

LinkedIn Profile

You may not consider your LinkedIn Profile to be a career document, but in the modern job market, it has become one of the most important public-facing representations an executive candidate has to prove their value and demonstrate their brand. Additionally, most recruiters find or look for a candidate's LinkedIn profile in the early stages of the hiring process to see if a candidate is the right fit for the role.

Your LinkedIn profile gives you a unique opportunity to express information about yourself beyond the limits of a resume/CV. You can also show some personality in your LinkedIn profile by writing in first person (resumes/CVs are in third person without the pronouns). Even though it is not appropriate to copy and paste your resume/CV into your LinkedIn profile, the two documents should still connect and support each other under your brand.

A resume/CV cannot be replaced by a LinkedIn profile – they are both essential as different brand-supporting channels in your marketing toolkit. One important reason for this is that a LinkedIn profile is online and therefore is always publicly accessible. This limits what you can include on your LinkedIn profile as you attempt to show your accomplishments to a prospective employer. Also, there is no method to target your LinkedIn profile to individual positions, which is one of the essential bonuses of an customizable resume/CV.

Starting the writing process with your resume/CV can absolutely shorten the LinkedIn profile writing process, making it faster to complete the “Work Experience” and “Education” sections. Simply remember that both documents should complement not copy each other. If you are in active job search mode, you may want to attach your resume/CV to your LinkedIn profile so it is accessible if you are initially found by a recruiter via LinkedIn.

Aspects of a Successful LinkedIn Profile

An effective LinkedIn profile will not only support your brand, but will also expand your online visibility, giving your online networking effectiveness a significant increase. This section describes some of the key aspects of successful LinkedIn profiles.

Represent Your Current/Most Recent Company

Whether or not you're currently employed, your LinkedIn profile is an opportunity to present your current or most recent organization in the best light possible. This is particularly important if you intend to make sure your current employer doesn't suspect you're seeking a new opportunity. Your LinkedIn profile should emphasize your desire to connect with other executives in your field and industry, but absolutely don't mention an interest in employment opportunities. Use your LinkedIn profile as a way to give press and additional visibility to your current employer in your “Summary” and “Experience” sections to form the impression that you're looking to connect, but are content at your current organization.

Make Your Profile Public

This might be obvious, but many executives, when they initially created their LinkedIn profiles, may have been more apprehensive about privacy than visibility. In order to entice potential employers or recruiters, however, you must reevaluate any personal privacy rules that may have informed your decisions on what to allow the public to see on LinkedIn. If it's too personal or confidential, then leave it off your profile – problem solved.

Complete Your Whole Profile

If your LinkedIn profile is 100 percent complete, you're much more likely to learn about available jobs on LinkedIn. A complete profile means including the following:

- Your industry and location
- Your current position
- At least two past positions
- Your education
- A minimum of three skills
- A profile photo
- At least 50 connections

Choose a Professional Photo

The essential point to be made about your LinkedIn profile photo is this: You must have one. If you don't have a profile photo you are 14 times less likely to be viewed on LinkedIn. When a photo is not included, it can lead to distrust, with the viewer deliberating what the candidate is keeping secret. If you don't have a professional photo on hand, take one on your smartphone for now until you can get a professional one taken.

When taking or selecting a photo for your profile, you should confirm that the photo is squared and contains your head and shoulders. You should also be dressed for the role and industry of the opportunities you are seeking. Casual, personal photos are fine for Facebook, but if you want to work in a formal, professional environment, it is vital that you help recruiters visualize you in that environment.

Elaborate Further on Current and Past Job Descriptions

The current and past job description sections of your LinkedIn profile allow you to further explain your current and previous roles and how you've added value to each organization. This space also lets you go beyond what is said in your resume/CV and to provide more detailed information. Be sure to include some items that were cut for space from your resume/CV drafts if they're still important to explaining your brand value.

