

Build a (Better) LinkedIn Profile

For those who don't know, you may be asking what is LinkedIn? LinkedIn is the social media channel for professional networking, to include companies posting jobs, job seekers searching and applying to jobs. Many companies only post on LinkedIn now over the common job boards (Monster, Careerbuilder, Ziprecruiter, etc).

LinkedIn is about connecting professionally, but before we connect, we look for what we have in common. Think of your profile as another way to promote yourself (a.k.a. your brand), like a digital resume on the web to promote your experience, knowledge and skills. Build trust by using an authentic voice & telling your unique career story. Some tips for you:

1. **Don't cut & paste your resume!** You wouldn't hand out your resume before introducing yourself to a Talent Advisor or HR Manager. You can copy in from your resume as a starting point only.
2. **Turn off your profile updates** Before you start working on your profile, make sure to turn off the alerts. In Settings & Privacy - How LinkedIn uses your data - Share job changes, education changes, and work (choose whether network is notified) = NO Note: I leave this off indefinitely, since you should continue to work on and/or keep your profile current.
3. **Turn on your career interests to let Recruiters know you want to hear from them** In the job section, click on Career Interests in the header. There you can choose to let recruiters know you're open. Turn ON. Take time to read each section of this page and make this as robust as you like. (Personal note to recruiters, variations of job titles, area preference, type of jobs). Note: if you are working, make sure your current job and company are built out in your profile (with company page linked) first, that will help keep your current job search private by omitting your current employer.
4. **Essential Basics (Name & Photos)** Name: make sure you have it filled in accurately, so the first & last name in the correct fields. If hyphenated, then both in last name field best. Profile Photo: you need to have a professional headshot. Showing some of your personality (color backdrop, style, attire, accessories, etc.) is a plus. Backdrop photo: optional to add. If you do then personalize it, tie it into your professional image as well.
5. **LinkedIn URL** Check yours to see if it has a portion of your name, if not edit to include it. While job seeking the URL should be added to any of your cover letter, resume, and email signature.
6. **Headline** That line of text under your name? It follows your name in search and all your posts, comments, tags etc. It defaults to your last job. Best to put in variations of the titles you are seeking with achievement terms that describes who you are and what you will bring to a company. Do not put "unemployed, seeking work etc".
7. **About (the Summary)** Think about your elevator pitch, this is where you describe your professional story. The essence of who you are and what you do, personal values you bring to your professional performance, even a note of humor or passion. The more meaningful your story is, the more time you'll get from readers. Note: the first 3 lines show to anyone who looks at your profile first, when job seeking make those 3 lines count to recruiters.
8. **Build out your Experience & Skills** You can start by copying from your resume, but must modify the details further for your profile. This needs to be formatted and proofread well. Having a few sentences and bullets, looks clean. Target the transferable experience and skills around what you want in your next job.
9. **Recommendations** Give and get recommendations from coworkers, vendors, clients, partners, bosses.
10. **Connections** Build out your network