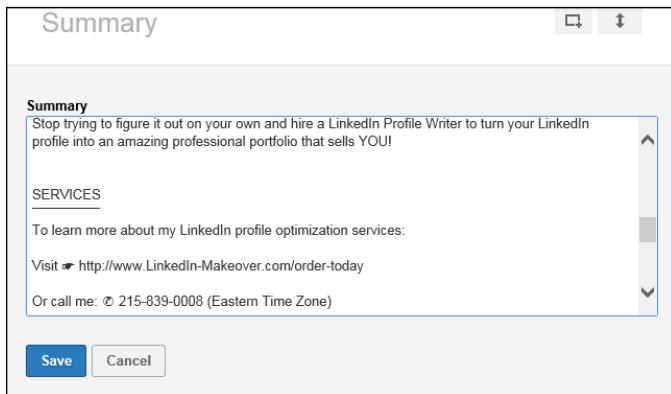


FIGURE 10-2:
Use symbols to dress up your profile.

Examples of Compelling and Engaging Summaries

Here are examples of compelling and engaging summaries that you can use to help you create your own.

Product management

My name is Jana Gates and I am a powerhouse in product management. Using my expertise in retail marketing of technology products and my ability to work within the structure of technology companies, I have developed successful programs leading to robust sales of profitable products, and have increased market shares in very competitive markets.

Among other career accomplishments, I am proud to have spearheaded product launches that have paid off for my employers. Being considered a trusted advisor and functional expert in my area of specialization, gives me great satisfaction.

I firmly believe that for today's technology companies to continue to be successful, they must rely on someone like myself who understands the changing dynamics of retail product management, marketing and sales, along with the impact of new technologies.

With the advent of new shopping paradigms such as participatory shopping and new mobile shopping options, it's more important than ever before to drive innovation. My goal is to help shape strategy, achieve higher customer retention and deliver profitability that increases year after year.

As a team leader, I feel it's important to unleash the potential of those working with me and to share my passion for success with them. With our combined energy we can develop better products that respond to and exceed consumer needs.

I am on LinkedIn to meet others who share my commitment to doing great work and to share best practices. Please reach out and let's connect!

Leadership

My name is John Gates and I have never faced a challenge in my work life that I couldn't surmount. I have built a track record over a 10-year career of delivering outstanding results and operational efficiency.

In my current position as VP of Operations for Widgets, Inc., a leading national manufacturer, I've assembled an organization that sets new standards in efficiency and delivers excellent production quality.

I believe that as a leader, the most important success factor is cultivating excellence in people. The employees you hire and train are capable of great things. It's up to the leader to unleash their capabilities in support of the company mission. It's important that they understand business goals and how they can play a part in achieving them.

To that end I work closely with team members and have developed a number of training programs focused on career learning. These programs have received national awards for integrating training execution, results measurement and personal recognition in a way that yields a learning culture. My initiatives were named 2015's Top Training Program by Training Magazine.

My areas of expertise include:

- * Employee engagement and culture building
- * Operational effectiveness and Six Sigma
- * Change management
- * Leadership development and organizational growth

I am always looking out for new opportunities that utilize these skills. To explore how my areas of expertise might benefit your organization, please connect with me via LinkedIn.

Retail

My name is Johan Gates and I manage store operations and am a retail leader for Widget Style, a leading U.S. fashion retailer. It is my responsibility to set clear goals and objectives for a team of over 10 associates so that everyone works together to achieve the highest level of customer service.

Every associate at Widget Style is the face of the company to our customers. I pride myself on the training and development opportunities I provide for our team members so that they can fulfill this responsibility. In addition, a key part of my role as retail leader is to inspire the team, maintaining morale and productivity so that they deliver value and service while driving store revenues.

During a career of seven years in retail management, I have developed strengths not only in team building but in leading business operations and building relationships with key influencers. As a result of my solid track record, I've been promoted to positions of increasing responsibility. Today, I am proud to run the flagship store of the company's regional operations.

As a leader of a significant enterprise in our area, fostering community relationships is an important part of my job and I am passionate about supporting the community. In addition, I am on the Board of the Bucks County Orchestra, and have worked with charitable foundations in our area to raise money for worthwhile causes.

I feel that the lessons I have learned in working my way up a retail enterprise can offer valuable insights to others. Please connect with me via LinkedIn and we can share our ideas for creating exceptional customer experiences.

Accounting

My name is Jackie Gates and I am a partner with Thompson, Gates, and Thompson, the leading certified public accounting (CPA) firm in the Dallas, Texas area. We have been in business for 15 years and are the firm of choice for many in our area because of our wealth of experience regarding accounting issues.

As individual and business tax reporting and filing requirements have become increasingly complex, clients know we deliver the highest quality results. They rely on us as strategic partners and reliable advisors. I have been a partner since 2011 and in my tenure have gained expertise in many areas of the tax code, which benefits our clients.

As it relates to the selection of a CPA partner, I would suggest asking the following questions before making a decision:

- * How confident are you in managing today's complex tax returns yourself?
- * As a business owner, how important is it to you to have confidence in the company managing your firm's tax returns?
- * How important is it to you to receive personalized service?

Personalized service is a hallmark of our firm. We assist clients in navigating the complex tax code environment. Long-term clients often express their appreciation for our service. My own priority is to be personally responsible to our clients,

understanding their unique situations and making sure each one has the needed services so services are customized to their needs.

To learn more about our services, which include tax preparation, cash flow management, estate planning and preparation of financial statements, among others, please contact me at TGTCPA.com or by phone at 215-839-0008.

Student

My name is Jack Gates. As a recent graduate of Widget University, I am seeking opportunities to apply the wide-ranging skill set I have gained through rigorous academics and multiple internships. My goal is to obtain an entry-level marketing position with a mid-to-large consumer brand company based in New York City.

* Internships Yield Valuable Experiences

While completing my education, I gained real-world experience via multiple internships. These hands-on internships taught me how various departments and functions really work. While successfully carrying out assigned projects in support of company goals I learned accountability. Through internships I expanded my experience, learned new industries and gained invaluable insights from my mentors that I can apply on behalf of a future employer.

* Rigorous Academics Prepare for Meeting Tough Challenges

In the academic world, competition is fierce, and so provides a model for business success. Through university training I have developed critical thinking skills and the ability to prioritize. My degree in Business Administration gave me a strong foundation, and team-based projects taught me that through collaboration, winning outcomes can be achieved for all.

* Contributing in Today's Business World

Self-motivated and self-directed, I am eager to embark on a career where future employers can count on me to deliver my best efforts for the good of their organization.

To discuss how my experiences may be a perfect fit for your company, please connect with me via LinkedIn or contact me directly student@gmail.com.

In the next chapter, I show you how to round out your profile with additional sections like Honors and Awards, Organizations, and more. I'll meet you there!

4

Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches

IN THIS PART . . .

Learn how to compile and record all of your professional accomplishments, skill sets, certifications, and abilities to tout on your profile.

See what you need to do to get your profile an All-Star ranking, even if you didn't graduate from college or university.

Look at ways to add multimedia content to turn your profile into a portfolio that showcases your best work and projects.

Understand why it's important to ask for and provide recommendations, and take a look at ways to do so.

Learn how to join LinkedIn Groups, follow the right influencers, and show your allegiance to companies and schools to strengthen your brand vision.

See what finishing touches you should add to your profile, including rearranging sections into a logical order.

Once your profile is complete, learn how to market your profile to get more and more views.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Detailing your professional career
- » Getting your profile to All-Star status
- » Branding yourself through activities and interests

Chapter **11**

There's More to You Than Your Jobs

Most people think of LinkedIn as a place to state the positions they've held throughout their careers. LinkedIn is so much more than just a compendium of where you worked. Your LinkedIn profile is a 360-degree view of you as a professional. Throughout your career you won awards, joined industry organizations, ran projects, received patents, wrote publications, and more.

In this chapter, I show you how to compile and record all these professional accomplishments to create a complete profile of *you*. And it's not just accomplishments; certain professions demand certain skill sets, certifications, and abilities. LinkedIn provides sections for you to record certifications, languages you speak, courses you've taken, and test scores that make you even more marketable. I also show you how to record your education and even show you what to do if you didn't graduate from college or university.

Showcasing Organizations

The Organizations section of your LinkedIn profile is the place to record the real-world associations and clubs to which you belong. Listing professional membership organizations on your profile proves you are an integral force within your community and an involved member within your industry.

I often see LinkedIn members add LinkedIn Groups or their volunteer experience to the Organizations section. This is a mistake. LinkedIn Groups are forums within LinkedIn focused on a specific topic. Within a LinkedIn Group, members post and comment on discussions. It's a great way to come together with like-minded individuals for discussions around shared interests. However, you do not want to list your LinkedIn Groups within the Organizations section, as LinkedIn Groups automatically appear at the bottom of your profile.

The Volunteering Experience section of LinkedIn is where you list those humanitarian organizations to which you donate money or time. Not sure where to add a particular organization? To determine which organization goes into which section, ask yourself the question, “Is this organization’s goal philanthropy, and am I donating my time or money?” If so, enter it into the Volunteering Experience section, which I cover later in this chapter in “Adding Volunteer Experiences.”

To determine the organizations to list in your profile, answer the following questions:

- » Do you belong to any industry organizations?
- » Do you belong to any user groups?
- » Are you a member of a networking group?
- » Do you pay dues to any association?
- » Are you a part of a local government organization?
- » Do you sit on a board of directors?

Make sure you include organizations that forward you professionally and are interesting to your target audience. It's okay to leave out organizations that are of a personal nature or may alienate your target audience.



TIP

Everyone has causes that move them but you must be smart about what you list on your profile. You may love animals but showing your support of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) may alienate some people. Likewise, listing your National Rifle Association (NRA) membership may upset others. It's certainly fine to stand behind your convictions whatever end of the spectrum they might be on — just realize that not everyone will agree and opportunity might be redacted because of what you list on your profile. You can't please everyone, so be strategic and think through the pros and cons prior to adding organizations to your profile.

To add professional membership organizations to the Organizations section of your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Organizations section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.**
- 3. If you don't have the Organizations section added to your profile yet, add it by scrolling below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile.**

Two sections appear that you can add. If Organizations isn't one of the options listed, click View More (see Figure 11-1) to expand the area to see a full list of sections to add.

- 4. In the Organizations section, click Add Organizations.**
- When clicked, the Organizations section appears on your profile.
- 5. In the Organization field, type the name of the organization.**

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Donna Serdula. At the top, there's a photo of her, her name, and some professional details like being a writer and speaker. Below that, there's a 'View profile as' button and a '500+' connections indicator. Underneath, there's a URL and a 'Contact Info' link. A callout bubble points to a 'View More' button with the text 'Click to expand'. The expanded section contains two boxes: 'Test Scores' (with a blue icon) and 'Courses' (with a purple icon). Both boxes have descriptions and 'Add' buttons. At the bottom of this expanded section is another 'View More' button.

FIGURE 11-1:
Add additional
sections to
your profile.

6. In the Position(s) Held field, type the position you held.

If you didn't have an official title, such as President or Treasurer, you can use: Member, Key Contributor, Team Member, Patron, Supporter, Sponsor, Subscriber, Angel, or Backer.

7. In the Occupation field, select the current or prior experience to connect this organization to a particular role.

The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences. If you are part of this organization not because of a current or past role, feel free to skip this field.

By linking the organization to a position, the organization shows up in the Organizations section and directly under the position it is paired with.

8. In the Time Period fields, choose the month and year you started your membership from the drop-down lists.

LinkedIn defaults to no end date. If this organization is no longer current, enter an end date by deselecting Membership Ongoing.

9. In the Additional Notes field, enter information about the organization.

10. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-2 for an example of an organization added to the Organizations section.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Organizations' addition form. At the top, there's a search bar and a 'PREMIUM' badge. The main section is titled 'Organizations'. It contains the following fields:

- Organization ***: A text input field containing 'National Speakers Association (NSA)'.
- Position(s) Held**: A text input field containing 'Member'.
- Occupation**: A dropdown menu showing 'Professional Public Speaker at Donna Serdula'.
- Time Period**: A dropdown menu showing 'May 2012 – Present'. Below it is a checked checkbox labeled 'Membership ongoing'.
- Additional Notes**: A text area containing the following text:

The National Speakers Association (NSA) is the premier organization for professional speakers. Since 1973, NSA has provided the most comprehensive resources and education designed to advance the skills, integrity and value of its members and the speaking profession.
- View my directory listing**: A link to <http://bit.ly/publicspeaker>.

At the bottom are three buttons: 'Save' (blue), 'Cancel' (gray), and 'Remove this organization'.

FIGURE 11-2:
Adding an organization membership.

FINDING ADDITIONAL NOTES

LinkedIn provides an Additional Notes field for you to enter a description of the organization. Don't leave this field blank. Rather than racking your brain trying to figure out how to describe the organization, let the Internet do the work for you. Go to the organization's website and visit the About Us page. The About Us page should contain a paragraph that describes the organization perfectly. Use this description as a guide to create your own description of the organization within the Additional Notes field. And if you are interested in ranking high for a certain keyword phrase, you may consider working that keyword combination into the organization's description if it is pertinent and makes sense.

Uncovering Your Honors and Awards

The Honors & Awards section of your LinkedIn profile is the area to enter any honors and awards you earned throughout your career. Working with clients, I find that the Honors & Awards section is one of the hardest areas to fill out. Many people don't keep a list of the honors and awards they have received, and when it finally comes time to list them, they simply can't remember.

Here's something to remember: If you don't record these honors, no one else will. You never know when it might come down to you and another highly lauded individual for a job, promotion, or project. You don't want to miss out simply because they recorded and touted their accomplishments and you didn't.

To determine your honors and awards, think in terms of certificates, plaques, and trophies you received. Open up your closet and check the top shelf — are any of these items collecting dust in a box? Jot down on a piece of paper these awards. Once you have identified any certificates, plaques, or trophies, let's dig deeper. Honors and awards don't have to be tangible items.

Here are some questions to help you remember other types of honors and awards you may have received:

- » Were you ever quoted in a newspaper article?
- » Were you ever profiled in a magazine?
- » Did you ever give a speech or deliver a keynote address?
- » Did you ever sit on a panel or act as a moderator?
- » Were you ever asked to work on a special project?

- » Were you chosen to provide training or mentoring to colleagues?
- » Were you ever appointed to a committee?

Choosing the right honors and awards

Are your brain juices pumping now? Before we start adding all these amazing honors and awards to your profile, we need to take a step back and decide what to add and what not to include.

Look over the list of honors and awards you compiled. Did you list things that occurred over 20 years ago? In the professional world, it's all about what you did lately. With that said, once an Oscar winner, always an Oscar winner. The older awards that are for amazing accomplishments, you may decide to keep. However, if the accomplishments were great at the time but don't point you in the direction of your desired career future or impress your greatness upon your target audience, ditch 'em!



TIP

I can't tell you how many top-level executives have asked me whether to include their Eagle Scout award. Although this award is from childhood, it does showcase perseverance, and I tell them to include it on their profiles. Besides, there are a lot of former Boy Scouts in high places, and the Eagle Scout award impresses them.

Did you earn your black belt in Karate? You might decide to list it under Honors & Awards, especially if it is a recent achievement. However, you could instead add it to your Interests section of your LinkedIn profile, which I cover in Chapter 12. Ultimately it's up to you, but always keep your target audience in mind and consider what they might deem as an impressive professional accomplishment.

Ultimately, it comes down to being smart. If you *only* have awards that are over five years old, include them. As you receive new awards, start deleting the older ones. Also, if you earned President's Club or another top sales award five years in a row, you don't need to list it five times. Condense it into one entry and state it is for multiple years.



REMEMBER

Don't go overboard. It's better to have three to five high-level honors listed instead of 15 to 20 so-so awards.

Creating a strong description

Once you have your final, master list of honors and awards, you now want to do some research to create an optimized description that provides context around the award and showcases your contribution as award worthy.

Start with a boilerplate explanation of the organization that presented the honor or award. Who are they and what do they do? Then describe the honor or award and what you did specifically to get the award. You want to aim for a couple of sentences, not a full-blown novel.

The best way to get this information is to consult the Internet. Run searches on the organization and check its website's About Us page. Then search for the honor or award. Even if it's not the exact award you received, you may find wording that is close to what you need. Rather than plagiarizing, use this content as a springboard and tweak it to make it work for you.

Now that you have descriptions, it's time to enter these honors and awards into your LinkedIn profile. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Honors & Awards section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.**
- 3. If you don't have the Honors & Awards section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile.**

Two sections appear that you can add. If Honors & Awards isn't one of the options listed, click the View More link to expand the area and see a full list of sections to add.

- 4. In the Honors & Awards section, click Add Honors & Awards.**
- When clicked, the Honors & Awards section appears on your profile.
- 5. In the Title field, enter the name of your honor or award.**
- 6. In the Occupation field, select the current or prior experience to connect the honor or award to a particular role.**

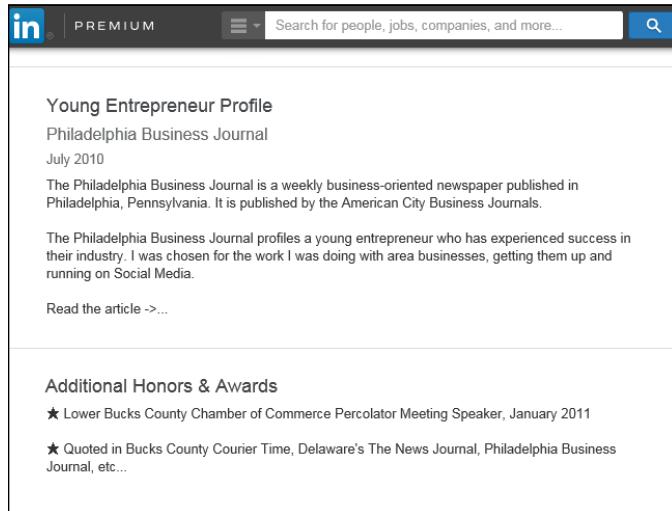
The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences. By linking the honor and award to a position, the honor and award shows up in the Honor & Awards section and directly under the position it is paired with.

- 7. In the Date field, choose the month and year you received the honor or award from the drop-down lists.**
- If this is an honor and award that spans multiple years, or a date simply doesn't pertain, feel free to leave the date field blank.
- 8. In the Description field, enter information about the honor or award.**

Remember, it's better to add context around your honors and awards, and the easiest way to do that is to search the web for already created content that you can tweak.

9. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-3 for an example of honors listed in the Honors & Awards section.



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the LinkedIn logo, 'PREMIUM' status, a search bar containing 'Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...', and a magnifying glass icon. Below the header, the profile section starts with a title 'Young Entrepreneur Profile' and a source 'Philadelphia Business Journal'. It includes a date 'July 2010' and a detailed description of the profile: 'The Philadelphia Business Journal is a weekly business-oriented newspaper published in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. It is published by the American City Business Journals.' Below this, there's a link 'Read the article ->...'. A horizontal line separates this from the 'Additional Honors & Awards' section. This section lists two items: '★ Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce Percolator Meeting Speaker, January 2011' and '★ Quoted in Bucks County Courier Times, Delaware's The News Journal, Philadelphia Business Journal, etc....'

FIGURE 11-3:
Honors listed in
the Honors &
Awards section.

Keeping your honors and awards updated



TIP

If you take anything away from this chapter, I want it to be this: honors and awards aren't bestowed on just anyone. *Honors and awards are typically given to people who have asked for recognition.*

It's time for you to start strategically identifying honors and awards and doing what it takes to obtain them. Make sure it's known that you are interested and worthy. Keep an eye out for initiatives where you can volunteer to be seen. Honors and awards prove to your audience that you have what it takes to be a success and deserve recognition.

And as you begin to accumulate more honors and awards in your career, revisit this section on your LinkedIn profile. Remove older awards and add new ones. Always include a description. Don't be shy and don't dismiss this section. You are worthy of recognition.

By adding these awards, you aren't bragging; you are merely reporting on what was presented to you. By adding your honors, regardless of how silly they may seem to you, potential employers or customers take notice. No one else will toot your horn, so it's important that you do it!

The Three P's: Projects, Publications, and Patents

There are times when you go above and beyond within your professional life. In these instances, you don't want to group these extraordinary accomplishments with less ordinary accomplishments. Projects, publications, and patents deserve their own spotlighted area on your LinkedIn profile. Keep reading to see what is considered worthy of the spotlight and how to add these "three P's" to your profile.

Adding projects

The Projects section is the perfect place to spotlight your involvement in company-driven initiatives. Long-range, high-yield projects that deserve a bigger spotlight than a simple bullet in your Experience section belong in the Projects section. Choose projects that make you proud and show that you helped move the corporate needle, but most of all, choose projects that will impress your target reader.



TIP

The Projects section is also the perfect section for consultants who have spent time working with different clients. Consultants can't list clients in their Experience section because they didn't work for them directly as an employee. The Projects section is the perfect answer to this conundrum.

This section also allows you to add a URL that links to an external website to add even more context to the project. Another great part of this section is that you can pull in other team members and link them to the project to show the full range of contribution.

To add projects to the Projects section of your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. If you have the Projects section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.
3. If you don't have the Projects section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile.

Two sections appear that you can add. If Projects isn't one of the options listed, click the View More link to expand the area and see a full list of sections to add.

4. In the Project section, click Add Projects.
- When clicked, the Projects section appears on your profile.
5. In the Name field, enter the name of the project.

6. In the Occupation field, select the current or prior experience to connect the project to a particular role.

The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences. By linking the project to a position, the project shows up in the Projects section and directly under the position it is paired with.

7. In the Date field, choose the month and year you worked on the project from the drop-down lists.

If this project spanned a period of time, click Switch to Date Range to add an end date.

8. In the Project URL field, add the website where more information on this project can be found.

If this project doesn't have a web presence, skip this section.

9. In the Team Member(s) field, place your cursor over +Add Team Member and start typing a name.

If the team member is one of your first-degree connections on LinkedIn, his or her name appears in a drop-down list.

10. Select the team member(s) you wish to add to the project from the drop-down list.

You can add team members even if they aren't on LinkedIn, but they will not have profiles dynamically linked within the project.

11. In the Description field, add context around your project so that your reader has an idea of the extent of your success and why this project was singled out.

12. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-4 for an example of adding a project to the Projects section.



TIP

Just as you can add a person to a project you created, others can add you to a project they created. If you aren't happy with your inclusion on a project on someone else's profile, you can't remove it yourself. You must reach out to the person and ask them to remove you from the project.

Adding publications

The Publications section of LinkedIn is the place for writers to add published work. This section is a great place to spotlight your writing ability and showcase your knowledge.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Projects' section. At the top, there's a search bar with the placeholder 'Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...'. Below the search bar, the word 'Projects' is displayed. The main form area has the following fields:

- Name ***: Insurance Liaison
- Occupation**: Account Manager • Client Services Manager • Sales Operations
- Date**: January 2000
- Project URL**: http://www.ccccis.com/insurance-carriers/
- Team Member(s) ***: Donna Serdula (with a '+ Add team member' button)
- Description**: A text box containing: "In January 2000, I was asked to head up the Insurance Liaison Project. During this project, I worked directly with Insurance Agents, providing them with the tools they needed to better utilize our suite of software products. When the project ended 12 months later, our insurance sales had increased by 25%, an uptick of \$2M over the previous year."

At the bottom of the form are three buttons: 'Save' (in blue), 'Cancel', and 'Remove this project'.

FIGURE 11-4:
Adding a project
to the Projects
section.

Do not think that this section is only for the books you wrote. If you wrote an article that was published or broadcast in some manner, add it to this section and share it with the readers of your LinkedIn profile. Cite magazine articles, newsletter pieces, guest blog articles, and more. Here's how to add your publication history to your profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Publications section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.**
- 3. If you don't have the Publications section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile and click the View More link to see a full list of sections to add.**
- 4. In the Publications section, click Add Publications.**
When clicked, the Publications section appears on your profile.
- 5. In the Title field, enter the name of the publication.**
- 6. In the Publication/Publisher field, enter the name of the publication if it's a magazine or periodical, or the name of the publisher if it is a book.**
- 7. In the Publication Date field, choose the month, day, and year the text was published from the drop-down lists.**

8. In the Publication URL field, add the website address where more information on this publication can be found.

If your publication is a book, you might consider adding a link to the book on Amazon. If it is an article you wrote, add a link to the article. If this publication doesn't have a web presence, skip this section.

9. In the Author(s) field, add the name of a first-degree LinkedIn connection to tie them to the publication, if applicable.

If you are the sole author, skip this step.



REMEMBER

When adding additional authors, they have the opportunity to add the publication to their profiles (or not). The authors' names will not be linked to the publication, and the publication will not show up on the authors' profiles, until they approve.

Your name is always listed first when you add a publication to your profile. To rearrange the additional author's name, simply click a name and drag it into the desired order within edit mode.

If you remove the publication after the additional author added it to his or her profile, the publication will remain on that author's profile.

10. In the Description field, provide some detail around the publication.

This is a great place to add a boilerplate description of the books and/or articles you've published, and you can even provide a brief excerpt. LinkedIn allows a maximum length of 2,000 characters, which is approximately 300 words — just enough room to provide context, but not enough room to write a novel.

11. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-5 for an example of adding a book to the Publications section.

Adding patents

A patent is a professional accomplishment and should be shared on your LinkedIn profile. If you are an inventor with patents to your name, the Patents section is the place to showcase your work.

Here's how to add a patent to the Patents section:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Patents section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.**

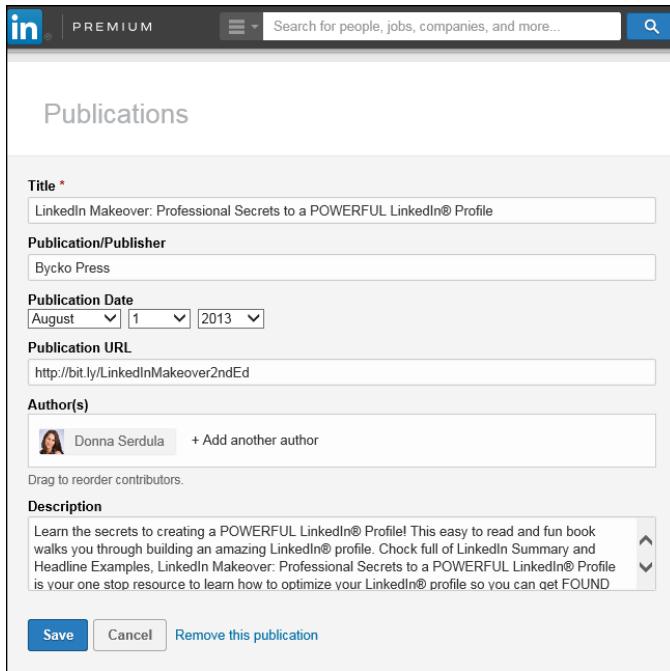


FIGURE 11-5:
Adding a book to
the Publications
section.

3. **If you don't have the Patents section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile and click the View More link to see a full list of sections to add.**
4. **In the Patents section, click Add Patents.**
When clicked, the Patents section appears on your profile.
5. **In the Patent Office field, select the appropriate Patent Office from the drop-down list.**
6. **Under Status, select Patent Issued or Patent Pending.**
7. **Type in the Patent/Application Number.**
8. **In the Patent Title field, enter the name of the patent.**
9. **In the Inventor(s) field, add any additional inventors by placing your cursor over +Add Another Inventor and typing a name.**

To choose a name from a drop-down list, additional inventors must be first-degree connections on LinkedIn. If they aren't first-degree connections, you can still add their names, but they won't have a profile dynamically linked.

The additional inventors have the opportunity to add the patent to their profiles (or not). The inventors' names will not be linked to the patent, and the patent will not show up on the inventors' profiles, until they approve.

Your name is always listed first when you add a patent to your profile. To rearrange the additional inventor names simply, click a name and drag it into the desired order within edit mode.

If you remove the patent after additional inventors added it to their profiles, the patent will remain on their profiles.

- 10. In the Issue/Filing Date field, choose the month, day, and year from the drop-down lists.**
- 11. In the Patent URL field, add the patent's URL where more information on this patent can be found.**
- 12. In the Description field, provide some detail around the patent.**

This is a great place to add more description about your patent, and you can even provide a brief sample from the patent itself.

- 13. Click the Save button.**

See Figure 11-6 for an example of adding a patent.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Patents' section. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the LinkedIn logo, 'PREMIUM' status, and a search bar containing 'Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...' with a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, the word 'Patents' is displayed in a large, bold font. The main area contains several input fields:

- Patent Office ***: A dropdown menu set to 'United States'.
- Status ***: Radio buttons for 'Patent Issued' (selected) and 'Patent Pending'.
- Patent/Application Number ***: An input field containing 'WO 2012129400 A3'.
- Patent Title ***: An input field containing 'Sharing content among multiple devices'.
- Inventor(s)**: A list box containing a blacked-out email address and a '+ Add another inventor' link. Below it is a note: 'Drag to reorder contributors.'
- Issue/Filing Date**: A date picker showing 'March 22 2012'.
- Patent URL**: An input field containing 'https://www.google.com/patents/WO2012129400A3'.
- Description**: A rich text area containing the following text:

Systems and methods for the distribution of content among user devices of a device group are presented. In one example, logical relationship information describing logical relationships between user devices is accessed. Membership in a device group of a plurality of the user devices is determined based on the logical relationship information. Content from at least one of the user

At the bottom of the form are two buttons: a blue 'Save' button and a white 'Cancel' button.

FIGURE 11-6:
Adding a patent
to the Patents
section.

The Two C's: Certifications and Courses

Certain professions demand certain skill sets and certifications. Increase your marketability by spotlighting your professional development. Add the certifications, licensures, and clearances you've earned and courses you've taken throughout your career to your profile.



WARNING

A common issue I see, however, is that many people enter certifications in the Education section of their profiles. At one time, the LinkedIn profile didn't contain these extra sections, and the only way to record a certification was to add it as part of the Education section. Remember, the Education section is where you enter degrees received. If you received a certificate, enter it in the Certifications section.

Here's how to enter a certification to your profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Certifications section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.**
- 3. If you don't have the Certifications section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile and click the View More link to see a full list of sections to add.**
- 4. In the Certifications section, click Add Certifications.**

When clicked, the Certifications section appears on your profile.

- 5. Type the name of the Certification in the Certification Name field.**
- 6. Enter the Certification Authority in the next field.**

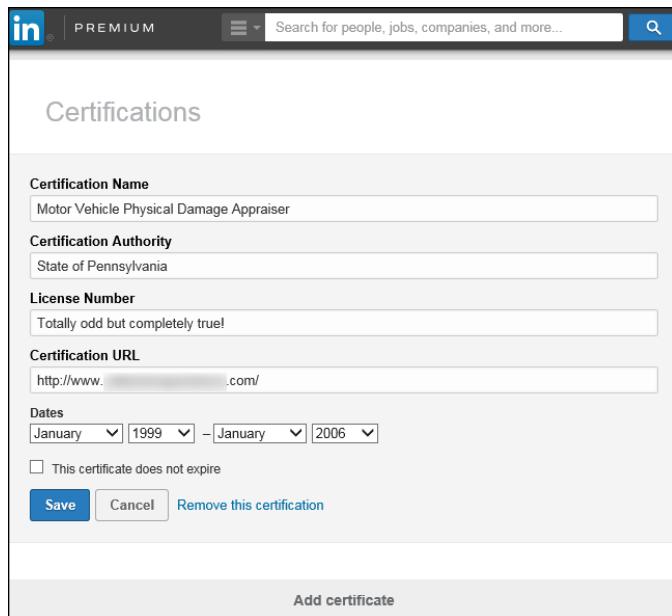
The Certification Authority is the trusted organization or company that issued the certificate. They are the ones guaranteeing your knowledge or ability.

