



# HOW TO OPTIMISE YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

# CREATING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

## Choose the right profile picture

Your profile picture is the first thing people will see on your LinkedIn profile, it is what introduces you and governs first impressions. It is therefore important the image clearly shows what you look like and looks professional. You can find more top tips for choosing your LinkedIn profile picture [here](#) and below:

- Pick a photo that looks like you
- Make sure your face takes up at least 60% of the frame
- Have a plain background
- Wear formal clothing, what you might wear in a professional workplace
- Use a high-resolution image
- Be the only person in the picture
- Get someone else to take the picture for you
- Smile! This will make you look more friendly and approachable

Take the time to get your profile picture right. It's your first chance to communicate that you are friendly, likable, and trustworthy – attributes that are crucial to getting prospects to engage with you.

## Complete your profile

LinkedIn encourages you to complete your profile and even has an automatic tool to indicate your profile's strength based on its completeness. You're 40 times more likely to show up in search results with a complete profile and benefit from recruiters and hiring managers looking at your profile. Below is a list of essential elements that need completing:

- Industry and location
- An up-to-date current position (with a description)
- Two past positions
- Education
- Skills (minimum of three)
- Profile photo
- At least 50 connections

# Write a banner headline

The site automatically makes your headline your current job title and employer. It is fine to leave it like this but there are things you can do to give more information and make you stand out. That doesn't mean your headline can't include where you work and what you do. It should communicate your expertise, your field, and why you're special. But it also should be eye-catching. Below are some points you should include in your headline:

- Add your speciality
- Incorporate your future job
- Include what you do
- Show off your accolades

Use keywords (not overused buzzwords) that make it easy for others to find you. You can identify the right options by reviewing job descriptions in your industry. There is more information on the points above [here](#) and writing a headline [here](#).

## Change your URL

When you create a profile, LinkedIn automatically assigns you a string of numbers as a URL. But you can (and should) set a custom URL instead. Make sure your URL is easy for you to remember and share. Most commonly people will use their name and initials in some format, though you might need to get creative or add numbers if you have a more common name. You can also add key certifications to better optimise your profile. A customized URL will increase your search results, make it easier to direct people to your profile and it'll look sharp in email signatures and on business cards. Find a guide on how to change your URL [here](#).

## Showcase your experience

Far too many professionals paste information from their CV and cover letter and bullet points from each of their positions. But your experience section can show much more, such as what you've achieved, delivered, and learned in each of your positions. Include distinct measurables and quantify whenever possible. Share details of interesting projects and key accomplishments. You can also include pictures, compelling videos, links to news stories, press releases, and innovative presentations you've delivered to bring your experiences to life.

# Craft your summary

This section should be a few short paragraphs summarising your professional background, areas of expertise, and key accomplishments. Your summary or “About” section is where you can really show your personality and share your story. Does your past experience differ from where you want to go? If so, your summary is the perfect opportunity to connect the dots. Here’s how you might structure it:

- Introduce yourself. Who are you as a professional and what do you do? What value do you bring to the organisations you work for?
- Highlight your key skills, experiences, and achievements in paragraph form or a bulleted list.
- Talk about who you are outside of work. This is optional, but you never know which of your interests might resonate with a recruiter, future employer, or professional connection.
- Call the reader to action by asking them to connect with you to discuss growth marketing, contact you about job or speaking opportunities, or do whatever you’re currently looking to get from your LinkedIn profile.

## Use keywords and avoid buzzwords

Once you know your keywords, weave them into your headline, summary, experience, skills, and anywhere else they make sense on your profile. Make sure that your keywords flow with the rest of your writing, and aren’t just jammed in.

Buzzwords are the words you see all the time on LinkedIn and job descriptions, but that don’t necessarily say a lot about an individual. Such as “innovative,” “driven,” “hardworking,” “effective,” “successful,” and “motivated”. You can use buzzwords in conjunction with more specific keywords when it makes sense but you’ll send a stronger message by showing you have these qualities.

## Include a current job entry, even when unemployed

When recruiters search on LinkedIn, one of the pieces of information the platform uses to return results is your current position—and if you don’t have one, you might not appear. So if you don’t currently have a job, you should add the position or positions you’re looking for but add a line in the spot usually reserved for the company name that makes it clear you’re not saying you’re employed, like “Seeking new opportunity” or similar.

# Add volunteer experience and causes

Underneath your work experience and education are additional spaces to show off your background and qualifications. Adding this information to your profile is a great way to showcase what makes you unique and helps you get in some additional keywords as well.

Adding volunteer work will round out your professional identity. A lot of employers also view volunteer experience as “equivalent to full-time work experience. Volunteering shows employers you are a conscientious individual who is happy to work for a good cause. Volunteering projects abroad can also indicate you are happy to work outside of your comfort zone.

## Fill out your education

The education section is especially important for students and recent graduates, because fellow students and alumni are a key part of your network, and if someone searches for “people who studied at [your University]” (which is a LinkedIn search prompt), you want to show up in the results. Especially if your experience section is otherwise a bit thin, you can include relevant coursework, school projects, and extracurricular activities. Like your experience section, you can set yourself apart by adding rich media.

