

LEARNING MADE EASY



2nd Edition

LinkedIn® Profile Optimization

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Create an integrated
LinkedIn branding strategy

—
Optimize with keywords
to get discovered

—
Determine and articulate
your professional story

Donna Serdula

Founder of LinkedIn-Makeover.com



LinkedIn[®] Profile Optimization

2nd Edition

by Donna Serdula

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

LinkedIn® Profile Optimization For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

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Introduction

LinkedIn is *the* professional network for business people. Whether you are a job seeker, a corporate executive, a small-business owner, an entrepreneur, or a professional with the desire for more, LinkedIn is the place to build and nurture your network. It's so easy to get caught up in your day-to-day life and job. People flow in and out. But by using LinkedIn to build a network of the people you meet and then keeping in touch with them, you are creating an engine for opportunities.

American businessman and author Robert Kiyosaki has said, "The richest people in the world look for and build networks; everyone else looks for work."

Beyond the network and networking capabilities, LinkedIn is also the place to forge a strong professional brand. As you move through your professional life, people will want to learn more about you. Who are you? What do you do? How do you help others? What do you represent? What is your mission? These are all questions on top of people's minds. The answers to these questions help people decide if they like you and want to spend more time with you.

Remember, people do business with people!

Not everyone has a personal website or websites devoted to them (well, unless you are a celebrity); however, the LinkedIn profile has become the *de facto* website for everyday professionals. A simple name search for most people returns their LinkedIn profile on the first page of search results. How does your LinkedIn profile portray you? Your LinkedIn profile is your online reputation, digital introduction, and first impression. The good news is that you have complete control over your profile and can shape how your reader perceives you.

Most people simply copy and paste their resume into their profile because it's easy, but a profile consisting of a copied-and-pasted resume impresses no one. Consider the recruiter who has your resume in his hot hands and wants to learn more about you, so he looks you up on LinkedIn, only to find the exact same information that is in your resume. He would be disappointed, to say the least. To have a strong and optimized LinkedIn profile, you need to move beyond just your resume that details your past and aligns you to a job. An optimized LinkedIn profile tells your professional story, is geared strategically toward your goals, and contains what your target audience needs to know about you.

When you are done with this book, your LinkedIn profile is going to be a true compendium of who you are and what you stand for. It's going to authentically tell your professional story, and people will see you as someone who inspires confidence and ability.

About This Book

This book is a how-to manual that shows you the steps to craft a strategic and compelling LinkedIn profile that captures your unique brand and professional story. I show you how to take your profile from nothing more than a simple outline to a robust, full-featured profile of you as a professional that commands attention and evokes action.

Although you can pick up this book at any point, I highly suggest, at the very least, reading Chapter 1 and then Part 2. In Chapter 1, I discuss the importance of determining your LinkedIn goal and target audience. If you don't identify your goal, your profile cannot be written strategically and it will not perform adequately. Likewise, you need to understand your target audience and write to what they need to know about you.

Part 2 is all about the intro card of your LinkedIn profile. This is the very first part people see when they open your LinkedIn profile and you want to make sure you capture their attention immediately, or else they'll surf off to another profile.

Regardless of your LinkedIn goal, you will benefit from the information in this book. Although LinkedIn isn't rocket science, it isn't the most intuitive social network either. Plus, writing about yourself is hard! In this book, I break everything down to its core to make it easy for you to use LinkedIn and create an impressive profile that helps you achieve your professional goals.

Foolish Assumptions

Having worked with thousands of professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, and companies from all over the world, I am going to assume that like them you are optimizing your profile for:

- » **Professional branding/reputation management.** You know that people are looking at your profile and you want to showcase yourself in a professional and impressive manner. You recognize that people draw conclusions based

upon what they read, and you want to ensure they see you as a thought leader and someone who deserves to be noticed and respected.

- » **Sales and prospecting.** You want to use your LinkedIn profile to help you prospect better and sell more. You know that prospects and clients are looking at your profile, and you want them to see you as a solution provider who can help them achieve their goals. You also know that people may be looking for a service or product that you sell and you want to appear in search results.
- » **Job search.** You are either currently working or displaced, but you are ready to spread your wings and find the next great opportunity that makes you want to get out of bed in the morning and go to work. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals are using LinkedIn to find candidates. You want to make sure that your profile stands out in those searches, and that when they click on your profile, what they read is compelling and makes them want to reach out to request your resume. Alternately, you have likely submitted your resume to various job postings and you know that recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals may look at your LinkedIn profile to learn more. You want to make sure your profile is an impressive introduction that compels them to call you for an interview.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into five parts:

Part 1: The Strategy Before the Siege

Most people just jump into writing their LinkedIn profiles, but not you! In this first part, I show you how to immediately stand out by determining your LinkedIn goals, target audience, and keywords.

Part 2: Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started

In this part, I show you how develop a compelling intro card section by choosing a professional profile picture, creating a compelling headline, and uploading an on-brand background image. I also show you how to create a personalized link to your profile that makes marketing a cinch.

Part 3: Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression

In Part 3, I walk you through filling out the two LinkedIn profile sections the majority of people find the most challenging: Experience and About. You'll learn how to craft impressive experiences that focus on achievements over pure job description. You also learn how to craft an About section that acts as a professional manifesto that engages and impresses your target audience.

Part 4: Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches

Part 4 is all about the extra flourishes you can add to your profile, such as with sample projects, publications, patents, organizations, and more. I show you how to spice up your profile and professional brand by getting active on LinkedIn and joining the LinkedIn conversation. When you are done with Chapter 15, you will know more than most Influencers do about LinkedIn publishing!

Part 5: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is the traditional end of a *For Dummies* book and contains lists of ten items that will help you leverage your profile and LinkedIn even better. This part is packed with links to external websites that provide the tools you can use to create a powerful profile.

The last three Part of Tens chapters are pure powerhouses of information. If you want a quick and dirty education on LinkedIn, don't skip these. By reading these chapters, I promise you, you'll have more knowledge of LinkedIn than most of those social media "gurus" who have set up shop.

Icons Used in This Book

I use a number of icons in this book to draw your attention to pieces of useful information.



TIP

This whole book can be considered a series of tips! When I share information that I find especially useful for optimizing your profile, I indicate it with a Tip icon.



REMEMBER

This icon is used to flag information that may be useful to remember when you think about and work on your profile.



WARNING

Whenever something may cause unnecessary work or a headache down the road, I alert you with a Warning icon.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

A Technical Stuff icon contains detailed or background information that is not necessary to know to optimize your profile, but is otherwise interesting.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading now, this book also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that gives you even more pointers on how to optimize your LinkedIn profile. My favorite cheat sheet details how to take your LinkedIn profile photo yourself! To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for *LinkedIn Profile Optimization For Dummies Cheat Sheet* in the Search box.

You can also visit my website for additional free resources like my LinkedIn Headline Generator, LinkedIn Text Formatter, Background Photo library, and more. Click the Free Resources tab at www.linkedin-makeover.com.

An optimized LinkedIn profile is more than just your online reputation. A powerfully written LinkedIn profile has the ability to change your life. After optimizing their profiles, I've seen people find amazing jobs and opportunities. They connect with more people and experience the full gamut of what LinkedIn and a successful career has to offer.

I wish you the very best of luck — now go get optimizing!

1

The Strategy Before the Siege

IN THIS PART . . .

Understand your LinkedIn goals and target audience to give your profile purpose.

Learn how to use the proper tone in your profile to draw people in, not push them away.

Optimize your LinkedIn search results by discovering your keywords and infusing them throughout your profile.

Learn how to use LinkedIn as a search tool and how to ensure your search result listing catches a reader's eye.

Add skills to showcase your strengths to potential employers or clients.

See why soliciting endorsements and endorsing others boosts your credibility.

- » Deciding your LinkedIn goal
- » Understanding your target audience
- » Using the proper tone

Chapter **1**

Determining Your LinkedIn Strategy

When you register for a LinkedIn account, the first thing you encounter is the LinkedIn profile. Most people jump in and immediately fill out the fields of the profile, not giving much thought as to why they are on LinkedIn or who will eventually be reading their profile.

Profiles created without a goal or a target audience in mind lack purpose. These profiles don't catch readers' eyes and compel them to reach out to the person behind the online persona. You see these profiles on LinkedIn every day. Scanning the profile, nothing grabs you or makes you want to learn more about that person.

To experience success on LinkedIn, you must approach your LinkedIn profile strategically. In this chapter, I show you how to determine your LinkedIn strategy by looking at the three most typical goals people are trying to accomplish on LinkedIn. Once you've determined your goal, I show you how to figure out your target audience and discuss the importance of creating a compelling profile tone.

Determining Your LinkedIn Goal

To create a profile that has purpose, you must ask yourself, “What am I trying to accomplish on LinkedIn?” Many people get a LinkedIn account because they want to find a new job. Other people are interested in reputation management and branding. Still other people are on LinkedIn because they are in sales and want to prospect and increase sales through social selling.

To help you determine what you want your profile to accomplish, review the following three most common types of LinkedIn profiles.

Job search

LinkedIn plays a huge role in the job search process. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals search LinkedIn looking for potential candidates. They may perform broad-based keyword searches looking for a candidate who matches the skill sets the position requires, or they may already have certain candidates in mind. When they have a person already in mind for a position, a name search is performed on LinkedIn with the goal of learning more about that person than what is stated on his or her resume.

LinkedIn is also a job board. The LinkedIn Jobs section (www.linkedin.com/jobs) is where thousands of jobs from all over the world are posted. These job postings are promoted throughout LinkedIn as well. When you find a job posting that interests you, you can apply for the position by submitting your resume and LinkedIn profile.



TIP

Even if you aren't utilizing LinkedIn's job postings or hoping to collide with a recruiter, potential employers are still looking you up on LinkedIn and reviewing your LinkedIn profile. Think about it: If you are about to hire someone, and available to you is a database in which to look this person up and see a picture of the candidate, a listing of people he or she knows, and recommendations of his or her work ethic, of course you would use it!

Potential employers are looking at your profile. The good news is you have control over how you represent yourself and how they perceive you. A job search profile complements and echoes your resume without being a direct one-to-one copy. The profile is written to the job description of that next position you are targeting and showcases you as the perfect candidate for that role. See Figure 1-1 for an example.

To find out more about how to create a powerful job search profile, see Chapter 11.