- 7. Enter the License Number in the License Number field.**
- 8. In the Certification URL field, add the website address where more information on this certification can be found.**
- 9. In the Dates field, choose the month and year from the drop-down lists.**

If the certification has no end date, place a check mark next to This Certificate Does Not Expire.

- 10. Click the Save button.**

See Figure 11-7 for an example of adding a certificate.



The image shows a screenshot of the LinkedIn 'Certifications' section. At the top, there's a search bar with the placeholder 'Search for people, jobs, companies, and more...' and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, the word 'PREMIUM' is displayed next to the LinkedIn logo. The main heading is 'Certifications'. The form contains several input fields: 'Certification Name' (Motor Vehicle Physical Damage Appraiser), 'Certification Authority' (State of Pennsylvania), 'License Number' (Totally odd but completely true!), 'Certification URL' (http://www. [redacted].com/), and 'Dates' (January 1999 - January 2006). There's also a checkbox for 'This certificate does not expire'. At the bottom of the form are three buttons: 'Save' (blue), 'Cancel' (gray), and 'Remove this certification' (gray). A large 'Add certificate' button is located at the very bottom of the page.

FIGURE 11-7:
Adding a
certificate to the
Certifications
section.

Importing certifications from Lynda.com

LinkedIn acquired Lynda.com (www.lynda.com), the leader in online professional development classes. This acquisition means easy integration of your Lynda.com course completion certificates and your LinkedIn profile. If you're a member of both Lynda.com and LinkedIn, when you complete a course on Lynda.com, you'll receive an email with a link that lets you post your Certificate of Completion to your LinkedIn profile. Click that link and the Certificate of Completion appears in the Certifications section of your LinkedIn profile. Voila!

Adding courses

If you take a one-off course that doesn't deliver a certificate nor is part of a much larger degree program, the Courses section of LinkedIn is for you. In addition, more and more students are joining LinkedIn, realizing the huge opportunities for networking and job search. The Courses section is where you spotlight recent courses that deserve to be highlighted outside of the degree you are working toward.

Here's how to add a course to your LinkedIn profile:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. If you have the Courses section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.

3. If you don't have the Courses section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile and click the View More link to see a full list of sections to add.

4. In the Courses section, click Add Courses.

When clicked, the Courses section appears on your profile.

5. In the Course Name field, type the name of the course.

6. Enter the course number in the Number field.

7. If this course was taken for a position you held, select that position from the drop-down list under the Associated With section.

By linking to a past or present work experience, readers can see the courses you took for that position, thus providing even more robustness to your profile and work history.

8. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-8 for an example of adding a course to the Courses section.

The screenshot shows a modal window titled 'Courses'. Inside, there's a form with fields for 'Course Name *' (Leadership Development), 'Number' (101), and 'Associated with' (Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profi). Below the form is a link 'Add another course' and two buttons: 'Save' (highlighted in blue) and 'Cancel'. At the bottom of the modal is a link 'Add course'.

FIGURE 11-8:
Adding a course
to the Courses
section.

Adding the Languages You Speak

Sprechen sie Deutsch? Ja, me neither. But if you do speak other languages, add them to your LinkedIn profile. Simply choose the language(s) from the drop-down list and then indicate your level of proficiency.

Choose from:

- » Elementary proficiency
- » Limited working proficiency

- » Professional working proficiency
- » Full professional proficiency
- » Native or bilingual proficiency



TIP

If you add a foreign language to this section, be sure to also add your native language to the list of languages you speak. You don't want potential alliances to dismiss you because they assume you hired a translator to create your LinkedIn profile and don't speak their language.

Creating a Profile in Another Language

For those global business people who work throughout the world, you can make multiple versions of your profile in different languages. This way, the person viewing your profile sees your profile in the language that matches his or her primary language. If this person is using LinkedIn in a language that doesn't match any of your languages, he or she sees your profile in your primary language.

When you initially created your profile, the language you chose becomes your primary language. Once your primary language is chosen, it can't be changed. However, you can add as many secondary language profiles as you like, provided there are languages available. (Sorry, Klingon is not supported.)

LinkedIn doesn't automatically translate your profile; you are responsible for editing your profile and adding the translated text yourself.

To create a profile in another language, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the down arrow next to the View Profile As button and select Create Profile in Another Language, as shown in Figure 11-9.**
- 3. Choose a language from the drop-down list.**
- 4. If your first name and last name are different in the new language, update your name in the First Name and Last Name fields.**
- 5. In the Professional Headline field, update your headline in the new language.**
- 6. Click the Create Profile button to go to the Edit Profile page of your new language profile.**

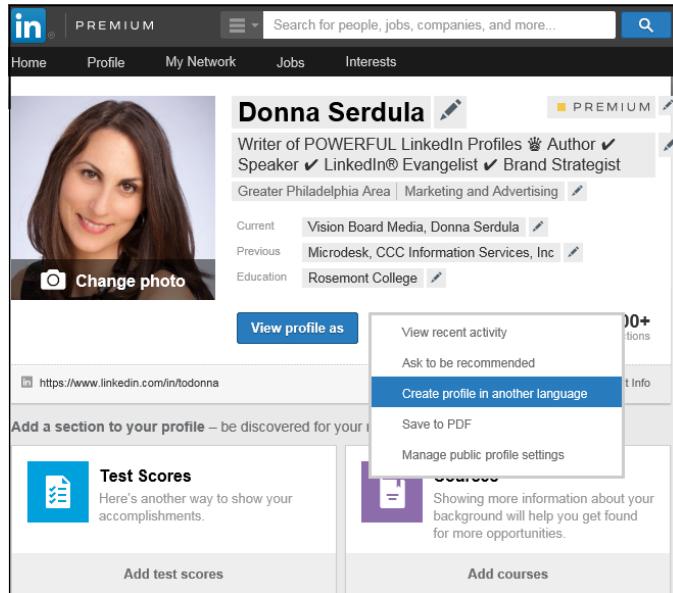


FIGURE 11-9:
Creating a profile
in another
language.

You are now at the new secondary language profile. Your original profile sections have been transferred to the new secondary language profile with the titles, company names, and recommendations intact. When you click into sections, the descriptions remain; you must delete the content and replace it with your translation. Once the original primary language is deleted, LinkedIn provides your primary language text below the fields to aid you in translating.

7. Refer back to the chapters of this book to optimize your profile in your new language.

Adding Your Education, or Lack Thereof

Education plays an important role in your LinkedIn profile. Not only is this information placed at the very top of your profile, visible within your search result listing, but also it helps your profile achieve All-Star ranking.

All-Star profiles are profiles that are 100% complete and may perform better in search. When creating an optimized, robust profile, achieving the rank of All-Star is important and a goal to strive for.

Not everyone graduates college, and it's a shame LinkedIn forces you to fill out this section. When I first began working as a LinkedIn profile writer several years ago, I was shocked by the number of executives who didn't have college degrees.

I quickly realized that many movers and shakers of this world aren't content sitting in a college classroom. These "do-ers" have better things to do, such as build businesses and generate revenue. And besides, if they want a college education, they'll hire someone with one.

Keep reading to find out how to make the education section work for you regardless of whether you graduated from college or university, or graduated after a longer than typical spell, or didn't graduate at all.

Divulging the year you graduated

People tend to omit the years they attended college. As I see it, the reason is either that they prefer to disguise their real age, or they do not want people to realize it took them more than the usual amount of time to graduate.

If you are not listing your graduation date because you are trying to hide your age, I say, "Don't worry about it!" Embrace your age. By putting the years you attended university, LinkedIn is able to link you to other people who graduated with you. This means more people to add to your network, which means the potential for more opportunity. And that is a good thing.



WARNING

In addition, a profile that is missing years is a huge red flag to potential employers, recruiters, and human resources professionals. Omitting dates is a sign that something isn't quite right. It's better to be viewed as old than someone who is hiding something.

On the other hand, if you are omitting dates because it took you longer to graduate than the norm, at the very least, enter the year you graduated. This way you are still able to connect with your fellow graduates without divulging the length of time it took you to complete your schooling.

LISTING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

Every now and then I see clients who come to us with their high school educations listed in their profiles' Education section. Only list your high school experience if:

- You are a recent high school graduate.
- You attended a prestigious high school that provides great networking potential.
- You didn't continue on to college or university.

Listing your high school is not needed if you have a higher-education degree.

Preparing activities and societies

Before we get started adding your Education, let's take a moment to prepare the Activities and Societies and Description sections. It is tempting to leave these fields blank, but profiles that are completely filled out rank better than profiles missing information. This means you should enter *something* in these fields.

In what clubs, activities, fraternities, or sororities did you participate? Determine the activities that portray you as a well-rounded individual and list them. Here are a few examples: Foreign Language Club, Debate Team, Football, Theater, Delta Delta Delta Sorority, Chess Club.

The Description field is where you provide information about your educational background and experience. Did you graduate with honors? Were you the recipient of a scholarship? Take the most interesting notes and add them into your profile. Here are a few examples: Fulbright Scholarship. Graduated cum laude. Study Abroad Program, Junior Year, London, England. Matriculated while working full time. Wrote thesis entitled, *Liberation of Literature during Fin de siècle France*. Minored in English, with a concentration in American Literature.

Don't get too carried away with this section. Just add a couple items and move on.

Adding your education

Whether you graduated from college or not, it's time to add education to your profile. Here's how to do it:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll to the Education section of your profile and click the pencil (edit) icon to edit a pre-existing school or select + Add Education to add a new school.**
- 3. In the School field, start to type the name of your school.**
A drop-down list with schools matching the characters you type appears.
- 4. Select the school name from the list.**

By selecting your school from the drop-down list, the school's logo appears alongside your education section, the LinkedIn university page for your school is dynamically linked to your profile, and you are included in the alumni data. LinkedIn also may show you other alumni who graduated with you in the People You May Know page, helping you create an even more robust LinkedIn network.

- 5. Under Dates Attended, choose the year you started to attend the school and the year you left the school in the drop-down lists.**

For the end date, choose the date you graduated or the year you expect to graduate.

EDUCATION FOR THE UNEDUCATED

Houston, we have a problem. In order to obtain an All-Star-ranked, robust profile, one must include education. So what happens if you didn't go to college or earn a degree?

My recommendation is to enter your high school information or whatever was the last bit of education you received. I have clients who enter: The Esteemed School of Hard Knocks. Silly, yes, but if education is what LinkedIn wants, education we will give.

You must put something in the School field. LinkedIn doesn't care if it's the School of Hard Knocks, Cordon Bleu, or Paint and Sip art classes. Add your "school" of choice, leave the degree blank, and move on to the other sections of your profile.

6. Under Field of Study, start to type your major and choose your major from the drop-down list LinkedIn provides.

If your major doesn't match what LinkedIn suggests, add your own major by simply not selecting LinkedIn's suggestions.

7. In the Grade field, enter your GPA or whether you graduated Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude, or Magna Cum Laude.

If you don't have a respectable GPA or can't remember back that far, don't worry. Leave this field blank. Having written thousands of profiles, I have added information to the Grade field only a few times.

8. In the Activities and Societies field, enter the clubs and activities you participated in during your time at that school.

Refer back to "Preparing activities and societies" earlier in this chapter for more information on how to decide on this information.

9. In the Description field, enter your educational background and experiences that will impress your reader. (See Figure 11-10.)

10. Click Save.

Reordering education

If you went to multiple schools and want to list them in a specific order, it's easy to reorder them. The first school you list in the Education section is the school that shows at the top of your profile. To change the school at the top of your profile, you need to reorder the schools within the Education section. Here's how to do so:

1. Hover your mouse pointer over the education entry you'd like to rearrange.

in PREMIUM  Search for people, jobs, companies, and more... 

Education

School *
Rosemont College [Change School](#)

Dates Attended
 – Or expected graduation year

Degree

Field of Study

Grade

Activities and Societies

Examples: Alpha Phi Omega, Chamber Chorale, Debate Team

Description
Graduated cum laude. Majored in Humanities. Concentrated in Women's Studies. Minored in German Literature. Would you like some fries with that? I tease! My women's education in the Cornelian tradition thoroughly prepared me for the wants of this crazy age.

[See examples](#)

Save **Cancel** **Remove this school**

FIGURE 11-10: Adding educational background and experience information to the Education section

2. Click and hold the Up/Down arrow that appears to the right of your school name, as shown in Figure 11-11.
 3. Drag the school into the desired position.

Only one school is listed at the top of your profile.



REMEMBER

Adding multimedia

Add documents, photos, links, videos, and presentations to your entries in the Education section. Are you proud of your thesis? Upload it to your profile! Is there a picture you'd like to include? Upload it to your profile!

Follow these steps to add multimedia to your education entries:

1. Within the Education section of your profile, select the appropriate icon next to Add Media: Document, Photo, Link, Video, Presentation.

You can upload documents in the following formats: .pdf, .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .odt.

You can upload photos in the following formats: .png, .gif, .jpg, or .jpeg.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile page for a user. At the top, there's a banner with the text "Click and hold to reorder your listed schools". Below this, the "Education" section is visible. The first entry is "Rosemont College", which has a blue edit icon and a small downward arrow indicating it can be reordered. The entry details are: "Bachelor's Degree, Humanities/Humanistic Studies, Cum Laude" (with a blue edit icon), "1992 – 1996" (with a blue edit icon), and a descriptive paragraph about the user's education. Below this is another entry for "School of Hard Knocks" from "1974 – 2016". At the bottom of the section are buttons for "Add Media" (Document, Photo, Link, Video, Presentation).

FIGURE 11-11:
Reordering the
schools in your
Education
section.

You can upload presentations in the following formats: .pdf, .ppt, .pps, .pptx, .ppsx, .pot, .potx, or .odp.

2. **Click Upload a File to display the media on your profile or type in a website URL to link to content that exists on another site and then click Continue. (See Figure 11-12.)**
- If you chose to upload a file, select the file from your desktop. A picture of your content displays. LinkedIn automatically populates the Title and Description fields.
3. **If the prepopulated Title and Descriptions fields aren't correct, click and edit them to your liking.**
 4. **Click Save.**

This is a screenshot of a modal dialog box titled "Add to Education". It contains a "Document" tab selected, a "Photo" tab, a "Link" tab, a "Video" tab, and a "Presentation" tab. Below the tabs is a dropdown menu set to "Student at Rosemont College, Bachelor's Degree Humanities/Hu". There is a text input field with "http://" and a "Supported Providers" link below it. At the bottom are "Continue" and "Cancel" buttons.

FIGURE 11-12:
Adding
multimedia work
samples to your
education.

Adding Volunteer Experiences

You are more than just a corporate creature. There are causes that you care about and support after work hours. Showing your philanthropic and humanitarian interests proves you are a well-rounded individual, which readers of your profile may find interesting and relatable.

Do you belong to a service organization such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, Shriners, or Lions Club?

Do you donate to the Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, or St Jude Children's Hospital?

Do you take part in the Susan B. Komen Race for a Cure or have donated time to a charitable organization?

The Volunteer section is where you add these items to your LinkedIn profile. Within the Volunteer section of your profile, you can add:

- » Individual volunteer experiences
- » Organizations your support

Individual experiences allow you to showcase the breadth of your work. You can add the name of the organization, your role, the cause it supports, dates of your tenure, and a description. You can also list just the organizations you support, but don't necessarily work one on one with them.

In addition, you can select:

- » Opportunities to donate your time and talent
- » Causes you care about

LinkedIn enables you to select whether you want to donate time or talent to future nonprofit charities. You can also select from a list the causes you hold dear.

Here's how to add a volunteer experience and indicate what volunteer opportunities you are looking for to your profile:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. If you have the Volunteer section already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 5.

3. If you don't have the Volunteer section added to your profile yet, scroll below the Contact Information section at the top part of your profile and click the View More link to see a full list of sections to add.

4. In the Volunteering Experience section, click Add Volunteer Experience.

When clicked, the Volunteer section appears on your profile.

5. Type the name of the Organization in the Organization field.

6. Click Role and add your role or the type of volunteer work you do.

This field shows at the top of the individual volunteer experience; it should spotlight either your role or what you are doing specifically. Here are some roles that might work for you: Angel, Backer, Contributor, Supporter, Patron, Donor, Grantor, Giver, Sponsor, Subscriber.

7. Click the Cause drop-down list and choose the applicable cause from the list.

If nothing from the list correctly identifies this volunteer experience, choose the top option that looks like a minus sign to leave this field blank.

8. In the Date Range fields, choose the month and year from the drop-down lists.

LinkedIn defaults to present with no end date. If this Volunteer experience is no longer current, enter an end date by deselecting, I Currently Volunteer Here.

9. In the Description field, enter information about the volunteer experience.



REMEMBER

It's better to add context around your experiences and the easiest way to do it is to visit the organization's About Us page on its website.

10. Click the Save button.

11. Scroll down and hover your mouse pointer over the Opportunities You Are Looking For area and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode.

12. If you would like to be considered for a nonprofit board or if you would like to offer your skills for free to a nonprofit in need of your specialty, click the boxes to select.

13. Click the Save button.

14. Scroll down and hover your mouse pointer over the Causes You Care About and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode.

15. Select the causes you care about by clicking the boxes.

16. Under Which Organization(s) Do You Support, enter any additional charitable organizations you would like listed on your profile.

The charitable organizations to add are those that you are not actively donating time. Click inside the text field and begin typing. LinkedIn tries to match the organization you are typing with one that already has a page on

LinkedIn. Click the option from the drop-down list or add it free-form if no match is available. To add multiple organizations, press the Tab or Return keys.

17. Click the Save button.

See Figure 11-13 for an example of a completed Volunteer section.

18. To add additional volunteer experiences, Click Add Volunteer Experience and lather, rinse, repeat.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile page with a 'PREMIUM' badge. The main header says 'Volunteer'. Below it, there's a section for 'U.S. Veteran Assistance' at 'Vision Board Media' from 'January 2013 – Present (3 years 6 months) | Economic Empowerment'. It includes a logo for 'VB MEDIA'. A link to 'http://www.linkedin-makeover.com/veteran-support/' is provided. The next section, 'Opportunities you are looking for:', lists 'How would you like to donate your time and talent?' and two bullet points: '•Joining a nonprofit board' and '•Skills-based volunteering (pro bono consulting)'. The third section, 'Causes you care about:', lists 'Topics and causes that matter to you.' followed by five bullet points: '•Animal Welfare', '•Arts and Culture', '•Human Rights', '•Politics', and '•Science and Technology'. The final section, 'Organizations you support:', lists 'What are your favorite organizations?' followed by three bullet points: '•ASPCA', '•Johnsville Centrifuge', and '•Purple Heart'.

FIGURE 11-13:
A completed
Volunteer section.

Pro bono opportunities

By filling out the Volunteer section, you are able to state whether you are open to joining a nonprofit board or offer your skills pro bono to a nonprofit. This is a great way to get even more involved. When your skills match what a nonprofit is looking for, LinkedIn sends an email to you alerting you of the opportunity.



TIP

Visit the LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace to find out more about offering your own skills consulting pro bono. Simply visit Volunteer.LinkedIn.com to see volunteer opportunities available to LinkedIn members.

Causes you care about

To make it even easier to explain to the world in the simplest language what you truly care about, LinkedIn compiled the top causes in the world and distilled them down to 14 items. For example, within the Volunteer section, you can show the world that you care about Animal Welfare and Economic Empowerment.

Here is the list of causes to choose from:

- » Animal Welfare
- » Arts and Culture
- » Children
- » Civil Rights and Social Action
- » Disaster and Humanitarian Relief
- » Economic Empowerment
- » Education
- » Environment
- » Health
- » Human Rights
- » Politics
- » Poverty Alleviation
- » Science and Technology
- » Social Services



TIP

When working with clients, the biggest mistake I see is choosing all 15 causes. This makes your true interest seem rather dubious. Instead, choose the top three or five causes. If you truly care about all 15 causes equally, think in terms of your target audience and choose the causes closest to their heart.

In the next chapter, I show you how to personalize your profile even more with interests, multimedia work samples, and a background image. I also walk you through how to best leverage recommendations. When you are ready, I'll meet you there!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Creating rapport with your reader
- » Turning your profile into a portfolio
- » Uploading images
- » Building credibility through recommendations

Chapter **12**

Making Your Profile Personal and Unique

Your LinkedIn profile is more than just text. You can also upload images and multimedia content. In this chapter, I show you how to turn your flat, text-based profile into a graphically attractive profile that is not only eye-catching, but also makes your reader want to learn more about you.

I also show you how to turn your profile from solely professional to one that incorporates your interests and personality so you can create stronger rapport and build an actual relationship with your reader.

Lastly, I take you through the ins and outs of asking for and providing recommendations. I even provide you with my number-one secret to getting tons of glowing recommendations that crank up your credibility and results on LinkedIn.

Leveraging the Additional Information Section

The Additional Information section of your LinkedIn profile is divided into three areas: Interests, Personal Details, and Advice for Contacting. Although LinkedIn is strictly professional, this one section allows for the addition of some personal

information. Not only can you add your extracurricular activities, but also you can add your birthday and marital status along with advice for how you would prefer to be contacted by your readers. Filling this section out isn't difficult, but it does present a number of potential issues, and it's important to fill the fields out strategically.

Adding interests

The Interests area of the Additional Information section is where you connect with your reader on a more personal level by adding your hobbies and interests to your LinkedIn profile. I often hear clients say, "But Donna, LinkedIn isn't Facebook; it's professional! I don't want to list my hobbies and interests!"

Remember this: *People do business with people.* That's why when you walk into another person's office for the first time, the very first thing you do is look around. You look for pictures, plaques, trophies, memorabilia, and other objects that give you an idea of his or her personality, likes, and dislikes. As soon as you spy a commonality, you have a conversation starter. For example:

"Oh, I see you swam with dolphins. I love scuba diving. Have you been to Bermuda?"

This is how you forge a connection and build a relationship.

The Interests area allows you to connect with your reader at a deeper, more personal level, and it shows that you have a life outside of work. People love to work with people who are friendly and who lead fun and interesting lives.

The interests you choose should reflect shared characteristics with your target audience. There is no greater way to forge rapport when you have shared interests in common. I am not suggesting that you lie about your interests, but definitely determine what you have in common with your target audience and showcase it in the Interests area.

In addition to shared interests, the interests you choose should reflect how you want to be perceived by your target audience. Prove you are the leader you say you are by choosing interests that reflect the qualities of a leader, like boat captain, Little League coach, or Grand Poohbah of the Loyal Order of Water Buffalo. If you want to appear technically savvy, mention that you enjoy the latest gadgets, building computers, or coding websites for nonprofit organizations.

As you choose your interests, keep your target audience in mind. If your target audience is comprised of animal lovers and members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), you may want to leave out your love of boar hunting. As much as I am a believer in authenticity and truth, there are times when you

must be smart with the information you share. If an interest you list has the potential to spark worry or requires a discussion to explain, it's best to leave it off your profile. You don't want to upset your target audience and risk having them move on to the next profile because of a silly interest.



TIP

When you discuss politics and religion, you risk alienating half of your audience. Even though you may have a strong connection to either, it's sometimes best to leave these interests off your profile entirely.

Here's how to add interests to your LinkedIn profile:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

If you have already added information to the Additional Information section, go to Step 3. If you don't have this section on your profile yet, continue to Step 2.

2. Click the Additional Information section that appears toward the top of your profile to add the Interests section to your profile page.

You may need to click View More to find this section.

3. Scroll to Interests and click Add Interests.

When clicked, the Interests section appears on your profile within the Additional Information section.

4. Scroll to the Additional Information section, hover your mouse pointer over the Interests area, and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode.

5. Click your mouse inside the text field and start typing your interests.



TIP

When you enter your interests, separate each term with a comma, as shown in Figure 12-1. LinkedIn automatically links your interests to other profiles that contain those words. By separating your interests with commas, LinkedIn knows what words should be hyperlinked. If you don't include commas, the entire phrase becomes one giant hyperlinked group of words connecting you to no one.

The screenshot shows the 'Additional Info' section of a LinkedIn profile. Under the 'Interests' heading, there is a text input field containing the text: 'Spending time with my family, blogging, LinkedIn super user, photography, voracious reader of books on sales, body language, and personal development'. Below this input field, there is a note: 'Examples: Management training, new technologies, investing, fishing, snowboarding, digital photography'. At the bottom of the section are two buttons: 'Save' and 'Cancel'.

FIGURE 12-1:
Add interests to
your LinkedIn
profile.

INTEREST IDEAS

Not sure what to list in the Interests section? Here are a bunch of interests categorized by the personality characteristics they convey.

Adventurous

- Luger
- Rafting
- Rock Climbing
- Travel
- Zip lining

Sailing

- Sports
- Swimming
- Chess
- History

Focused

- Blogging
- Coin Collector
- Electronics
- Gadgets
- Investments
- Model Airplanes
- Stamp Collector
- Tech Savvy
- Web Design

Personal Development

- Reading Books
- Writing
- Community Association Board President
- Entrepreneur
- Little League Coach
- Pilot
- Sailboat Captain

Giver

- Fundraising
- Helping the Disadvantaged
- Humanitarian
- Philanthropist
- Volunteer work

Well-Rounded, Cultured

- Cooking
- Museums
- Spending Time with My Kids
- Wine Tasting

Healthy

- Circuit Training
- Hiking

Now that you have your interests documented in your LinkedIn profile, you can now discover other professionals with similar interests. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. At the top of your profile, click the blue View Profile As button.**

Your profile now appears as a connection would see it.
- 3. Scroll to the Interests area in the Additional Information section and click one of the hyperlinked interests.**

LinkedIn takes you to a search results page of profiles containing that term.
- 4. In the right sidebar, place a check mark next to 1st Connections.**

LinkedIn filters the list by first-degree connections.
- 5. Scroll through the list to see which of your first-degree connections share this interest with you.**

This is great information. Knowing you have commonality, perhaps you want to ask that client to a round of Frisbee golf?

Providing details that show you are human

The next two fields in the Additional Information section are where you add your birthday and marital status. If you don't already have these fields on your LinkedIn profile, here's how to add them:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Additional Info section that appears toward the top of your profile to add the Personal Details section to your profile page.**

You may need to click View More to find this section.
- 3. Scroll to Personal Details and click Add Personal Details, as shown in Figure 12-2.**

The Personal Details fields appear on your profile within the Additional Info section, as shown in Figure 12-3.

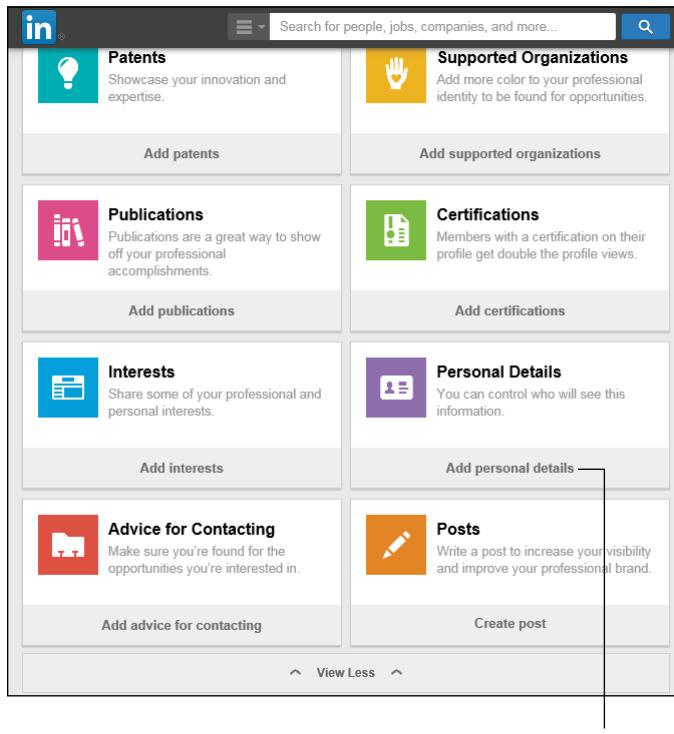


FIGURE 12-2:
Adding Personal
Details to your
profile.

Additional Info

Interests
Spending time with my family, blogging, LinkedIn super user, photography, voracious reader of books on sales, body language, and personal development

Personal Details

Birthday

Marital status

FIGURE 12-3:
The Personal
Details fields.

Your birthday is an event that LinkedIn recognizes and alerts your network so that they can wish you “Happy Birthday!” On my last birthday, my assistant calculated that over 500 birthday greetings arrived in my LinkedIn Messages from my LinkedIn network.

I highly recommend filling out the Birthday field because it offers the potential for networking and an excuse to get back in touch with people. Plus, LinkedIn doesn't ask for your birth year, so your age isn't front and center, just that you are celebrating a birthday. All you have to do is click the down arrows to select the month and date.

The Marital Status field is an informational field. It isn't searchable within LinkedIn's advanced search. There is potential for it to be used in audience targeting for LinkedIn advertisements; however, currently LinkedIn doesn't offer marital status as criteria for advertisement targeting.

To fill out the Marital Status field, all you do is click the down arrow and choose Married or Single. If your status is something different, select "Choose..." to keep the field blank.

The decision to fill out the Marital Status field is one you should approach strategically. When I was single, I left the field blank. My reasoning at that time was that I didn't want to advertise being single. LinkedIn isn't a dating site, and I didn't want people getting the wrong impression. In addition, I felt people might see me as less stable and mature. Now I am married, but I continue to keep my marital status off my profile because I don't want people thinking I am not as committed to my business as I am to my marriage.

Working in a conservative industry where married people are viewed more favorably, it may serve you to add this piece of information to your profile. On the flip side, there are industries where those who are not married are favored, and you may either want to omit your married status or, if you are single, tout that instead.

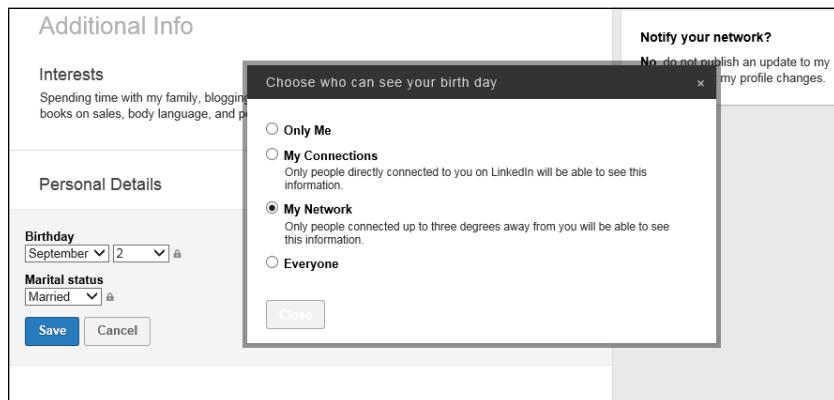
You have control over who sees the contents of these fields. By clicking the lock icon next to the Birthday and Marital Status fields, you are able to set the visibility to:

- » Only Me (Birthday field only)
- » My Connections
- » My Network
- » Everyone

By selecting Everyone, anyone who views your profile, regardless of whether he or she is connected to you or not, sees the contents of the fields. Selecting My

Connections means that only people who are directly connected to you see the contents of the fields. If you choose My Network, your first-, second-, and third-degree network and members who are in the same LinkedIn Groups as you see this information. Figure 12-4 shows you what this screen looks like.

