

Creating an Effective LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is the second largest social media site behind Facebook with more than 238 million users worldwide. With networking playing a vital role in the job search process, LinkedIn is a great way to connect, communicate, and learn from other professionals in your field. Because LinkedIn is one of the best ways to network online, building a successful LinkedIn profile is an important step in beginning your career search.

- 1. Use a professional photo.** Think of LinkedIn as your online business suit. Present yourself to employers on the site the way you would present yourself in an interview. Always use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- 2. Make your profile stand out with an informative headline.** Just like your resume, potential employers will not spend much time looking at your site if their interest is not caught early. Use an attention grabbing headline to pull prospective connections to your profile.
- 3. Be detailed and show off your skills and education.** Unlike a resume or cover letter, a LinkedIn profile can be as lengthy as you need it to be. It is your opportunity to display all your education, experience, activities, awards, and achievements, and you do not have to be defined by a set number of pages.
- 4. Be concise and confident in your opening summary.** The summary is the first thing everyone sees as they scroll your page, so make sure it conveys your most relevant work experiences, internships, volunteer work, and education. If this is the only thing someone reads, what do you want them to know about you?
- 5. Use key words in your “Specialties” section.** The specialties section is searchable by hiring managers and recruiters. If someone types in one of your specialties, your profile will show up in the search list. This is a great way to put yourself ahead of others who may choose to leave it blank.
- 6. Utilize the “Ask to be recommended” button.** Showing credibility is one of the most important steps you can take when job searching, and you should have a wide array of recommendations and at least one recommendation for each position. Connect with your professors, internship coordinators, past employers, and professional mentors and ask them to recommend you on your page.
- 7. Join LinkedIn Groups.** Joining groups on LinkedIn not only shows that you are involved on the site, but it allows you to connect with others in those groups who have similar interests as you.
- 8. Use your unique LinkedIn URL.** Under edit profile, you can change your URL to your name so it is easier for employers to search for your profile. It is also important to add your LinkedIn page to your resume and your email signature. This is a lot easier to do if you have a unique URL.
- 9. Keep your profile up to date.** Just like your resume, continue to update your LinkedIn profile. By creating a weekly status as well, your profile will show up on your connection’s front pages, another great way to stay updated with potential employees.
- 10. Utilize all LinkedIn has to offer.** Just as potential employers can search you, you can search your potential employers. Read their LinkedIn profiles before going in for an interview to learn more about their skills, awards, values, and past job experiences. This is a great way to develop questions and connections for the interview.

Resources: Grads.linkedin.com <http://press.linkedin.com/about>