About

The healthcare industry is undergoing unprecedented disruption. With a combination of novel treatments and increasingly digitized business processes, the options to improve the health and the health services of the global community are growing at a swift pace.

As an Account Manager specializing in healthcare services, I help clients achieve their business and IT initiatives by providing innovative cost-effective solutions that are at once practical and efficient. Working closely with healthcare providers, I deliver targeted needs for varying levels and functions of organizations.

I am currently seeking new opportunities in similar roles in the healthcare services industry.

I have a proven track record in achieving—and exceeding—sales goals. During my tenure at ABC Healthcare, the scope of my portfolio included diverse clients across hospitals and healthcare systems where I specialized in healthcare IT services.

I'm proactive in project management and work diligently to ensure excellence in customer service, tackling issues head-on when they arrive. An Account Manager is essentially about customers, regardless of what they sell or manage, and I'm dedicated to quality in everything I do from communications to meeting deadlines. This is the driving force of sustainable business practices and company growth.

Another essential element of a successful business is a healthy company culture. I place an emphasis on collaboration, trust, and respect, and am proud to be known as a professional that honors and supports diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

I strive each day to make a positive impact in a field that I love and look forward to new opportunities to contribute my expertise and help companies thrive. Connect with me on LinkedIn or contact me here:

Email: Joedoe@gmail.com

Phone: 215-555-1234

FIGURE 1-1:
A job search
profile.

Reputation management and branding

It's a Google world. At one time, if you needed to find out information, you headed to the library to search the encyclopedias and other reference materials. Now, all you need to do is pull up a web browser and perform an Internet search to get more information than you could ever read or use.

This easy access to information has some side effects. People are doing more research than ever before and they are researching you! Going to the doctor? Most people search the Internet for the doctor's name to see the results that pop up in a search engine. Executives who find their names appearing in press releases or in magazine articles may find that views to their LinkedIn profiles skyrocket by readers wanting to know more about them.

Job candidates' names are entered into search engines all the time by hiring managers looking to discover more than what is provided in the resume. Similarly, hiring managers' names are searched by job candidates wanting to learn more about their potential new employer.

LinkedIn profiles rank high in search results. Not only is it usually the top result when a person searches for your name, but also it's sometimes the only result, as most people don't have a personal website. *You* create your LinkedIn profile. *You* choose what people learn about you. *You* have total control over how people perceive you. A reputation management profile is one that showcases your successes,

honors, awards, and accomplishments, and leads people to see you as a credible, impressive professional.

Sales and prospecting

LinkedIn is more than just a job search tool. LinkedIn is a compendium of professional profiles with industry and contact information, which makes it a terrific prospecting tool for sales professionals. However, it's not just for sales people looking for prospects. People use LinkedIn to search for service providers and consultants who can help them.

Most people prefer to do business with someone they know or someone with whom they share a connection. When searching LinkedIn for a service provider, you see how you are connected to that service provider through the degrees of connection. This ability to see shared connections provides a level of trust and comfort.

A sales and prospecting profile shines the spotlight on not just the salesperson, but also on that person's products, services, and company he or she represents. Most important, the sales and prospecting profile focuses on prospective clients and their needs, and solidifies the salesperson as someone clients can feel confident in working with. See Figure 1-2 for an example.

About

Trustworthy. Knowledgeable. Reliable. These qualities are the foundation of my success in the Real Estate industry. From first contact to closing, I am a well-rounded Real Estate professional that puts the needs of my clients first to give them the confidence they need for a positive efficient process.

My name is Andy Gates and I am a licensed Realtor in Fort Worth, TX with Widget Real Estate Partners. I help clients with a wide range of properties from Single Family Homes to Commercial Real Estate. With ten years of experience in the Real Estate industry, I understand what it takes to find the right property at the right price and am with potential homeowners and investors every step of the way.

A key component of my success is an emphasis on top quality service. It's about streamlined processes, transparency and accessibility in communications, and a dedication to listening to client priorities and concerns. This serves as the foundation for successful Real Estate experiences in both residential and commercial transactions.

Proficiencies include Residential Real Estate, Commercial Real Estate, Investment Properties, REO, Foreclosures, Short Sales, Listing, Marketing, Social Media, First Time Home Buyers, and Closing Deals.

Industry Credentials:

- * National Association of Realtors
- * National Multifamily Housing Council
- * Institute of Real Estate Management

As an enthusiastic leader and experienced Real Estate professional, I keep an ever-present eye on market trends and utilize the latest technology to discover the best options for client needs. Leveraging my market knowledge and data-driven strategies, I drive success for commercial real estate investors and families across the greater Philadelphia area.

Let's start a conversation about your Real Estate needs.

Email: [redacted]@gmail.com
Phone: 215-555-1234

FIGURE 1-2:
A sales and
prospecting
profile.

Figuring Out Your Target Audience

Knowing your goal is only half the battle. Now it's time to figure out your target audience. One of the most common mistakes people make with their LinkedIn profiles is using it to tell the story they want to tell. Instead, you need to use your profile to tell the story your audience *wants to read*. Write for your target audience first.

When you are looking for a job, your target audience is typically recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals. In almost every case, they are armed with a job description. Recruiters want to know that you have the skill sets and experience required to fulfill the job. They also want to know that you are professional, respectful, and capable of doing the job. You want to make it clear in your profile that you are the perfect person for your desired position. After reading your profile, the recruiter should feel confident in your skills and abilities.

When you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting, your target audience is your client and prospective client. They are less interested in hearing about your sales expertise and more interested in knowing that you understand their industry and their needs, and can provide solutions to their issues. As you consider your target audience, think in terms of the solutions you offer them and provide them the information they need to feel confident with you as a potential partner.

The sales world has changed in the age of Google and social media. Buyers now educate themselves, researching products and services online. They even research the salesperson, wanting to make sure they are reaching out to someone they can feel comfortable working with. Knowing that you are under a magnifying glass, make sure you provide your target audience with the information they need to feel confident in you and your products or services.

When the goal of your LinkedIn profile is reputation management and branding, your target audience may not be as clear cut as it is with a job search or sale and prospecting. To figure out your audience, you need to determine the type of person you want to cater your profile toward. Is it the executive team and colleagues at your company? Audience members who watched you give a presentation? Readers of articles you wrote? Private equity investors? Once you pinpoint the type of person who you want to target, consider what that person needs to know to take that next step forward.

Do you want your target audience to connect with you on LinkedIn? Perhaps you want them to visit your website and download a white paper. You may want your target audience to email you to request your resume. Your target audience could pick up the phone and call you. Figure out what that next step is so you can build it into your profile as a clear call to action.



TIP

Strategically written profiles do not state what you want to say as much as what your target audience needs to know.

Creating a Compelling Tone

LinkedIn is a social network, and writing an impersonal profile filled with business jargon doesn't mesh. Social networks are all about you interacting with your network. And because your network will check out your profile, it's imperative that what they read is from your pen. You don't want to push people away by creating distance between you and your reader.

A powerful LinkedIn profile is written in first person narrative form ("I"). Draw readers in by writing about yourself in the first person. Writing in a conversational, natural tone is a great way to connect with your audience and start forging an easy rapport.

As important as it is to write in first person, you also must be careful not to overuse "I." There is nothing worse than a profile where every sentence starts with I. In my profile, I sometimes use the second person narrative form ("You") because it brings your reader in even closer by speaking directly to them, and it eases the potential overuse of "I."



TIP

The best way to ensure your profile is compellingly written is to read it aloud. Does it sound stilted? Does it sound like it's something you would never say to an acquaintance live in person? If so, the writing is forced and not conversational in tone.

Here is an example of stilted, hard-to-read resume speak:

Creating a clear strategy for leveraging resources to produce the maximum number of insights possible. Integrating contextual analytics to business processes. Centralizing deep analysis expertise for use across the organizational axis but mandating each individual department and line of business takes responsibility for their own reporting needs.



REMEMBER

You want to write your profile as if you are talking directly to your reader. Your words should sound professional yet natural. A profile written in corporate jargon or resume speak is a turn off. Demonstrate your human side and warmth by writing in a natural, conversational tone.

When you see profiles written in the third person, typically the reason is that they simply copied and pasted their biography or resume into the LinkedIn profile.

That's a cop-out! Your LinkedIn profile is *not* your resume nor your bio. Your LinkedIn profile is your career future! It's who you are, how you help people, and why you deserve to be noticed. A powerful LinkedIn profile is strategically written for your goals and your target audience. It's not a copy and paste of some other document.

While the best profiles are written in first person, there are times when other styles work better. For example, if you are in sales and marketing and your profile is written with the goal of engaging potential clients, second person works great: "If you want to up your game and improve your productivity, our CRM solution will help you save time and" Notice how the focus is on the person reading the profile.

If you are a person with a long list of accomplishments and awards, it may feel more comfortable writing about your successes in third person: "After winning the Nobel Peace Prize, Jane Doe sold her company for \$33 billion and decided to dedicate the rest of her career to saving the rain forests."

Think about your target audience and your brand, then tailor your voice accordingly.

Using the Different Versions of LinkedIn

Part of your LinkedIn strategy should extend to your use of LinkedIn as well as how your target audience typically accesses LinkedIn. At one time, LinkedIn was a site you accessed via a browser on your desktop computer or laptop. With the rise of mobile devices and apps that run on them, LinkedIn has extended the features and functionality of its desktop experience to a mobile app.

Since debuting its mobile app, LinkedIn's success has exploded, and it makes sense why. Even though LinkedIn is a professional platform, many companies block the use of LinkedIn over the company's Internet connection, which means in order to access LinkedIn, one would have to do it at home after work. Who wants to do professional stuff after work? Once LinkedIn was accessible via the mobile app using personal mobile data, LinkedIn could be used anywhere and everywhere. Waiting for a meeting to start? Click the LinkedIn app on your smartphone and scroll through your LinkedIn feed to see what's going on with your network. Grabbing lunch at the local deli? Check the LinkedIn profiles of the people who you'll be pitching later today via the mobile app.

Fewer than half of all LinkedIn users access the site via a browser on a computer or laptop. If you find that you struggle to find time to access LinkedIn, it may be because you are only accessing it from a computer. Install the mobile app on your smartphone and you may be surprised at the frequency with which you begin to access it.



TIP

It's important to note that your LinkedIn profile appears differently in the LinkedIn app and the LinkedIn desktop experience. As you move through this book and begin updating your LinkedIn profile, I recommend doing as much of the updating of your profile via a desktop browser as possible, using a full-size keyboard. But when you are finished with each section, make sure you check out how your work looks on the mobile app.