FIGURE 12-4:
Controlling who
sees your
personal
information.



The Additional Information section doesn't appear on your public profile, so people viewing your profile who are not logged in to LinkedIn can't see this information. Think it through and decide if it behooves you to fill these fields in. If you are not comfortable letting people know this information, leave the fields blank.

Offering advice for contacting you

The next area within the Additional Information section is Advice for Contacting. This is a fantastic field that few people ever fill out. This area doesn't show up on your public profile, but it is visible to your LinkedIn network. Just as the name implies, this is where you tell your audience why and how to contact you directly.



REMEMBER

Success on LinkedIn is getting off of LinkedIn. It's in the real world where strong relationships are forged. The Advice for Contacting section helps your reader get off of LinkedIn and start down the path toward real-world communication with you. When you let people know why and how to contact you, you open the door for opportunity.

Rather than leaving it up to your readers, tell them why they should contact you. If you are a job seeker, you can state, "To learn more about my professional history, please request my resume." Or, "If you have a job opportunity to discuss, please contact me directly." If you are on LinkedIn as a salesperson, you might state, "If you are interested in learning more about our services and pricing, contact me today." A thought leader might use, "If you are interested in having me

speak at an event, or if you are looking for a snappy quote or interview subject for a news article, please feel free to contact me.”

Not everyone prefers the phone. Do you pay more attention to text messages? Do you rarely check voicemail but always check email? Is Skype your communication mode of choice? This is information to share with your readers so they know the most successful way to reach you.

Subtlety doesn’t work here. Instead, be direct. For example:

The best way to reach me is via Skype. My username is donna.serdua. If email is better for you, my address is donna@linkedin-makeover.com.

Here’s how to edit the Advice for Contacting section:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

If you have already added information to the Additional Information section, go to Step 3. If you don’t have this section on your profile yet, continue to Step 2.

2. Click the Additional Information section that appears toward the top of your profile to add the Advice for Contacting section to your profile page.

You may need to click View More to find this section.

3. Scroll to the Advice for Contacting section, hover your mouse pointer below Advice for Contacting, and click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode.

4. Click your mouse inside the text field and start typing your advice to your readers.

Figure 12-5 shows you an example of great advice on how to contact me.

5. Click the Save button.

The Advice for Contacting section is visible to your full LinkedIn network. This provides the possibility that your phone number or email address might be used for marketing or nefarious purposes. However, there is an even better chance that your contact information will be used to benefit you.

Recruiters, reporters, event planners, hiring managers, angel investors, long-lost colleagues, donors, and others will use it to reach you. If I haven’t changed your mind about including your contact information in the Advice for Contacting section, read Chapter 5, where I provide alternative contact information ideas for those troubled by identification theft fears.

FIGURE 12-5:
Let folks know
how best to
contact you.

Additional Info

Interests
Spending time with my family, blogging, LinkedIn super user, photography, voracious reader of books on sales, body language, and personal development

Personal Details
Birthday September 2

Advice for Contacting Donna
I welcome all calls and emails. Whether you need someone to help you write your LinkedIn profile, your team's LinkedIn profiles, or something else entirely (resumes, recommendations, blogs, bios, etc) reach me at:
Phone: 215-839-0008
Email: Donna@LinkedIn-Makeover.com
You can find my full contact information here:
★ <http://www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/contact> ★
I look forward to hearing from you.



WARNING

You can only block people from your desktop using LinkedIn's website. LinkedIn's mobile application does not yet allow the ability to block people.

Here's how to block a person from seeing your profile on LinkedIn:

1. In the LinkedIn search bar, type the name of the person you want to block and click the search button.
A list of profiles matching the name appear as search results.
2. Open the profile of the person you want to block by clicking the search result.
When you view a person's profile, depending on your settings, that person may be able to see that you viewed his or her profile. Once you block the person, you disappear from his or her Who's Viewed Your Profile section.
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the down arrow next to the button in the top section of the member's profile and select Block or Report from the list, as shown in Figure 12-6.

A Block or Report this person dialog box appears.

- 4. Check the box next to Block.**
- 5. Click Continue.**
- 6. On the next screen, click Agree to confirm your action.**

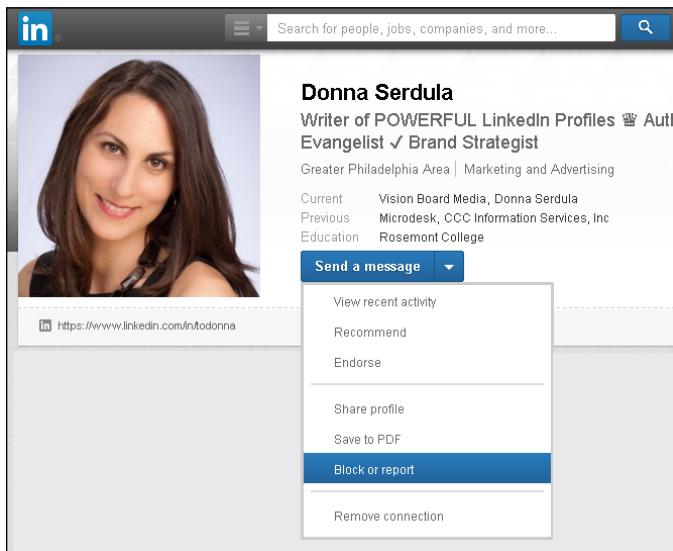


FIGURE 12-6:
Blocking a person
on LinkedIn.

When you block a person from viewing your profile, that person is not alerted and should not know anything is amiss. Only you can unblock a person you blocked. When you block a person, you won't be able to access his or her profile, and that person won't be able to view yours. In addition, you won't be able to see each other's LinkedIn activity or message one another.

If you are connected, that connection goes away along with any endorsements or recommendations that person gave to you or you gave to that person. Any previous views listed under Who's Viewed Your Profile are wiped. Lastly, all suggestions under People You May Know or People Also Viewed stop.



TIP

The block only works when the person is logged into LinkedIn. If he or she logs off LinkedIn and accesses your public profile, that person is still able to see your public information. To keep your profile truly private, you should also hide the public version of your profile that's visible to search engines and people not signed into LinkedIn. Check out Chapter 4 to see how to turn on and turn off your public profile.

Adding Multimedia to Make Your Profile POP!

LinkedIn allows you to add work samples to your profile. Adding multimedia is a great way to further your professional brand on LinkedIn and truly make your profile eye-catching. Types of multimedia samples you can add include:

- » Documents
- » Images
- » Presentations

You can also link to:

- » Images
- » Online videos
- » Rich media (such as foursquare check-ins, polls, Kickstarter campaigns, Tumblr, and so on)

The areas of your profile that allow multimedia work samples are:

- » Education
- » Individual job experiences
- » Summary

Determining what to highlight with multimedia files

Adding multimedia to your profile is a great way to showcase your work and provide your audience with proof of your abilities. Certainly when you are in a creative field, adding work samples is pretty easy. It's your best portfolio pieces that you upload to your Summary and individual Experiences. But what if you aren't in a creative field?

Think in terms of your goals and target audience. If you are on LinkedIn to be seen as a thought leader and expert, upload that podcast interview or link to that video interview on YouTube. Scan that newspaper article in which you were quoted.

Looking to be seen as a leader? Upload a picture of you and your department at a team building event.

Using LinkedIn for prospecting and sales? Upload that presentation slideshow or video demo you created.

On LinkedIn for job search? Showcase your work by uploading a white paper or a dashboard report (minus any confidential or proprietary information) showing your past successes.

Make sure that what you choose makes sense to your reader. It's best to include a title and descriptions for each multimedia file or link you attach to your profile.

Once you decide what to upload, here's how to do it:

- 1. Open your profile on LinkedIn.**
- 2. Scroll to either your Summary, Experience, or Education section where you want the multimedia work sample to reside.**
- 3. Hover your mouse pointer over the section and click the Add Media button that corresponds with the type of media you want to add, as shown in Figure 12-7.**

If you don't see an Add Media bar, look for an icon in the shape of a little square with a plus sign to the right of the section heading.

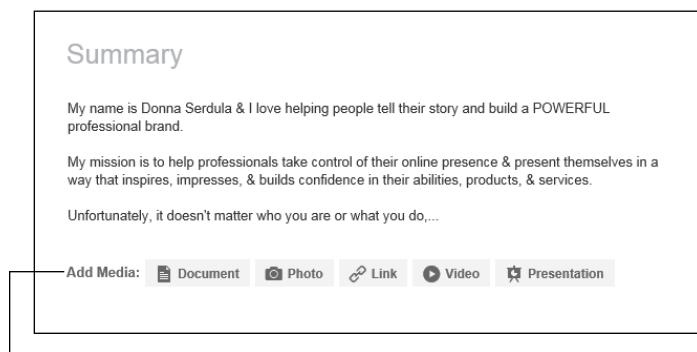


FIGURE 12-7:
Adding
multimedia files.

- 4. To add a link to external media, paste the URL into the blank URL field and click the Continue button.**
- 5. If you would prefer to upload media that resides on your hard drive, click the Upload button.**

An open dialog box appears. Locate the file on your hard drive and click the Open button.

6. Enter a title and description, as shown in Figure 12-8.
7. Click Save.

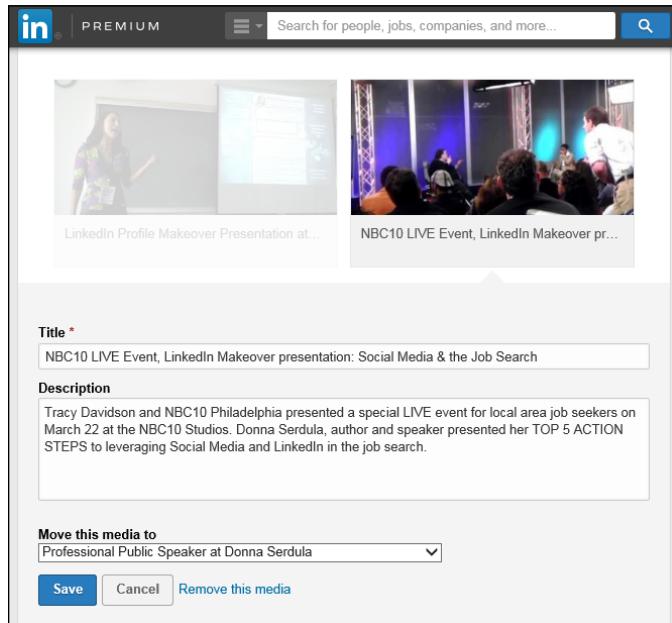


FIGURE 12-8:
Adding a
description to a
work sample
media file.

VIDEO RESUMES: WHEN THEY WORK AND WHEN THEY DON'T

Every now and then I see video resumes on LinkedIn profiles. Video resumes are used in addition to the traditional resume and cover letter. Usually one to three minutes in length, a video resume features job candidates talking straight to the camera, introducing themselves, summarizing a success they achieved, and explaining their ideal position.

Many companies tout video resumes as the key to getting that elusive job offer. The problem I have is that few people are comfortable in front of a camera. Just as the possibility is there that a video resume can get you the job, it can also help you lose a job. So often video resumes come across as rather silly, and the person often looks stilted and uncomfortable. If you are exceptionally good-looking and have been trained to work the camera, then by all means, go for it. If you are a regular Joe or Judy, you may decide to steer clear of the whole fiasco. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

Resisting the urge to upload your resume

You may run into “experts” who insist you upload a copy of your resume to your LinkedIn profile. I don’t agree.

You want your LinkedIn profile to be the hook that gets people to request your resume. That way, you have control and can determine who gets to have access it. Your resume contains your complete career trajectory and you don’t want just anyone able to download it.

Recruiters love it when a resume is attached to your profile — this way they can read it without ever contacting you and they can immediately dismiss you without ever talking to you. You want recruiters and hiring managers and human resources people to contact you so that you can show them you are a real person — you can ask questions and make a great impression while engaging in human contact.



TIP

However, if you decide to upload your resume to your LinkedIn profile, consider removing your home address and any confidential information you aren’t comfortable sharing with the whole wide world. Your employer may not be too keen on you publicly sharing how you singlehandedly saved them from bankruptcy twice in the past six months.

Although I don’t recommend uploading your resume to your profile, you may feel otherwise. If you are clear on the reasons not to and still think it makes sense to do, here’s how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Move your mouse pointer over the section to which you want to add your resume and click the Add Media icon in the upper-right corner.**

I suggest uploading it to your Summary section or to your most current experience.

- 3. Select Upload a File.**

An Open dialog box appears.

- 4. Locate and select your resume file from your hard drive and click Open.**

A picture of your content displays, and sometimes LinkedIn automatically fills in the Title and Description fields with information from the file. Regardless, update the Title and Description fields to something that makes sense for your reader.

- 5. Click Save.**

Reinforcing Your Brand with a Background Image

LinkedIn profiles used to be so plain, especially when compared with Twitter and Facebook where you are able to upload large, eye-catching banner images. LinkedIn eventually came around and now allows you to upload a background image to visually spice up your profile.

This background image is only visible to LinkedIn members who view your profile while logged in. The background image doesn't appear on your public profile.

Finding the right image to showcase your brand

When choosing a LinkedIn background image, make sure the image matches your personal/professional brand and conveys your unique message. Choose images that inspire you or reflect what you do.

Here are some ideas:

- » An image of the products you sell or produce
- » A picture of your office building or interior
- » A team photo
- » An illustration or photo that shows an analogy of what you do (lighthouse, magnifying glass, owl, tree, and so on)
- » A picture of you at a podium or presenting in front of an audience



The image you choose must be professional and it must reflect your personal brand.

REMEMBER

LinkedIn's background image is responsive, which means the image can grow and shrink depending on the screen size of the device you are using to view it. Think in terms of the screen size differences between a desktop monitor, a laptop, and a little iPhone. These different devices all have different screen sizes. Utilizing a responsive image means that your profile should look good regardless of what device is used to view it.

Because the background image is responsive, there are areas of the image that you almost always see and other areas where you may only sometimes see. This means you have to be careful with the image you select and the placement of any logos.

Figure 12–9 shows the portion of the background image that is universally visible and the areas that are sometimes visible. To download this image to use as a template, access it here: www.linkedin-makeover.com/tools/background.

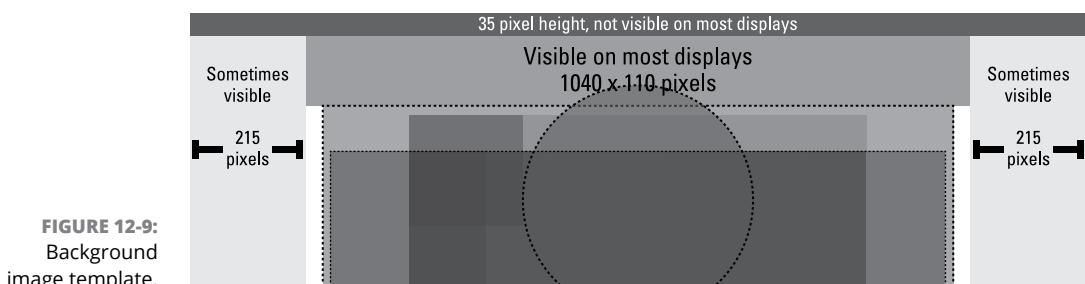


FIGURE 12-9:
Background
image template.

When choosing your background image, make sure the focal point of the image is not located in an area that is not visible.

Depending on your goals and budget, you may want to reach out to a graphic designer for assistance. www.Fivrr.com and www.99Designs.com are two easy and affordable ways to work with graphic designers. If working with a graphic designer is outside your budget, don't worry! It's easy to create a background graphic yourself using free, online tools, which I discuss in the next section, “Using online graphic tools to create an image.”



TIP

Premium LinkedIn members get to choose different background images from a gallery. As wonderful it is to have already created background images, these images are overused and no longer unique. I recommend not using LinkedIn's background images and finding something unique to you and your brand.

Using online graphic tools to create an image

When looking for an image to turn into your LinkedIn background, you must be careful not to steal. Just because you saw an image on Google search or on another person's website doesn't mean it's ripe for the picking. If you found an image you truly love and is perfect for your background image, you can attempt to reach out to the creator of the image and ask permission to use it. Rather than get caught up in finding email addresses and asking permission, it's actually easier to simply visit websites that provide royalty-free stock images.

A few of my favorite sites that specialize in free images are:

- » Barn Images (<http://barnimages.com>)
- » Raumrot (<http://raumrot.com>)
- » Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>)
- » Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)
- » Freelimages (www.freeimages.com)
- » Photocrops (www.photocrops.com)
- » UHD Wallpapers (www.uhdwallpapers.org)

Have you ever heard of the old saying, “you get what you pay for?” With royalty-free stock images, the quality of images isn’t always grade A. If you aren’t finding any free images you like, you may decide to shop for images instead.

Here are a few sites where you can search and purchase professionally rendered images:

- » GraphicRiver (<http://graphicriver.net>)
- » iStock (www.istockphoto.com)
- » ShutterStock (www.shutterstock.com)

Are you interested in getting a branded image from your company’s website? You can grab images off your company’s website fairly easily. Using a print screen tool like Microsoft’s Snipping Tool, which is available in the Accessories folder (if you are on a Mac, press Cmd+Shift+4), you can capture images from your website. Depending on how the website is coded, sometimes all you need to do is hover your mouse over the image, right-click your mouse, and choose Save Image As.



REMEMBER

Regardless of how you obtained the image, you must resize it to the requisite dimensions of 1,400 pixels wide by 425 pixels tall. Images sized incorrectly look blurry or pixelated and that comes across as very unprofessional.

My favorite free online tool for resizing images and creating interesting, personalized photo montages is Canva (www.canva.com). Canva is an online graphic design application that offers access to free and paid design tools and templates.

Here’s how to use Canva to create an interesting background image for your LinkedIn profile:

1. Visit Canva.com in your favorite browser.

If you have never used Canva before, you need to create an account. It's easy to sign up with your Facebook account.

2. Click Use Custom Dimension in the top-right corner of the screen.

In the Width field enter 1400. In the Height field enter 425.

3. Click the green Design! Button.

4. Click the Uploads tool in the left sidebar.

5. Click the green "Upload Your Own Images" button.

An Open dialog box appears.

6. Locate the background image you want to resize, highlight it, and click the Open button.

The image uploads to Canva.

7. Locate the uploaded image and click and drag it to the white canvas on the right side of the screen.

The image fills the canvas.

8. If the image is too small, expand the image by clicking a corner and dragging to resize it, or add another image so that it becomes a montage of images.

9. Click the Text tool in the left sidebar to add words to your image.

Make sure the text is located in an area that is visible.

10. Once you are finished designing your image, click the Download button at the top of the screen, and in the drop-down box that appears, click Image:high quality (PNG).

A Save As dialog box appears.

11. Select where on your hard drive you would like to save the image and click Save.

Adding a background image to your profile

Now that you have a beautiful background image, here's how to add it to your LinkedIn profile:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

2. Hover your mouse pointer over the top part of your profile where your background image will go and click the Edit Background button that appears.

3. Click the Upload button.

An Open dialog box appears.

4. Locate the background image file from your hard drive and click Open.

The image is uploaded and appears in preview mode. Dragging your mouse over the preview image allows you to align it.

5. Once you are happy with the alignment of your image, click Save.

Your background image appears at the top of your profile.

The Importance of Recommendations

Recommendations are testimonials that appear on your profile, showing your reader you are trusted and admired within your network. Recommendations are given by first-degree connections and provide citation to your value and abilities and make your profile more credible.

If you are a job seeker, recommendations from your current or past employer and colleagues sets you apart from other job applicants. When your goal is branding or reputation management, a strong list of recommendations from VIPs and leaders boasting your finer points provides evidence to your reader that you truly are a high performing, impressive professional. If you are promoting your business, products, or services, having recommendations from your current clients touting your strengths impresses your prospects.

You may be thinking, “What’s the merit in a LinkedIn recommendation when every recommendation on LinkedIn is glowing?”

The power behind LinkedIn recommendations is it’s easy to find out how significant or insignificant the person is who wrote your recommendation by simply clicking on the person’s name and visiting his or her LinkedIn profile to learn more. It is not what the recommendation says that’s so important, *It’s who wrote it*. The short recommendation from someone in a high place is significantly better than the glowing recommendation from a colleague or vendor.

Identifying people to recommend you

The best kind of recommendation comes from employers, VIPs, or customers. These are people with a lot of things on their plates. The fact they took time and wrote you a recommendation speaks volumes and proves that you truly did something important. Recommendations by colleagues and people in lateral or lower

positions are useful, but not nearly as powerful. The quid pro quo recommendation, given out of duty, impresses no one. Check out Figure 12-10 to see the types of people you should ask for a recommendation.



Here are some questions to help you identify the right people to ask for a recommendation:

- » Who have you helped?
- » Who have you impressed?
- » Who have you inspired?
- » Who have you provided value?
- » Who has recently thanked you?

If you have a large list and don't want to send a recommendation request to each and every one, here's how to narrow the list:

- » Who is on LinkedIn?
- » Who has a large LinkedIn network?
- » Who is active on LinkedIn?
- » Who shares your target audience?

When a person writes a recommendation for you, that recommendation is also listed on that person's profile. By making sure the person has a large network and shares your target audience means more eyes on the recommendation, which might translate to additional opportunity for you.



TIP

You can only request recommendations from people who are on LinkedIn and connected to you. However, if you want to add a recommendation from a person who is not on LinkedIn or from someone who has passed on to the great beyond, you can scan the recommendation and add it to the experience as a multimedia file. Directions on adding multimedia files are found in “Adding Multimedia to Make Your Profile POP!” earlier in this chapter.

If you were unable to come up with a list, what are you waiting for? Go out and start impressing people, help others, and start participating in random acts of kindness.

Asking for a recommendation

Now that you have a list of people to ask for a recommendation, don’t let shyness get in your way. People love helping other people and you may discover that most people are honored that you asked them to recommend you.



TIP

The best and most successful approach when asking for a recommendation is not to simply request a recommendation, but provide the person with a recommendation already written for them.

People often balk when I suggest providing a pre-written recommendation. The truth is, rather than being insulted, more often than not the other person is going to be overjoyed. The vast majority of people out there don’t have the time or ability to write you a strong recommendation. Because this person is doing you a favor, it’s important to do them a favor by making it as easy for them as possible to help you. And as you struggle to come up with the words for your own recommendation, imagine how difficult it would be for the other person!

The other reason I suggest writing the recommendation yourself is to ensure the recommendation is written with all of the points you want covered. Just because you think your leadership ability and unwavering commitment to customer service is what sets you apart, the person writing your recommendation may instead focus on something else entirely.

In addition, by writing the recommendation yourself, you can infuse the recommendation with keywords that help optimize your profile’s searchability. All those keywords can be infused into recommendations to make your profile rank even better. (Refer back to Chapter 2 to find out even more about how to get found on LinkedIn.)

If my arguments to write the recommendation yourself failed to persuade you, at the very least provide the person with some criteria as to what you’d like stated in the recommendation. Consider including language similar to this:

Dear Dave,

I have enjoyed working with you. Would you be open to providing me a recommendation of my work that I can include on my LinkedIn profile?

When you write the recommendation, I would love it if you'd mention my strength in social selling and how I often acted as a trusted advisor to my clients. Perhaps you can even mention how I saved the Wiener deal using my extensive knowledge of widgets and ended up renewing them for an extra two years, which resulted in a \$2M uptick in revenue?

Thanks so much! I appreciate it!

—Hal

When requesting a recommendation, it's important that you request the recommendation from within LinkedIn's interface. Whatever you do, don't send the request for a recommendation via an outside email address. Emailing the request makes it difficult for your contact to figure out how to provide the recommendation. By sending the request from LinkedIn's recommendation page, your contacts can easily click the link that LinkedIn provides, making it easy for them to give you a recommendation.

WRITING THE PERFECT RECOMMENDATION

When writing a recommendation for yourself, the best thing to do is list your qualities you want highlighted. If you aren't quite sure what qualities you want highlighted, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this person know you?
- How long have you known each other?
- How did you work together?
- Detail a singular experience in which you exhibited a high level of leadership as it fits within his or her knowledge of you.
- What one quality of yours proved beneficial to this person? What was the result?
- Did you mentor or work alongside this person? What impact did you have on him or her?

Use the answers to these questions to craft a powerful recommendation.

Here's how to request a recommendation from within LinkedIn:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the down arrow next to the View Profile As button in the top section of your profile.**
- 3. Select Ask To Be Recommended.**

The Recommendations page opens, and the first question you are asked is, "What do you want to be recommended for?"

- 4. Click the drop-down arrow and select the position the recommendation is for.**

The second question you are asked is, "Who do you want to ask?"

- 5. Enter the name of the person in the empty field.**

As you type, LinkedIn suggests contacts with similar names.

- 6. Select the person from the drop-down list.**

LinkedIn allows you to ask up to three different people per recommendation request. I highly suggest only asking one person per request. It's important to personalize the request, and that is impossible if you are asking numerous people at once.



TIP

- 7. Choose your relationship to the person.**

You have numerous options. Read through the list carefully and choose the relationship that most closely echoes yours. Unfortunately, there is no "other" option, so you must determine the best fit. Luckily, the other person has a chance to make changes, so if he or she doesn't feel you used the proper relationship option, he or she can change it for you.

- 8. Choose the other person's position at the time from the drop-down list.**

The drop-down list contains a listing of the person's experiences as listed it on his or her LinkedIn profile.

- 9. Change the Subject line of the message if you are so inclined.**

LinkedIn prepopulates the Subject field with the title, "Can you recommend me?" This is a perfectly acceptable subject for the message, but you may change it if you wish.

Directly below the Subject field is a pre-written recommendation that LinkedIn provides. As I have stated, it is best to add the recommendation for the person or at the very least, guidelines to what you want covered in the recommendation.

Figure 12-11 illustrates an example of the recommendation request form.

- 10. Click the Send button when you are ready to send your request.**

Ask your connections to recommend you

- 1** What do you want to be recommended for?
- 2** Who do you want to ask?
Your connections: (You can add up to 3 people)
- 3**  Howard Roark
What's your relationship?

What was Howard's position at the time?
- 4** Write your message
Subject:

FIGURE 12-11:
LinkedIn's recommendation request form.

Your request for a recommendation is sent as a LinkedIn message. Depending on your LinkedIn settings, you may also receive a notification alert via email.

Ditching the default request text

When requesting a recommendation from a connection, LinkedIn provides a pre-written request for you to send. Rather than use LinkedIn's default text, personalize the message instead. Try something like this:

Dear Fran,

It's been a pleasure working with you and accomplishing so much together. It would be an honor to include a recommendation from you on my LinkedIn profile. I know how busy you are so I took the liberty of writing the recommendation for you. Please feel free to make any edits, and if you would prefer to write your own recommendation, please do so. Thank you in advance and I hope we can do lunch together soon.

<insert pre-written recommendation>

—Ollie

Once the recommendation request is sent, rather than wait for the other person to respond, I highly suggest reaching out to the person directly to let them know that you requested a recommendation. Give them a call and walk them through the

steps of providing the recommendation. Let them know how appreciative you are of the help they are providing.

Accepting a recommendation

One of the perks of writing the recommendation for the other person is how quick the recommendation is usually accepted and posted. My clients who accepted this advice have reported back that most people, when provided with a pre-written recommendation, post it almost immediately. You'll know when the person responds because LinkedIn sends an email notification. In addition to the email, you also get a LinkedIn message from the person giving the recommendation. This message contains a preview of the recommendation and a link to manage your recommendations. Here's how to accept it:

1. **Go to www.linkedin.com/recs/received.**

Under Pending Recommendations, you see a picture of the recommender and a preview of the recommendation.

2. **Hover your mouse pointer over the recommendation preview and choose to either Add To Profile or Ask For Changes.**

3. **If you need to request a change, click Ask for Changes.**

A pop-up message appears.

4. **In the text area, type the reason you are requesting a change.**

A preview of the recommendation appears below the editable area. To make it as easy for the person as possible, highlight the recommendation and right-click with your mouse to copy it. Paste the recommendation into the editable area and make the change for the person.

5. **Click Send.**

It may seem insulting and wrong to request a replacement, but it's an important thing to do. You don't want to publish a recommendation filled with typos. That would defeat the purpose of the recommendation.

6. **If the recommendation looks great, click Add to Profile.**



TIP

Sometimes you receive recommendations you do not want on your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn doesn't easily provide a way to archive or delete recommendations. The best thing to do is to accept the recommendation and then immediately go to the Manage Recommendations area and remove the check mark so that the recommendation does not show up on your profile. If the person recommending you has a poor reputation or the recommendation isn't authentic or genuine, it is best to simply accept it and remove it from view.

Reordering recommendations

Recommendations are listed in the order they were received on your LinkedIn profile. The most current recommendations sit at the top. I've heard from people who stopped accepting recommendations because they want a specific recommendation to remain at the top of their profiles and they don't want another lesser recommendation to take the top spot. You don't have to worry about this because LinkedIn allows you to reorder recommendations. Here's how to do it:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
 - 2. Scroll down and hover your mouse pointer over the Recommendations section.**
 - 3. Click the Manage button that appears.**
- You are now at the manage recommendations page.
- To the right of each recommendation is a small image that looks like two arrows pointing up and down.
- 4. Click and hold this icon to drag and drop the recommendation wherever you want it to go within the experience it is located.**

Unfortunately, you can't move a recommendation to another job utilizing the drag-and-drop method.

Removing recommendations

Careers change, people change, and sometimes, a recommendation you accepted a long time ago may not be a recommendation you want on your profile today. Although it's not possible to delete recommendations, you can prevent them from showing on your profile. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
 - 2. Scroll down and hover your mouse pointer over the Recommendations section.**
 - 3. Click the Manage button that appears.**
- You are now at the manage recommendations page.
- 4. Remove the check mark that appears to the left of the recommendation you wish to remove, as shown in Figure 12-12.**

Recommendations without check marks do not show on your profile. And don't worry: The other person is not notified that the recommendation was removed.

Recommendations

Received Given Ask for recommendations (1) Give recommendations (1)

Divisional Business Manager, Widgets R us

You have 1 recommendation (1 visible, 0 hidden).

[Ask for a recommendation](#)

Checkmark indicates a particular recommendation is displayed on your profile

Donna Serdula
Writer at POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles & Author ✓ Speaker ✓ LinkedIn®
 Uncheck to stop showing on your profile

As a LinkedIn profile writer, I am very focused on creating a strong brand for my clients. Howard Roark was an old colleague of mine who truly taught ... [more](#)

Jul 14, 2016, You were a client of Donna

[Ask for changes](#)

FIGURE 12-12:
Removing a recommendation from your profile.