## Add your skills

It’s one of the quickest of quick wins on LinkedIn – scroll through the list of skills and identify those that are relevant to you. Doing so helps to substantiate the description in your Headline and Summary, and provides a platform for others to endorse you. However, the key here is staying relevant. Take time for a spring clean of your skills list every now and then. One way to identify relevant skills is to review profiles of your peers and colleagues and add the ones that apply to you.

A skills assessment is an online test that enables you to demonstrate the level of your skills, and display a Verified Skills badge on your profile. Data shows that candidates with verified skills are around 30% more likely to be hired for the roles they apply for – and displaying proof your abilities strengthens your personal brand more generally as well. Displaying the results of your skills assessments is entirely voluntary, and you can retake the tests as often as you like before showing that you’ve passed.

# Take skills and endorsements seriously

There's evidence that more endorsements will lead to higher LinkedIn search results. You can edit the order of your skills and put the most important ones at the top to increase the likelihood you get endorsed for those you care most about.

While it may not affect the search metric, recommendations feel more reliable than skill endorsements, so you want to be sure you have those, too. Many professionals get endorsed for skills by people who hardly know them, but this isn't the case with a recommendation. Aim to have one to two for each position. Consider asking peers, clients, and managers shortly after you receive feedback so you can build them up slowly, rather than feeling pressured to get a bunch at once.

## Ask for recommendations

Recommendations give people viewing your profile a sense of your professional credibility. They are personal testimonials written to illustrate the experience of working with you. LinkedIn makes it easy to reach out to specific contacts and request recommendations. Take the time to think about who you would most value a recommendation from and personalise your request.

# USING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

## Be Mindful of Your Profile Settings

If you're job searching, you can adjust your profile settings to let recruiters know you're open to work. And if you don't necessarily want your current employer to find out about it, you can tweak your settings further to hide this info from anyone working at the same company as you. You can also control who sees your updates.

## Link to Your LinkedIn on Your Resume

Don't forget to direct people to your LinkedIn profile. You can add your URL right to your resume or hyperlink it so that anyone reading your resume on a computer can immediately find out more about why you're a great candidate.

## Become an Active User

Once your profile is finished, you can't just abandon LinkedIn until the next time you're applying for a job: You need to be an active user. You can see a massive increase in followers, connections, and profile views if you are actively commenting on posts, engaging with other users, and writing content on LinkedIn. Actively using LinkedIn will help you grow your network, be more visible to your existing network, and learn more about your role, industry, and potential opportunities. If you are regularly sharing content about your chosen industry it shows potential employers your passion and knowledge, and also means they may mean they reach out to you first when a job comes up.

# Request Connections

You can start building your professional network online by connecting with people you already know, or request connections from people you don't know who might be able to help you grow in your career. Or you might request to connect with people who work at companies or in jobs you're interested in.

No matter who you're requesting to connect with, include a message personalise it to them. Pay attention to what they have in their profile, and be very specific about what you hope to get out of connecting. Also, be conscientious, give people an out, and don't take declined connections personally.

Once you connect, you can continue the conversation: Consider setting up an informational interview to learn more about what someone does or the company they work for or talk about new developments in your field. You'll also start to see each other in your feeds so you can comment on their posts and updates.

## Don't Just Network—Use LinkedIn to Learn and Grow

Most people know LinkedIn is a networking platform, but it's also a knowledge-sharing resource. Users talk about what they've learned in posts, what is happening in their industry, and general business-related topics that lead to discussions among professionals. If there's a new development in your field, you can learn about it in a more interactive way than just Googling it—you'll see what others think and can join in the discussion.

LinkedIn Learning is another great feature—you can learn and develop a range of new skills and add completed courses directly to your profile. Perusing the profiles of people who have the type of job or work in the industry you're interested in can help you identify which exact courses you might want to take—or at least give you clues based on their skills and experiences.

# Start Posting

All LinkedIn users can write posts or even articles on the platform. These posts will help you build up your reputation as an expert. Posting regularly shows employers your interest in the industry and can build connections and a higher following if people have something to interact with. It is even an opportunity to show off your writing skills. You can even share relevant articles you've come across elsewhere online.

If you don't feel ready to write your own posts just yet, start by commenting. Select relevant interests on your profile and follow experts, thought leaders, and others in your field who have careers you'd like to learn something from. Then, engage with their posts on your news feed. You'll learn, gain connections, and get inspiration for your own posts.

## Join LinkedIn Groups

LinkedIn Groups are an incredible way to find even more like-minded professionals in your job or industry. You can discuss relevant topics in a more focused setting and become more engaged in your field. Plus, the other group members are a large pool of possible connections.

# Don't Only Pay Attention When You're Job Searching

There are many benefits to LinkedIn for people who aren't looking to switch jobs, from developing relationships with others in your field to learning new skills that will help you in your current job. Furthermore, staying active on LinkedIn after you've found a new role helps make that next job search that much easier. Build up your network and personal brand before you need to tap into it to help get your next job. You'll also stay top of mind for people in your network who can then offer help in your search.