Next up I look at how to get found on LinkedIn.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Optimizing your LinkedIn search results
- » Determining your keywords
- » Creating a clickable search result
- » Increasing your search ranking

Chapter 2

Getting Found on LinkedIn

LinkedIn helps people connect with opportunity. Whether it's a new job, a sale, a media interview, a business partnership, or something else entirely, many times the connection starts with a LinkedIn search.

At the time of this writing, LinkedIn has over 575 million users in over 200 countries. Of those 575 million users, 260 million are active on a monthly basis, and 40 percent are engaging on a daily basis (<https://kinsta.com/blog/linkedin-statistics>). Making sure your profile sticks out and pops up is important. In this chapter, I show you how people use LinkedIn as a search engine. I show you the importance of your search result listing and how to make it attractive and clickable. I also show you how to discover your keywords and how to infuse them into your profile for higher search engine ranking. By the time you finish this chapter, you will have a list of your keywords and the knowledge of how to dominate LinkedIn search results.

Using LinkedIn as a Search Engine

Getting views to your profile doesn't always start through an Internet search. LinkedIn is more than just a professional network and profile listing. LinkedIn is a different type of search engine. Most search engines return websites. Searches

conducted via a LinkedIn search return LinkedIn profiles, company pages, job listings, reader-published posts and blog articles, and LinkedIn Groups. LinkedIn search is also used to find potential customers, vendors, service providers, and employees.

Using the search bar

On the top of LinkedIn's website is the search bar. This is where most people enter their search terms. When people search LinkedIn, they search in two different ways: name or keyword. A direct name search is typically performed after a resume has been received or when a person has met you and is looking to connect on LinkedIn. The person doing the search is looking for one, specific person.

Most times, people are searching not for a specific person but for a type of person with distinct skill sets and strengths. In this situation, the person conducting the search enters those skill sets as keywords into the LinkedIn search bar. As the keywords are entered, LinkedIn's search bar presents a drop-down menu with suggested results (see Figure 2-1). However, rather than selecting from the drop-down list, you can press the Enter or Return key on your keyboard or you can click the magnifying glass that appears to the right of the search bar when it's active to visit a full page of search results. For example, Figure 2-2 shows the results of a LinkedIn search for the keywords "Customer Success Manager." The search results display profiles that contain those keywords. Your profile never displays as a search result listing if those keywords do not exist within the profile. Therefore, to get found in searches, your profile must contain the keywords a person is using in the search.

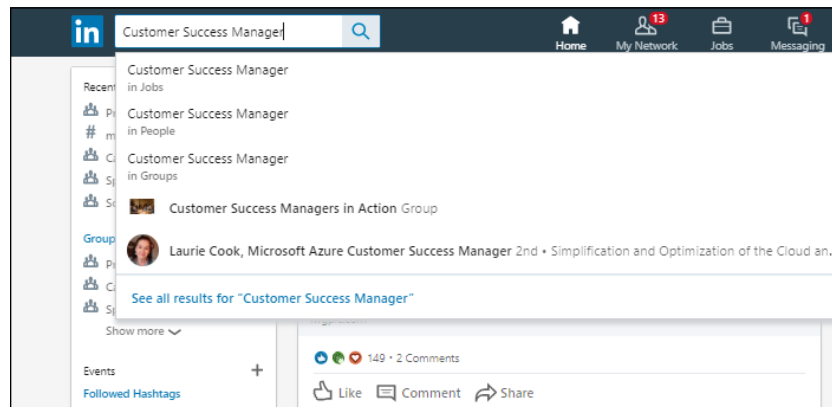
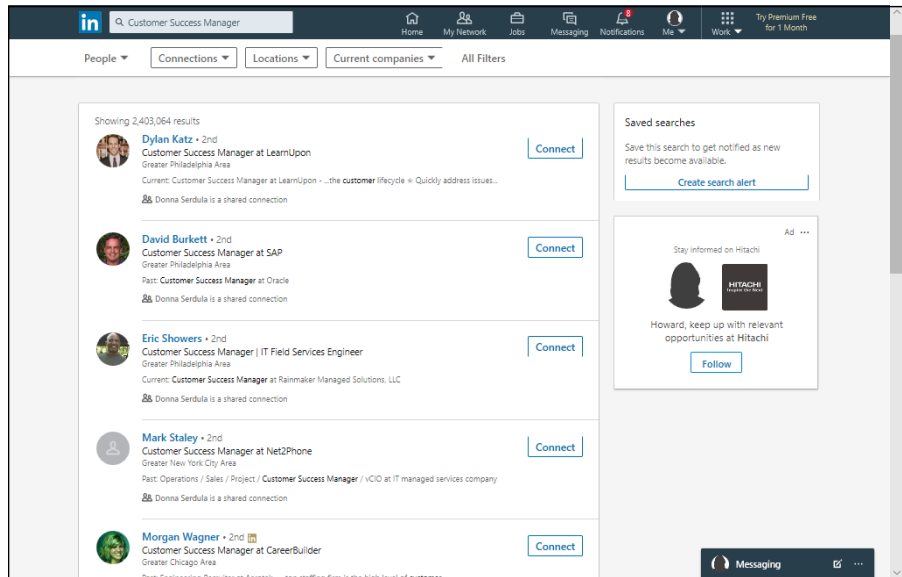


FIGURE 2-1:
The search drop-down list suggests results for you.

FIGURE 2-2:
Search results for
the keywords
“Customer
Success
Manager.”



Using search filters

Once you perform a search on LinkedIn and see the search results page, you can refine your search. You can filter your search by People, Jobs, Content, Companies, Schools, and Groups. You can also filter your search results by how you are connected to a person, location, or current company. In Figure 2-2, you can see the search filters immediately below the LinkedIn search box.

If you are looking for a person with a common name like Joseph Smith, you can filter by location or by his current company to find him. If you are looking for posts that contain the name of a company, you can filter by Content. The results are posts that people broadcast through their LinkedIn feeds.

If you are looking for people who provide a certain service, you can filter by Locations so you know they are located near you. You can also filter by Connections. Choose first for people you are already connected to or second for people who have mutual connections in common with you.

Even more filters are available on the All Filters page. When recruiters search LinkedIn, they often use LinkedIn's All Filters to find the exact candidate they seek. See what the People search filters look like in Figure 2-3.

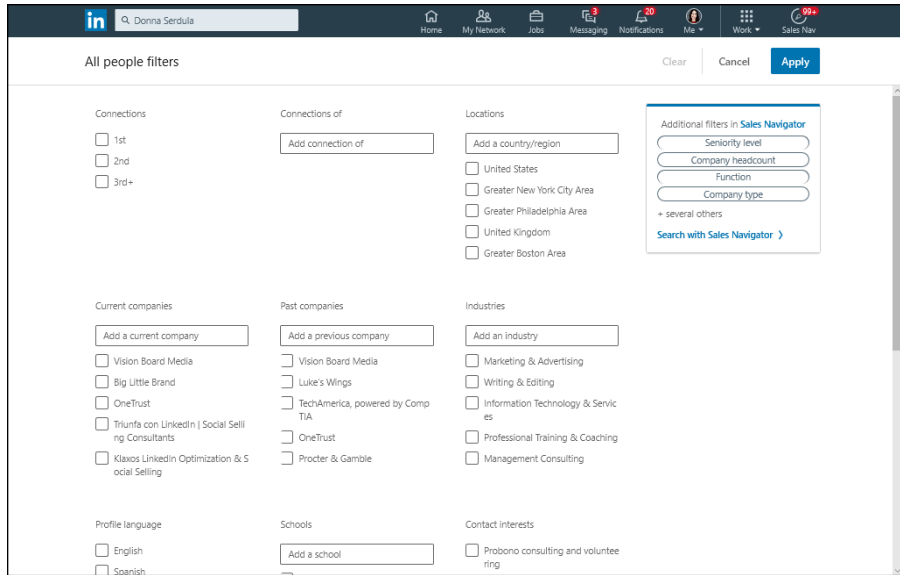


FIGURE 2-3:
People search filters.

The All People Filters search filters provide additional fields to narrow your search to exactly your target results. You can search by connections, connections of, location, current and past company, industry, profile language, school, interests, and services they offer. You can also drill in even deeper by searching by first and last names, job titles, company, or school. Premium LinkedIn members get access to even more filters such as Years of Experience, Function, Seniority Level, Company Size, and more.

Recruiters typically search by the job titles they are trying to fill and the industry. If they are looking for a candidate in a specific area, they will add the Location to make sure they are only finding people within that area.

Follow these steps to use LinkedIn's search filters:

- 1. Go to LinkedIn.com.**
- 2. From any LinkedIn page, enter your desired search terms in the LinkedIn search bar.**

A drop-down list appears with suggested search results.

- 3. Click the blue magnifying glass icon that appears to the right of the search box.**

The full search results page appears.

- 4. Click People to ensure you are only seeing people within the results and not Jobs, Content, Companies, Schools, or Groups.**

BOOLEAN SEARCH STRINGS

When super users of LinkedIn, such as recruiters, use search filters, they often use Boolean search operators to limit and widen the scope of their searches so that they can find profiles that better match their target results. The Keywords, First and Last Name, Title, and Company fields support the Boolean search modifiers of quotes and parentheses, and the Boolean search operators AND, OR, and NOT.

If a recruiter is looking for an account manager, encasing the words “account manager” in quotes ensures he or she finds that exact phrase and not people with simply the words “account” and “manager” in their profiles. To broaden a search so that it includes profiles with one or more specific terms, use the Boolean search operator OR. For example, Sales OR salesperson OR “Account Manager” OR “Business Development.”

5. **Filter the search results by the degree of connection you'd like to appear in the search results, selected geographic area, or company.**
6. **To access even more filters (including industry), click All Filters.**

The All People Filters page appears.



TIP

In addition to searching for people, you can also search LinkedIn for jobs, content, companies, groups, and schools.

Ensuring a Compelling and Attractive Search Result



REMEMBER

People use LinkedIn to find other people. They are looking for job candidates, service providers, strategic partnerships, and many other professional relationships. When someone clicks the Search button on LinkedIn, he or she is confronted with a list of search results. It's important that your profile turns up in the search results, but it's even more imperative that your search result listing catches the searcher's eye and compels him or her to click your listing to learn more about you.