Recommending others

Everyone knows it's important to get recommendations, but it's also just as important to give recommendations to other people. Think about it. You want to brand yourself as a leader and executive. Leaders and executives don't just get recommendations, they give them!

Most people only provide recommendations when asked. Instead, give recommendations out of the goodness of your heart. Make it a part of your professional life. Once a month, look back and determine who did good by you. Who inspired and impressed you? Without anyone asking, send a glowing recommendation. You might be surprised by the good things that happen when all that karma comes back to you.



TIP

In addition to good karma, writing recommendations for others is a great way to promote yourself. Within the recommendation, introduce yourself and explain what you do. Not only does this give the recommendation context and credibility, but also it serves to get the word out about you.

Here's an example of a self-promoting recommendation:

As a Financial Advisor, I work with many small business owners, helping them reach their financial planning goals. I frequently refer Jill Schwettie to my clients that need a small business advisor. The feedback my clients provide me regarding Jill is always very positive. Jill's marketing advice has been instrumental in helping me expand my business. When you are ready to take your business to the next level, reach out to Jill.

People who read this recommendation may find themselves not only impressed with the person recommended, but also curious about the person providing the recommendation. Remember, the power of LinkedIn recommendations is the ability to click to learn more about the person providing the recommendation, and when you provide a well-written recommendation, a person may click on your profile to learn more about you, the recommender.

Here's how to give a recommendation:

1. In the LinkedIn search bar, type the name of the person you want to recommend and click the search button.
A list of profiles matching the name appears.
2. Open the profile of the person you want to recommend by clicking the search result.
3. Hover your mouse pointer over the down arrow next to the Send a Message button and select Recommend, as shown in Figure 12-13.

FIGURE 12-13:
Providing a recommendation.

- The Recommendation Management page opens, as shown in Figure 12-14. The first text area is where you write your recommendation. If the person provided the recommendation for you, this is where you copy it and make any tweaks.
4. Edit the prepopulated text in the message section of the form if you'd like.
This message alerts the person for whom you wrote a recommendation.
 5. In the What's Your Relationship field, choose your relationship to the person.
You have numerous options. Read through the list carefully and choose the relationship that most closely echoes yours.
 6. In the What Were Your Positions at the Time field, click the drop-down lists to choose your position and the position of the person you are recommending.

The drop-down list contains a listing of the person's experiences as listed on his or her LinkedIn profile.

 **Give Donna Serdula a recommendation**

1 Write a recommendation

If needed, you can make changes or delete it even after you send it.

Ex. Donna is very detail-oriented and produced great results for the company...



Your message to Donna

You can personalize this message if you'd like.

Hi Donna,
I wrote this recommendation of your work that you can include on your profile.
Thanks,
Howard
<http://www.linkedin.com/recs/received>

2 What's your relationship?

Choose...

What were your positions at the time?

You: Choose...

FIGURE 12-14:
Filling out the recommendation form.

7. Click the Send button when you are ready to send your recommendation.

LinkedIn displays a banner on top of the page that lets you know the recommendation was sent successfully.



WARNING

Some experts out there may tell you that you can have too many recommendations on your LinkedIn profile. I subscribe to the old adage that you can never be too thin, too rich, or have too many recommendations on your profile. As long as the recommendations are genuine, authentic, come from people within your network, and align you with your career future, you truly can't have too many.

I have over 100 recommendations on my profile. I regularly go through and cull the weaker recommendations. I also make sure that the person who is recommending me is a person who is respectable and professional. Otherwise, I remove the recommendation. The ultimate advice I can give you is to accept and show genuine recommendations from good people and never be afraid to remove a recommendation.

In the next chapter, I show you how to truly trick out your profile by following groups, companies, and influencers. I also show you how to blog directly on your LinkedIn profile. Let's go!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Handpicking the groups on your profile
- » Following the right influencers and news topics
- » Showing allegiance to companies and schools

Chapter **13**

Following Groups, Companies, and Influencers

Your LinkedIn activity is reflected on your profile. The LinkedIn Groups you join and the influencers and news topics you follow all show up at the bottom of your LinkedIn profile. Rather than ignore this area, build up your brand and online persona by following the right groups, influencers, news topics, companies, and schools to align with your LinkedIn goals.

In this chapter, you learn the importance of joining LinkedIn Groups (and it's not just for the discussion value) and how to choose the best groups. I also show you how to optimize the Following section by choosing the right influencers, news topics, companies, and schools to complete the construction of your profile to your desired brand vision.

Lastly, I show you how to blog on LinkedIn to further develop your professional presence and showcase yourself as a thought leader. Let's get started!

Understanding the Importance of Groups

The groups you join on LinkedIn are listed toward the bottom of your profile in the Groups section. The group logos appear in a grid pattern, showing your reader your online involvement in your industry and community (see Figure 13-1).

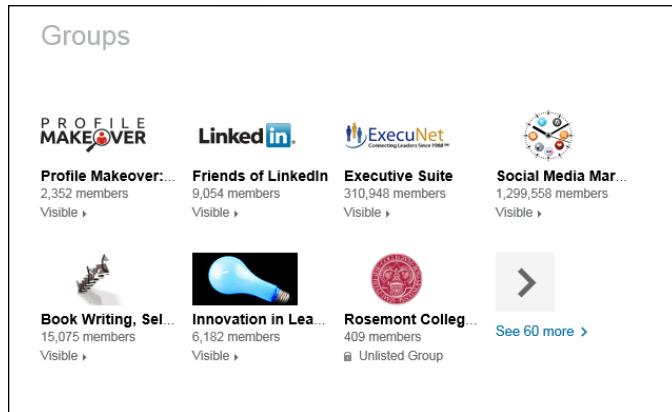


FIGURE 13-1:
The LinkedIn
Groups you
belong to appear
in the Groups
section.

LinkedIn Groups are forums devoted to discussions around a single topic. When reading your LinkedIn newsfeed, you see status updates with discussions, quotes, and links to articles about a myriad of topics. With such a wide range of topics taking place, some people find it overwhelming. On the flip side, when you visit a LinkedIn Group, the discussions are focused on the Group topic, ensuring your interest in the discussions taking place.

When you join the groups that interest you, and you engage successfully, LinkedIn Groups provide you the ability to forge new business relationships with like-minded professionals. Within the group, you can post news, participate in discussions, and network. It is a great way to add value and learn from others.

The only issue when it comes to LinkedIn Groups is your own time limitation. There are a slew of LinkedIn experts and professionals who claim to use LinkedIn Groups to find amazing business opportunity. There is certainly business to be mined, but it takes time and energy that not all of us have in abundance. If you have the time and enjoy interacting in group discussions, do it and reap the rewards. On the other hand, if you are a busy person and do not have the time nor inclination to engage in group discussions, I have another way for you to take advantage of LinkedIn Groups in a passive way that provides real results.

It is not a well-known fact, but LinkedIn Groups expand your LinkedIn network. Your LinkedIn network is comprised of connections within three degrees.

The people you are directly connected to by exchanging and accepting a LinkedIn invite are considered your first-degree connections. The people directly connected to your first-degree connections are considered your second-degree connections. The connections of your second-degree connections are considered your third-degree connections. Your LinkedIn network is also comprised of the members of groups you have joined.

When you perform keyword-based searches on LinkedIn, you are only searching your LinkedIn network. In order to find people and get found, you need to have an extensive network. The fastest and easiest way to expand your network is through joining LinkedIn Groups. People in the same LinkedIn Groups as you are considered part of your LinkedIn network even if they aren't first-, second-, or third-degree connections.



TIP

You can join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups. My suggestion is to join 100 groups so you can strengthen and expand your network as wide as possible.

Simply by joining groups, you receive the massive benefit of expanding your LinkedIn network. When you have a strong, large network, you get more views to your profile and collide with more opportunities. You do not have to participate in every single group you join. The only thing you need to ensure is that you join groups that contain your target audience.

Determining the types of groups to join

The LinkedIn Groups you join should contain your target audience — not your competitors. Most people join only groups that reflect their interests and careers. As an example, let's say you are an insurance broker. You may find yourself tempted to join only groups for insurance brokers. When you do that, you are filling your LinkedIn network with your competitors. You don't want to find or be found only by insurance brokers. Instead, think in terms of your target audience. You want to find and be found by prospective customers. Your prospective customers probably belong to LinkedIn Groups for business owners and human resource professionals. Figure out what LinkedIn Groups attract your target audience and join those groups.



TIP

Jobseekers should join groups that contain recruiters and human resources professionals. They should research the companies where they want to work and join groups where the employees of their dream companies are members.

Those who are using LinkedIn for executive branding and thought leadership should join groups that contain their target audience. Do you want to be found by reporters and journalists? Join groups for media professionals. Do you want to be asked to speak at conferences? Join groups that cater to conference and

event planners. Do you want to be asked for radio interviews? Join groups for radio broadcasters and podcasters.

One of the easiest ways to determine which groups attract your target audience is to visit the profiles of your current customers or target audience members. Scroll to the bottom of their profiles and look at the groups they have listed on the bottom of their LinkedIn profile. After viewing a number of their profiles, you may start to see certain groups repeated across their profiles. Those are the groups you should join.

The other thing to consider when joining LinkedIn Groups is the number of members within the group. Your network grows by the number of people in the group, so choose LinkedIn Groups with the most members. The bigger your network, the more people you find and the more people who find you.

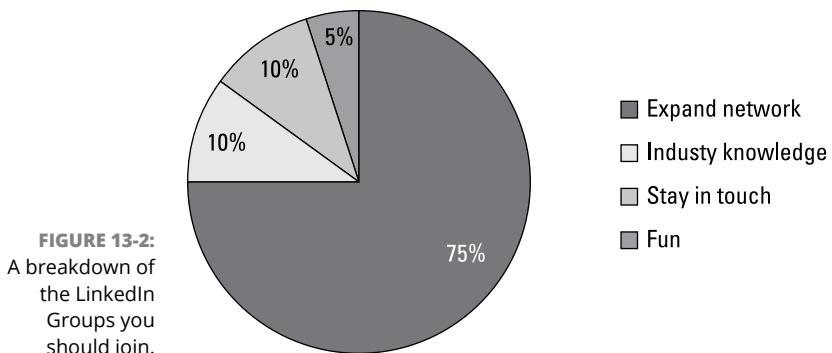
In addition to the groups that fill your network with your target audience, consider joining groups that demonstrate your expertise and industry knowledge. These groups may contain more of your competition than target audience, but that's okay as long as you don't join too many of them.

Another type of groups to join are the groups I like to call "Glory Days." Your university alumni group falls into this category as well as any groups devoted to old companies at which you worked in the past. By joining these groups where old colleagues, schoolmates, and friends are, you are making sure that if you are not directly connected to them yet, they are still in your network. You never know when one of these old relationships may need your new expertise.

Lastly, join a couple groups that are strictly fun. Do you love martial arts? There are a number of great groups devoted to discussions on martial arts. Do you enjoy technology or history or professional development? There are groups related to all of those topics. It's important to have fun on LinkedIn, and it's okay to delve into things you enjoy even if they aren't pertinent to your career. LinkedIn is all about networking, and networking with people who share common interests is a great way to forge real relationships.

Check out Figure 13-2 to see the ideal breakdown of groups you should join on LinkedIn.

If you are so inclined to participate in LinkedIn Groups, choose two or three LinkedIn Groups for your focus. Get into the habit of checking out the group discussions once a week. Participate as you can. Add discussions and comment on already occurring discussions. And guess what? If you simply don't have enough time to keep up with a few groups, don't worry about it. You can still find amazing benefit from LinkedIn Groups without any true participation.



TIP

If you love participating in groups, LinkedIn has a LinkedIn Group mobile app. As of 2016, it is available only for the iPhone, but it is slated for release on the Android soon. This mobile app makes it easy to interact with your LinkedIn Groups wherever you are . . . watching TV, in a coffee shop, or trying to look busy during a boring meeting.

Turning off group notifications

Before you start joining groups, especially if you are a currently employed job seeker, it's best to update your notification settings so LinkedIn doesn't notify your network whenever you join a new group. Here's how:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **Hover your mouse pointer over the thumbnail image of yourself in the upper-right corner of your screen and click Manage next to Privacy & Settings.**
LinkedIn's settings page opens.
3. **Along the top of the settings page, click Communications.**
4. **Under Groups, click Group notifications.**
This setting expands to show more information
5. **If "Would you like to publish an update to your network whenever you join a group?" is switched to Yes, click it to select No.**

By selecting No, when you join a LinkedIn Group your network is not alerted. See Figure 13-3.

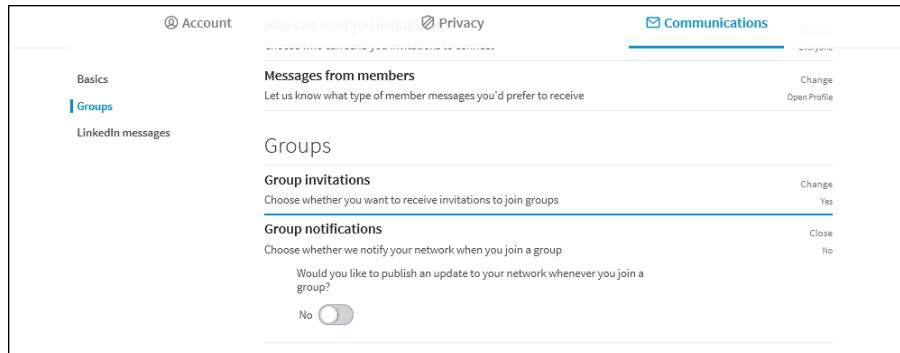


FIGURE 13-3:
Stop LinkedIn
from notifying
your network
when you join a
group.

Joining recommended groups

There are over two million groups on LinkedIn. Search LinkedIn to find groups that match your target audience and interests or allow LinkedIn to recommend groups to you. LinkedIn looks at commonalities you share with members of different groups such as companies, schools, or industries. Those groups with members that share the most attributes with you are presented as groups you might want to join.

Here's how to discover groups that align with your goals and target audience:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **Hover your mouse pointer over Interests located in the menu bar at the top of the screen and then click Groups.**

The My Groups page opens. This is where you see all of the groups you have already joined.

3. **Click Discover on the lower menu bar.**

The Discover page opens. This is where LinkedIn recommends groups to you.

4. **Scroll through LinkedIn's recommended groups, and if you see a group you would like to join, click the Ask to Join button.**

Notice the total number of people in the group. The larger the number, the more your network expands when you join. Also, LinkedIn shows you the number of people you know within the group. Are these people your target audience or are they competitors? If they are competitors, you may choose not to join the group. See Figure 13-4.

Are the people in your network competitors or your target audience?

The more group members, the more your network will grow

B2B Content Marketing
17,679 Members

This group is for professionals in the B2B Content Marketing and publishing industry. If you are involved in the creation of content to educate your clients, this is the group for you.

You know 79 people in this group

American Advertising Federation (AAF)
38,210 Members

The American Advertising Federation (AAF), headquartered in Washington, D.C., acts as the "Unifying Voice for Advertising." The AAF is the oldest national advertising trade association, representing 50,000 professionals in the advertising industry. T... Show more

You know 57 people in this group

FIGURE 13-4:
LinkedIn
recommends
groups you might
be interested in.

Searching for groups

Rather than just accepting groups that LinkedIn deems worthy of you, search for groups. LinkedIn has two types of groups: standard and unlisted. When searching for groups, you only see standard groups. Unlisted groups are unlisted and do not turn up in Search. The only way to join an unlisted group is to be invited to join.

Here's how to search for groups that match your interests, goals, and target audience:

1. **From any LinkedIn page, click the down arrow to the left of the search bar at the top of the page and select Groups.**
- This filters your search results to only LinkedIn Groups.
2. **Enter a group topic that would attract your target audience in the search bar at the top of the page.**

Some keyword topic ideas include: Executives, Real Estate, B2B Marketing, CAD, CRM, Sales, Cloud Computing, Supply Chain, Retail, Fashion, Maritime, Military, and so on.



WARNING

When typing in your keywords, do not choose any of the suggested results! Instead, click the search button so you are presented with a page of search results. By clicking on a suggested Group, you are only then visiting that particular Group rather than have numerous options to choose from.

3. Click the search button.

Search results display, as shown in Figure 13-5.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn search interface. At the top, there's a search bar with the query 'Executive Management'. Below it, a sidebar on the left allows filtering by type ('Groups') and categories like 'All', 'Categories', and 'Languages'. The main area displays a list of search results:

- Retail Management Executive Group [Member]**: This is a group of retail management executives networking to share ideas and answer questions that relate to the retail ... 208,756 members. Options: Post, Join, View.
- Human Resources (HR) & Talent Management Executive**: The #1 Talent Management group on LinkedIn. We are a global group of strategic HR & talent management executives that ... 430,932 members. Options: Join.
- Human Resources Management & Executive Network**: Whether you are a Specialist or a Generalist in HR, this networking group is for all leaders and executives in Human ... 54,219 members. Options: Join, View.
- Information & Knowledge Management Executive Network**: Information and Knowledge Management Executive Network is a community of information and knowledge management ... 6,054 members. Options: View.
- EMST | Executive Management Search in Telecom**: Join Executive Management Search in Telecom group to discuss, share the ideas and network with executive officers, senior ... 4,046 members. Options: Join.

Annotations on the image:

- 'Click here to filter search results by type' points to the sidebar.
- 'Click to join a group' points to the 'Join' button for the first group.
- 'You can filter results from this sidebar' points to the sidebar.
- 'Click the group name to go to the overview page' points to the group names in the list.

FIGURE 13-5:
Going through
group search
results.

4. Scroll through the list.

The name of the group displays, followed by a brief description. Under the description is the total number of members in the group.

5. If the group looks interesting, click the Join button to immediately become a member, or if you want more information before joining, click the group name hyperlink to visit the group overview page.

The group overview page shows you the admins of the group and who within your connections are members. If you wish to join, click the Ask to Join button, otherwise click your browser's back button to go to the previous screen of search results.

Deleting groups

Now that you understand the strategy behind LinkedIn Groups, you may want to delete some groups that aren't providing the value you need. Here's how to delete groups you have already joined:

- 1. From any LinkedIn page, hover your mouse pointer over Interests located in the top menu bar at the top of the screen and click Groups.**
The highlights page displays. This page offers brief summaries of the most popular and trending discussions from all of your groups.
- 2. Click My Groups on the lower menu bar.**
The list of groups that you belong to appears. If you manage any groups, they appear at the top of the list.
- 3. Scroll through the list until you find the group you want to remove.**
- 4. Click the gear icon that appears to the right of each group listing and select Leave Group, as shown in Figure 13-6.**

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'My Groups' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, My Network, Jobs, and Interests. Below this is a search bar and a 'Premium' status indicator. The main content area has a teal header bar with 'My Groups' and 'Discover' tabs. On the left, there are buttons for 'Create group' and 'My pending groups'. A search bar labeled 'Filter my groups' is present. The main list is divided into two sections: 'GROUPS THAT I MANAGE' and 'GROUPS THAT I'M IN'. In the 'GROUPS THAT I MANAGE' section, there is one group listed: 'Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets' with '(31) pending members - (1) new conversation'. To the right of this group is a gear icon, which is highlighted with a blue box. In the 'GROUPS THAT I'M IN' section, there are four groups listed: 'On Startups - The Community For Entrepreneurs' (989 new conversations), 'Social Media Marketing' (298 new conversations), 'eMarketing Association Network' (228 new conversations), and 'Finance Club' (200 new conversations). Each of these groups has a gear icon to its right, and the 'Leave group' option is visible in the dropdown menu for the 'Social Media Marketing' group.

FIGURE 13-6:
Leaving a
LinkedIn Group.

Turning off group communication email

You've joined 100 groups and suddenly you are beginning to see more views to your LinkedIn profile. As wonderful as that is, you are also seeing your email inbox fill up with LinkedIn Group update email. LinkedIn sure does love to fill our inboxes up with notifications, don't they? No worries! It's easy to turn off the LinkedIn Group communication email. Here's how:

- 1. Go to LinkedIn.com.**
 - 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the thumbnail image of yourself in the upper-right corner of your screen and click Manage next to Privacy & Settings.**
- LinkedIn's settings page opens.
- 3. Along the top of the settings page, click Communications.**
 - 4. Under Basics, click Change to the left of Email frequency.**

The page expands to include different options. This is where you choose what email notifications you want to receive from LinkedIn.

- 5. Scroll down to Group updates and click Details.**
 - 6. Click All Group Email Settings to see options for all of the groups you belong to.**
- The top five groups you belong to display with the ability to toggle off their email updates.
- 7. To turn off all group email communication, click the top option, "Receive email about group notifications" from On to Off.**

If you only want to turn off some group email updates, go through the list toggling from On to Off the groups you no longer want to receive email updates from.

If you want to receive a weekly digest rather than daily email from some of the groups, toggle the option from Off to On and the menu expands to choose between daily or weekly digest options. You are also given the option to turn off alerts on new discussions and group announcements. See Figure 13-7.

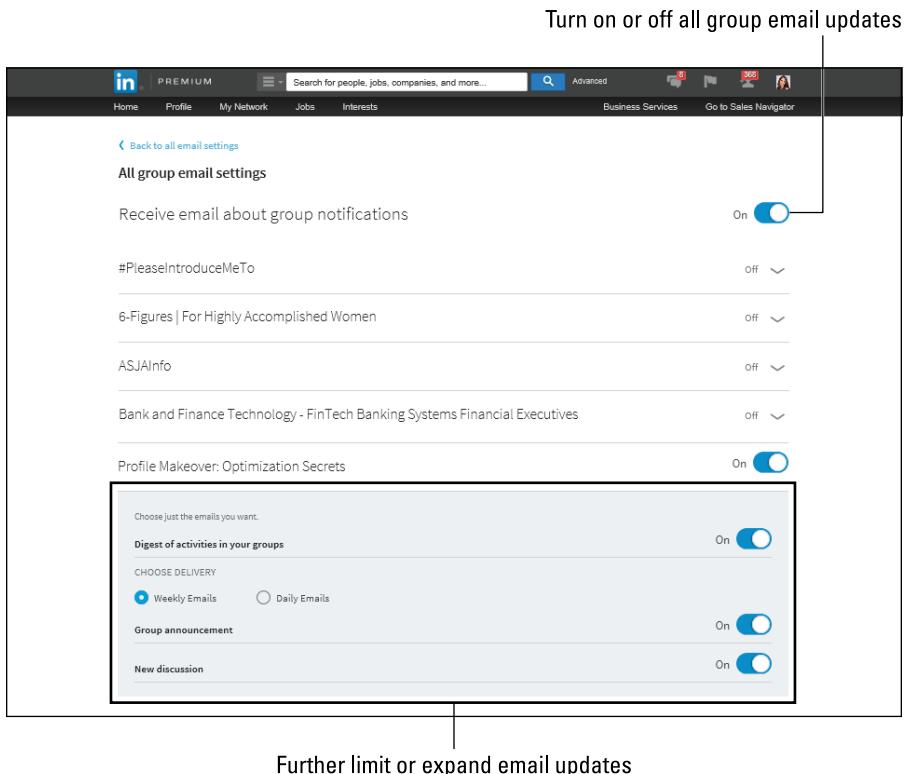


FIGURE 13-7:
Stopping all those
group emails
from deluging
your inbox.

Choosing which groups to highlight on your profile

Your profile displays seven group logos on your profile with the option to expand to show the complete list. Although LinkedIn lists the groups on your profile in the order in which you joined them, you can determine the order groups are displayed.

Instead of leaving it to LinkedIn to showcase your group membership, it's important you take control and determine the best groups to populate your profile to impress your target audience. Remember, it's a Google world, and people are looking you up. They want to learn more about you. You control how they perceive you. As a reader scrolls through your profile, you want to make sure that the groups you are associated with build your brand and won't turn anyone off.

In the section, “Determining the types of groups to join,” I suggest adding a few groups that showcase your industry knowledge. These groups are great to add to the top of your profile. Always think of your target audience. What group memberships might impress them? Which might make them feel confident in you?

Once you have an idea of the groups to spotlight on your profile, here's how to reorder them:

1. From any LinkedIn page, hover your mouse pointer over Interests located in the top menu bar at the top of the screen and click Groups.

The highlights page displays.

2. Click the gear icon that appears in the upper-right corner of the highlights page.

The Groups Order and Display page appears.

3. To rearrange the order of groups on your profile, click the arrow icon to the left of the group name to jump the group to the #1 position, as shown in Figure 13-8.

Alternatively, click in the text field and type the order number for the group and press the Return or Enter key on your keyboard to accept the change and see the page update with the new order.

4. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the Save Changes button.

This jumps the group to the first position

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Groups Order and Display page. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Search groups..." and a magnifying glass icon. Below the search bar, there are navigation links for Home, Profile, My Network, Jobs, and Interests. On the right side, there are icons for Business Services and Go to Sales Navigator. The main content area is titled "Groups Order and Display". It contains a sub-section titled "Groups (74)". A table lists 14 groups with their current order number, group name, and "Member Settings" link. The first group, "Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets", has its order number changed from 1 to 2, which is highlighted with a red box. A callout bubble points to this row with the text "This jumps the group to the first position". The other groups listed are: Book Writing, Self Publishing, and Marketing for Business People; Friends of LinkedIn; Social Media Marketing; Executive Suite; Innovation in Leadership Development; Rosemont College Alumni Association; CCC Alumni; Food Service Professionals Network; Rosemont College Alumni Networking Group - Rosemont, PA; #PleaseIntroduceMeTo; Social Media Today; Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) Philadelphia Chapter; and The Women's Business Forum of Bucks County.

Order	Group Name	Member Settings
1	Profile Makeover: Optimization Secrets	Manager Settings Member Settings
2	Book Writing, Self Publishing, and Marketing for Business People	Member Settings
3	Friends of LinkedIn	Member Settings
4	Social Media Marketing	Member Settings
5	Executive Suite	Member Settings
6	Innovation in Leadership Development	Member Settings
7	Rosemont College Alumni Association	Member Settings
8	CCC Alumni	Member Settings
9	Food Service Professionals Network	Member Settings
10	Rosemont College Alumni Networking Group - Rosemont, PA	Member Settings
11	#PleaseIntroduceMeTo	Member Settings
12	Social Media Today	Member Settings
13	Society for Marketing Professional Services (SMPS) Philadelphia Chapter	Member Settings
14	The Women's Business Forum of Bucks County	Member Settings

FIGURE 13-8:
Rearranging the display of groups on your profile.

Cultivating Your Following Section

When you first log in to LinkedIn, you land on the LinkedIn home page, which is where you post status updates that are potentially seen by your network of connections. It's also where you read your network's status updates. Think of this newsfeed as your own customized newspaper, curated by all of your direct, first-degree LinkedIn connections. You are not limited to just status updates from first-degree connections, however. You can also subscribe to news topics of interest to you, company and school updates, and original content from influencers. To tap into this stream of information, all you have to do is follow companies, news topics, influencers, and schools that interest you.

By following companies, news topics, influencers, and schools, you get their status updates delivered to your LinkedIn home page's newsfeed. You show your interest and allegiance to them on your LinkedIn profile in the Following section, which appears at the very bottom of your profile. Within this section, logos of the companies, news topics, influencers, and news you follow are displayed. To populate this section, you must follow some companies, news topics, influencers, and schools, otherwise the Following section does not appear on your profile, and the opportunity to showcase potential commonality is lost.

You can follow as many as 1,000 companies and an unlimited number of news sources or industries.

Choosing the right companies to follow

Just as individuals have LinkedIn profiles, companies have LinkedIn company pages. A company page is where a company tells its story, mission, and goals on LinkedIn and posts open positions. When employees and past employees list the company in their LinkedIn profiles' experience sections, the logo that is displayed on their profiles comes from this company page. A link is also created from the employees' profiles to the company page.

In addition to providing a digital outpost for the company on LinkedIn, the company page provides the ability to post status updates as the company rather than as an individual. When you visit a company page, you have the ability to follow that page and receive the updates it posts. Some company pages have showcase pages. Most companies post statuses on a large variety of topics, but not all followers want to read such a wide range of topics. Showcase pages are for the different topics a company page might broadcast. Visitors can then subscribe to the showcase page of the topic they are most interested in reading. When you subscribe to a showcase page, that logo is displayed on your profile as a company.



TIP

Follow at least 10 companies and/or showcase pages to demonstrate you are using LinkedIn as a way to get information and updates. These company logos also show your allegiance and interest in the company.

Not sure what companies to follow? No worries; here are some ideas to get you started:

- » Your current company
- » The companies where you worked in the past
- » Your dream company(ies)
- » Companies that are current or prospective customers
- » Companies in the news
- » Companies that are leaders within your industry or customers' industries
- » The companies where your friends and family members work



WARNING

Unlike with groups, you cannot control the order companies are displayed on your profile. If you are not comfortable potentially showcasing a certain company on your profile, don't follow it!

Following companies

It's easy to follow companies on LinkedIn. Here's how:

- 1. From any LinkedIn page, click the down arrow to the left of the search bar at the top of the page and select Companies.**
This filters your search results to only LinkedIn company pages.
- 2. Enter the name of a company you would like to follow.**
As you type, LinkedIn recommends matching company pages.
- 3. If the page you are searching for appears, click it to open the company page.**
If LinkedIn doesn't recommend the correct company page, click the search button to display the search results.
- 4. Scroll through the results and click the company page you'd like to follow.**
The company page opens.
- 5. Click the Follow button.**
The button text changes to Following and the company appears in the Following section on your profile.

Unfollowing companies

If you go overboard and follow more companies than you are able to keep up with, or if you've changed your mind about showing allegiance to a certain company, simply stop following a company and its updates.

To unfollow a company, follow these steps:

1. **From any LinkedIn page, hover your mouse pointer over Interests located in the top menu bar at the top of the screen and click Companies.**

The Company Recent Updates page displays. This page shows you the most recent updates sent out by companies you follow. This is also where you see the company pages you manage.

2. **Click Following at the top of the page.**

The list of companies you follow appears. You may need to click the Next button to see more results.

3. **Hover your mouse pointer over the word, "Following," that appears under the logo of the company you no longer want to follow and click.**

It momentarily changes to Unfollow. Once you click Unfollow, you no longer follow that company and it is removed from your profile's Following section.

Following News

LinkedIn's home page also contains a summary of news items found on LinkedIn Pulse. LinkedIn Pulse is content curated by LinkedIn. These are the top business stories of the day. By following a news source or industry on LinkedIn Pulse, you are customizing the content based upon your preferences.

Here's how to follow different news topics:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll down to the Following section and click the Customize News button.**
3. **Scroll down to the list of Channels.**

Channels are the different news topics you are able to follow to truly customize and personalize the news LinkedIn provides to you via Pulse.

4. Hover your mouse pointer over a topic that interests you.

The plus (+) sign that appears in the upper-right corner of the topic image changes to Follow.

5. Click Follow.

The plus (+) sign becomes a green check mark, showing that you are following this news topic.