Solicit LinkedIn Recommendations

Recommendations from past and present colleagues can add a lot to your candidacy when you're being assessed for a new opportunity. Therefore, it is sensible to start gathering them before you need them. The most effective strategy to ask someone to write a recommendation for you is to start by writing one for them. LinkedIn permits you to write one recommendation per day to a first degree connection, so manage your time well and target those who are highly likely to return the favor.

Keyword Optimize

Identify keywords for your LinkedIn profile just as you did for your resume/CV and use them strategically across your entire profile. You can even start off with the same ones used in your resume/CV and add to the list. LinkedIn profiles allow you to enter more text and content, which means you can also fit in more keywords without overdoing it.

The top areas to add keywords comprise of the summary and experience sections. However, countless people are unaware of the other LinkedIn fields that are important in LinkedIn's search algorithm. These include:

1. **Name field.** This one is simple—you type in your first and last names. Do not include additional titles or certifications here as it could make it difficult for recruiters to find you by name in searches.
2. **Headline.** Numerous people use LinkedIn's default headline, which uses your current job title. But you are permitted 120 characters, so take advantage of this by introducing critical areas of expertise or qualifications, such as language skills, degrees, etc. Make use of alt-codes to break up the information and make it easier to read. The alt codes or use of non-standard punctuation is read as a "full stop" by the search algorithm – in other words it treats whatever is between the lines as a discrete search term. Also this section is the first area searched for keywords. So it is wise to think in terms of SEO and reverse engineer how you are found.
3. **Job Titles.** You are given 100 characters for this crucial field. Don't miss the chance to introduce key areas of your experience that you refined during the position, following the same principles as the headline. If you have an unusual title – tech companies are infamous for this – like Chief Evangelist, you will also want to put a more common title in parenthesis here or start your description with something like "Serving as the SVP of Business Development" or "CMO".
4. **Skills.** LinkedIn allows 50 words in the skills section, which means this is the place to shamelessly keyword stuff. Use all of the words available, even if you include identical terms. This will add SEO (search engine optimization) value to your LinkedIn profile.
5. **Customize Your URL.** This is an easy way to boost your ranking. It also looks nicer on your business card, email signature, bio, or resume/CV.

Include Links and Media Content

Similar to website optimization, your LinkedIn profile will be most-optimized if you include as much relevant content as possible. Think of your profile as your personal website or a hub. By augmenting your profile with great content, you not only escalate your ranking in searches, but you add dimension to your story. If you have them, add in media mentions, additional websites or blogs you have, a video bio, or SlideShare to your profile.

You may also want to add in attachments from specific projects you led from current and previous organizations (if they're not confidential). Lastly, think about blogging on LinkedIn's Pulse to frequently add to your profile's productivity; this will not only give you better visibility among your network, but will demonstrate your industry or functional knowledge in the minds of those in your network.

Biography

An executive biography is a short document that explains your career in a narrative format. It can comprise of your crucial career moments; the influence of your personal attributes on your calling; major hardships and challenges you confronted and how they made you tougher; and more. Bios also allow you to demonstrate your soft skills, take advantage of “CAR” stories (Challenge, Action, Result), and further describe your leadership style. Executive bios further confirm your brand message in a different way than your resume/CV does by focusing on how your softer skills connect to your value proposition.

The main reasons you should have an executive bio in your marketing toolkit are:

- To emphasize your brand
- To communicate your experience with more personality
- To go past the details stated in your resume/CV
- To point out life passions, personal attributes, and strengths
- To initiate networking outreach when a resume/CV is premature

How to Write a Captivating Bio Checklist

- Write for your target audience.
- Capture attention in the first 10 seconds by starting with a clear branding statement.
- Show your value proposition by telling your story. What do you want to be known for?
- Make paragraphs short and easy to read.
- Let your personality shine throughout the document.
- Validate your successes with supporting data to prove your accomplishments.
- Don't forget to include personal information or impressive life experiences.

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