Your search result listing is comprised of the following:

- » Your profile picture
- » Your name and degree of connection
- » Your headline

- » Your location
- » Your current or past job title and company
- » Names and total number of connections in common
- » Services you may offer or if you are currently open to new opportunities

SHOULD I PAY FOR LinkedIn?

There are two types of accounts on LinkedIn: the free and the paid version. The free account is a good starting point for most users. It allows you to do almost everything the paid version does, only in limited numbers and with limited visibility. For example, a free account can only message people within his or her first-degree network, whereas Premium users have access to InMail and the Open Profile option, which enable them to communicate with people outside their first-degree network.

There are various types of paid accounts ranging from \$29.99 per month (Premium Career; <https://premium.linkedin.com/jobsearch>) to \$825 per month (LinkedIn Recruiter; <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions>). The higher the price, the more you are able to do with LinkedIn.

Although the free account is a good starting point, if you plan on using LinkedIn for prospecting, recruiting, heavy searching, or to communicate with professionals outside your first-degree network, upgrading is necessary.

Premium account members get a badge on their profiles that identifies them as paid users. This badge is a great way to signal that you are a serious LinkedIn user and someone who is responsive to opportunities.

The Premium plans have many selling points that make the monthly or annual fee reasonable. One of my favorite features of the Premium accounts is the ability to see the full 90-day list of Who's Viewed Your Profile and insights into your audience, such as where they work and their job titles. You also get access to the Open Profile option, which enables you to freely communicate with other Premium members outside your first-degree network.

Depending on the Premium plan you choose, you may get additional search filters, more search result listings, job and applicant insights, more saved searches and unlimited profile searches, and company page business insights.

My recommendation is to start with the basic, free account. Once you start using LinkedIn more frequently, you will begin to feel restricted by the limits of the free account and upgrading will make sense.



TIP

By making sure your profile picture, headline, and current job listing are optimized and compelling, you are ensuring that when recruiters or others looking for a person like you sees your listing, they will be sufficiently impressed to click your profile rather than another person's profile.

Looking through pages and pages of LinkedIn search results is a daunting task. It's important to make sure your search result listing showcases you in the best light. For example, many recruiters and hiring managers actually skip past profiles that do not have a profile picture. The omission of a profile picture typically means that the LinkedIn user doesn't take the social network seriously, provides little detail to his or her career trajectory, and won't respond when an InMail message is sent. (InMail is a message that you send to a member not directly connected to you. Only Premium members have the ability to send InMail messages.) By including a profile picture, you are proving that you are a serious LinkedIn user and networker. I show you how to upload a profile picture in Chapter 6.

Let's see what your full search result listing looks like by performing a name search for you:

- 1. Type your name into the LinkedIn search bar and click the magnifying glass icon (or press Enter or Return).**

While you are typing, LinkedIn may provide you with suggestions from a drop-down list. Do not choose any of these suggestions. Upon pressing Enter or Return, search result listings appear.

- 2. Find your search result listing.**

Your search result listing may be the only result, or if you have a common name, your listing may reside farther down the list of search results.

- 3. Look at your search result and determine if it showcases you in the best light.**

Did you upload a professional profile picture? Is your headline engaging? Read through the chapters in Part 2 of this book to learn how to optimize these different areas.

Look at Figure 2-4 to see the difference between an optimized and an unoptimized search result listing and the differences between a free and a paid user listing.

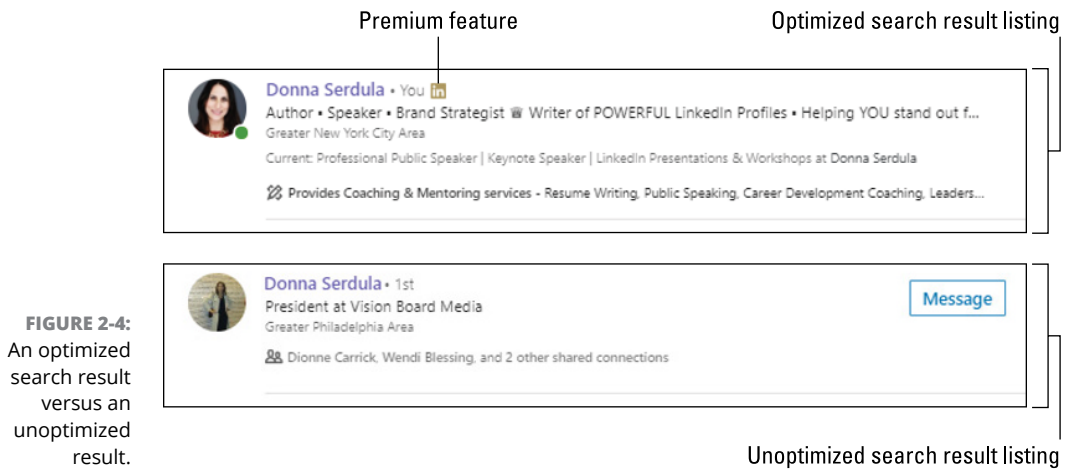


FIGURE 2-4: An optimized search result versus an unoptimized result.

Understanding the Importance of Keywords

To appear in search results, you must identify what words people are using to find a person like you. What words would they type into LinkedIn search to find you? These search terms are your keywords.



REMEMBER

Your profile never appears in search results for terms that do not appear in your profile. In order to appear, your profile must contain those keywords people use to search.

How many keywords do you need? I suggest choosing five to ten main keywords to pepper throughout your profile. When you try to rank for too many keywords, you lose keyword density and you end up not ranking for anything.

Keywords don't have to be just one word. A keyword could be a phrase. For example, *profit and loss* may be three words, but it is considered one keyword.

Keywords must be descriptive and exact. *Problem-solver* and *dynamic professional* are not good keywords. These words are too general and can describe anyone from a top executive to an office manager. Good keywords are specific and reflective of key skills, strengths, core competencies, specialties, and abilities that differentiate you.

Here are some questions to help you determine your keywords:

- » In what industries have you worked?
- » What positions have you held?

- »» What certifications have you earned?
- »» What skill sets were listed on your last job description or resume?
- »» What computer applications do you know?
- »» What languages do you speak?
- »» What services do you provide?
- »» What topics are you an expert in?
- »» What products do you sell?
- »» What additional strengths or skill sets do you have?

Answering these questions provides you with a starting point. Now that you have a few keywords, the next step is to use one of several online keyword tools to find additional, related keywords.

The following is a list of keyword examples to get you thinking. These are real meat-and-potato keywords. Highlight or star the keywords that seem to fit you and your role. Once you have that list, use the keyword tools described in the next section to dive in deeper and find more keywords that fit you.

Accounting

- Account reconciliation
- Auditing
- Budgets/budgeting/budget control
- Contract management
- Corporate governance
- Financial reporting/analysis
- Financial statements
- Fixed assets
- General ledger
- Internal controls
- Inventory management
- Investment finance
- Investor relations

Tax accounting

Taxation

Engineering

- 3D modeling
- Assembly design/modification
- Conceptualization
- Consistency and compatibility
- Data collection and analysis
- Design methodologies
- Efficiency control
- Integrated solutions and services
- Job costing
- Mission-critical programs
- Process development
- Process improvements

Project management

Prototypes

Resource allocation

Executive

Budgeting

Business plans

Change management

Deal negotiations

International business

IPOs

Joint ventures

Operational streamlining

P&L/Profit and loss

Policy development

Process reengineering

Profit building

Restructuring

Start-up operations

Turnaround strategies

Human Resources

Business reengineering

Compensation management/
analysis

Deferred compensation

Dispute arbitration

Employee relations

Job description development

Labor relations

Leadership development

New Hire orientation

Performance management

Recruitment/recruiting

Succession planning

Talent management

US Family and Medical Leave Act

Workforce planning

Information Technology

Data center operations

Database administration

Fault analysis

Information security

Infrastructure development

IT risk management

Multiplatform integration

Network administration

Process reengineering

Quality assurance

Solutions delivery

Systems configuration

Technical documentation

Web-based technology

Yield management

Professor/Teacher

Brain-based learning

Classroom management

Classroom planning

Curriculum design

Curriculum development

Discipline strategies

Educational leadership
Educational technology
In-service training
Interdisciplinary teaching approaches
Lesson planning
Peer mentoring
Process improvement
Teacher-parent relations
Technology integration

Retail

Assortment
Customer service/interpersonal skills
Inventory management
Loss prevention
Marketing strategy
Merchandise planning
Merchandising
Planograms
POS terminals
Sales management
Shrinkage
Store management
Store operations
Team management
Visual merchandising
Sales and Marketing
Account expansion
Account management

Account retention
Channel development
Client relations
Competitive analysis
Contract negotiations
Lead generation
Market analysis
New business development
Post-sale support
Product rollout
Proposal development
Prospecting
Sales forecasting
Supply Chain
Asset management
Cost reduction
Demand planning
Distribution management
Inventory control
Logistics planning
Loss prevention
Procurement
Purchasing
Quality control/assurance
Route management
Shipping/receiving
Six Sigma
Vendor relations
Warehousing

Telecommunications

3G

Audio visual and peripheral equipment

Broadband

Customer service

Integration

Internet protocol (IP)

Network installations

Product management

Project management

Telephony

Value-added service

Voice and data networks

Voice over IP (VOIP)

Wireless technology

Using Online Keyword Tools

Coming up with the right keywords is challenging. The good news is that there are tools designed to assist you in finding the right keywords.



TIP

One of my favorite techniques to determine keywords is the word cloud. A *word cloud* is a way to visualize data. It is an image composed of words used in a particular piece of writing. The size of each word is determined by how many times the word is used or the importance of that word. A word cloud generator is an application that scans through text and provides a graphic output of words. The more often a specific word appears in inputted text, the larger and more colorful the word is shown in the word cloud. (My favorite word cloud generator is found at WordArt.com, which I discuss in the next section.)

To use a word cloud generator, you first need text for it to analyze. Use text from your current job description in digital format or find a similar job description online. If you are looking for your next opportunity, do an Internet search for a job description that fits your dream job. Don't worry whether the position is in your location or already filled. Most job descriptions are the same — right now you are just after the text and not the actual opportunity.

If you are not a job seeker but instead looking to brand yourself more effectively or showcase yourself as an expert thought leader, use the content of your company's website or marketing literature. There are also industry-related articles and white papers that you can use. Also check out the LinkedIn profiles of people you admire and copy their LinkedIn profile content into the generator. (But do not copy their content into your own profile!)