Showcasing Influencers on Your Profile

Not only does LinkedIn provide curated content from around the web, you can also tap into original content by big-name thought leaders. These influencers share their knowledge and insights through original articles found exclusively on LinkedIn. When you follow an influencer, you receive their latest articles via your LinkedIn home page's newsfeed. Not only do you get to read their latest missives, but also you get to show your admiration and interest in them on your profile.

When people check out another person's LinkedIn profile, they often scroll to the bottom to check out whether they have any influencers in common. Seeing an admired thought leader on another person's profile shows more than just a common interest; it shows a common philosophy and thought pattern. By following certain influencers, you raise your reputation and viewpoint.



TIP

There is a difference between following and connecting. When you connect, you are sharing your connections with that person and that person is added to your LinkedIn network. As part of your LinkedIn network, when you search LinkedIn, that person potentially shows up in searches as does his or her first- and second-degree network. By following a person, they are not added to your LinkedIn network. You are simply subscribing to their updates and long-form posts. You approve connections; you don't approve followers.

Deciding which influencers to showcase

Unlike with groups, you cannot control the order influencers are displayed on your profile. Just because you adore a certain influencer, consider if that person is a polarizing individual, especially within your industry. Rather than choosing influencers you truly love and want to follow, you may decide to choose influencers who showcase you as you want to be seen.

If you want to be seen as a conservative, traditional leader, you may decide to follow Jack Welch rather than Mark Cuban. Although LinkedIn includes a number of

politicians as influencers, you may decide not to follow them and alienate half your audience.

LinkedIn doesn't provide a list of influencers beyond a small list of recommended influencers listed on the Discover page. Rather than have you blindly search for influencers, I've compiled a list of the most popular and prolific (see Table 13-1). See if any strike a chord with you. If they influence you, go ahead and follow them.

TABLE 13-1 List of Interesting Influencers

Sallie Krawcheck	CEO and Co-Founder of Ellevest	B2B/Leadership	www.linkedin.com/in/salliekrawcheck
Meg Whitman	CEO of Hewlett-Packard	B2B/Leadership	www.linkedin.com/in/megwhitman
Beth Comstock	Vice Chair at General Electric (GE)	B2B/Leadership	www.linkedin.com/in/elizabethjcomstock
Jonathan Becher	Chief Digital Officer at SAP	B2B/Leadership	www.linkedin.com/in/jbecher
Dr. Marla Gottschalk	Director of Organizational Development, Allied Talent	Human Resources	www.linkedin.com/in/marlagottschalk
Josh Bersin	Principal and Founder, Bersin by Deloitte	Human Resources	www.linkedin.com/in/bersin
Laszlo Bock	SVP, People Operations at Google and author of <i>Work Rules!</i>	Human Resources	www.linkedin.com/in/laszlobock
Lou Adler	CEO, Adler Group & author of <i>The Essential Guide For Hiring and Being Hired</i>	Job Search	www.linkedin.com/in/louadler
Liz Ryan	Founder & CEO of Human Workplace	Job Search	www.linkedin.com/in/lizryan
J.T. O'Donnell	CEO of CAREERREALISM & CareerHMO	Job Search	www.linkedin.com/in/jtodonnell
Ann Handley	Chief Content Officer of MarketingProfs	Marketing	www.linkedin.com/today/author/6474349
Brian Solis	Principal Analyst, Altimeter Group	Marketing	www.linkedin.com/influencer/2293140
Jonah Berger	Wharton Professor and author of <i>Contagious</i> and <i>Invisible Influence</i>	Marketing	www.linkedin.com/in/j1berger
Daniel Burrus	Founder and CEO Burrus Research, Inc	Marketing	www.linkedin.com/in/danielburrus

Finding specific influencers

Not all big names are influencers. Check to see if a person you admire is an influencer by following these steps:

1. From any LinkedIn page, enter the person's name in the search bar at the top of the page.

As you type, LinkedIn presents you with name matches.

2. If the person's name appears, click it to open his or her profile.
3. If the person's name doesn't appear, click the search button and review the search results, clicking the person's name to open his or her profile.

If the person is an influencer, at the very top of the profile, it says *Influencer*. Although you can connect with influencers, the Follow button is highlighted, as shown in Figure 13-9.

Just preceding the word, "Influencer," you may see 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, meaning that not only is the person an influencer, but also you are connected to that person and that person is in your LinkedIn network.

4. Click the Follow button to subscribe to the person's long-form posts and status updates.

The screenshot shows two LinkedIn profiles side-by-side. The top profile is for Jack Welch, Executive Chairman of The Jack Welch Management Institute. The bottom profile is for Donna Serdula, Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles, Author, Speaker, LinkedIn Evangelist, and Brand Strategist. Both profiles feature the LinkedIn Influencer badge. A callout box highlights the 'Follow' button on both profiles, with the text: 'Influencers have an easy-to-see Follow button' pointing to the Welch profile and 'Click the down arrow and select Follow to follow people who aren't influencers' pointing to the Serdula profile. The Serdula profile also shows she is a 1st-degree PREMIUM connection with over 500 connections.

Influencers have an easy-to-see Follow button

The LinkedIn Influencer badge

Jack Welch

Executive Chairman, The Jack Welch Management Institute

New York, New York | Education Management

Current The Jack Welch Management Institute

Previous HarperCollins Publishers, GE

Education University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Follow Connect 4,837,762 followers

Donna Serdula

Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles, Author, Speaker, LinkedIn Evangelist, Brand Strategist

Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula

Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc

Education Rosemont College

Connect View in Sales Navigator 500+ connections

View recent activity

Follow

Share profile

Save to PDF

Block or report

Click the down arrow and select Follow to follow people who aren't influencers

FIGURE 13-9:
Determining if a person is an influencer.

Discovering recommended influencers

LinkedIn provides you with a partial list of recommended influencers. Here's how to access that list and follow those influencers LinkedIn recommends for you:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll down to the Following section and click the Customize News button.**
- 3. Scroll down to the list of Influencers under Discover More.**

This is a very small, partial list of some of the top influencers on LinkedIn.

- 4. Hover your mouse pointer over an influencer that interests you.**
- 5. Click Follow.**

The plus sign that appears in the upper-right corner of the influencer's profile picture image changes to Follow.

The plus (+) sign becomes a green check mark, showing that you are following this influencer. See Figure 13-10.

The plus (+) sign becomes a check mark when you are following an influencer

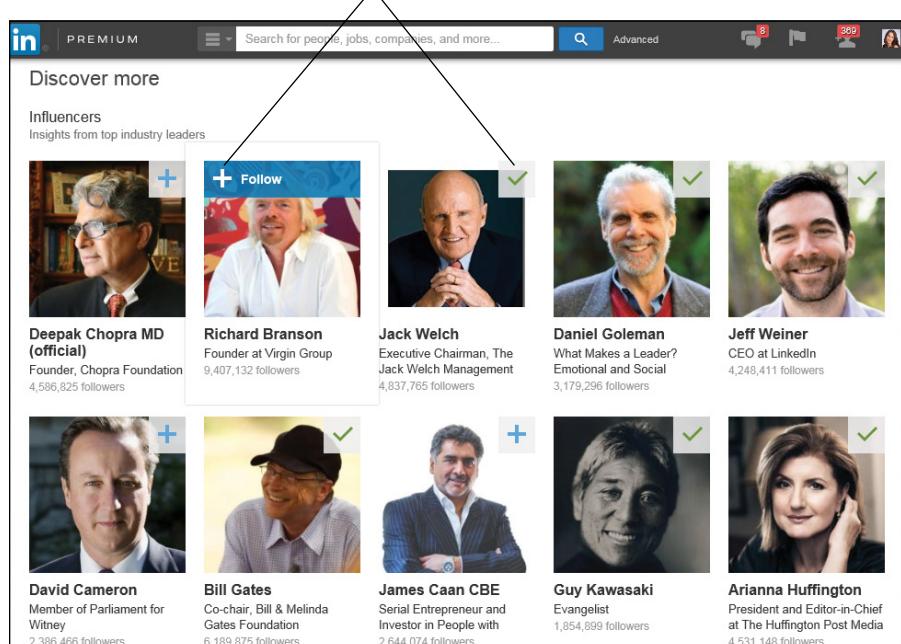


FIGURE 13-10:
Following Influencers is as easy as clicking a plus (+) sign.

Removing influencers

It's a good idea to audit and edit your list of influencers every few months. Not only does LinkedIn add influencers, but also some influencers you follow may lose their luster, and it's best to remove them. Remember, nothing on LinkedIn is written in stone. Not only are you developing as a professional within your career, so are your interests and future vision of yourself. Make sure that you are always keeping your profile updated as to who you are right now in time.

Here's how to remove influencers from your profile:

- 1. From any LinkedIn page, enter the person's name in the search bar at the top of the page.**
As you type, LinkedIn presents you with name matches.
- 2. If the person's name appears, click it to open his or her profile.**
- 3. If the person's name doesn't appear, click the search button and review the search results, clicking the person's name to open his or her profile.**
- 4. Hover your mouse pointer over the Following button, and when it changes to Unfollow, click.**

Once you click Unfollow, that influencer is removed from the Following section of your profile.

Publishing on LinkedIn

Publishing on LinkedIn isn't relegated to only influencers. LinkedIn's Publishing Platform gives everyone with a LinkedIn profile the ability to publish long-form posts. When you publish a long-form post, the article is listed on your profile under the Posts section, and a notification is sent to your connections and followers. Posts that you write are searchable on LinkedIn and outside of LinkedIn via any search engine.

Check out Figure 13-11 to see how the articles you write on LinkedIn's Publishing Platform are displayed on your profile. If your article gets enough traction through views and likes, it may even be featured on LinkedIn's Pulse. Pulse is a standalone smartphone app, but it's also integrated into LinkedIn's newsfeed. Pulse collects articles and displays them to you in an easy-to-digest content stream.

Donna Serdula
Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ✎ Aut Evangelist ✓ Brand Strategist
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula
Previous Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc.
Education Rosemont College

[Send a message](#) ▾

https://www.linkedin.com/in/todonna

Posts

Published by Donna See more ▾

Microsoft Deal Mobility Productivity Microsoft to acquire LinkedIn

LinkedIn Groups BIG CHANGES COMING Here's what you need to know! LinkedIninPULSE.com

30,055 followers

LinkedIn + Microsoft Sitting In a Tree June 13, 2016

Changes to LinkedIn Groups: What YOU Need to Know October 12, 2015

New Functionality! LinkedIn Adds Skills Pages October 8, 2015

FIGURE 13-11:
Your three most recent posts are displayed on your profile.

Long-form posts appear here on your profile

The types of information Pulse displays include:

- » Articles from around the web
- » Articles shared by your connections on LinkedIn's newsfeed
- » Popular long-form posts on LinkedIn's Publishing Platform
- » Articles written by LinkedIn influencers

Think of Pulse as a super smart digital newspaper that only displays articles that interest you. How does Pulse know what interests you? You tell it by following news topics, influencers, companies, schools, and people. LinkedIn also utilizes a complex algorithm to determine which articles pertain to your interests.

LinkedIn's goal is to provide tailored and relevant content that interests the reader. When reading articles on Pulse (on your mobile phone app or via LinkedIn's desktop newsfeed) everything you see is customized specifically to you. LinkedIn

wants to make sure what you are reading is meaningful to you. If you were to log in as someone else, the information you see would be completely different.

Although all long-form posts can be viewed on Pulse, only popular posts are featured on Pulse and have the ability to truly be seen by thousands of professionals in and out of your LinkedIn network.

Showcasing yourself as a thought leader

At one time, only academics were held to the paradigm of “publish or perish.” Now, in the world of rampant social media, professionals who wish to be seen as thought leaders must also publish or perish. By blogging on LinkedIn, you establish yourself as an authority in your specialized field by sharing your expertise, insights, opinions, and professional background. With each share, like, comment, and view, your post is seen, shared, and promoted to your network and beyond.

It’s easy to say you are an expert; it’s much harder to prove it. Imagine you are on the shortlist for your dream job. The hiring manager visits your profile and the profiles of the other people being considered. Your profile showcases a number of blogs you’ve written on your specialized field; the other candidates have none. Immediately you have differentiated yourself from the other candidates and have proven your knowledge and authority.

Creating your first blog

The longest journey begins with a single step! Before you create your first long-form post, it’s best to consider the topic channels on Pulse. By knowing the different channels people subscribe to, it’s easier to choose your topic.

SHARING UPDATES VERSUS WRITING POSTS

Updates are short and quick dispatches that go out to your network via your LinkedIn newsfeed. An update could be a link to an article, webpage, or video; an image or infographic; or an interesting quote, advice, thought, or question you want to share with your connections. Posts on the other hand are longer and more thoughtful, and require more time to create.

Here is a list of the Pulse topic channels:

Leadership & Management	Entertainment
Big Ideas & Innovation	Mobile
Technology	Media
Entrepreneurship	Food & Beverages
Social Media	Apparel & Fashion
Economy	Careers: The Next Level
Professional Women	Automotive
Marketing & Advertising	Oil & Energy
Green Business	Construction
Banking & Finance	Public Relations
Best Advice	Travel & Leisure
Your Career	Management Consulting
Healthcare	Real Estate
Customer Experience	Product Management
What Inspires Me	Logistics & Supply Chain
Big Data	Airlines & Aviation
Software Engineering	Company Culture
Social Impact	Information Technology
Recruiting & Hiring	VC & Private Equity
Law & Government	Pulse
Business Travel	Europe
Careers: Getting Started	Asia Pacific
Productivity	Insurance
India	Operations
Editor's Picks	Pharmaceutical
Retail & E-Commerce	LinkedIn Tips
Accounting	Human Resources
Design	Cloud Computing
Sales Strategies	Public Speaking & Presenting

Writing and Editing	Law Practice
Freelance and Self Employment	Manufacturing
Hospitality	Australia & New Zealand
Business Strategies	Top Videos
United Kingdom	Daily Digest
Global Trade	Millennials
Information Privacy & Security	Africa
Space	The Weekend Essay
US Politics	Middle East
Student Voices	Latin America

You want to choose a topic that resonates with your target audience. Concentrate first and foremost on making the content high quality and meaningful to your audience.



Articles on LinkedIn shouldn't be overwhelmingly long. Aim for 800 to 2,000 words. If you have a larger vision, break it into a series of articles. Keep yourself focused on your topic and write using a conversational tone. Rather than write for views, write for engagement. A successful post receives feedback in likes, comments, and shares.

Unlike your profile, LinkedIn supports formatting of long-form posts. Make sure your article is thoughtfully formatted. Use headings to outline your overarching points. Add interesting pictures that illustrate your thoughts. Call attention to your important points by using lists and formatting your text in bold and italics.

You can also include links to other websites, and you can embed videos as well as HTML. Here are some items you can embed into your blog post:

- » Charts
- » Images
- » Podcasts
- » Polls
- » Presentations
- » Tweets
- » Videos

By adding multimedia to your article, you are making it visually appealing and providing concrete examples that support your opinion.



TIP

Publishing on LinkedIn isn't a once and done exercise. Publishing is a long-term commitment with no end date. The idea is to commit to a schedule and keep at it. Determine what works for you, and make it a habit whether it's once a week, once a month, or once every three months.

If you are wondering the best days to publish your post to achieve the most views, research points to Thursdays and Sundays. Some of the most successful posts I've written were posted on Fridays and Mondays, so even though research points to Thursday and Sunday, the real differentiator is simply good content.

Now that you have an idea of topic, tone, length, and frequency, follow these steps to create your very first blog post on LinkedIn:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **At the top of your home page, click Write an Article (see Figure 13-12).**

A page opens where you write your long-form post, as shown in Figure 13-13. At the top of the page is an area to add a hero image. This image also acts as a thumbnail and proceeds your long-form post on your profile and on status updates and on Pulse, if you are featured.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn homepage for a user named Donna Serdula. The top navigation bar includes 'LinkedIn' and 'Sign In'. Below the header, there's a profile picture of Donna Serdula, her name, and her title 'Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles'. It also shows 'Your recent activity'. To the right, there are two statistics: '47 people viewed your profile in the past day' and '22 people viewed your post in the past 7 days: "Should a LinkedIn Profil...". At the bottom of the page, there are three buttons: 'Share an update', 'Upload a photo', and 'Write an article'. A callout box points to the 'Write an article' button with the text 'Click to publish a long-form post'.

FIGURE 13-12:
Click to start a
blog post.

3. **Click anywhere within the image area to add an image.**

An Open dialog box appears.

4. **Select your image on your hard drive and click Open.**

The image opens and you can preview how it looks. Hovering your mouse pointer over the image, click at the top to credit the person who made the image.

5. Click in the area where it says, "Headline," and type in a headline.

The headline is the title of your article. Make sure it is intriguing and compelling. This field may only contain 150 characters or fewer.

6. The next area is the body of the post. Click where it says, "Write here. Add images or a video for visual impact."

This is where you write your article.

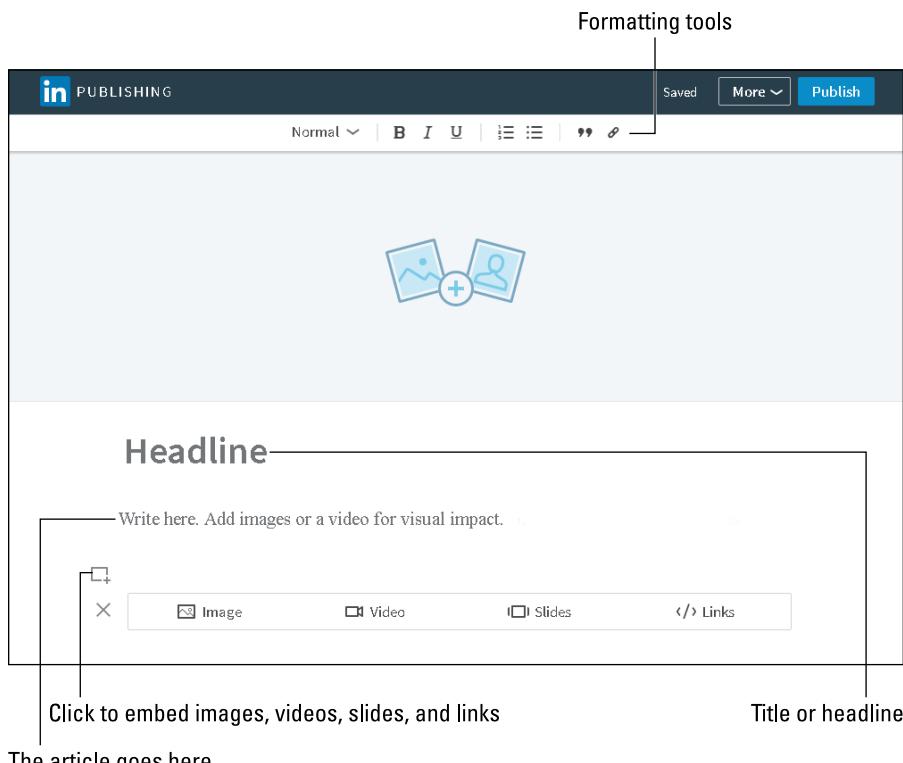


FIGURE 13-13:
Publishing a
long-form post.

7. Highlight the text you want formatted, and then in the format bar at the top of the screen above the image area, click the Normal drop-down list to expand the text formatting options:

- **H1:** This is the main heading and produces the largest font size.
- **H2:** This is a subheading and produces the second largest font size.
- **Normal:** This is unformatted body text.

There are other options as well. Click the matching icon to apply the following formatting:

- **B:** This sets the text in bold.
- **I:** This sets the text in italics.
- **U:** This underlines the text. Use this sparingly as most people associate underlined text with hyperlinks.
- **Numbered list:** This creates a numbered list.
- **Bulleted list:** This creates an unnumbered list.
- **Block quote:** This is for a direct quotation. The text is center justified and the font is italics and slightly larger than the normal body text.
- **Link:** This creates a hyperlink to another page on the web.

8. Once you have finished writing your article, proofread to make sure it's ready to be published.

9. Click the Publish button in the upper-right corner of the page to publish your article.

A pop up window appears.

10. In the open text field, provide context around your article so your network knows what it is about, and then click the Publish button.

Tell your network what your article is about. Use #tags (hashtags) to help others find it.



TIP

To create a hashtag, all you do is take a word or phrase, remove any spaces, special characters, or punctuation and begin it with a hash mark (#). For example, #LinkedIn #B2B #Leadership #ProfessionalDevelopment.

People search by hashtags to find content that corresponds to subjects they are interested in. By searching for hashtags or just clicking on a hashtag (as long as you are accessing LinkedIn on your mobile device), you are presented with a results page of articles written on that subject utilizing those hashtags.

What happens after you publish?

Take a deep breath, whisper a little prayer to your favorite benevolent god, and hit the Publish button. What happens now? Your post is published to your LinkedIn profile under the Posts section in the top part of your profile. Your profile shows the last three posts you've written. Anyone who views your profile sees your posts.

ADDING AN ENGAGING HERO IMAGE

Sitting atop your long-form post is a hero image that brings visual zest to your article. Make sure you add an image that is interesting and compelling. This image becomes the thumbnail image that follows your article on your profile and throughout the web as it is shared. When chosen well, an image can bring more views than even a great headline.

The dimensions for a long-form post hero image is 744 pixels wide by 400 pixels tall. In Chapter 12 I offer a bunch of ideas for choosing background images. Also check out Flickr's Creative Common images (www.flickr.comcreativecommons) where the images are free to use as long as you attribute the work to the image author.

Now that your post is published, a status update appears on the newsfeed of your followers and connections alerting them of your new post. As newer status updates and long-form posts are published by others, this little update of yours gets pushed down lower and lower on the newsfeed. Depending on the size of your network and how active your connections are on LinkedIn, some people will see it and some will not.

LinkedIn runs your post through a spam and low-quality filter. If your post passes as quality content, LinkedIn begins to individually notify your network. Rather than alert every single connection you have, LinkedIn alerts only the strongest connections that you interact with regularly. This notification appears as a flag on the upper-right corner of the LinkedIn desktop and as an alert on the LinkedIn Pulse smartphone app.

Every day LinkedIn sends out an email entitled, "Pulse's Top Stories." As long as your connections and followers are subscribed to this email, they get a link to your post in their inbox.

And if your article is truly compelling and engaging, you may find that it is chosen for a Pulse channel. When this happens, you'll receive an email alerting you, but most likely you will already know because you'll receive more views, likes, and comments than ever before.

Marketing your blog post

Although LinkedIn does a fair amount of marketing for you by notifying your network of a new blog post, you should also market your post yourself. Use social media as well as email to alert your audience.

Once your article is published, share the link on Facebook, Twitter, and/or Pinterest. Don't just send it out once; send it out a bunch of times on each network. Either schedule a reminder in your calendar to resend the link or use a tool like Hootsuite that allows you to create multiple updates that are scheduled out into the future.



TIP

Don't just post a link — provide some context and include hashtags in the status as well.

Bad:

Read my article: www.linkedin.com/today/author/todonna

Good:

Just posted a new article detailing the #Microsoft acquisition of #LinkedIn and what it means to LinkedIn users. Read it here: www.linkedin.com/today/author/todonna

Email is another great way to get views to your long-form post. If you are a marketer with a double opt-in email list numbering in the thousands, you'll have no difficulty getting word out. But even without a marketing email list you can still send an email out to your friends and colleagues, letting them know you posted an article and providing a link so that they can read it.

When sending email to more than a few people, don't use the To or CC address fields of your email header; instead use BCC. BCC stands for *Blind Carbon Copy*. When you add email addresses to the To or CC fields, everyone can see those email addresses and reply to them. When you use the BCC field, those email addresses aren't visible to others. This is helpful because often people reply not just to you, the person writing the email, but to everyone included as recipients. When this happens, the person replying is unknowingly spamming all of the email recipients. By using BCC, you are stopping people from seeing the other email addresses and mistakenly "replying all."

In the next chapter, it's time for you to review your profile and get ready for the final reveal!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Adding the finishing touches to your profile
- » Making sure your profile is optimized and complete
- » Upgrading to a premium LinkedIn account
- » Improving your profile's chances of success

Chapter **14**

The Final Review and Reveal

Your LinkedIn profile is nearly finished! You added a professional headshot and your headline is compelling. The summary is no longer a copy-and-paste of your resume. Instead, it's a digital introduction and an impressive first impression. Your career trajectory is clearly defined in the Experience section of your profile. Your experiences don't dwell on job description, but instead host impactful accomplishments that differentiate you from others in your industry.

You might have thought you were finished, but now it's time to put the final touches on your profile. In this chapter, I show you how to rearrange the different sections of your profile so that the order is clear and aligns your profile with your brand and goals.

I also show you how to market your profile so others see the work you put into it. Lastly, I give you tips and tricks to increase views to your profile so you are more apt to collide with opportunity.

Rearranging Profile Sections

As you build your LinkedIn profile, your summary and experiences are placed at the top, right underneath the section that contains your profile picture and name. After experiences, any new sections are placed in the order in which you added them. This can create a hodgepodge of sections that doesn't make sense to your reader or forward the brand message you are ever so carefully trying to create.



TIP

What most people don't know is that it's easy to rearrange profile sections by simply dragging and dropping them wherever you want the section to appear on your profile.

Follow these steps to rearrange your LinkedIn profile sections:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over the section you'd like to move, then click and hold the Reorder Section icon in the top right (see Figure 14-1).**
- 3. Keeping your finger pressed on your mouse button, drag the section to the new location.**
- 4. Drop the section into place by releasing your finger.**

The section is now arranged where you want it within your profile.

Click and drag to rearrange profile sections

A screenshot of a LinkedIn profile page. At the top, there is a header with the text "Click and drag to rearrange profile sections". Below this, there is a section titled "Honors & Awards" with a "Reorder Section" icon (a blue square with a white double-headed arrow) in the top right corner. The section content includes "Keynote Speaker", "Numerous Organizations across the United States", "I am often asked to speak on the power of LinkedIn, Personal Branding, and Job Search.", "For a listing of prior and upcoming speaking engagements, please check out my Website: <http://www.DonnaSerdula.com>". Below this section, there is another section titled "Check Your LinkedIn Profile for These 7 Mistakes" with "Time Magazine - Money Section", "April 2016", "Written by Alexandra Mondalek", "This is the Day 9 in the #MONEY30, a month-long boot camp for personal finance novices.", "It might seem easy enough to set up a profile (the site walks you through the sections you need to fill out), but there are some all-too-common mistakes that could make or break your job prospects.", and "Donna Serdula, founder of LinkedIn-Makeover.com, says that too many people don't consider how...".

FIGURE 14-1:
Rearranging
profile sections is
a simple drag
and drop.



TIP

Think in terms of your goals and target audience. Sections should be moved higher or lower on your profile depending on how pertinent they are to your goals and target audience. Items that are most important to your audience should be at the top, and items that are of lesser importance should be moved to the bottom.

If you aren't sure what sections should rise to the top and which should sink to the bottom, here's my recommended order of profile sections:

- 1.** Summary
- 2.** Experience
- 3.** Projects
- 4.** Patents
- 5.** Publications
- 6.** Honors & Awards
- 7.** Skills & Endorsements
- 8.** Additional Information
- 9.** Organizations
- 10.** Volunteer
- 11.** Certifications
- 12.** Courses
- 13.** Education
- 14.** Test Scores
- 15.** Languages

Keep in mind, when people view your LinkedIn profile, they spend most of their time looking at the top half of your profile. Suppose you are proud of your extensive education and caliber of the schools you attended. Move your education section up higher on your profile. On the other hand, if you didn't receive a college degree and don't want to spotlight your high school diploma, move the education section to the bottom of your profile.

Perhaps you are an author. Move the Publications section below your summary. If you work with nonprofits and want to showcase your volunteer experiences, move up the Volunteering Experience section.



Do keep your summary at the very top of your profile. By straying too far from the default, you may confuse your reader. I remember a time I logged into a client's LinkedIn profile and I couldn't find his Summary section. I clicked back and forth, hit my browser's refresh button, and rebooted my computer, only to find that the Summary section had been dragged to the very bottom of his profile. If you don't see a profile section, it may just be out of order.

Viewing Your Profile as an Outsider

When you log in to LinkedIn and click to view your profile, you are always in edit mode. The profile you see is not what others see when they view your profile. Therefore, to preview your profile, you must decide who you want to view it as. Logged-in LinkedIn users see your profile one way, non-LinkedIn users who are not logged-in to LinkedIn see it a totally different way (if at all).

To view your LinkedIn profile as an outsider, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Click the View Profile As button that appears next to your profile picture, as shown in Figure 14-2.

You see a preview of your profile as a person logged-in to LinkedIn would see it.

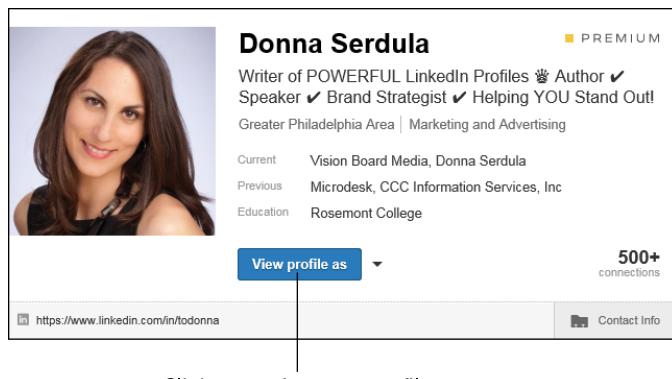


FIGURE 14-2:
The View Profile
As button.

At the top of the page is a bar that reads, "This is what your profile looks like to Connections."

3. Select Public from the drop-down list, as shown in Figure 14-3.

You see a preview of your profile as a person not logged-in to LinkedIn would see it.

Toggle between Public and Connections view

This is what your profile looks like to

Donna Serdula
Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles
Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓
Helping YOU Stand Out!
Greater Philadelphia Area | Marketing and Advertising

Current: Vision Board Media, Donna Serdula, LinkedIn Makeover, Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile
Previous: Microdesk, CCC Information Services, Inc.
Education: Rosemont College
Recommendations: 121 people have recommended Donna
Websites: Visit My Website, click here! SERVICES & PRICING Keynote Speaker

500+ connections

View this profile in another language

Search by name

Over 400 million professionals are already on LinkedIn. Find who you know.

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Example: Jeff Weiner

Public profile badge

Include this LinkedIn profile on other websites

View profile badges

View Donna's full profile

FIGURE 14-3:
Toggling between
Public and
Connections
profile view.

4. Click the Return to Your Profile button that appears in the top-right corner of your screen to return to edit mode.

Your LinkedIn Profile Checklist

Now that you can view your profile as your target audience, let's make sure you didn't miss any sections or make any mistakes. Your public profile is your online reputation and digital face to the world. Your profile must be perfect, as this is how people see and judge you. Make sure all the sections are customized completely. As you go through, check off each completed section.

Profile picture

Does your profile picture cast you as a professional? Do you look warm, friendly, and well-adjusted? Is the background neutral and not distracting?

Name

Is your name spelled correctly? Is it consistent with your business card, resume, other social media channels, and letterhead?

Headline

Is your headline interesting? Does it contain your top keywords? Does it compel a person to open your profile to learn more about you?

Location and industry

Is your location correct? Is your industry accurate?

Customized public profile URL

Did you customize the link to your public URL? Does the customized URL contain your name?

