

LinkedIn Profile Guide

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Social media platforms are becoming increasingly important when looking for work and should be a crucial part of your job search and networking efforts. These platforms have introduced ways for job seekers to connect more easily with employers and offer recruiters and hiring manager's additional information about your candidacy beyond what would appear in a typical cover letter and CV.

The social media platform most associated with one's professional life is LinkedIn. It has become an almost essential part of any job search, equal to having a CV and cover letter prepared. In the world of recruitment, it is now recognized as the single best online platform for employers to find candidates. This means that employers are increasingly searching for potential candidates' profiles online in addition to reviewing traditional applications.

Unlike your CV, LinkedIn should be used as a professional portfolio. It allows you the space to clearly outline your career goals, experience, achievements and the value you can offer a company.

BASIC TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Start with a professional photo of yourself

- Profiles with a photo have 14 times the views of those without, so this should be one of your first steps.
- When you're getting ready to take your photo make sure that you've dressed professionally (think about what you would wear to work in your specific field).
- Smile and focus the shot on your head and shoulders which should take up the majority of the picture.
- Finally, ensure that the background is not distracting or that it isn't a picture that you've taken from Instagram, your last trip to Europe or your friend's wedding ceremony.

Stand out with a creative and informative headline

- Think of this as your professional slogan! LinkedIn will automatically generate a headline for you based on your most recent experience, but creating a customized headline will help you stand out.
- Think about one or two things you would want someone to know about you without even having to view your profile. Areas that you specialize in, skills that you have, jobs you aspire to fill once you've finished your program.
- Also, consider who you will be targeting in the near future. Are you looking to simply expand your network or are you actively looking for a job.
- Examples for your headline might be "A client centred marketing student and social media branding

specialist” or “An experienced JavaScript and C# programmer · Aspiring Front End Developer · Current Computer Science Student @ McGill” or “Analytical Math Student who loves making sense of large datasets · R / SQL proficient · Seeking internship opportunities.”

- Do not use this section to advertise that you’re just generally seeking new opportunities or challenges. Instead, go to your account privacy settings and switch on the feature that lets recruiters know you’re open to being contacted.

Customize your LinkedIn URL

- The default URL that LinkedIn provides you with when you register for an account will usually include your name along with a seemingly random sequence of numbers and letters.
- Take the time to customize the URL by clicking on the “edit your public profile & URL” tab. This will ensure it looks more professional, especially if you’re going to be using the URL on your CV.

Location, location, location?

- While at McGill you can use “Montreal, Quebec, Canada” as your location but as you begin looking for work it’s a good idea to change the location to the city where you’re hoping to actually land your position.

Summarizing your experience and interests

- Use the summary section to provide prospective readers with an overview that sells your experiences and highlights your skills and passion for your area of interest. Write it in the first person and use it to connect with your target market.
- This section should focus on your professional/academic story and achievements. If you don’t have direct experience then you will want to focus on your strengths, interests, and career aspirations.
- When writing your summary, try to focus on making the first two lines the most engaging as they will be the only lines to show up on your main profile page. You will have to entice potential viewers with those two first lines to make them click “show more.” Try using a personal anecdote, story, or humor to draw people into reading through your summary in more detail.
- Try to quantify your experience if possible. Numbers will draw the reader’s eye and make the experience you’re describing much more concrete and results oriented.

Highlighting what you've done

- After you've completed the summary section, describing your relevant experiences should be next on your list. Remember that LinkedIn is a space that should be more descriptive than your CV.
- Try to summarize your role in a short paragraph focusing not only on your principle tasks but also your achievements and the results of your work wherever possible. Incorporate industry key words and phrases throughout your experiences when possible.
- You can also include volunteer experience that you've gained that is relevant to the positions you are targeting. Just be sure to identify that it was a volunteer role after the position title.

Education

- This section is fairly straight forward to complete for the most part but be sure to include any activities, societies, or clubs you've taken part in during your studies.
- However, if these experiences have been larger roles and would be interesting to a potential employer, include them in the experience or volunteer section instead.
- You should also provide a brief description of your degree. This is especially important if your program is non-professional (ie. accounting or engineering) but is actually applicable for all degrees as there can be variations in the programs between different schools.

Talk about your projects

- Projects discussed in this section can be from either professional, volunteer, or academic roles. In fact, if you are lacking industry experience, this should be used as a space to discuss academic projects that relate to your desired jobs.
- Be sure to include salient details, industry keywords, and any technical skills you used while completing the project. If appropriate, you can also connect your team members in your project description.

Recommendations

- As you complete roles or projects, you can ask for recommendations from your supervisors or fellow team members. While it will be left up to the person to include what they like, they will hopefully focus on your skills and abilities, as well as how effective you were at working with others.
- Most people won't think of offering to write these for you, so asking is your best bet if you think the experience working with that person was positive.
- You can also offer to write recommendations for others. Potential viewers of your profile will be able to see the recommendations you've written for fellow team members and colleagues, as well as the ones you've received.

Featured Skills & Endorsements

- The skills section on LinkedIn is for you to populate with skills that you think reflect your expertise, competencies, and abilities, or skills that capture your experience in a single word or two. These can include both hard skills (e.g. SPSS) and soft skills (e.g. Leadership).
- Try to be specific and list skills that are important in your industry or future role and avoid using generic

terms. LinkedIn allows you to add up to 50 skills to your profile, but your focus here should be on quality over quantity!

- If you're unsure of which words to use at this point, one way of starting your list is to review job postings that interest you and look for the terms that employers are using to describe the role.
- Once you've created your skills list, it's time to solicit endorsements. You can ask people you've worked with recently to endorse you for skills that you demonstrated in your work together. It's a simple click of the mouse to endorse someone so typically people will be willing to help.
- You can also endorse people in your network for skills you know your connections possess. This may in turn lead to them endorsing you as well.

Remaining sections

- Try to complete as many remaining sections as possible. LinkedIn members with complete accounts have been shown to be 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through the platform.
- Fill out the courses section with a selection of classes you've taken to date that relate best to your area of career choice.
- List the languages you're able to communicate in, and qualify to what level.
- Add any honours or awards you've received to date and link them back to the roles in which you received them when prompted.

What's next?

- Start to follow companies you would like to work in, request to join groups that interest you, connect with people working in areas you'd like to work in, actively use your account, and finally reach out to people you'd like to talk with; either online or better yet, in person.