There are a number of word cloud generators out there on the Internet. Here are a few examples:

WordArt (<https://wordart.com>)

WordClouds (www.wordclouds.com)

Word Cloud Generator (<http://wordcloudmaker.com>)

Using WordArt.com

WordArt.com is my favorite free word cloud generator. I love it because not only is it super easy to use, but also the resulting word clouds are visually beautiful and you can customize them.

Follow these steps to use WordArt.com to generate a word cloud for keyword discovery:

- 1. Find and copy the text you want to visualize for keywords by highlighting the text and pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).**
- 2. Open your web browser and go to <https://wordart.com/create>.**
- 3. Click the Import button that appears on the left side of the screen.**
A large, empty text box appears with the words, "Input your text here." Figure 2-5 shows the text input area of WordArt.com.
- 4. Paste the text into the WordArt.com text box.**
Copy and paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac) to copy and Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac) to paste.
- 5. Click the Import Words button.**
- 6. Click the Visualize button.**

The resulting word cloud visually shows you what words hold the most weight. These words are typically your keywords. Check out Figure 2-6 to see what a word cloud looks like. I used a job description text to generate this word cloud. Clearly customer, success, manager, and team are important keywords for this position.

Hopefully your word cloud provided you a good strong list of keywords. If not, I have another keyword tool, and this one is found right in LinkedIn.

highlights the skills pertinent to the position and lets you know if your skills are a match. If you are a premium LinkedIn user, you also get access to a section that shares competitive intelligence about other applicants. You can see where you rank based upon your LinkedIn profile, and you can see the top skills of those who have already applied.



TIP

These two areas are great places to discover additional keywords. These skills may also describe your skill sets. If so, not only consider them keywords but also add them to your LinkedIn Skills section.

FIGURE 2-7:
LinkedIn's job
postings provide
skill suggestions.

These are your keywords

To access LinkedIn's job postings, follow these steps:

- 1. Click Jobs on LinkedIn's toolbar.**
The LinkedIn Jobs page appears.
- 2. In the Search Jobs text box, enter the position you are interested in and click the Search button.**

A new page displays with a listing of open positions. You can also designate a location to search.

3. Click the job listing you find most compelling.

More information on that position appears on the right side of the screen. Scroll through to find more information.

Using Good Ole Google

I have one more tool in my arsenal of keyword tools to help you determine your keywords: Google. Go to Google (www.google.com) and search job descriptions for the position you are interested in obtaining. For example, “Customer Success Manager job description.”

You may find job descriptions from Indeed.com, Glassdoor, CareerBuilder, or Monster. Don’t worry if some of the results are for old postings that are no longer open or for positions located outside your target area. The point of this exercise is to find four or five job descriptions to determine the different ways this position is defined. Print out the descriptions and with a pen or pencil, underline the keywords that are specific to the position (see Figure 2-8).

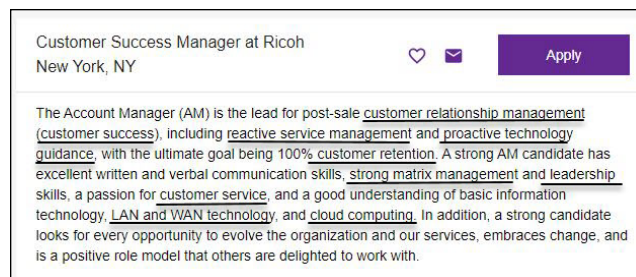


FIGURE 2-8:
Underline
keywords in job
descriptions.

Repeat this exercise at least five times, using five different job descriptions. You want to make sure you know exactly how different companies are defining the role you are targeting so you can define yourself in the same way and be seen as the perfect candidate!



REMEMBER

Regardless of how you located your keywords, make sure you write them down. Don’t make the mistake of trying to remember them in your head. It’s important to keep these keywords in front of you so you can work them into your LinkedIn profile in an organic, natural manner. In Figure 2-9 is a blank form to use to jot down your keywords.

My LinkedIn Keywords

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

FIGURE 2-9:
Remember to
write down your
keywords!

Ranking Higher with Profile SEO

SEO stands for *search engine optimization*. It is the process of making certain strategic changes to a profile to boost its search ranking. By putting in a little effort, you can improve your profile's ranking so it appears more often and higher in search. Certain areas within your profile are highly sensitive to the addition of keywords. When you add keywords to these areas, the LinkedIn search algorithm treats these keywords with more weight and your profile ranks higher on the search results page. These highly sensitive SEO fields are:

- » Headline
- » About section
- » Skills & Endorsements section
- » Job titles (especially current)
- » Job descriptions

Make sure these five areas are rich in your chosen keywords. Don't just list keywords in the summary and job description fields. Use your keywords intentionally yet naturally in your narrative. Write for your reader first and the search engine second.

The more times a keyword is repeated throughout your profile, the higher you may rank for that keyword in LinkedIn search results. Although repeating keywords is a good thing, it's easy to become obnoxious, so be careful not to overdo it!

Figure 2-10 demonstrates the difference between strategic keyword usage and obnoxious keyword stuffing.

Obnoxious Keyword Repetition

FIGURE 2-10: Don't overstuff your profile with keywords; use them strategically.

Sales, sales...

Unobnoxious Keyword Repetition

As an account manager & sales leader who specializes in the sales & marketing of EMR software, I utilize solution selling and consultative selling in my sales process.



WARNING

You can rank higher by repeating your keywords ad nauseam, but when your target reader opens your profile and sees the repetition, they are turned off and exit from your profile and move on to the next search result listing. Keyword abuse doesn't impress anyone. In fact, LinkedIn has been known to delete profiles that are abusive in their keyword stuffing technique. Ultimately, you want to be strategic and smart when peppering your profile with keywords, not obnoxious.

Building Off Profile SEO

In addition to building a powerful profile enriched with keywords, another way to increase your LinkedIn search ranking is to have a large number of connections within your LinkedIn network.

When a person performs a keyword search on LinkedIn, they are not searching the entire LinkedIn database of users. They are only searching their LinkedIn network. Your LinkedIn network extends three degrees. Your first-degree connections are the people who have accepted your LinkedIn connection invitation and ones you have accepted. Second-degree connections are those people who are first-degree connections of your first-degree connections. Third-degree connections are the first-degree connections of your second-degree connections. Additionally, any people who are in a LinkedIn Group that you belong to are also considered part of your LinkedIn network.

Figure 2-11 is a visualization of your LinkedIn network. Your network increases exponentially as you add more first-degree connections.

When people perform a LinkedIn search, the resulting profiles are from their LinkedIn network. Every now and then you may see a person from outside your LinkedIn network; however, when that happens, you are prevented from seeing that person's full name and that person's profile may not be completely accessible to you.

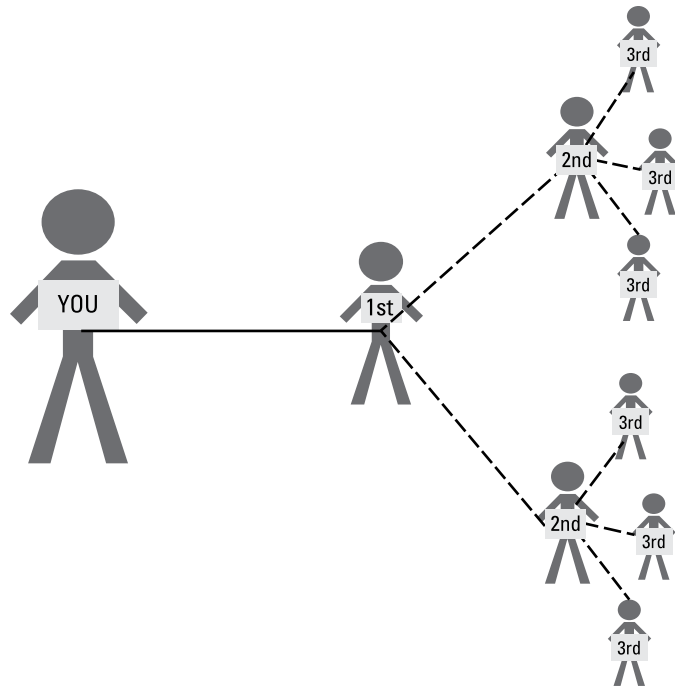


FIGURE 2-11:
There is a clear structure to your LinkedIn network.

LinkedIn ranks the profiles of people directly related to you first. This means the more people you are connected to directly, the higher you rank in a LinkedIn search.



WARNING

LinkedIn cautions that you should only connect with people you know and trust. I agree, but I believe you should remain open to all opportunities. I do not suggest aiming low and wide to connect with everyone and their brothers. However, if a person you do not know sends a connection request, visit his or her profile. Is this person in the same industry? Do you share a similar network of connections or belong to the same LinkedIn Groups? As long as the person doesn't look overly suspicious, it's okay to accept this person into your network. You never know if a connection of theirs may one day be searching for someone like you, and accepting the invitation today means you'll be found tomorrow for a fantastic opportunity.

In the next chapter, you see how to take your keywords and add them to LinkedIn's Skills & Endorsements section.

SEARCHING FOR YOURSELF

It's important to realize that LinkedIn caters search results to the person searching. LinkedIn wants to provide relevant search results. By trying to find yourself in search, you may find that you rank several pages in or not at all. Don't get upset! LinkedIn knows you are the person searching, and because you are the searcher, you can't possibly want to find your own profile. The other thing to realize is that search results are different for everyone. When people search by keyword, they are searching their LinkedIn networks, and no two networks are the same!

LinkedIn also tailors search results based upon what it believes is most relevant to the person searching. If you and your friend both search for the same keyword, the search results will vary wildly. You may see a certain profile on page 1, and your friend may find that profile on page 10 or not at all. How does LinkedIn determine what is relevant to you? It references the contents of your profile and potentially hashtags you follow and posts you share or engage with to determine your interests. Just as two networks are not the same, no two profiles are the same.

So how do you test your profile's SEO? You could potentially ask a friend to search your keywords, but even that only tells you where you fall in a search conducted by your friend — a recruiter or hiring manager may have totally different results. I've found the best way to determine how well your profile performs is to check your profile views. As long as people are landing on your profile, your profile is performing well.

- » Showcasing your skill sets and strengths
- » Leveraging your skills for SEO purposes
- » Hiding and removing endorsements
- » Soliciting recommendations and recommending others

Chapter **3**

Understanding Endorsements and Recommendations

The Skills & Endorsements section is a much-maligned area of the LinkedIn profile. Whenever I speak to groups about LinkedIn, there is always someone in the crowd who jumps up and asks, “What is the point of Skills & Endorsements?” The crowd goes wild, and I am left defending this poor section of the profile.