Contact information

Did you include your phone number, email, and IM? Did you add links to your websites and Twitter?

Summary

Is your summary engaging and easy to read? Does it introduce you to your reader? Does it provide a clear call to action?

One current and two past experiences

Are your experience titles packed with keywords? Do the descriptions contain a boilerplate on the company along with your performance highlights?

Skills and endorsements

Did you add your core competencies, strengths, skill sets, and abilities?

Education

Did you list at least one education, even if you did not graduate?

Additional profile sections

Did you add honors and awards, organizations, volunteer experience and causes, certifications, languages, projects, publications, patents, test scores, and/or courses? Are you showcasing yourself as a well-rounded professional? Did you reorder these sections so the more important ones are listed higher?

Additional information

Did you add your interests and advice for contacting you?

Recommendations

Do you have glowing recommendations on your profile from people in high places? Have you given recommendations to other professionals?

Connections

Do you have at least 50 first-degree connections?

Groups

Did you join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups that contain not only your target audience but also large amounts of members?

Following influencers, news, and companies

Are you following at least five influencers and companies that interest you?

Are you following news items that provide you with information on your industry and interests?

To Pay or Not Pay for LinkedIn

Whenever I speak to groups about the importance of LinkedIn and having a LinkedIn profile, the number one question I get is, “Should I pay for LinkedIn, or is the free version good enough?”



TIP

LinkedIn’s free version works well for most people; however, if you plan to use LinkedIn for more than just casual networking, upgrading makes sense.

LinkedIn has restrictions in place on the free account to limit heavy recruiting and prospecting. The commercial use limit is based upon the number of searches you do during a month’s time. When you exceed what LinkedIn considers typical usage, you are no longer able to search nor will LinkedIn suggest profiles for you to view until the counter resets the next month.

Unfortunately, LinkedIn hasn’t publicly stated the number of searches they consider commercial use versus typical. The number 100 has been bandied around by super users as the maximum search limit for typical use. Here’s the thing, if you are a heavy LinkedIn user, you very well may hit the maximum search limit. When this happens, decide if it makes sense to wait for the month to roll over and the search counter resets, or upgrade.

I remember when I hit the commercial use limit — it was only one week into the month. I realized it would be impossible for me to wait three weeks to search again and so that afternoon, I upgraded to Sales Navigator. Ultimately, if you are using LinkedIn to make money, LinkedIn would like you to pay to use its service; it’s only fair.

Features of paid accounts

LinkedIn has four types of premium accounts:

- » Job Seeker
- » Business Plus
- » Sales Navigator
- » Recruiter

All four types of premium accounts have features in common. In the following sections I outline the features that exist within all premium accounts.

Open Profile and Open Profile messages



Free members can view the full names and profiles of anyone in their LinkedIn networks (first-, second-, and third-degree connections). All LinkedIn members can see a user's full profile as long as they searched by that person's first or last name. However, if a person is doing a broad-based keyword search and that person is outside of your network, he or she sees a limited version of your profile.

Premium account holders can turn on Open Profile so that anyone on LinkedIn can see their full profile regardless of how that person searched to find them.

Additionally, anyone with Open Profile turned on can send messages to other members with Open Profile turned on for free, even if they are second- or third-degree connections or outside of your LinkedIn network.

Premium badge

Premium account holders can add a premium badge to their profiles and search result listings so people can see that they are paying members and take LinkedIn and networking seriously. The premium badge appears in the upper-right corner of the person's profile, to the right of his or her name. The badge looks like a yellow square followed by the word: PREMIUM. The premium badge is shown in Figure 14-4.

Premium profile

Free members have a narrower profile picture than premium members. The free member profile picture is sized 200 x 200 pixels, while premium members have a wide screen profile picture sized 240 x 240 pixels. That's 30 percent bigger than a free account's profile picture. Figure 14-4 shows the appearance differences between a premium and a free profile picture.

The image shows two LinkedIn profile pages for the same user, Donna Serdula. The top section, labeled 'Free account', displays a standard profile view with a smaller thumbnail photo, basic contact info, and a 'Send a message' button. The bottom section, labeled 'Premium account', shows an enhanced view with a larger, higher-resolution background image, detailed work history, and a 'Message' button with a dropdown.

FIGURE 14-4:
Differences between a premium profile picture and free profile view.

When you pay for LinkedIn, you also get access to the Premium Background Image Gallery that provides high-resolution images to use as your background image.

Larger search result listing

Free members have a standard search results listing. Paying members have an enhanced search results listing that shows greater work history detail. Figure 14-5 illustrates the differences between a premium and a standard search listing.

The image shows a search results page for 'Donna Serdula'. The top section, labeled 'Premium account', displays a detailed search result with a large thumbnail, extensive work history, and a 'Message' button. The bottom section, labeled 'Free account', shows a simplified search result with a smaller thumbnail and less detailed work history, also featuring a 'Message' button.

FIGURE 14-5:
Differences between premium and standard search listings.



REMEMBER

Who's viewed your profile

LinkedIn is one of the few social media sites that enables you to see who has viewed your profile. Free members only see the last five profile visitors, whereas premium members get to see everyone who's viewed their profiles within the last 90 days along with additional insights such as the keywords searched that brought them to their profiles and any patterns that may be evident.

If your profile is set to *Anonymous*, you are unable to see who viewed your profile. Basically, LinkedIn goes by the, “If you show me yours, I’ll show you mine” rule.

How you rank

Free accounts see the top 10 most viewed connections and the 10 people closest to your ranking. Premium accounts see the full list of top 100 most viewed connections within your network and top 100 “Professionals like you.”

InMail

Free members can only communicate directly with first-degree connections. As a paying member, you can use InMail to send a message to LinkedIn users you are not directly connected to. The number of InMails per month differs based on the premium account you have.

Search alerts

Free members have the opportunity to save three searches. Paying members get more saved searches, each plan providing its own number. Great for prospecting, recruiting, or even job search, LinkedIn automatically performs your saved search weekly or monthly and sends you all new search results.

Unique features of premium accounts

In addition to the features all premium accounts offer, LinkedIn provides even more features unique to each type of premium account. In the following sections I provide a rundown of the added features per subscription type.

Job Seeker

A great selling point for subscribing to the Job Seeker premium account is the Featured Applicant and Applicant Insights functionality. As a Featured Applicant, your search results listing puts you at the top of recruiters’ applicant lists. Applicant Insights shows you how well you measure up to other current applicants on job postings. You get to see how many other people have applied to the job

posting; the other applicants' experience, education levels, and top skills; and how well your profile ranks with other applicants.

Business Plus

The Business Plus premium account provides unlimited profile search so you never hit the commercial use search limit. You also get company page insights that point to the overall health of the organization you are interested in by showing you employee count, employee distribution by function, new hires, notable alumni, and total job openings.

On the advanced search page, Business Plus account owners see additional filters marked with the gold LinkedIn premium badge that are only available to paying members. These filters enable you to further drill down to your perfect target by searching within group members, years of experience, job functions, seniority levels, company size, and more.

Sales Navigator

When you subscribe to the Sales Navigator premium account you get a totally different LinkedIn interface that is focused entirely on sales, lead generation, prospecting, and account management. You can see how this different interface looks in Figure 14–6.

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Sales Navigator dashboard. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'SALES NAVIGATOR' and links for 'HOME', 'ACCOUNTS (12)', 'LEADS (24)', 'SEAT MANAGEMENT', 'INBOX (5)', 'Support', and 'Go to LinkedIn.com'. A search bar at the top center says 'Search for people and companies...'. On the left, a sidebar titled 'FILTER YOUR UPDATES' includes sections for 'Most important' (selected), 'Most recent', 'BY TYPE' (Suggested leads, Lead news, Lead shares, Account news, Account shares), and 'BY TOP ACCOUNTS' (AEI Advertising, LinkedIn, FranNet, Total Transit E..., Ericsson, Cadence Design..., Unicrat Energy...). The main content area is titled 'TOP UPDATES FROM YOUR LEADS & ACCOUNTS'. It lists two updates from 'Franchise Consultant - FranNet': one from Charles Mizejewski sharing an article about unleashing passion, and another from Christine Nocciolo sharing an article about food for thought. To the right, there's a 'YOUR SOCIAL SELLING INDEX' section with a score of 84, a 'WHO'S VIEWED YOUR PROFILE' section showing 30 views in the past day, and a 'RECENTLY VIEWED' section listing profiles like Angeles Carsi Liuch, Alison L., Jeff mcShea, Ken Summerfield, and Jeana Simonen. At the bottom, there's a 'RECENTLY SEARCHED' section with keywords like 'Donna Serdula' and 'Social Media Today'.

FIGURE 14-6:
Sales Navigator
has a different
look than
LinkedIn.com.

Sales Navigator allows you to save your leads' profiles, which LinkedIn uses to extrapolate and recommend other potential leads for you. You can also build lead lists using premium search filters. Sales Navigator also allows you to drill deep into your target accounts via Account Details Pages that keep you updated on the latest news and information LinkedIn has on those accounts. In addition, Sales Navigator enables you to filter through the noise of your network to see just what's going on with your leads, prospects, and customers via their status updates and news.

This premium account also provides unlimited profile search so you don't hit the commercial use search limit.

Recruiter Lite

LinkedIn has a number of recruiter packages available, but the most popular is Recruiter Lite. Just like Sales Navigator, the Recruiter Lite premium account has a different LinkedIn interface. Recruiter Lite offers unique functionality such as the ability to organize candidates in folders with an area on each profile to take notes and set follow-up reminders.

The Recruiter Lite premium account also allows for unlimited profile searches of your extended network. Recruiter Lite also provides smart search capability that provided additional premium filters and search suggestions to help you find the perfect candidates.

Choosing the best plan for you

By segmenting its plans based upon goal, LinkedIn makes it easy to identify the premium account that works best for you. My recommendation is to use the free version of LinkedIn until you begin to feel constrained. You will know that it's time to upgrade when you start hitting the commercial search limit, or you long to view more than just five of your last profile visitors. Once you realize it's time to pay for LinkedIn, all you need to do is click the upgrade button in the upper-right corner of any LinkedIn page. I often hear from client's who tell me that once they started paying for LinkedIn, they began to take it more seriously. Sometimes you need to get some skin in the game to truly commit.

Ultimately, you may find that it feels good to support a company that lets you network in your pajamas!

Benchmarking Your Profile's Success

You've put a lot of time into improving your profile. Now you want to see if the effort was worthwhile and is bringing enhanced results. The thing is, to determine success, you need to know where you started. Fortunately, LinkedIn provides statistics that show you how well your profile is performing.

You get to see enhanced stats that log the past 90 days of total views. If you are a premium user, you also get to see the individual viewers of your profile over the past 90 days.



TIP

Although LinkedIn tracks your progress for you, the graph only goes back 90 days. Also, the graph does not track the most important information statistic, network total. To truly benchmark your success, you must look past 90 days. For that reason, I suggest going old school — yes, track your progress with a good ol' pen and paper.

Here's how to track your progress with a benchmarking worksheet:

1. **Create a benchmarking worksheet on a blank sheet of paper or download a printable PDF version from my website at www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/tools/benchmark_workbook.**

If you are creating your own, divide your paper into a grid that has four columns and several rows.

2. **Label each column with the following:**

Date
Profile Views
Days
Network Total

Your homemade benchmarking worksheet should look similar to the worksheet shown in Figure 14-7.

3. **Hover your mouse cursor over Profile, and in the drop-down list that appears, click Who's Viewed My profile.**

This page displays your profile stats. The graph shows how many people have viewed your profile in the past 90 days and the actions you did per week (such as added connections, shared updates, commented on updates, liked updates, posted, or commented on group discussions).

4. **Write down the number of people who have viewed your profile and now many actions you took per week into your benchmarking worksheet.**

FIGURE 14-7:
Benchmarking
worksheet.

- 5.** Hover over My Network on LinkedIn's main navigation bar and click Connections.

At the top of this page is the total number of first-degree connections.

- 6.** Write the number of first-degree connections in the Network Total column of your worksheet.

The Connections page shows the number of first-degree connections within your LinkedIn network.

- 7.** Record these stats weekly or with as much regularity as you can into your benchmarking worksheet for the next 180 days.

The more you use LinkedIn, the better your profile performs. You should see the number of views grow as your network and activity level grow.

Marketing Your Profile

Your profile is a gleaming example of your brand and professionalism. You want your entire network and the whole wide world to look at this amazing profile of you. Now it's time to start marketing it!

I am often reminded of that iconic line from the movie, *Field of Dreams*: “If you build it, they will come!” Unfortunately, that’s not always true in the world of social media. Yes, you optimized your profile with keywords so your profile will be easier to find, but there is no promise that people are searching for a person like you every day of the week. To consistently get views to your profile, you need to consistently market your profile.

Alerting your connections of your updated profile

“The squeaky wheel gets the oil.” That’s an old saying I heard often growing up. This adage holds true in the social media realm as well. If you want people to check out your new and improved profile, you need to speak up and direct them to it. In the following sections I outline how to alert your network and drive traffic to your profile.

Issue a broadcast update

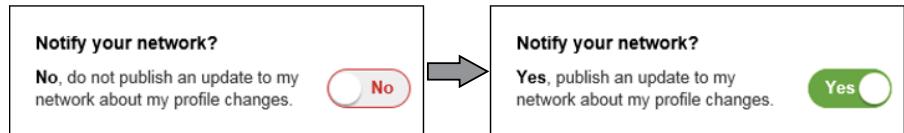
Remember when you toggled off the Notify Your Network button so that LinkedIn would not publish profile change updates to your network? It’s time to turn on the notification. Once it’s back on, when you make one small change to your profile, LinkedIn notifies people to check out your profile.

Follow these steps to issue a broadcast update:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll to the Notify Your Network module that appears on the right side of your profile and click the button to change No to Yes.

Figure 14-8 shows how the Notify Your Network module changes between on and off mode.

FIGURE 14-8:
Yes, notify my network of profile changes.



3. Scroll to your current position in the Experience section, click in the title field, and make a minor edit to the position title.

With Notify Your Network turned on, LinkedIn generates an update to your connections stating that you’ve updated your Experience section.

If you prefer, tweak your profile picture to generate a broadcast update. Simply recropping the image already uploaded generates an update that states you changed your profile picture.

Adding additional skills to your profile also triggers an automatic update to your connections.

By adding a new current job position, an update goes out to your connections announcing the new position and providing a way to "Say Congrats" to you in a LinkedIn message.

Send out a status update

Rather than just letting LinkedIn send out a notification, send out a status update on your own. The real secret in getting people to read and click your update is to send it out multiple times. This ensures that people throughout your network get the chance to see it and act! Here's how to send out a status update. Lather, rinse, and repeat as often as you like!

Follow these steps to send out a status update:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Highlight your LinkedIn profile URL that appears at the bottom of your summary and copy it by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).
3. Click Home on LinkedIn's navigation menu to go to the LinkedIn home page.
4. At the top of LinkedIn's home page, click the Share an Update button to unveil the text box.

Look at Figure 14-9 to see the status update field on your LinkedIn home page.

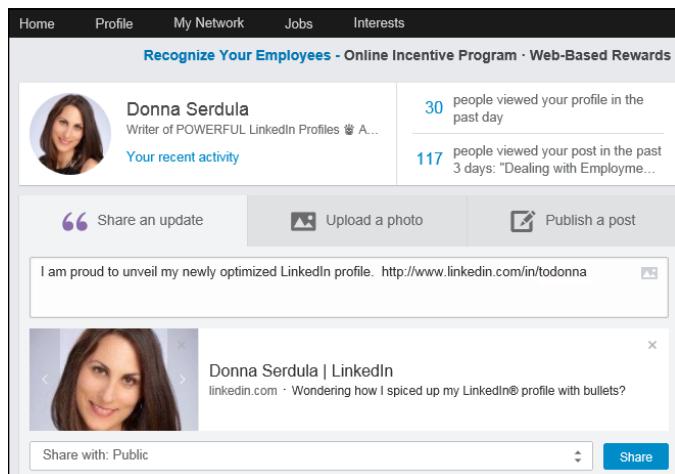


FIGURE 14-9:
Creating a status update.

- Type your status update in the Share an Update text field and then paste your LinkedIn profile URL by clicking Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac).

You may want to use something like this:

I just updated my LinkedIn profile, check it out: http://www.LinkedIn.com/in/todonna

Or:

I am proud to unveil my newly optimized LinkedIn profile, view it here: http://www.LinkedIn.com/in/todonna

- Click the drop-down list underneath the text box to choose your audience: Public, Just Your Connections, or Public + Twitter.
- Click the Share button.

Message people individually

Are there people within your network that would love to see your updated profile? Why not reach out to them directly? Messaging people individually takes time, but it's a great way to reconnect and get a real response.



REMEMBER

Free LinkedIn members can only message people who are direct connections.

Here's how to message people individually on LinkedIn:

- Go to LinkedIn.com.
- In the search bar at the top of the page, type the name of the first-degree connection you want to message.
LinkedIn suggests people.
- Click the person's name to open his or her profile.
- Click the Send a Message button at the top of that person's profile.

LinkedIn's messaging pane opens, as shown in Figure 14-10. You can add additional recipients by typing their names in the top field.

- Type your message in the text field.

Some message examples:

Hey Howard! It's been months since we last chatted, but I wanted to let you know I took your advice and optimized my profile. Check it out when you have a minute.

Or:

Hi Deborah! I've always loved your LinkedIn profile. I finally got off my duff and optimized my own. Take a look at it and let me know what you think!

- 6. Depending on your messaging settings, you either press Enter/Return on your keyboard, or press the Send button to dispatch your message.**

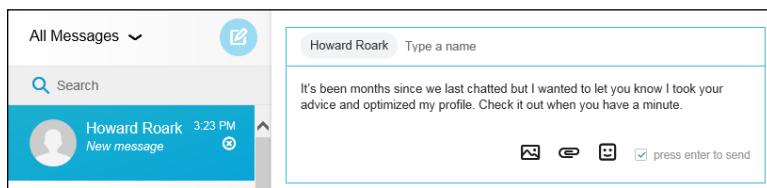


FIGURE 14-10:
Messaging connections.

Adding your profile to other social media sites

Most people don't have a personal website, and so LinkedIn becomes their online outpost. If this is true for you, use the other social media websites you frequent as a way to get the word out on your LinkedIn profile.

Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, and other sites all have a website field within the bio section where you can add your LinkedIn profile URL. Check out Figure 14-11 to see how I have my LinkedIn profile URL listed on my Twitter bio.

You can also send out a Facebook status update or tweet the link to your LinkedIn profile so followers on other channels are alerted and can check it out.



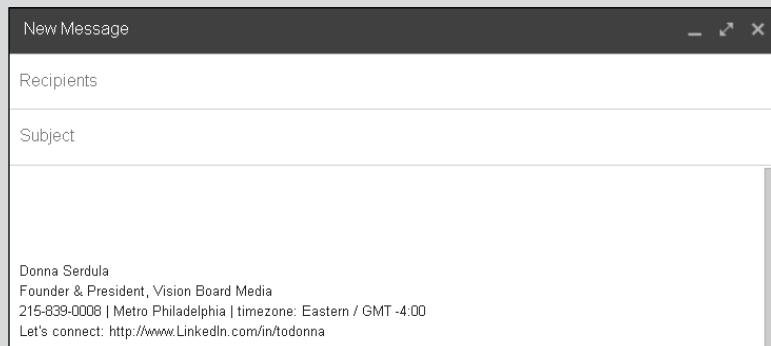
FIGURE 14-11:
Add your LinkedIn profile URL to other social media channels.

MAKING IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO CONNECT TO YOU

You interact with people every day. Each interaction is a chance to further your brand and direct traffic to your LinkedIn profile. Make sure your LinkedIn profile URL is added to your resume. If you often send out mailed correspondence, place your LinkedIn profile URL on your letterhead.

Do you have a personal website? If so, add a link to your LinkedIn profile. If you have a bio listed on your company's website, check with the webmaster to see if he or she can add a link to your LinkedIn profile.

Emails are such a normal part of business life. It's been stated that the average number of sent and received emails is 121 per day. Make sure that these interactions help further your brand and engage your network by using an email signature. An *email signature* is an automatic line added to the very bottom of the email messages you send that provides your name, contact information, and any other information you wish to include (see the following figure). I highly suggest including your LinkedIn URL at the bottom of your email signature. This way, after reading your emails, people can easily connect with you and stay in touch.



Business cards are another way people trade contact information and stay in touch. If your LinkedIn profile URL isn't on your business card, add it! Some companies simply provide canned cards to employees, and it's not possible to customize the information on the card. If your company won't allow you to add your LinkedIn profile URL to your business card, consider having a thin sticker printed that contains your LinkedIn profile URL and stick it to the bottom or back of your pre-printed business card.

Remember, there is power to your network. You must make a concerted effort to build and nurture your network. By making it easy to connect with you, you are helping to grow your network in a very passive manner.

Getting views to your LinkedIn profile

LinkedIn is one of the few social networking sites where you can remain quite passive and still experience amazing success. Imagine getting on Facebook or Twitter and doing absolutely nothing — nothing would happen. But on LinkedIn, simply by having an optimized profile infused with your keywords, people find you. Your profile's content shapes how people perceive you and compels them to reach out. This is one of the great benefits to LinkedIn, but for some people, it's not enough.



REMEMBER

There are over 400 million users on LinkedIn. It's a veritable ocean of people. In order to drive traffic to your profile, get noticed, and find opportunity, you have to splash around. Your LinkedIn activity is a direct contributor to profile traffic and LinkedIn success. In the following sections I outline a bunch of LinkedIn activities to perform that will increase traffic to your LinkedIn profile page.

View other profiles

LinkedIn is one of the few networks that enables you to see who has checked out your profile. Most people on LinkedIn love looking at the Who's Viewed Your Profile page. Not only do they love looking at who checked out their profile, they also want to learn more about the people with such awesome taste who checked them out! And so, in turn, they click to read their visitor's profile. If you want to drive traffic to your page, view other people's profiles! After you visit a person's profile, more often than not, that person will visit your profile to check you out, too.

However, in order for this to work, you must have your profile set to Visible and not to Anonymous.

Here's how to make sure your profile is visible:

- 1. Go to LinkedIn.com.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over your profile picture in the upper-right corner of your screen and click Manage next to Privacy & Settings.**
- 3. Click Privacy from the top portion of the screen that appears.**
- 4. Click Profile viewing options.**

This is where you choose whether you're visible to other LinkedIn users or viewing in private mode.

- 5. Click the top option that shows your name and headline (see Figure 14-12).**
- 6. Click the Close link in the upper-right corner of the option to save your setting.**

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn Premium account settings page. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for Home, Profile, My Network, Jobs, Interests, Business Services, and Go to Sales Navigator. Below the navigation is a search bar and a 'Privacy' section. The main content area is titled 'Profile privacy' and includes sections for 'Blocking and hiding', 'Data privacy and advertising', and 'Security'. Under 'Profile viewing options', there are two tabs: 'Viewers of this profile also viewed' (set to 'No') and 'Sharing profile edits' (set to 'Yes'). A note says 'Choose whether or not this feature appears when people view your profile'. Another section, 'Profile stats', has a note 'Note: Selecting this option will disable Profile Stats. Whenever you switch to anonymous, your viewer history gets erased.' At the bottom, there's a 'Private mode' section with two options: 'Life / Professional Coach in the Marketing and Advertising industry from Greater Philadelphia Area' (selected) and 'Anonymous LinkedIn Member'.

FIGURE 14-12:
Choose to be
visible on
LinkedIn!



WARNING

By choosing Private mode, not only are you choosing to remain anonymous, but also you are disabling your profile stats so you can't see who has viewed your profile. And when you switch to Private mode, your viewer history is deleted. Premium members can choose Private mode and still see the list of people who viewed their profiles (with the exception of viewers in Private mode). LinkedIn's good when you pay!

It feels weird to let people see that you browsed their profile. Believe me, I know! When I first joined LinkedIn, I kept my profile in Private mode. Eventually, the desire to see who was checking out my profile became so great that I begrudgingly turned my profile from anonymous to full visibility. As I watched my visitor list grow and views to my profile increase, I realized there was nothing to feel weird about. Viewing a profile shows that you are interested in the other person; it doesn't mean you are a stalker. People appreciate that you are doing your due diligence and research to learn more about them. It also provides the person with a link to learn more about you. Try it out after the initial feeling of discomfort passes; you'll be glad you did it.

Post status updates

Keep in touch with your network by posting status updates. As these status updates go out, people will click on your profile to check up and see what you are doing.

Here are some ideas of items to share as a status update:

- » Did you read an interesting article?
- » Did you finish an amazing project?
- » Are you attending a unique event?
- » Did you hear a great piece of advice?
- » Are you reading a life changing book?

These are all things to share on LinkedIn!

One of my favorite tools is the LinkedIn Bookmarklet icon. The Bookmarklet is a little button you drag onto your browser's bookmark tool bar. As you surf the web and find an interesting website or article, simply click the Bookmarklet icon to easily share the information on LinkedIn.

Follow these steps to install LinkedIn's Bookmarklet icon:

1. Go to www.linkedin.com/bookmarklet.
2. Drag the Share on LinkedIn button to your browser's bookmark bar, as shown in Figure 14-13.

If your browser doesn't have a bookmark bar, go to your browser's settings and turn it on.

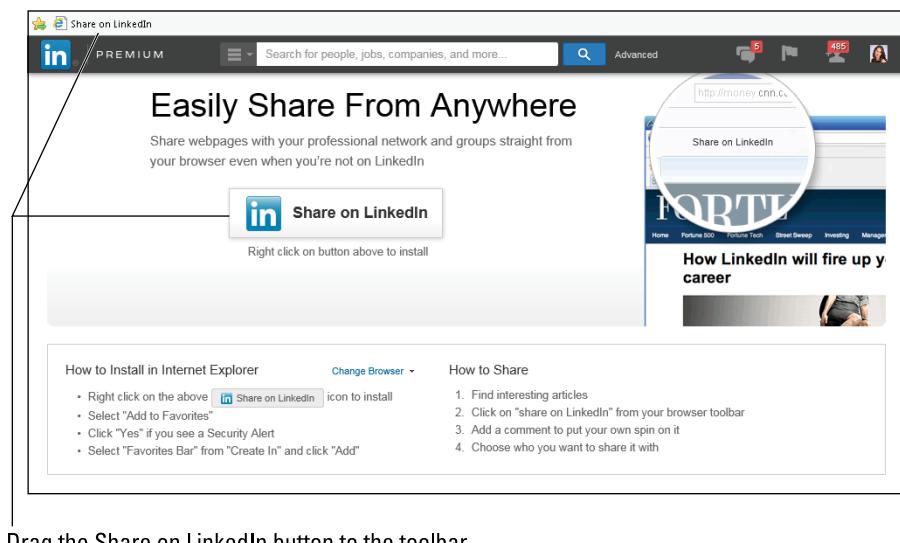


FIGURE 14-13:
Adding LinkedIn's
Bookmarklet
to your web
browser.

3. While on an interesting website or reading an article that you would like to share on LinkedIn, click the Bookmarklet button on your browser's bookmark bar.

A LinkedIn window pops up. This window contains the link to the item you want to share along with a brief description and thumbnail image.

Choose to share this as a status update on your LinkedIn newsfeed, post it to specific LinkedIn Groups, or send it via LinkedIn InMail to specific first-degree connections.

4. To post the link as an update, click to place a check mark next to Share an Update, as shown in Figure 14-14.

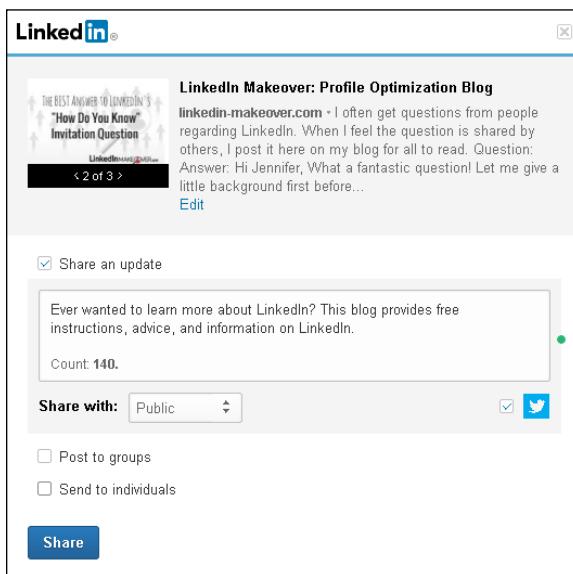


FIGURE 14-14:
Posting an update.

5. In the text field, type your opinion, input, or reason for sharing.

Although it's easy not to add your own spin, I highly recommend taking a few moments to share your thoughts.

6. Click the Share With drop-down menu and select whether you want to share this update with the public or with just your connections.

If you have a Twitter account connected to your LinkedIn profile, click the Twitter icon to also share this update on your Twitter feed.

7. Click the Share button.

In addition to using the Bookmarklet icon to share web pages and online articles as status updates, you can also share as group discussions or direct messages with connections. Placing the check mark by clicking in the Post to Groups box enables you to then choose which group or groups you want to post to. Conversely, click in the Send to Individuals box to send the link via LinkedIn's messaging. It's important when posting to a group or to an individual connection to provide context. If you were posting to a group, you might state, "Do you agree?" "What do you think?" or something that helps the reader respond and create conversation. When sending the link as a message, let the person know why you are sending the link and what result he or she can expect.

Posting status updates is a great way to stay in front of your connections. Make it a part of your professional life. Rather than decide to post an update once a month, once a week, or once a day, resolve to stay connected by sharing the items, events, and happenings that move you. When you read a great article, share it. When you sign up for an event, share it. When you have that Aha! moment, share it. Once you decide that you are on LinkedIn to educate, add value, and inspire people, that's when you start having fun and when opportunities start hurtling toward you.

Blog with the LinkedIn Publishing Platform

Publishing long-form posts gets you in front of large numbers of people quickly as LinkedIn notifies your network of your blog. When you create noteworthy content, it is shared way beyond just your network of connections. As the post catches on, people read it and want to learn more about you, the author. Profile views go up and opportunities appear. Get step-by-step directions on creating a long-form post in Chapter 13 of this book.

Participate in LinkedIn Groups

Believe me, I know it's not easy to find the time to participate in LinkedIn Groups, but when you consider the results of group participation, you may decide it's worth the time investment. Not only do you expand your network by joining groups, but also you meet people, engage in healthy discourse, develop professionally, and drive views to your LinkedIn profile.

By commenting on discussions and creating engaging discussions that compel people to comment, you are showcasing yourself as an interesting individual and expert. I am not suggesting that you market yourself low and wide in a slimy manner. Instead, use the discussions to help and inspire people. When you give your time, advice, and expertise, people take notice of you, which then makes them open your profile to learn more about you.

Recommend people

When you recommend people on LinkedIn, those recommendations display on their profiles as a link back to your profile, right next to your profile picture. The more recommendations you give, the more links you have on LinkedIn pointing back to your profile.

Those profiles attract readers, and many times those readers look at the recommendations received. It's not unusual for people to click the profile link to learn more about the recommender.



REMEMBER

Always recommend people out of the goodness of your heart. Recommend people you know and who have impressed you. It's important to use recommendations and endorsements genuinely and authentically.

