

# What Makes A LinkedIn Profile Great?

*Answer by [Aaron Clayton-Dunn](#), entrepreneur and musician, on [Quora](#)*

I work at a startup, and we're building out our engineering staff. In order to find our application engineer last spring, I spent weeks scouring LinkedIn. Having read thousands of profiles, I figure I'll summarize what makes a profile stand out to me. If you are looking for a technical role and you want to generate a lot of interest from recruiters, here's my advice:

- 1. Upload a picture.** Of you. Yes, your face. At a good resolution. Why? Two reasons. One—when recruiters spend all day looking at profiles, it's easy to forget that each profile is actually linked to a human being, not just a humanoid machine that may or may not meet the job requirements. A picture of said human is a good reminder of that. Two—recruiters end up seeing the same profiles again and again as they try out hundreds of different filters. Because visual memory is one of our species' superpowers, the picture will anchor your profile in recruiters' minds. When they stumble upon it again, they'll remember you and continue building their mental model of you instead of starting over from scratch.
- 2. Make a call to action in your summary.** If you are willing to speak to recruiters, encourage readers to get in touch.
- 3. Include your contact information unless you are categorically closed off to anyone reaching out to you for any reason.** Who knows what someone will want to get in touch about! Add the "Advice for Contacting" section and put your email address in an obscured format like first (AT) last (DOT) com to evade unwanted attention from simple-minded bots. I would urge you not to rely on people contacting you through LinkedIn's messaging system for a few reasons. Not every recruiter has the paid account which allows you to contact people that way. Those who do have paid accounts have limits on the number of people they can converse with. Finally, the messaging system is surprisingly buggy.
- 4. Write a summary that gets at the heart of what you're interested in doing and conveys both your expertise and your eagerness to learn and take on new challenges.**

At the end of the summary, just go ahead and write "Keywords: graphics, graphics engine, game engine, OpenGL, WebGL, C++, [insert 30 more]." By using the term "keywords," you don't have to shy away from redundancies which are helpful to include if you want to turn up in lots of searches. "Skills" is a good approach too, especially when you take the time to break the skills into categories. Feel free to include both keywords and skills.

- 5. Convey your passion for something.** And not just your passion for solving hard problems. That's what everybody writes. What do you love to work on and think about? Games? Distributed systems? Bioinformatics? Write that! And don't stop there. If you're actively pursuing a new job, explain the type of role you're seeking, the company size you're targeting, and the technologies you're excited to explore. It's not just about finding a job. You're a software engineer; believe me, you can get a job. It's about finding a job you love.

- 6.** For each section in your work experience, list your responsibilities and accomplishments. Be honest, be specific, and use numbers when possible.
- 7.** Don't write big paragraphs. Break up your ideas into logical chunks and use single dashes or tildes for bullet points.
- 8.** Link to other places you want people to find you online. If possible, showcase your work on Github or on a "projects" or "portfolio" page on your personal website.
- 9.** Here's a good one from Mr. Friedman, my ninth grade English teacher: read over your writing out loud. You'll weed out some typos and realize when a sentence has taken a turn for the worse.
- 10.** Ask one or two friends who write well to read over your profile. They'll help you make your points succinctly and fix up your grammar mistakes. Hopefully they'll wince and stop you from writing a summary like "People often call on me to solve arbitrarily complex problems" or a headline like "Perceiving the future." I didn't make those quotes up.
- 11.** If you're looking for a job in a new city, update your location to that new city. This step is easily overlooked but actually quite important. The city you choose dictates who contacts you and what jobs LinkedIn recommends to you.
- 12.** If your job experience involves a number of shorter engagements, be aware that this might be a "red flag" for certain employers who are looking for someone with a track record of long-term commitments. If you *are* looking for a long-term position but you've held a number of positions for less than a year, I would suggest saying something in your summary to create a short narrative of your career path and aspirations and affirm that you are looking to make a serious commitment to a new employer. Alternatively, if you are looking for part-time or short-term engagements, make that clear in your summary. That's perfectly fine too and it's always good to be upfront about what you're looking for.
- 13.** Solicit a handful of strong recommendations.

That's all I've got for now. Good luck finding a job where you learn a lot, work on something important, and spend your time with people you admire and enjoy working with!