As I show you in this chapter, the bad reputation of the Skills & Endorsements section is not deserved. This section is simply a place to list your skills and strengths and allow your connections to publicly validate them with an endorsement.

In this chapter, you look at how to take the keywords you discovered in Chapter 2 and turn them into skills in the Skills & Endorsements section where your connections can endorse them. I show you how easy it is to add and rearrange those skills to expertly showcase your skill sets and strengths. I also show you how to obtain endorsements, how to hide or remove an endorsement you don’t necessarily want, and how to endorse others.

Lastly, I take you through the ins and outs of asking for and providing recommendations. I even let you in on my secret to getting tons of glowing recommendations that crank up your credibility and results on LinkedIn.

Showcasing Your Skills

The skills and strengths you list in the Skills & Endorsements section of your LinkedIn profile are the keywords you discover in Chapter 2. Think of LinkedIn Skills as your expertise boiled down to just single words. LinkedIn Skills aren't just there to describe you; they are listed for your first-degree connections to validate and endorse. The Skills section is shown in Figure 3-1.

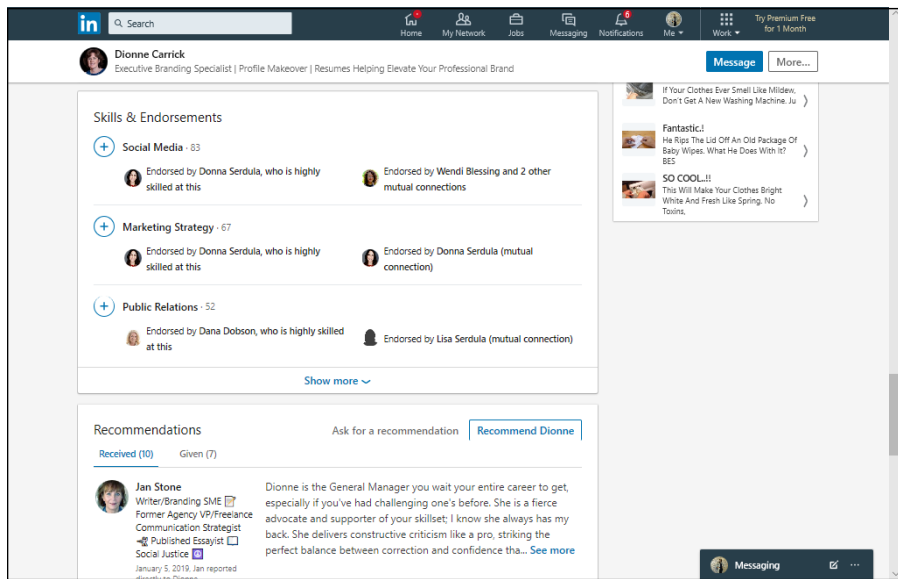


FIGURE 3-1:
The Skills & Endorsements section.

The following keywords are examples of excellent skills and strengths in the Skills & Endorsements section:

- Change Management
- Strategic Planning
- Conflict Resolution
- Customer Service
- Entrepreneur
- Employee Relations

WHY THE BAD REPUTATION?

Sadly, the Skills & Endorsements section has gotten a bad rap. One reason many people dislike the Skills & Endorsements area with such intense fury has more to do with how others abuse it. Rather than genuinely endorsing people for skills that a person is proud of, there are people who willy-nilly endorse people for any skill listed. This often leaves the person receiving the endorsement feeling slighted and misunderstood. For example, perhaps you listed Email Marketing as a skill on your profile. A person who has never worked with you or experienced your extraordinary email marketing skills endorses you for email marketing. Suddenly, what should be a compliment suddenly seems inauthentic and sycophantic.

Keywords that don't translate so well as skills include:

- Problem-solver
- Dynamic
- Professional
- Engaging
- Interesting
- Friendly



TIP

The excellent keywords are excellent because they are specific and could appear on a job description. Skills should reflect your expertise, competencies, specialties, or abilities that you possess. *Problem-solver*, *dynamic*, *interesting*, and *friendly* aren't great keywords to list. While they are all positive terms, these terms could describe anyone in any industry. The key is to be specific; your listed skills should describe you and your unique abilities and strengths.

Adding skills

To showcase your strengths and get endorsed for your expertise you must add skills to your profile. LinkedIn allows you to add up to 50 skills. If you completed Chapter 2 and have a list of your keywords, get that list out now. If not, no worries!

If you are a job seeker, simply locate a job description of your current position and review it to see the keywords that describe your abilities. If your resume was professionally written, you may have a section that lists your strengths, core competencies, and skill sets. For sales professionals using LinkedIn to prospect, visit your company's website. Scan through the pages for words used to describe your

service offering or products. Those of you who are interested in reputation management and branding, think in terms of your strengths and expertise.

To add your skills to your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

If you already have skills listed on your profile page, go to Step 3. If you don't have any skills listed yet, continue to Step 2.

2. Click the "Add new profile section" to expand it.

3. Under Skills, click the down arrow to add Skills to your profile.

4. Click the plus (+) icon to add a new skill.

An empty Add Skills box appears, as shown in Figure 3-2.

5. Type the name of a skill in the "Skill" text box or choose it from the drop-down list that appears after you type a few letters.

If your skill doesn't appear, completely type in the skill name in the field. There is an 80-character limit for each skill.

6. Click Add.

The skill is added to your Skills list.

7. Click Save.

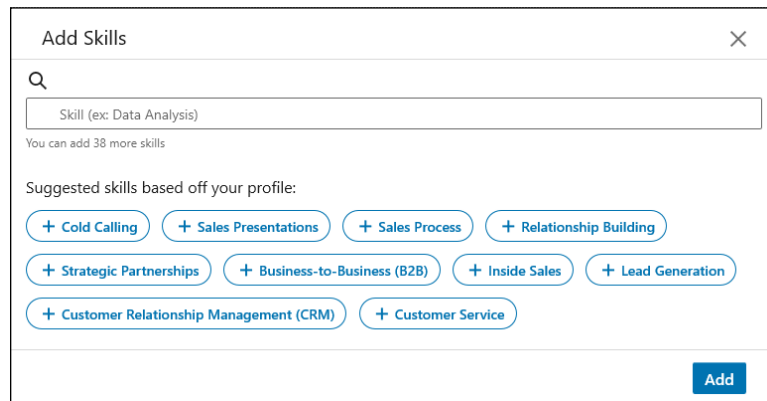


FIGURE 3-2:
Where to add
your skills.



TIP

You can add up to 50 skills to your profile. Don't focus on trying to list 50 skills. It's quality versus quantity here. Concentrate on 15 to 20 core skills. When you focus on adding 50 skills, you end up adding some skills of lesser importance. Because LinkedIn allows others to endorse you, you may find some of these lower skills are endorsed and elevated on your profile. If you do get up to 50, that's great, but don't kill yourself trying.

Grouping skills by category

As you add skills to your profile, LinkedIn groups your skills into the following categories:

- » Top Skills
- » Industry Knowledge
- » Tools & Technologies
- » Interpersonal Skills
- » Languages
- » Other Skills

When a skill is added that LinkedIn doesn't know, or the skill simply doesn't fit within the other categories, LinkedIn puts it under Other Skills.

You must have more than three skills listed on your profile for LinkedIn to group them into categories. The skills you add will be grouped by LinkedIn automatically. If there is a skill you would like to see grouped differently, unfortunately there's nothing you can do.



TIP

As you add skills, consider LinkedIn's categories. Try to add skills that fit the different buckets, and don't add too many skills under just one bucket.

Pinning your top skills

LinkedIn doesn't want to overwhelm readers of your profile with too much content and information. It controls what is visible by collapsing sections and asking viewers to click if they want to see more. Although you can list up to 50 skills on your LinkedIn profile, LinkedIn only shows the top three skills. If viewers want to view more, they must click Show More to expand the section.

However, LinkedIn enables you to choose which skills you'd like to showcase. You can pin the skills you consider your top skills so that they show on your profile without users needing to click Show More. Here's how:

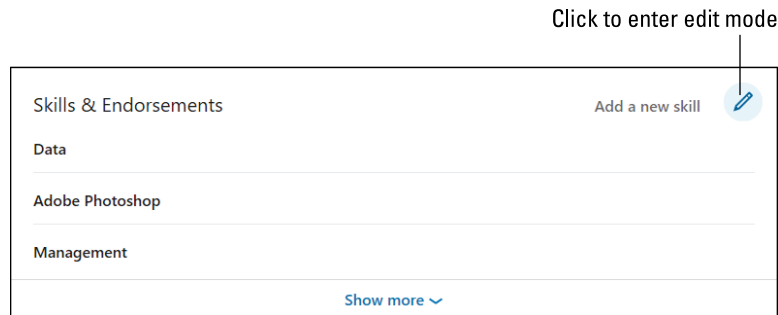
- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll down to Skills & Endorsements.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon, as shown in Figure 3-3.**

A list of your skills appears.

4. Click the pin icon to unpin the top skills.
5. Scroll through the list of skills and click the pin icon next to three skills that you want visible to viewers of your profile.
6. When you have finished pinning your top skills, click the Save button.

One of my biggest pet peeves when viewing profiles is seeing a high-level individual with top skills of MS Word, Team Building, and Problem Solving. Although these are fine skills, they aren't career-defining. It's imperative you choose three skills that truly showcase your abilities. These skills should immediately convey to the person reading your profile who you are and what you do best. In addition, the skills should be future-oriented. Don't choose skills you currently utilize but don't love. Choose skills that align with the position you are striving to land.

FIGURE 3-3:
Click the pencil icon to go into edit mode.



Rearranging skills

Skills are listed in the order in which they are added. Once you start getting endorsements, skills with the most endorsements are listed first. However, you can rearrange the order of endorsed skills by drag and drop. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.
2. Scroll down to Skills & Endorsements.
3. Click the pencil (edit) icon (shown earlier in Figure 3-3).
4. Click the reorder icon that looks like four horizontal lines.
5. Drag and drop the skills where you want them to appear in the list, as shown in Figure 3-4.

When moving skills, make sure you keep your mouse button pressed on the skill you wish to move, drag your mouse to the top or bottom of the list, and then release. You can only rearrange skills within categories.