Endorse people

Endorsements also provide links back to your profile from other profiles. Go out and endorse people for their real skill sets. Not only will they be touched by your generosity, but also your name is now listed next to their Skills & Endorsements section on their profiles. With each link, there's a better than good chance other people will see the endorsement and click to read more about you.

And that concludes this guide for LinkedIn profile optimization. It's been a fun ride, and although it's the end of the guide, you still have the Part of Tens where I give you even more tips and tricks for better leveraging LinkedIn.

The Part of Tens

IN THIS PART . . .

Learn the do's and don'ts to create a professionally impressive profile and create a relatable and likable digital identity.

See what you need to do to take a professional profile picture that portrays you in the best light, including how to photograph your good side, use Photoshop to improve — but not distort — your image, and what you should wear.

Learn the best tips for expanding your network, including improving your contact information, creating an attractive headline, joining groups, and creating great multimedia content.

Discover how you can get the most out of LinkedIn by connecting with as many people as possible.

Get the scoop on some powerful online tools to help you create an impressive profile.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Making your profile eye-catching
- » Creating social proof of your accomplishments
- » Making changes to your profile quietly
- » Creating a brand that is relatable and likeable

Chapter **15**

Ten Profile Do's and Don'ts

Your LinkedIn profile is your digital identity. Of all the social media profiles out there, LinkedIn's profile is the most in-depth and provides a comprehensive overview of you as a professional person. When people search your name in a search engine, your LinkedIn profile is often returned high in the search results. When it comes to creating a professionally impressive profile that helps you collide with opportunity, here are ten Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind.

Do Use a Professional Profile Picture

The picture on your LinkedIn profile is your public face to your network and the world. It's imperative that it presents you in the absolutely best light. If your budget allows, get a professional photo taken in a photographer's studio. If your budget doesn't allow for it, enlist a friend to take a photo. Make sure you are dressed professionally and the background isn't messy, busy, or distinct. Position yourself near a window to ensure a well-lit image. The camera should be at eye level — not at too high of an angle nor too low of an angle. Look directly into the camera lens and smile. Have the photographer take numerous shots. Usually the winning image is snapped toward the end of the photo session, right when you start to feel comfortable in front of the camera.

Don't Use LinkedIn's Default Headline

LinkedIn automatically populates your headline with your current job title and company name. You couldn't pick a worse headline if you tried! Ditch LinkedIn's default and create a compelling headline — infused with your keywords — that gets your target audience to open your profile and read more.

Do Turn Off Your Update Notifications

Before performing any major updates to your profile, make sure your activity update notifications are turned off. You don't want to inundate your network with change notifications! To turn off update notifications, toggle the Notify Your Network switch that appears on the right sidebar within your LinkedIn profile from On to Off. Once off, you can make changes quietly — LinkedIn will not send updates to your network via email, nor will your changes show up as status updates on your connections' LinkedIn newsfeed.

Do Use Eye-Catching Symbols Sparingly

LinkedIn doesn't allow any formatting within your profile. This means you can't bold or italicize text, create links, or even have a bulleted list. However, you can copy and paste ASCII symbols into your profile to create visual flair. Choose one or two symbols and use them where you want to attract attention to your profile. This might be around your call to action and contact information, or before an accomplishment.



TIP

Less is more when it comes to symbols. Whatever you do, don't go overboard, splashing tons of different symbols throughout your profile. Regardless of how great the content might be, too many symbols may cheapen your profile and may make people not take you seriously.

Do Include Your Contact Information

The Contact Information section of your LinkedIn profile is only visible to your first-degree network of connections. If a second-degree connection, third-degree connection, group connection, someone outside of your network, or someone not on LinkedIn views your profile, they will *not* see your contact information.



LinkedIn is all about business networking and opportunity development. In order for people to reach out to you, they need to have your contact information. Make sure it's easy for people to reach out by including your contact information not just within the Contact Information section, but throughout your profile.

At the end of your LinkedIn summary, at the end of your current experience, and within the Advice for Contacting section, add your phone number and/or email address. Let people know you are serious by allowing them to contact you off LinkedIn.

Do Add Multimedia Files

Add work examples to your profile to further showcase who you are and what you do. Upload presentations, images, documents, videos, and more to your LinkedIn profile so readers of your profile can get a more robust view of you as a professional. Decide what your target audience would like to see from you and add it. Rich media can be linked to or uploaded to the Summary, Experience, and Education sections.

Don't Stuff Keywords

Strategically placing keywords into your LinkedIn profile is a great way to increase the likelihood of your profile turning up in searches. Although you might be tempted, don't stuff your profile with keywords. Instead, work the keywords into your profile naturally and organically. Profiles that are stuffed with keywords might rank well initially, but they quickly get deleted by LinkedIn. Keyword-stuffed profiles impress no one, and when it's clear you are gaming the system, people click away.

Don't Go Back 30 Years

You don't need to detail your complete work trajectory. Business has changed drastically over the last 30 years. Highlighting your IT accomplishments from 1985 doesn't prepare you for anything today. Your LinkedIn profile should align you with your career future. If you want to showcase your deep history, consolidate all past positions prior to 1985 into one experience. Your history is important, but what really moves mountains is what you did lately.

Do Get Recommendations

Recommendations listed on your LinkedIn profile provide social proof around your accomplishments and background. To get recommendations, you need to ask people to give you recommendations. In fact, if you want to truly make sure that those recommendations are posted to your profile, write the recommendation for the person.



There is no such thing as too many LinkedIn recommendations; although, you should make sure that the recommendations posted to your profile are current, align with your objectives, and are authentically given.

Do Add Interests

Within the Additional Information section of your profile is where you can list your interests. Don't skip this area of your profile. People do business with people. By adding interests, you show you are human and allow your reader to see what you have in common together. Shared interests allow you to forge a quicker, deeper rapport with your reader.

Yes, LinkedIn is a professional network, but don't skip the Interests section. By providing some insight as to who you are as a person, your business connections may feel a stronger connection to you, which may spur more business and career opportunities.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Taking a good professional picture
- » Modeling to catch your good side
- » Using Photoshop to improve the image

Chapter **16**

Ten Tips for a Perfect Profile Picture

Say “Cheese!” Your profile picture is your face to the world. Don’t settle for an “in the car” selfie. Every reader of your profile inspects your image. Make sure what they see aligns with your brand and portrays you in the best light. Here are ten tips that will help take your so-so profile picture to amazing heights.

Hire a Professional Photographer

So many people tell me that using a professional photographer is outside their budget. I don’t buy it! They probably never shopped around. There are zillions of photographers out there offering affordable options.

Do an Internet search for: *Photography [Your Town], [Your State]*

For example, *Photography Delran, NJ*

This produces a listing of all photographers in your local area. Review the list, visit their websites, and check out their portfolios. Call those photographers who feel right to you. Ask for pricing. You’ll find that most photographers want your business and will work with you to make your session affordable to you.

In case your Internet search fails you, here are a few online photographer directories to help you search for photographers by location:

- » American Society of Media Photographers (<http://findaphotographer.org>)
- » Professional Photographers of America (www.ppa.com/findaphotographer)
- » Photographers Index (www.photographersindex.com)
- » Photoshelter (www.photoshelter.com/explore/photographers)

Use Lots of Light

Whether or not you utilize a professional photographer, there should be lots of light where the picture is being taken. Good lighting is what takes a profile picture from mediocre to great. When lighting is adjusted and applied properly, almost everyone looks better.



TIP

Photographs shot in a professional studio often look better than shots taken in a person's office or outside in nature. The reason for this is a professional studio has professional lighting that can be manipulated. When given the option of having your photo taken in a studio or at your home or office, go with the studio. The end result will look much better.

Use a Nondescript Background

The background in your profile picture should be nondescript and plain. You are the focus of the photograph. The background image should never detract from you or provoke questions or judgment in the viewer's mind.

“Is she standing in front of a shed?”

“Gosh that room is messy.”

“Is that a bookshelf filled with romance novels?”

“Why is he standing in front of bamboo trees?”

“I think I see the edge of a toilet!”

If you have a friend taking a picture of you, find a bare wall. If working with a professional photographer, find a backdrop that is plain. Pass by the bamboo trees, clouds, and laser-light shows.

Dress to Impress

Choose a professional outfit — clothes that you would wear to a job interview or to a business meeting. Make sure the clothes fit you well in your shoulder and neck area. The image is cropped, so the top area of the outfit matters the most.

I often tell my male clients to wear a suit and to pair it with a tie that complements the color of their eyes. In the beginning of the session, I tell them to have pictures taken with the full suit. After they are sure there is at least one usable image, I tell them to take off their ties and open the top button of their shirts. Then, once another usable image is taken, I have them remove their jackets and take pictures in just the dress shirt. By simply removing the tie and jacket, you are getting three different types of looks: formal, semi-formal, and informal.

When working with my female clients, I tell them to bring a few wardrobe changes to the photography session. Often a dress that looks great in person simply doesn't photograph well. Bringing along two or three different outfits allows them to change clothes and salvage the session if one outfit isn't working out.



TIP

Choosing the right color for your clothing is important. Whatever you do, don't choose a color that is close to the color of your skin. If your clothes too closely match the color of your skin, they can overpower the face and wash you out. Dark colors are usually a safe choice: Dark gray, black, navy blue, green, burgundy, rust, and brown typically work well.

In addition, when choosing your outfit, stay away from bold prints with stripes, plaids, checks, or polka dots. Remember, it's not your clothes but your face that is the focus of the photograph. Choose understated clothes to keep your face the focus of the picture.

Adjust Yourself

Before the photographer starts clicking, look in the mirror. Is your collar straight? Is your necklace clasp behind your neck? Are the backs of your earrings on tight? Is everything smooth and nice?

A client once told me that she was interviewed on television, and unbeknownst to her, her bra strap was clearly visible. As much as she loved the clip, she never used the recording on her website because she was mortified that her bra had a guest-starring role!

And so, in the immortal words of my mother prior to almost every photograph and major event, “Adjust yourself!”

Keep the Camera Close to Eye Level

When working with a photographer, he or she might get on a chair or stoop down a bit to get the right angle. In many situations, this is absolutely fine. However, having worked with thousands of professionals from all over the world, I see too many photos taken at too much of an angle.

The camera should be close to eye level. An image captured at too high of a level makes you look submissive and small. Too low of an angle and you’ll look looming and overly dominant. Meet your viewer on equal ground by keeping the level of the image steady.

If the photographer appears to be using too much of an angle, ask to see the pictures on the camera’s back screen. If it appears that the angle is too great, tell the photographer that you would like to take a few images with him or her at ground level. Remember, you are the boss.

Say No to the Mug Shot

With the camera close to eye level, position yourself at a slight angle from the camera lens. You don’t want your body to be perfectly square with the camera because the resulting images will have the quality of a mug shot, driver’s license photo, or passport picture.

The best thing to do is turn your shoulders so that they are at an angle to the camera.

Crinkle, Smile, and Jut

A genuine smile engages the full face and causes the eyes to wrinkle at the edges. To look genuine, give a big smile that crinkles your eyes. Don't worry about crow's feet — it's more important the image looks authentic and real.

As you smile, push your face out, jutting your jaw forward. This might feel weird, but it accentuates your jawline, tightening it and reducing any double chin.



TIP

Two videos by the famous photographer Peter Hurley reveal his secrets and offer advice on how to look more photogenic in portraits. They are found on his website at:

<https://peterhurley.com/news/2013/who-knew-it-really-all-about-squinch>

Use Photoshop Lightly

You've selected your favorite picture and now the photographer will go to work using Photoshop to make you look like an alien. Sadly, most images are over-Photoshopped. The eye crinkles are erased and all lines and definition deleted. You look at the image and it kinda looks like you, but not really.

Instead, use Photoshop to freshen you, smooth hair flyaways, and remove any temporary blemishes. When Photoshop is used too heavily, the resulting image doesn't look authentic or real.

I have asked photographers to remove their Photoshop edits from my images more times than I care to admit. Yes, I have bags under my eyes, but without those bags, I am not me. Accept yourself as you are and don't erase your features — people gravitate to authenticity and the genuine.

Crop Your Image

The headshot is called a headshot for a reason — it should only contain your head. Your profile picture should present your full face and a sliver of your shoulders.

Crop out your ankles, knees, torso, elbows, and chest. The image should span from the top of your head to the bottom of your tie knot or clavicle.

The reason we zoom in is that it brings you closer to your viewer. Plus, that's a nice professional picture you just took — let's show it off!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Using your email address book to find even more connections
- » Joining groups or starting your own
- » Branding yourself a LION or joining an open network list

Chapter **17**

Ten Tips to Expand Your Network

LinkedIn search is a little peculiar. When you search by a person's name in the LinkedIn search bar, it doesn't matter if the person is in your network or not; his or her profile (provided there is one) appears in search results. But as you know, people don't always search by name. When typical users search by keyword, the results that appear are from profiles that are in their LinkedIn networks — not the entire LinkedIn user database.

This means that the profiles that are returned are either first-, second-, or third-degree connections, or members of common LinkedIn Groups. It is true that occasionally you'll see an Out of Network profile appear in your search results, but when that happens, the full name is not provided and the profile isn't completely visible.

You just put a lot of work into optimizing your LinkedIn network. To make sure you get a lot of profile views, you must be able to be found, and to make that happen, you need to make sure you have a strong LinkedIn network.

I am not advocating aiming low and wide, connecting with people for sheer quantity. Instead, I want you to make your online network reflect your offline network. The people you know, the people you knew, and the people you meet every day should be added to your profile.

When you have a strong network, your profile appears in search results more often, and you get more views to your profile. Here's how to get started.

Import Your Address Book

It's hard to connect one by one, remembering the people you met through your life. Rather than rack your brain, LinkedIn allows you to import your online address book. Scanning your email address book shows you who's on LinkedIn already, and LinkedIn allows you to automatically connect with them. I know it seems a little scary to give LinkedIn your email password, but I promise, nothing bad will happen as long as you go slow and read through each screen!

Here are the steps:

1. **On LinkedIn's main toolbar, hover your mouse pointer over My Network and select Add Contacts (some users might see Invite Contacts).**

The Add Contacts page appears, as shown in Figure 17-1. A list of email providers appears on the right side of the page.

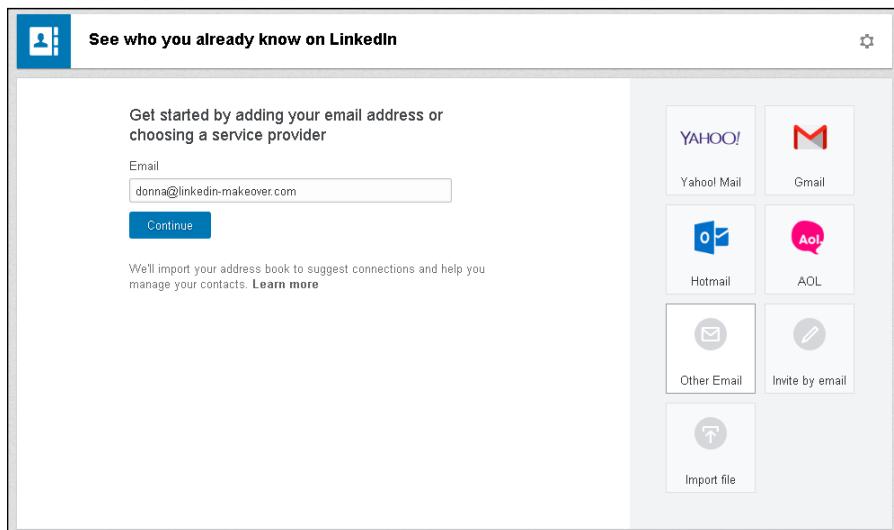


FIGURE 17-1:
This is the page where you add connections via email or csv file.

2. **Click the button for the email providers you use. (If you don't see your provider, choose Other Email.)**

An authentication window appears.

3. Enter your email credentials and accept any permission requests.

LinkedIn scans your email address book looking for profile matches and presents you with a list of people you know who are already on LinkedIn, but not connected to you. (See Figure 17-2.)

FIGURE 17-2: LinkedIn displays the profile matches based on email addresses in your email address book.



WARNING

LinkedIn automatically selects all contacts. Do not click Add Connections! It's important to first go through this list one by one and select or deselect who you want to invite to connect with you on LinkedIn.

- 4. Remove the check marks by clicking in the circle to deselect the individuals you do not want to send a connection request.**
- 5. Click the Add Connections button.**

An invitation request is sent, and then LinkedIn displays a list of people from your email address book who are not on LinkedIn that you can invite to join, as shown in Figure 17-3.

- 6. Deselect the people on the list you do not want to invite to join LinkedIn and click the Add to Network button, or click Skip to skip this step.**

Invites are sent to those people you selected and you are back at the People You May Know Screen.



TIP

It's absolutely acceptable to skip sending invitations. LinkedIn has over 400 million users. Most times, those people who show up as not on LinkedIn, are on LinkedIn but with a different email address. Rather than bombard people with LinkedIn invitations, skip this step and concentrate on connecting with people who are definitely on LinkedIn already.

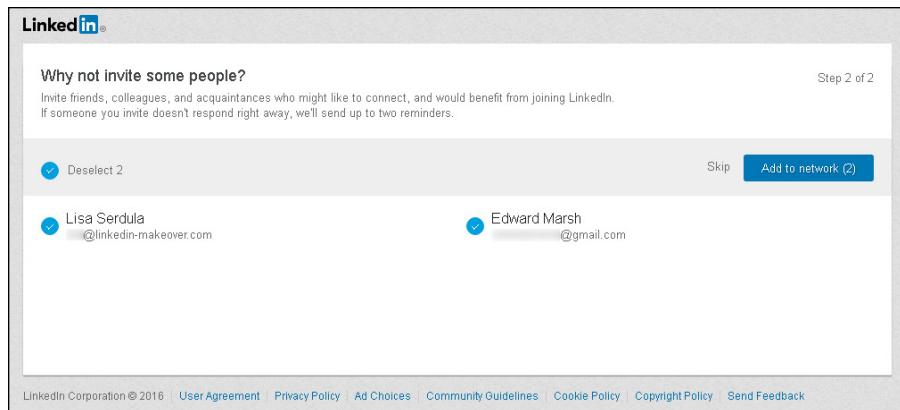


FIGURE 17-3:
LinkedIn displays
the people who
are not on
LinkedIn that
you can invite.

Import a Contact List

To make connecting as easy as possible, LinkedIn lets you upload a .csv, .txt, or .vcf file of email addresses. This is perfect if you have a spreadsheet of email addresses. Simply go to Add Connections under My Network and choose Import file. Select your file and go! If you want explicit directions, simply follow the directions under “Import Your Address Book” starting with Step 4.

Let LinkedIn Help You Connect

Under My Network on LinkedIn’s navigation bar is People You May Know. This is a great page that most people overlook.

LinkedIn shows you connection recommendations of people you may possibly know and may like to connect with on LinkedIn. These recommendations are based on similar profile information. You may have gone to school with the person LinkedIn is recommending, or maybe you worked at the same company, or maybe you have similar experiences or work in the same industry.

LinkedIn also extrapolates people you may know from your email and mobile address books. Don’t worry: LinkedIn never reads your messages; it just looks for email address matches.

To use People You May Know to make more connections, follow these steps:

1. Hover your mouse pointer over My Network and click People You May Know.

2. Scan through the list of profiles that appear, and click the Connect button when you see a person you want to invite into your first-degree network.

By clicking Connect, you are sending a non-personalized invitation. If you want to personalize your invitation, go to step 3.

3. Click the profile picture of the suggested person.

His or her LinkedIn profile opens.

4. Click the Connect button that appears next to that person's profile picture, as shown in Figure 17-4.

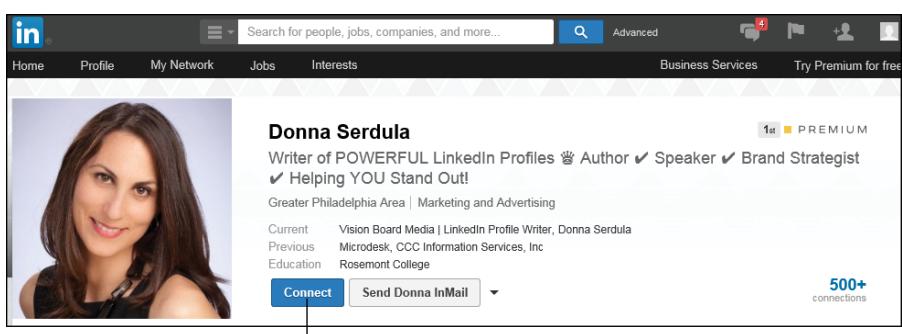


FIGURE 17-4:
Click Connect
to send a
personalized
connection
request.

5. Choose how you know the person: Colleague, Classmate, We've Done Business Together, Friend, or Other.
6. Add a personalized note in the text field.
7. Click the Send Invitation button.

A personalized invitation is sent.

Join One Hundred Groups

Group members are part of your LinkedIn network. LinkedIn allows you to join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups. If you want to get found and find more people via LinkedIn search, my recommendation is to join the maximum 100 LinkedIn Groups.



REMEMBER

By joining groups, those members are added to your LinkedIn network. This means that when they search for someone like you, the odds of you appearing in their search results are much greater because you are “connected” through the group.

Start a LinkedIn Group

Depending upon your need to grow your network, starting a LinkedIn Group to grow your network might be akin to killing a fly with an anvil. Starting a LinkedIn Group is a huge undertaking, but it can be a worthwhile investment depending on your goals. As the LinkedIn Group administrator, you sit in a unique leadership position, and people within the group get to know you. Who would reject a connection request from the Group administrator?

My only caveat here is there is a lot of work required to create and build a LinkedIn Group. If you are absolutely not interested in creating a group, become very active in an already established group. As you interact with people via group discussions, send them a connection request. It's on a slightly smaller scale than being a LinkedIn Group administrator, but it does allow you to meet people and connect.

Make Connecting a Process

To grow your network, you must make it a systematic process. Don't just focus on connecting with people from your past. Each time you schedule a meeting, make sure the invitees are in your LinkedIn network. Don't just collect business cards at industry events, enter the names into LinkedIn and connect with them. The idea is that you connect with the people you meet along the way.



TIP

Connecting must be part of your professional process, and it's something that you should never stop doing.

Link to Your Profile

Expanding your network is not just about sending connection requests to other people. It's equally important that you make it easy for other people to connect to you. The best way to do that is to provide a link to your LinkedIn profile wherever you are . . . online or off.

Here are a few places you can add a link to your profile:

- » Business card
- » Email signature
- » Letterhead
- » Marketing literature
- » Neck tattoo (just teasing!)
- » Resume
- » Social media networks
- » Website bio
- » Website social media section

Brand Yourself a LION or Just Connect to Them

Surely you've noticed people on LinkedIn with the moniker "LION" next to their names or have it listed in their summaries. No, these people are not actual cat lovers. LION is short for LinkedIn Open Networker. A LION is a person who is willing to connect with anyone on LinkedIn, regardless of whether they know you or trust you.

The one rule LIONS follow is never mark any incoming invitation as SPAM or I Don't Know. When a person marks an invite as SPAM or I Don't Know, that's a black mark against the user. If too many people mark you as SPAM or I Don't Know, LinkedIn restricts your account and you will only be able to add people if you enter in their email addresses.

It's easy to become a LION. All you need to do is add LION or LinkedIn Open Networker to your profile and never choose SPAM or I Don't Know on an incoming invitation to connect.

However, there are pros and cons to becoming a LION. It's something that you need to consider long and hard. If you are only looking to grow a strong network, not a ginormous one, becoming a LION may not be the best option for you.



TIP

Instead of labeling yourself a LION, you can choose to just connect to LIONs. By searching out LIONs and adding them to your network, you are expanding your second-degree network and growing your total LinkedIn network in the process.

Because it's easy to spot a LION, it's easy to find them on LinkedIn. By doing a simple keyword search for "LinkedIn Open Networker," you'll find a slew. Send them a connection request and a short personalized note and they'll be happy to add you to their enormous network.

Join Open Networking Lists and Groups

A number of websites allow you to download a list of LION email addresses. By then uploading that list of email addresses to LinkedIn, you can expand your network very quickly.

Here are two open networking sites:

- » TopLinked (www.toplinked.com)
- » Invites Welcome (www.inviteswelcome.com)

These websites work in a similar manner. It's free to download the list, but it costs money to get your name on the list. The idea is that you want people adding you as a connection rather than having to download the list yourself. By having other people add you, you are able to determine who you want to add, but also, you aren't using up your 5,000 invite limit.

LinkedIn limits the number of invitations you can send out to 5,000. If you hit the 5,000 invitation limit, you can petition LinkedIn's Customer Service for more. If you play nice in LinkedIn's sandbox and have a high rate of invitation acceptance, LinkedIn provides you with an extra 500 invitations. If you don't play nice in LinkedIn's sandbox and have had a high rate of people marking you as Spam or I Don't Know, LinkedIn may refuse your request for more invitations. In that case, to keep growing your network, you have to ask other people to invite you into their network.

If you absolutely must expand your network quickly, only then join an open networking list and pay the money to get your email on the list. By downloading a list of email addresses, you are connecting with pretty much anyone. Paying to get your name on the list affords you a small semblance of control because when people add you, you get to decide of you want them as part of your network.

Whatever you do, don't use your primary email address for the list; instead, use a secondary address. Anyone can download that list, and many people simply use that list for their own spam-y purposes.

Use an App

What makes connecting so gosh darn hard is that it's outside your everyday process. Wouldn't it be great if instead of having to visit [LinkedIn.com](#), you could connect directly with people within your email application? As you receive and read email, you get to see a link to the person's profile and a Connect button? Guess what, there is! It's called Rapportive, a browser extension that works with Gmail.

Rapportive displays profile information on the right side of opened email messages, as shown in Figure 17-5. Not only do you see the sender's headline, location, and current position, but also Rapportive displays links to the sender's LinkedIn profile and Twitter accounts. If you are not currently connected to the sender, Rapportive shows you a Connect button that you can click to send an invitation to connect on LinkedIn.

Rapportive shows you LinkedIn profile information of the email sender

The screenshot shows an email inbox from 'LinkedIn Makeover' with an incoming message from 'Donna Serdula <donna@linkedin-maker.com>'. The message was sent '1:39 PM (0 minutes ago)' and contains the text: 'Hi There! Most people think that our clients are mostly job seekers but the truth is, our clients are professionals interested in branding, reputation management and creating a strong and impressive online presence. In terms of our services, I suggest either the Interactive or All Access. Choose the Interactive if you are mainly interested in an optimized profile. Choose the All Access if you are interested in an optimized profile and gaining the knowledge to utilize LinkedIn more effectively. You would also be better served with the All Access service if you have an unusual background and need more time to explain your background and build your professional brand with the Senior Branding Specialist.' Below this, there are sections for 'eDelivery' (fill out a questionnaire and send us your resume/cv, we'll send you a back a professionally written LinkedIn profile within 3-7 business days) and 'Interactive' (After filling out our questionnaire, we will partner you with a Branding Specialist who will interview you (30-minute). The Branding Specialist will write an engaging and impactful LinkedIn profile for you. You will then reconvene with your Branding Specialist for a final session to review and edit your profile (30-minute session). This service typically takes 10 business days). At the bottom, there is a section for 'All Access' (To get started on this service, you may either fill out our questionnaire or send us your resume instead. Once we receive your information, we will partner you with a Senior Branding Specialist. They will uncover your true professional story in an hour interview session. The Senior Branding Specialist will then write a high level, compelling LinkedIn profile that impresses your network and markets you immediately. You will approve the LinkedIn profile in a review and edit session. During this 60 minute session, your Branding Specialist will also train you on how to best utilize LinkedIn. You'). To the right of the message, a sidebar displays Donna Serdula's LinkedIn profile, including her photo, headline ('Writer of POWERFUL LinkedIn Profiles ✓ Author ✓ Speaker ✓ Brand Strategist ✓ Helping YOU Stand Out!'), bio ('Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer at Vision Board Media'), and social links for LinkedIn, Twitter (@donnaserdula), and LinkedIn (@LinkedInMakeover). Buttons for 'CONNECT' and 'rapportive' are also present.

FIGURE 17-5:
Rapportive makes connecting with people a breeze!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Growing a strong network
- » Gaining social proof and credibility of your skills
- » Promoting yourself as a thought leader
- » Finding assistance

Chapter **18**

Ten Tips to Leverage LinkedIn

Your profile is optimized and your network is growing . . . now what? Most people optimize their profile and then disappear off LinkedIn. They forget that LinkedIn is more than just a place to house your profile and accomplishments.

LinkedIn is a social network and a business tool. To truly see results and find that elusive opportunity that people claim is “in them thar LinkedIn hills,” you must get on LinkedIn and use it.

Here are ten tips to help you leverage LinkedIn like a successful goldminer.

A-B-C . . . Always Be Connecting

In the movie, *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Alec Baldwin’s character shouts, “A-B-C . . . always be closing!” I like to think of it a little differently in this brave new social media world. Rather than closing, let’s say, “A-B-C . . . always be connecting!”

By connecting with people on LinkedIn, you are able to keep in touch with them. I like to call it *drip-feed marketing*. When connected, that person is subscribed to your LinkedIn activity and updates. Each time you update your profile or send out a status update or get recommended or publish a long-form post, they have the potential to see it and be reminded of you.

There's so much going on in the world today. We are bombarded by messages every second of every day. Just because you met someone doesn't mean she'll remember you when she needs you. But by connecting on LinkedIn, you improve those chances because that person is often reminded of you through notifications, status updates, and search results.



REMEMBER

When you connect with someone on LinkedIn, you aren't just connecting to solely them — you are connecting to his network and his network's network. If either that person or someone within his network searches LinkedIn for someone like you, your profile has a higher likelihood of appearing in the search results because of the network you share.

Connect and Stay in Touch

When starting out on LinkedIn, most people don't put enough focus on connecting and growing a strong network. LinkedIn's People You May Know page is a great way to get connection recommendations.

Here's how to get to LinkedIn's People You May Know page:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over My Network in LinkedIn's main toolbar at the top of the page and click People You May Know.**

LinkedIn presents you with a page of connection recommendations.

By extrapolating relationships through email matches and shared information on LinkedIn profiles, LinkedIn often provides eerily correct recommendations. Often, the people in the People You May Know page are actually people you had forgotten about, but with LinkedIn's prompting, you can reconnect and reestablish a fruitful relationship.

Another way to reconnect and reestablish professional friendships is through LinkedIn's Connections page. This page shows your list of first-degree connections, but it also shows a list of people with suggested reasons to reconnect.

Here's how to get there:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Hover your mouse pointer over My Network in LinkedIn's main toolbar at the top of the page and click Connections.**

At the top of the page, LinkedIn shows you a grid of people who are celebrating:

- Birthdays
- Work anniversaries
- New positions

To make it even easier for you, LinkedIn provides a one-click button to wish the person a happy birthday or say congrats.

Now you have no excuses not to stay in touch with people in your network.

Gather Business Intelligence

LinkedIn is a treasure trove of information on people and companies. This is information that you can easily access with just a few simple searches.



TIP

Interviewing at a company and want to learn more about them? Check them out on LinkedIn. Their LinkedIn Company page not only summarizes who they are and what they do, but also you get to see a listing of current employees.

