



Explore



Engage



Experience



Embark



Elevate

Building a Strong LinkedIn Profile

Know what to include (and leave off)

Users who list their education appear in searches up to 17 times more often than those who don't. Location is another important detail: filling out this field with where you want to work will make you appear in up to 23 times more searches.

A professional-looking picture is another must-have. Profiles with a photo get up to 21 times more views and up to 36 times more messages. And a summary statement, an "elevator pitch" with at least 40 words that speak to your skills, motivation, and interests, will also help grab a recruiter's eye.

Your LinkedIn headline also deserves some attention. If you're actively looking for a new gig, think about how you can use this space to grab a recruiter's attention. There are a million "Marketing Director" profiles; something like "Master of Digital Pharmaceutical Marketing" will get way more eyeballs.

It's a social network. So be social

LinkedIn can be a powerful networking tool — if you let it. Instead of just saving the connections you've met throughout your professional life, actively engage with contacts by liking, sharing, and commenting on their activity.

It's fine to connect with someone you've never met. But make sure you send a customized message in your invitation. Something along the lines of: "Hey, Steve! We don't know each other, but we both work in sales, and I'm really impressed with what you're doing. I'd love to connect."

Nail the voice

Your LinkedIn profile is a chance to add some personality to your professional story, so don't make the mistake of copying your resume verbatim. The best profiles are usually written in first person ("I'm a PR whiz, trusted by the biggest names in Silicon Valley"), but other styles can work too. If you're in sales or marketing, second person ("If you want to know how we can affect change, visit my brand website,") can help engage potential clients.

Take a minute to think about your target audience. Is it a potential employer? New clients? Tailor your voice accordingly and try not to be too dry. Write it as if there's a real person behind it, not 'a dynamic professional with 30 years of upward experience'.

Make sure the work experiences you're highlighting are up to date, and pertinent to your career. It's cool to include volunteer work where you flexed skills that would be attractive to an employer, but the summer you spent as your kid's soccer coach, or the string of restaurant jobs you held in college, won't do you much good. Relevance is key. Add the experience that relates to your future professional goals.

Keep your profile alive

If you want your profile to stand out, you'll need to update it often with examples of your work output. Papers you've written, projects you've completed, and presentations you've nailed are all good options.

You don't have to have a traditional desk job, or a creative portfolio, to make this work. Just find something you're proud of and make it visual, like pictures of an event you planned, or a video of a panel discussion you took part in.



Explore



Engage



Experience



Embark



Elevate

The driving idea is to get your audience to engage with you in real life. A really successful profile makes a person want to do something — pick up the phone and call you, click a link to a website, download a white paper.

Hack the LinkedIn job search

There are more than 11 million active job listings on LinkedIn. Spend some time scrolling through the gigs you're interested in, and jot down the specific skills they ask for.

Often, recruiters will search LinkedIn for keywords of the job description they're trying to fill. Peppering some of these words into your skills section, summary, and work experience will make them come to you.

Including at least five relevant skills will help you connect with the right opportunities.

Give recommendations and endorsements

Give and people are likely to give back to you. It's a chance to help your fellow professionals, and it establishes you as an authority.

Ask for recommendations

These make for a priceless first impression! You know people who would gladly recommend your work, so ask them to do so on LinkedIn. But don't rely on LinkedIn to do the asking for you with their recommendations request feature. The best approach is to ask in person or to write a personal email sincerely expressing what their recommendation would mean to you.

Additional Suggestions

- Make a custom profile URL and use it — on business cards, in your email signature, in blogging bios, on your website. It's an easy and memorable way for people to connect with you.
- Follow relevant news and companies. Like groups, these demonstrate your interests and help you keep up with the latest news.
- Post professional LinkedIn status updates and show that you know your stuff. Got a professional blog? Share your blog posts and interesting industry news.