6. When you have finished organizing your skills, click the Save button.

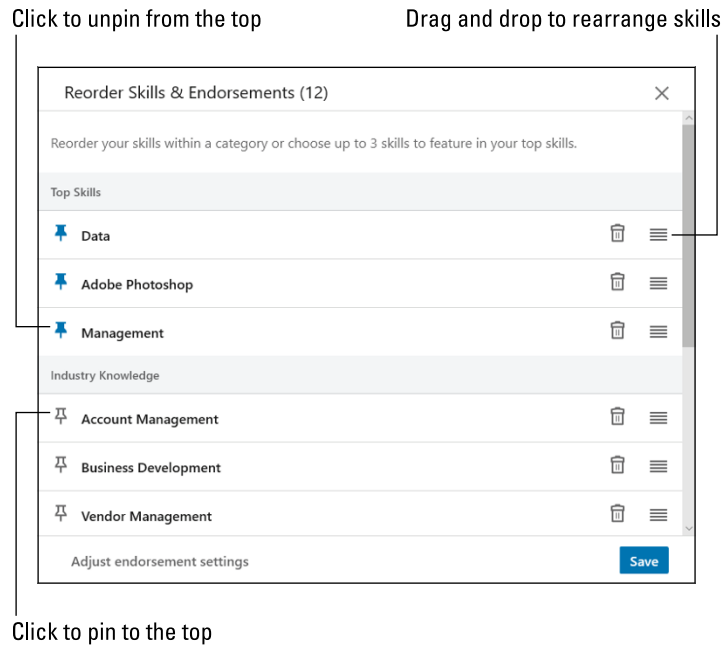


FIGURE 3-4: Drag and drop skills to arrange them in your desired order.

Showing Recruiters What You Know

It's one thing to say you know a skill; it's another to prove it. LinkedIn provides a Skill Assessments feature that enables you to demonstrate your knowledge of the skills you added to the Skills & Endorsements section of your profile. Skills Assessments are made up of multiple-choice quizzes that you can take to earn a badge for your skills. Following are the three categories of quizzes and a few of the topics available:

- » **Tech Skills:** Angular, AutoCAD, AWS, Bash, C, C#, C++, CSS, GIT, Hadoop, HTML, Java, JavaScript, jQuery, JSON, Maven, MongoDB, Nodejs, Objective-C, PHP, Python, R, React.js, Ruby, Ruby on Rails, Scala, Swift, WordPress, XML
- » **General Skills:** Adobe Acrobat, MS Excel, MS Outlook, MS PowerPoint, MS Project, MS SharePoint, MS Visio, MS Word, QuickBooks
- » **Other Skills:** Maya, Revit

LinkedIn is developing more quizzes all the time, so you may find that more are available than what is listed here. Here's how to access the Skills Assessment quizzes:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section.**

3. Click the Take Skill Quiz button, as shown in Figure 3-5.

If you don't see this button, LinkedIn may still be developing quizzes for the skills you have listed.

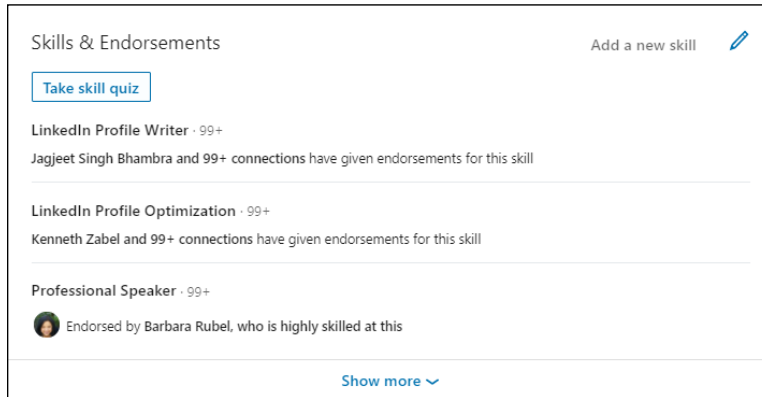


FIGURE 3-5: Click the Take Skill Quiz button to prove your knowledge.

The Skills Assessment feature is a great way to stand out from the crowd to recruiters and hiring managers. By taking quizzes to showcase your proficiency, you are showing you are relevant, proactive, and care about your professional development. LinkedIn has stated that by earning badges for your profile, you are helping to uncover more relevant content or opportunities on LinkedIn. Based on the skills you have proven you know, LinkedIn can better customize your LinkedIn feed and potentially jobs, LinkedIn Learning courses, and people suggestions.

The good news is, you don't have to worry about not getting an A. As long as you score in the 70th percentile or above, you will pass the quiz and be awarded a badge. The badges are only good for 12 months, though. After that they expire.

LEVELING UP WITH LinkedIn LEARNING

Do you want to advance in your career but need to develop certain skills to do so? LinkedIn Learning (www.linkedin.com/learning) is for you! LinkedIn provides over 15,000+ online courses taught by real-world professionals. With a free month upfront, a subscription to LinkedIn Learning costs \$29.99/month, which is cheaper than most community colleges and continuing education courses. After you complete a course, you receive a certification on your LinkedIn profile under the Licenses & Certifications section.



WARNING

What happens if you don't pass? Take a deep breath, it happens! Don't get upset. No one will know you failed — nothing is added or removed from your profile. You have three months to study and get your head in the game. After three months, you can take the quiz again. Here's the thing: You must do better the next time because you can only repeat an assessment once.

Obtaining Endorsements

Once you have skills listed on your profile, LinkedIn allows people to endorse you for those skills. By allowing others to endorse you, the Skills & Endorsements section provides credibility and validity that isn't available anywhere else. Sure, you can list your core competencies on your resume, but it's only on your LinkedIn profile where your first-degree connections can endorse you and prove that you really do possess that skill. The more endorsements you have for a skill on your LinkedIn profile, the more credible you appear.

As I explain in Chapter 2, LinkedIn search is driven by keywords, and LinkedIn wants its search results to be relevant and valuable to the person searching. By allowing connections to validate skills through endorsements, it allows LinkedIn a way to determine search result listings via a manner that is independent of the owner of the profile. At one time, LinkedIn's search results rankings were based solely on keyword density. As long as you stated your keyword more than anyone else did in their profiles, your profile showed up first. Clearly, this was an easy way to hack and skew the search results in your favor. By providing the ability to endorse others and basing search results on an area that is outside the control of a user, results ranking is harder to hack, thereby creating a better search result.



TIP

There is no maximum limit to endorsements (although you are limited by the number of first-degree connections within your network); however, LinkedIn only shows up to 99. After 99, LinkedIn displays 99+. To display the total number of endorsers of a particular skill, just click the 99+ icon to see the full number and a list of endorsers.

Most people confuse endorsements and recommendations. I like to call endorsements "Recommendations Lite." Endorsements occur with a single click of the mouse. Recommendations on the other hand are a written testimonial from a connection and require much more energy and thought.



TIP

When torn between providing a person with a recommendation or an endorsement, determine how much time you have allotted and what you want to convey. If you only have a few seconds, endorsements work just fine. If you want to say more than just one word and truly convey a message about the person, a recommendation is in order.

Hiding an endorsement

Did someone disreputable endorse you for a skill? Hide that endorsement so it doesn't show on your profile. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section and click Show More.**

A full list of your skills and endorsements expands. You may have to scroll to see all of your skills.
- 3. Click a skill to see all the people who have endorsed you for that skill.**

A pop-up window appears with a listing of all the people who have endorsed you. In Figure 3-6 you can see all of the connections who endorsed me for *Marketing Strategy*.
- 4. Toggle the switch to the right of the connection whose endorsement you want to hide.**
- 5. Click the X in the upper-right corner to exit.**

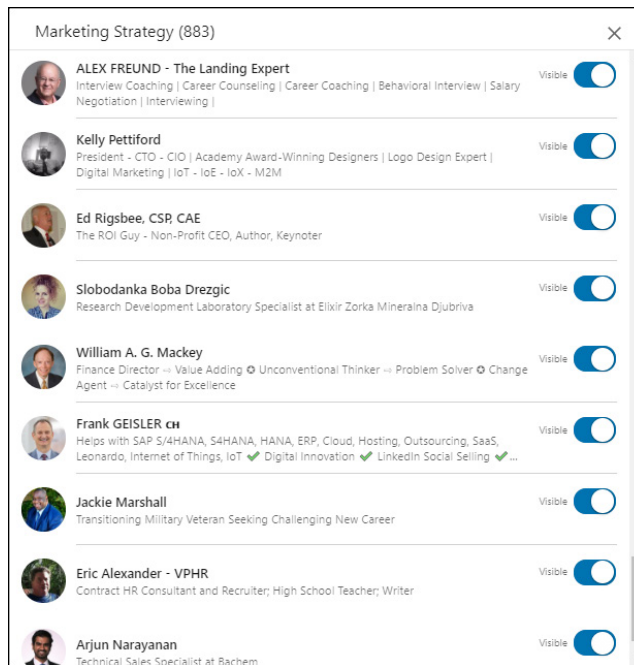


FIGURE 3-6:
Hiding an endorsement is as easy as switching it off.

Opting out of endorsements

Although I highly recommend embracing endorsements, there are some jobs in which endorsements are frowned upon. Financial advisors, for example, often prefer to opt out of LinkedIn's endorsement feature for compliance and regulation reasons.

If you wish to opt out of receiving endorsements, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll down to Skills & Endorsements and click the pencil (edit) icon.**
3. **Click Adjust Endorsement Settings at the bottom of the screen.**

The Endorsements screen appears where you can manage how you receive and give endorsements, as shown in Figure 3-7.

4. **Toggle “I Want to be Endorsed” from Yes to No.**

After selecting No, LinkedIn indicates that it will show your skills but not your endorsements. You can also opt out of having endorsements of your skills suggested to your connections. And you can also opt out of having your connections' skills suggested to you for endorsement.

5. **Click the X in the upper-right corner to save your changes and exit.**

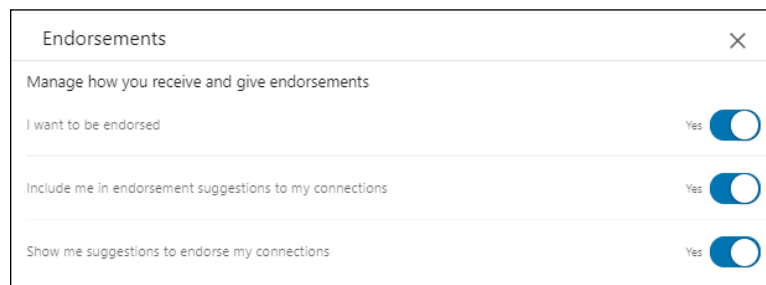


FIGURE 3-7:
Opt out of endorsements completely.