One of the key benefits of LinkedIn is that it turns invisible relationships visible. Looking at the list of employees on a LinkedIn company page, you can see how you are connected to them: first-degree, second-degree, third-degree, or through a group. If you find an employee who's a second-degree connection, visit that person's profile to see the mutual connection you have in common. If it's someone you are on familiar terms, reach out and ask for an introduction. If the employee has provided contact information, use your shared connection's name as an ice breaker.

LinkedIn does not just offer company research. Profiles are brimming with great information, too, even if the person hasn't optimized his or her profile. Back when I was in technology sales, I researched my top 15 prospects on LinkedIn. I checked their LinkedIn Groups and Organizations to see where they belonged online and offline. I then joined those groups and organizations so I could rub elbows with them. Many of those offline organizations afforded me a chance to forge relationships with my prospects that resulted in more clients and sales.

Are you looking to move up within an organization? Look at the profiles of the people in your target positions. What do they have in common? Do they have certain courses, certifications, or degrees to their name that you need? Use their profiles to determine what you need to do professionally to reach their career heights.

Ultimately, do your due diligence. Check out companies and people on LinkedIn so you get a deeper understanding as to who they are and what they do. You'll be surprised at what you find.

Get the News

The newsfeed on LinkedIn's home page is a veritable newspaper, filled with articles and items that have been cultivated and curated by your network. These people with whom you are connected have handpicked the articles, written the posts, and shared news that moves them. This stream of information is brimming with possibilities and opportunities. Scroll through your newsfeed, not just looking at the information being shared, but also at who's sharing it.



TIP

Think of your LinkedIn's home page newsfeed as an online networking party where that tiny little status update is the virtual embodiment of a person standing in the middle of the room, looking for someone to talk to. How do you want to respond to this person? If you simply want to smile and nod, click the Like button. If you want to engage and start a conversation, click the Comment button and type something pithy. If you want to trumpet this person and give her a bigger audience, click the Share button.

Are you ready to do more than just respond to others? Share your own status updates and experience what I like to call *drip-feed marketing*. By sharing links to articles, information on upcoming events, providing advice, quotes, infographics, and more, you provide value to your target audience. Each time you share valuable information, your audience is reminded that you exist. You never know when people might need someone like you. By staying on top on their mind, you are ensuring they reach out to you first!

When you are the one beginning the conversation, people respond to you. Each time a person likes, comments, or shares your update, your potential audience gets bigger and bigger. The more eyes on your update, the more people who may click your profile looking to learn more about you.

Get Social Proof and Credibility

LinkedIn offers something that resumes and recommendation letters can't: social proof. The LinkedIn profile is totally public and visible for all to see. The public nature of the LinkedIn profile acts as an honesty incentive. Who's going to lie when their teammates and colleagues are able to click and see what they are touting?

In addition, recommendations and endorsements add balance to your accomplishments and successes. It's not just you saying you're great; other people can chime in and say it, too. And remember, those people endorsing and recommending you — it's done upfront with their names and faces right next to the endorsement and recommendation. They, too, are incentivized to tell the truth with their public images on the line.

Get Past the Gatekeeper

If you have ever been in sales and had to cold-call potential customers, you know about the Gatekeeper. That's the person hired to keep salespeople and other annoyances away from decision-makers. You call and call but never can get through to the person because the Gatekeeper is keeping you at bay.

Back when I was in sales, I found that LinkedIn offered a great way to get past the Gatekeeper. InMails, OpenLink messages, and group messaging allowed me to directly communicate with the person I couldn't get through to over the phone. LinkedIn allowed me to sidestep the Gatekeeper and get my epistle directly onto the decision-maker's lap.

Even if you aren't in sales, you still will face gatekeepers whose job it is to keep you away from the person you need to reach. LinkedIn is the tool that can get you past that guard. However, it's important to have a compelling message that gets the decision-maker to take notice. Otherwise, even though you got through the door, you still won't make an impact.

Rub Elbows in Groups

LinkedIn Groups are subject-focused forums where like-minded individuals join for discussion and networking purposes. Join groups within your business niche to rub elbows with your target audience. When you join a strong, focused group with serious members, it's a place to learn, develop, inspire, and help others.

If you don't have time to join a group for discussion and interaction, join LinkedIn Groups because they extend your network. By joining a group, those members are added to your network. By having these members in your network, they are able to find you if they are doing a keyword-based search and your search results are enhanced for keyword searches you perform. Joining groups is the easiest way to grow your network and see a real impact in search results.

Find Assistance

When you need a handyman to help fix something in your home, what's the first thing you do? You ask around! You call up the people close to you to see if they know someone. Everybody feels more comfortable working with someone their friends and family have used in the past.

LinkedIn works on this exact same principle!

Are you looking for a marketing consultant to help grow your business? Perhaps you need a financial advisor or an insurance agent? Maybe you need to hire an office manager? Whatever you are looking for, LinkedIn is a searchable database of professionals who are connected to you.

When you use a search engine on the web, the results are all over the board. You'll find websites, blogs, videos, and more. The people you find on a search engine could be located anywhere and without any connection to you.

But search LinkedIn, and the search result listings that are returned are real people within your network. The number after their names tells you how closely connected you are to the people who fit your search criteria. First-degree connections are people directly connected to you. Second-degree connections are people who share with you a mutual connection. Third-degree connections are people who know a mutual connection you share. If the icon next to their name reads *Group*, this person shares a LinkedIn Group in common with you.

Clicking the result gives you a profile that provides everything you need to decide if you want to reach out to learn more.

Showcase Thought Leadership

The problem with blogging is not just coming up with content, it's also finding an audience to read your articles. You can go to Wordpress.com and easily create your own website and start blogging, but it takes time to develop an audience.

The beautiful part of using LinkedIn's Publishing Platform is that when you begin to write long-form posts, you already have a built-in audience — your LinkedIn network! All those people you've connected to over the years are potential readers of your work. Because you have a built-in audience, you can really concentrate on coming up with good topics and content. Your posts are housed on your profile for readers of your profile to see.

Profiles that contain long-form posts showcase thought leadership. Expertise is rare, and by taking the time to create a long-form post, you are differentiating yourself and your profile. Remember:

Blogging = Thought Leadership = Differentiation = Opportunity

Network in Your Pajamas

You always hear about the importance of networking, yet the thought of networking is intimidating. There's this vision of old men in dark suits convening in a club, drinking whiskey and making deals. Do you even want to be a part of that?

Networking is not nearly as complicated or nefarious as it seems. Networking at its most basic level is two things: being friendly and being helpful. That's why so many people fail. They start networking only when they need something. By then, it's often too late. Dig your well before you are thirsty.

Networking used to take place in person or over the phone, one to one. LinkedIn changed the playing field, giving you the ability to network at 3 a.m. in your pajamas.



TIP

Log on to LinkedIn and scroll through your newsfeed. Like, comment, and share your connections' status updates that move you. As you surf the web and find an interesting and pertinent article, send it out as a status update to everyone. Or, select a person from your contacts and message it to him or her specifically with a note, letting this person know you are thinking about him or her.

Join LinkedIn Groups to be part of a larger conversation. Ask for advice. Provide help. Introduce and connect with people with synergy. Share ideas. Add value.

All you need to do is log into LinkedIn. Stop thinking of LinkedIn as a chore or a site that simply houses your profile. LinkedIn is a conduit of information, news, people, branding, and opportunity. LinkedIn is a place to engage and interact. Forge a presence and a reputation on LinkedIn as a giver, and opportunity will begin to flow. Show up and immediately expect quick results, and opportunity will retract.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Improving your contact information
- » Generating an attractive headline
- » Creating great graphics and multimedia content

Chapter **19**

Ten LinkedIn Profile Resources

To achieve a truly optimized LinkedIn profile, it takes more than just sheer writing and typing ability. I've compiled a list of ten resources to help you create the best profile out there. These resources are my secret gems to create an impressive profile. The resources span videos, online tools, and more. The best part? Almost all of them are free.

Get Inspired and Excited

I remember when I watched Simon Sinek's TED talk, "How Great Leaders Inspire Action" the first time. He verbalized something I knew in my heart: *If you want to move someone, don't tell them how, tell them why.* After watching this video, you'll begin to see the bigger picture the LinkedIn Summary section provides, and you will begin to realize your own *why*.

Simon Sinek's TED talk is found here:

www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Carla Harris' presentation, "How to Own Your Power," is one I watch over and over again because it's so inspiring. She provides three pearls of wisdom, and

although she's not directly talking about a LinkedIn profile, her pearls absolutely reflect what is possible with your profile. She talks about confidence, risks, and (my favorite) perception.

Carla Harris's "How to Own Your Power" presentation is found here:

<https://youtu.be/0rWmtyZXkFg>

LinkedIn Headline Generator

I created an online application to help you generate your LinkedIn headline. All you do is check off the descriptive terms that apply to you and . . . bam! A LinkedIn headline is presented to you that you simply copy and paste into your LinkedIn profile.

It doesn't get any easier, folks! My headline generator app is found here:

www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/LinkedIn-Headline-Generator

Virtual Phone Numbers

Over and over again throughout this book, I told you to add your phone number to your profile. LinkedIn brings opportunity, and often that opportunity is looking to talk to you right this very moment. By not providing your phone number, that hot, heaping spoonful of opportunity will go elsewhere.

However, if you are simply not comfortable providing your home number or mobile number, there are services out there to help.

Google Voice

Google Voice is a free service that provides you with a virtual phone number that you can forward to either voicemail or to your regular phone number. There are many more features as well. Check it out here:

www.google.com/voice

Skype

Most people think of Skype as a way to place video calls to friends and family, but Skype is much more than that. Through Skype, you can purchase your very own phone number. When a person dials that number, it can ring your computer or your mobile phone if you have the Skype app installed. Just like Google Voice, Skype provides even more features, too. Check it out here:

www.skype.com

Say No to AOL and Hotmail Addresses

Believe it or not, your email address says a lot about you. AOL and Hotmail email addresses portray you as an outmoded, tech dinosaur. Is it a fair assumption? Of course not, but there are zillions of articles out there with studies to prove that your email address is a status symbol. Sadly, AOL and Hotmail are equivalent to driving an old-fashioned Buick.

Your own domain

Want to drive a Rolls Royce? Get an email address with your own domain. There's plenty of ways to do it, but the easiest is through Google Apps:

<https://domains.google.com>

Acceptable free domains

Not a Rolls Royce type? That's okay; you can drive a Lexus with either a Gmail.com or iCloud.com email address:

Gmail (<https://mail.google.com>)

iCloud (www.icloud.com)



It's hard to change your email address, and it's something that you can't take lightly. Strategically decide if it makes sense to keep your old addresses, or if it's time to move on. It's a shame to cling to an old email address out of laziness when it's hurting you on the job front.

Symbol Variations

When you paste symbols into your profile, their look changes depending on the device used to view them. What might look like a black check mark to you might look like a bright red check to a person viewing it on a MacBook Pro or an Android smartphone. The reason for this is that some devices display the symbols in black and white Unicode, while others replace them with their emoji equivalent. Every device vendor uses its own emoji art, so what looks one way on Mac looks differently on a PC or Android smartphone.

Check out my website to see the different variations of the most popular business symbols:

www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/tools/symbols

Stop the Typos

Most word processors have a spelling and grammar checker built in, but if you are typing directly into LinkedIn's text fields, only the Chrome browser provides spellcheck through an extension. Grammarly (<https://app.grammarly.com>) is a Chrome extension that enables grammar check within your browser. When Grammarly is running, it catches any grammatical mistakes you type and helps make you look even more professional!

SlideShare

SlideShare is a slide hosting service owned by LinkedIn that allows users to upload slide presentations to share their knowledge. People often ask me for ideas of items to add to their LinkedIn profiles. Most people don't have videos or podcasts to upload, and they are left scratching their head, wondering what to add. I have one word for you: presentations.

Practically every professional has access to PowerPoint or Keynote. Go ahead, get in there and create a presentation! You can paste in report metrics or offer insights into a project you completed. Create a presentation that showcases who you are and what you do. The world is your oyster; get creative and let yourself shine!

Once it's created, share it on SlideShare and link it to your LinkedIn profile. Voila! Instant multimedia content. You can find SlideShare here:

www.slideshare.net



TIP

You can also access SlideShare from LinkedIn's main navigation bar under Interests.

Photographer Directories

Your profile picture is so important. Working with a professional photographer ensures that this important photograph looks great. Here are a few online photographer directories to help you search for photographers by location:

- American Society of Media Photographers (<http://findaphotographer.org>)
- Professional Photographers of America (www.ppa.com/findaphotographer)
- Photographers Index (www.photographersindex.com)
- Photoshelter (www.photoshelter.com/explore/photographers)

Background Image Libraries

The LinkedIn background image is a great way to brand your profile and really stand out. The issue is finding the right background image. Yes, you can search around and steal an image off the web, but that brings bad mojo. Instead, peruse these online libraries of free images:

- Barn Images (<http://barnimages.com>)
- Raumrot (<http://raumrot.com>)
- Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>)
- Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)
- Freelimages (www.freeimages.com)
- Photocrops (www.photocrops.com)
- UHD Wallpapers (www.uhdwallpapers.org)

Here are some libraries where you can purchase images:

GraphicRiver (<http://graphicriver.net>)

iStock (www.istockphoto.com)

ShutterStock (www.shutterstock.com)

Online Image Apps

Once you have a great background image, you might want to customize it with text. My favorite online image editor is Canva. Canva makes it so easy to create picture montages and place text over images.

Canva isn't the only company out there providing this type of service. PicMonkey and Adobe Spark also offer similar services. You can find them here:

Adobe Spark (<https://spark.adobe.com>)

Canva (www.canva.com)

PicMonkey (www.picmonkey.com)

Try each service out to see which one is your favorite.

Index

A

About Us page, 169
account types, 20, 260–262
achievements
 in Experience section, 135
 highlighting top, 155
Activities section, 185
Additional Information section
 about, 193–194
 adding interests, 194–197
Advice for Contacting section, 200–202
blocking profile views, 202–203
 in checklist, 258
 providing details, 197–200
Additional Notes field, 169
address book, importing your, 292–294
Adler, Lou (CEO), 239
Adobe Spark (website), 314
Advanced People Search, 17–18
Advice for Contacting section, 200–202
age discrimination, 128
All-Star profiles, 183–188
American Society of Media Photographers
 (website), 286, 313
appearance, for profile pictures, 287–288
apps, 314

B

background, for profile pictures, 93–94, 286–287
background image
 about, 208
 adding, 211–212
 choosing, 208–209
 creating with online graphic tools, 209–211
 libraries for, 313–314
Barn Images (website), 210, 313

BCC (Blind Carbon Copy), 251
Becher, Jonathan (CDO), 239
benchmarking success, 265–266
benefit sentences, 154
benefit statement headline, 109–111
benefits, explaining your, 154
Berger, Jonah (professor), 239
Bersin, Josh (Principal and Founder), 239
Birthday field, 197–200
Blind Carbon Copy (BCC), 251
blocking profile views, 202–203
blogs
 creating, 244–249
 marketing posts, 250–251
 using Publishing Platform, 276
Bock, Laszlo (SVP), 239
boilerplate description, for company summaries, 131–133
Bookmarklet icon, 274–276
Boolean search strings, 18
branding, 11
broadcast update, 267–268
Burrus, Daniel (CEO), 239
business cards, LinkedIn URL on, 271
business intelligence, gathering, 303–304
Business Plus account, 260, 263

C

call to action
 in Experience section, 135–136
 in Summary section, 156–158
Canva (website), 210–211, 314
Causes section, 192, 258
Certifications section
 about, 179–181
 in checklist, 258
 foreign languages, 181–182

- character limits
for Experience section, 134
for job titles, 142
for Summary section, 156
- Cheat Sheet (website), 4
- checklist, 257–259
- commercial use limit, 259
- companies
in checklist, 259
choosing which to follow, 235–236
following, 236
linking to company page, 130–131
unfollowing, 237
- company logo, using in Experience section, 128–129, 131
- Comstock, Beth (Vice Chair), 239
- confidentiality, 70–71
- connecting/connections
alerting about updated profile, 267–270
in checklist, 259
compared with following, 238
endorsing, 43–44
importance of always, 301–302
as a process, 296
ways to make, 302–303
- Connections page, 302–303
- Contact Information section
about, 76–77
adding email addresses, 77–78
adding IM addresses, 80–81
adding phone numbers, 79–80
adding Twitter account, 81–83
adding websites, 84–86
adding WeChat, 83
adding work address, 81
in checklist, 258
including, 282–283
- contact list, importing a, 294
- Copy and Paste Emoji (website), 104
- cost, of LinkedIn, 20, 259–264
- Courses section
adding to Certifications section, 180–181
in checklist, 258
- credibility, 305
- cropping profile pictures, 96–97, 290
- current position, in profile, 61–62
- customized public profile URL, 55–59, 258
- ## D
- dates, for experience, 127
- default text, for requesting recommendations, 217–218
- Description field, 170–172, 185
- domains, 311
- dress, for profile pictures, 287
- drip-feed marketing, 302, 304
- Dummies (website), 4
- ## E
- Education section
adding education, 185–186
adding multimedia, 187–188
certifications in, 179
in checklist, 258
graduation year, 184
high school, 184
reordering education, 186–187
- elevator pitch, 151–153
- email addresses
adding to Contact Information section, 77–78
tips for, 311
- emails
LinkedIn URL on, 271
turning off group communication, 232–233
- employment gaps, in Experience section, 121–122
- end dates, for experience, 127
- endorsements. *See Skills and Endorsements section*
- examples
Experience section, 143–145
Summary section, 159–162
- Experience section
about, 115–116, 123
adding experiences, 124–131
in checklist, 258

deleting experiences, 117–120
disqualifying yourself, 131–136
editing existing experiences, 136–137
employment gaps, 121–122
examples, 143–145
merging experiences, 117–120
optimizing job titles with keywords, 140–143
reattaching recommendations, 139–140
removing experiences, 138–139
reordering concurrent experiences, 137
resume, 116–117
work histories for recent graduates, 120–121
extracurricular hobbies, adding to headlines, 108
eye level, for profile pictures, 288

F

Facebook, 270
first person, 14, 149
first-degree connection, 44, 63
Fivrr (website), 209
focus, of Summary section, 155
Following section
about, 235
choosing companies to follow, 235–236
following companies, 236
following compared with connecting, 238
unfollowing companies, 237
foreign languages, 181–183, 258
formatting
for headlines, 103
Summary section, 158–159
framing your shot, for profile pictures, 94–95
free accounts, 20
Freelimages (website), 210, 313

G

Gatekeeper, 305
generator app, for headlines, 112, 310
Gmail (website), 311
goals
multimedia and, 204
Summary section and, 151

Google AdWords Keyword Planner, 29–30
Google Apps (website), 311
Google Voice (website), 79–80, 310
Gottschalk, Marla (Director), 239
graduation
creating work histories for recent graduates, 120–121
year of, 184
grammar checker, 312
Grammarly (website), 312
GraphicRiver (website), 210, 314
groups. *See LinkedIn Groups*

H

Handley, Ann (CCO), 239
'happy ending,' adding to headlines, 109
Harris, Carla (speaker), 309–310
hashtags, creating, 249
headline
about, 101
adding, 112
benefit statement, 109–111
in checklist, 258
default, 282
generator app, 112, 310
importance of, 101–102
keywords, 106–109
overwriting, 126
using symbols, 102–106
hero image, 250
high school, 184
Honors & Awards section (profile), 169–172, 258
"How Great Leaders Inspire Action" TED talk (Sinek), 309
"How to Own Your Power" presentation (Harris), 309–310
How You're Connected section, 130
Hurley, Peter (photographer), 289

I

iCloud (website), 311
icons, explained, 4

identity theft, 86
IM addresses, adding to Contact Information section, 80–81
Industry section, 71–75, 258
influencers
 about, 238
 in checklist, 259
 choosing which to highlight, 238–239
 finding, 240, 241
 removing, 242
InMail, 262, 269–270, 305
Interests section
 adding to Additional Information section, 194–197
 tips for, 284
internships, 120
Invites Welcome (website), 298
iStock (website), 210, 314

J

job search process, using LinkedIn for, 10
Job Seeker account, 20, 260, 262–263
job titles
 adding to headlines, 107
 optimizing with keywords, 140–143
JRX (website), 104

K

keywords
 for headlines, 106–109
 importance of, 21–25
 online tools for, 25–30
 optimizing job titles with, 140–143
for Skills and Endorsements section, 36–37
stuffing, 283
Krawchek, Sallie (CEO), 239

L

languages, 181–183, 258
letterhead, LinkedIn URL on, 271
lighting, for profile pictures, 93, 286

LinkedIn. *See also specific topics*
 cost of, 20, 259–264
 popularity of, 15
 tips for leveraging, 301–307
 using as a search engine, 15–18
LinkedIn blog (website), 88
LinkedIn Groups
 about, 166, 223
 in checklist, 259
 deleting, 231
 highlighting on profile, 233–234
 importance of, 224–234
 joining, 228–229, 276, 295–296
 participating in, 276
 searching for, 229–231
 starting, 296
 turning off group communication emails, 232–233
 turning off group notifications, 227–228
 types of, 225–227
 using, 305–306

LinkedIn Jobs section (website), 10
LinkedIn Network, 63, 224–225
LinkedIn Open Networker (LION), 70, 297–298
LinkedIn Pulse, 237–238, 242–244
LinkedIn User Agreement (website), 99
LinkedIn Volunteer Marketplace (website), 191
linking, to your profile, 296–297
LION (LinkedIn Open Networker), 70, 297–298
Location section (profile), 71–75, 258
lock icon, 199
Lynda, 28, 180

M

Manage Recommendations section, 218
Marital Status field, 197–200
marketing
 adding profile to other social media sites, 270
 alerting connections of updated profile, 267–270
 blog posts, 250–251
 drip-feed, 302, 304
 getting views to your profile, 272–277

public profile, 59
your profile, 266–277
Microsoft Word, 148
month, using in Experience section, 127
mug shots, 288
multimedia
 adding, 187–188, 283
 highlighting with, 204–206
resume, 207
types of, 204
video resumes, 206

N

Name field (profile), 68–71, 258
network, 62–66, 291–299, 307
news
 in checklist, 259
 following, 237–238, 304
99Designs (website), 209
notifications, group, 227–228

O

O'Donnell, J.T. (CEO), 239
online tools
 for creating background images, 209–211, 314
 for keywords, 25–30
open networking sites/groups, 298–299
Open Profile/Open Profile messages, 260
OpenLink messages, 305
Organizations section, 165–168
outfit, for profile pictures, 95–96
outsider, viewing your profile as an, 256–257

P

paid accounts, 20, 260–262
Patents section, 176–178, 258
People You May Know tool, 63–66, 294–295, 302–303
Personal Details field, 197–200
personalized URL, 55–59, 258

phone numbers
 adding to Contact Information section, 79–80
 virtual, 310–311
Photocrops (website), 210, 313
photographers, professional, 91–92, 285–286, 313
Photographers Index (website), 286, 313
Photoshelter (website), 286, 313
Photoshop, for profile pictures, 289
PicMonkey (website), 314
picture, profile. *See* profile picture
Pixabay (website), 210, 313
posts
 marketing, 250–251
 publishing, 249–250
 writing, 244
prefixes, adding to name in profile, 69–70
premium badge, 260
Premium members
 about, 20, 262–264
 background images gallery for, 209
 profile, 260–261
 search results for, 19
Private mode, 272–273
pro bono work, 191
professional memberships, 165–168
professional photographers, 285–286, 313
Professional Photographers of America (website), 286, 313
professional story, creating your, 153–158
profile picture
 about, 87
 background for, 93–94, 286–287
 changing settings for, 100
 in checklist, 257
 choosing, 96–98
 determining need for, 88–90
 reason for having, 88
 taking your own, 92–96
 tips for, 281, 285–290
 uploading, 98–99
 using existing, 90–91
 using photographers, 91–92

- profile(s). *See also specific sections; specific topics*
- about, 67–68
 - adding background images to, 211–212
 - adding schools, 62
 - allowing update alerts, 52
 - All-Star, 183–188
 - confidentiality of, 70–71
 - creating, 53, 182–183
 - creating personalized URL, 55–59
 - current position in, 61–62
 - highlighting groups on, 233–234
 - improving strength of, 59–66
 - managing changes to, 49–52
 - manually removing updates, 51–52
 - marketing your, 266–277
 - rearranging sections of, 254–256
 - “three P’s,” 173–178
 - turning off update alerts, 50–51
 - turning on public, 53–55
 - viewing, 256–257
 - progress, tracking, 265–266
 - Project section, 173–174, 258
 - prospecting, using LinkedIn for, 11–12
 - public profile
 - marketing, 59
 - turning on, 53–55
 - Publications section (profile), 174–176, 258
 - Publishing Platform
 - about, 242–244
 - blogs, 276
 - creating a blog, 244–249
 - publishing posts, 249–250
 - thought leaders, 244, 306–307
 - using, 307
- R**
- ranking, 262
 - Rapportive app, 299
 - Raumrot (website), 210, 313
 - rearranging profile sections, 254–256
- recommendations
- about, 212
 - accepting, 218
 - asking for, 214–217
 - in checklist, 258
 - default text for requesting, 217–218
 - getting, 284
 - identifying people to give, 212–214
 - providing, 220–222, 277
 - reattaching to experiences, 139–140
 - removing, 219–220
 - reordering, 219
 - writing, 215
- Recruiter accounts, 20, 260, 264
- Remember icon, 4
- reputation management, using LinkedIn for, 11
- resolution, for profile pictures, 97–98
- resources, recommended, 309–314
- responsibilities, in Experience section, 134
- resumes
- in Experience section, 116–117
 - uploading, 207
 - video, 206
- roles, in Experience section, 134
- Ryan, Liz (CEO), 239
- S**
- sales, using LinkedIn for, 11–12
 - Sales Navigator account, 259, 260, 263–264
 - schools, adding to profile, 62
 - search alerts, 262
 - search bar, 16
 - search engine, using LinkedIn as a, 15–18
 - search engine optimization (SEO)
 - defined, 30
 - keywords for headlines, 106–109
 - off profile, 31–33
 - profile, 30–31
 - search results, 18–21, 261, 306
 - second-degree connection, 63
 - sections, rearranging in profile, 254–256

security
confidentiality, 70–71
identity theft, 86
self-promoting recommendations, 220
SEO. *See* search engine optimization (SEO)
Serdula, Donna (author) (website), 312
settings
for profile pictures, 100
visibility, 100, 199–200, 273
ShutterStock (website), 210, 314
Sinek, Simon (speaker), 309
size, of profile pictures, 97
Skills and Endorsements section
about, 35
adding skills, 37–39
in checklist, 258
endorsing connections, 43–44
hiding endorsements, 41–42
obtaining endorsements, 41–46
opting out of endorsements, 42–43
providing endorsements, 277
rearranging skills, 39–40
removing endorsements, 44–45
showcasing skills, 36–40
soliciting endorsements, 45–46
Skype (website), 80–81, 311
SlideShare (website), 28, 312–313
smiling, for profile pictures, 289
social media, adding your profile to other, 270
social proof, 305
Societies section, 185
Solis, Brian (Principal Analyst), 239
specialties, adding to headlines, 107–108
spelling checker, 312
start dates, for experience, 127
status updates, 268–269, 273–276
strategy
about, 9
creating a compelling tone, 14
determining your goal, 10–12
determining your target audience, 12–13
success, benchmarking, 265–266

Summary section
about, 147
avoiding ‘resume-speak,’ 149–150
in checklist, 258
creating professional story, 153–158
editing, 148–149
elevator pitch, 151–153
examples, 159–162
formatting, 158–159
goals, 151
target audience, 151
writing in first person, 149
summer jobs, 120
symbols
adding to headline, 102–106
in job titles, 142–143
in Summary section, 158–159
using, 282
variations in, 312

T

Tagul (website), 26
Tagxedo (website), 26
target audience
determining your, 12–13
Experience section and, 119
multimedia and, 204
Summary section and, 151
Technical Stuff icon, 4
test scores, in checklist, 258
third-degree connection, 63
thought leaders, 244, 306–307
“three P’s,” 173–178
Tip icon, 4
tone, creating a compelling, 14
Topic pages, 28–29
TopLinked (website), 298
turning on/off
group communication emails, 232–233
group notifications, 227–228
public profile, 53–55
update alerts, 50–51, 282
Twitter, 81–83, 270

U

UHD Wallpapers (website), 210, 313
Unicode Character Table (website), 104
Unsplash (website), 210, 313
updates
 alerts for, 50–52, 282
 to Honors & Awards section, 172
 manually removing from profile, 51–52
 sharing, 244
uploading profile pictures, 98–99
URL, personalized, 55–59
User Agreement (website), 99

V

video resumes, 206
views, of profile, 202–203, 272–277
virtual phone numbers, 310–311
visibility settings
 for Personal Details field, 199–200
 for profile pictures, 100
 for profiles, 272–273
Volunteering Experience section (profile), 166, 189–192, 258

W

Warning icon, 4
websites, 84–86. *See also specific websites*
WeChat, adding to Contact Information section, 83
Whitman, Meg (CEO), 239
Wikipedia Symbol Block List (website), 104
Word (Microsoft), 148
word cloud generator, 25–26
Word It Out (website), 26
Wordle.net (website), 26–28
Wordsift (website), 26
work address, adding to Contact Information section, 81
work history, 120–121, 283

Y

year
 of graduation, 184
 using in Experience section, 127

About the Author

Donna Serdula pioneered the concept of LinkedIn profile optimization, realizing early on that the LinkedIn profile was so much more than just an online resume. The LinkedIn profile is an amazing opportunity for branding.

Donna spent the first 10 years of her career in sales, marketing, and training. She joined LinkedIn's social network in 2005 where she promptly copied and pasted her resume and wondered what all the fuss was about. A job change in 2006 led her back to LinkedIn as she looked for tools to help her build a sales territory. It was during this time she had her LinkedIn epiphany and forged her LinkedIn profile methodology.

In 2009, she walked away from her successful sales career and founded Vision Board Media and LinkedIn-Makeover.com. Her mission: Help people realize their Internet identity and shape one that makes an impact and leads to opportunity.

From that day on, Donna Serdula became the chief influencer, advocating and evangelizing the importance of taking control of your Internet identity. By presenting yourself in a way that inspires and builds confidence in your abilities, products, and services, you are shaping your future.

Donna is an in-demand speaker throughout the United States, speaking on the topics of LinkedIn, professional branding, online reputation, and job search. Prior to *LinkedIn Profile Optimization For Dummies*, Donna wrote *LinkedIn Makeover: Professional Secrets to a POWERFUL LinkedIn Profile*. Donna has been featured on Business Insider, NBC, and SiriusXM Radio's The Focus Group, and in Time magazine's Money Section, the Wall Street Journal's Market Watch, the Los Angeles Times, and many other news outlets.

Visit Donna's website www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com for more LinkedIn resources or her website devoted to her public speaking, www.DonnaSerdula.com. You can contact Donna directly at Donna@LinkedIn-Makeover.com.

Dedication

To my sons, Jimmy and Jed — my favorite first degree connections.

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