Endorsing a connection

Most people focus on getting endorsements, but it's just as important to give endorsements. Endorsements are a great way to remind connections that you recognize their strengths. By endorsing connections, you are showing acknowledgment and respect for their areas of expertise. Think of endorsements as a “thumbs up” from a business acquaintance. It's an easy way to say, “Hey, I remember you and respect your skill set.”

When giving endorsements, read through the person's entire list of skills and endorse those skills that you are able to authentically validate from personal experience with that person.

Here's how to endorse a connection's skills:

- 1. Visit the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to endorse.**
- 2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsement section.**
- 3. Click Show More to expand the Skills & Endorsement section to see all of his or her skills.**
- 4. Hover over the skill you want to endorse and click the plus (+) sign that appears to the right of it.**

A pop-up window opens.

- 5. Select how good the person is at the skill and how you know about that skill.**

You can choose from Good, Very Good, and Highly Skilled. You can also note whether you managed or reported to the person. This information is not shared with person you are endorsing.

- 6. Click the Submit button.**

You can endorse numerous skills; just keep clicking the plus (+) signs.

You are only able to endorse first-degree connections. When you visit a profile of a second-degree, third-degree, or Out of Network profile, you see their skills and endorsements, but the plus (+) sign to endorse does not appear.



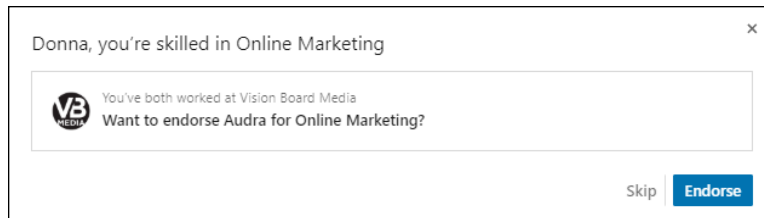
REMEMBER

Endorse your first-degree connections honestly and genuinely. No one wants to be endorsed by someone who is only guessing at their skills. When you make a thoughtful endorsement of a connection you admire, that person is more likely to return the favor in kind.

There may be times you receive endorsements from people within your network that you don't know all that well or at all. This is especially true when you are an open networker and connect with people regardless of whether you know them or not. These first-degree connections that you don't know so well may endorse you because they know of your work and wish to promote positivity in the world. They also may hope that you operate with a quid quo pro mentality and want you to endorse them right back. Do not feel strong-armed! Endorse people because you appreciate their work, not because you feel guilt.

When viewing a first-degree connections' profiles, every now and then LinkedIn may provide you the ability to endorse them for skills they have listed (see Figure 3-8). This prompt is a great way to keep in touch with connections and show your appreciation for their strengths.

FIGURE 3-8:
Endorsing a connection during a visit to her LinkedIn profile.



Removing an endorsement

Did you endorse someone only to learn that you would prefer to disassociate from them? Remove your endorsement from his or her profile by performing a few easy steps:

1. Visit the LinkedIn profile of the person you endorsed.
2. Scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section.
3. Hover your cursor over the check mark next to the skill you already endorsed.
4. Click the check mark to remove your endorsement.

Don't worry; the recipient is not notified of the removal.

Soliciting endorsements

Are you not receiving endorsements from your connections? Sometimes all it takes is a nudge. Rather than sit and stare at your lonely Skills & Endorsements section, get proactive and send your connections an email. Send a simple LinkedIn message to a few of your close connections and ask them to endorse you. Remember, the squeaky wheel gets the oil!

Following are two sample messages to send to connections with whom you recently finished a project or whom you've recently endorsed. The first is an example of requesting an endorsement after finishing up a project or other work with a client:

If you were happy with my work I performed at Widgets, Inc., would you be so kind as to endorse me on LinkedIn?

It's just a simple click of a button. The skills and expertise I would like to be endorsed for are Project Management, Leadership Team Building, and SEO.

All you need to do is visit my profile and scroll down to the Skills & Endorsements section located at the bottom of my profile.

Here's the link to my profile: www.linkedin.com/in/todonna.

The next is an example of requesting an endorsement using the power of quid pro quo:

I just endorsed you for Project Management and Leadership Strategy on your LinkedIn profile.

If you're comfortable with it, would you do the same for me?

There's 50 skills to choose from. All you need to do is visit my profile: www.linkedin.com/in/todonna.

When your connections do endorse you, make sure you reach out and thank them. Call them on the phone or send them a message via LinkedIn. Use LinkedIn as an excuse to get in touch. This is a great way to continue to network and forge strong relationships.

In addition to endorsements, there's another longer-form way for connections to add their two cents about you: recommendations. Keep reading to find out more about this type of testimonial.

The Importance of Recommendations

Recommendations are testimonials that appear on your profile, showing your reader you are trusted and admired within your network. Recommendations are given by first-degree connections and provide citation to your value and abilities and make your profile more credible.

If you are a job seeker, recommendations from your current or past employer and colleagues sets you apart from other job applicants. When your goal is branding or reputation management, a strong list of recommendations from VIPs and leaders boasting your finer points provides evidence to your reader that you truly are a high performing, impressive professional. If you are promoting your business, products, or services, having recommendations from your current clients touting your strengths impresses your prospects.

You may be thinking, "What's the merit in a LinkedIn recommendation when every recommendation on LinkedIn is glowing?"

The power behind LinkedIn recommendations is it's easy to find out how significant or insignificant the person is who wrote your recommendation by simply clicking on the person's name and visiting his or her LinkedIn profile to learn more. It is not what the recommendation says that's so important, *it's who wrote it*. The short recommendation from someone in a high place is significantly better than the glowing recommendation from a colleague or vendor.

Identifying people to recommend you

The best kind of recommendation comes from employers, VIPs, or customers. These are people with a lot of things on their plates. The fact they took time and wrote you a recommendation speaks volumes and proves that you truly did something important. Recommendations by colleagues and people in lateral or lower positions are useful, but not nearly as powerful. The quid pro quo recommendation, given out of duty, impresses no one. Check out Figure 3-9 to see the types of people you should ask for a recommendation.

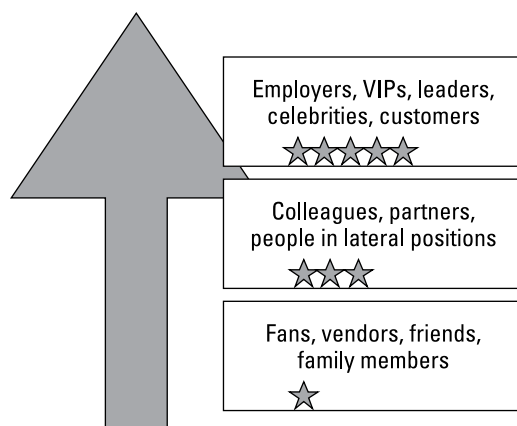


FIGURE 3-9:
Order of recommenders by importance.

Here are some questions to help you identify the right people to ask for a recommendation:

- » Who have you helped?
- » Who have you impressed?
- » Who have you inspired?
- » Who have you provided value to?
- » Who has recently thanked you?

If you have a large list and don't want to send a recommendation request to each and every one, here's how to narrow the list:

- » Who is on LinkedIn?
- » Who has a large LinkedIn network?
- » Who is active on LinkedIn?
- » Who shares your target audience?

When a person writes a recommendation for you, that recommendation is also listed on that person's profile. By making sure the person has a large network and shares your target audience means more eyes on the recommendation, which might translate to additional opportunity for you.



TIP

You can only request recommendations from people who are on LinkedIn and connected to you. However, if you want to add a recommendation from a person who is not on LinkedIn or from someone who has passed on to the great beyond, you can scan the recommendation and add it to the experience as a multimedia file. Directions on adding multimedia files are found in Chapter 12.

If you were unable to come up with a list, what are you waiting for? Go out and start impressing people, help others, and start participating in random acts of kindness.

Asking for a recommendation

Now that you have a list of people to ask for a recommendation, don't let shyness get in your way. People love helping other people and you may discover that most people are honored that you asked them to recommend you.



TIP

The best and most successful approach when asking for a recommendation is not to simply request a recommendation, but provide the person with a recommendation already written for them.

People often balk when I suggest providing a pre-written recommendation. The truth is, rather than being insulted, more often than not the other person is going to be overjoyed. The vast majority of people out there don't have the time or ability to write you a strong recommendation. Because this person is doing you a favor, it's important to do them a favor by making it as easy for them as possible to help you. And as you struggle to come up with the words for your own recommendation, imagine how difficult it would be for the other person!

The other reason I suggest writing the recommendation yourself is to ensure the recommendation is written with all the points you want covered. Just because you think your leadership ability and unwavering commitment to customer service is

what sets you apart, the person writing your recommendation may instead focus on something else entirely.

In addition, by writing the recommendation yourself, you can infuse the recommendation with keywords that help optimize your profile's searchability. All those keywords can be infused into recommendations to make your profile rank even better. (Refer to Chapter 2 to find out even more about how to get found on LinkedIn.)

If my arguments to write the recommendation yourself failed to persuade you, at the very least provide the person with some criteria as to what you'd like stated in the recommendation. Consider including language similar to this:

Dear Dave,

I have enjoyed working with you. Would you be open to providing me a recommendation of my work that I can include on my LinkedIn profile?

When you write the recommendation, I would love it if you'd mention my strength in social selling and how I often acted as a trusted advisor to my clients. Perhaps you can even mention how I saved the Wiener deal using my extensive knowledge of widgets and ended up renewing them for an extra two years, which resulted in a \$2M uptick in revenue?

Thanks so much! I appreciate it!

—Hal

WRITING THE PERFECT RECOMMENDATION

When writing a recommendation for yourself, the best thing to do is list your qualities you want highlighted. If you aren't quite sure what qualities you want highlighted, ask yourself the following questions:

- How does this person know you?
- How long have you known each other?
- How did you work together?
- Detail a singular experience in which you exhibited a high level of leadership as it fits within his or her knowledge of you.
- What one quality of yours proved beneficial to this person? What was the result?
- Did you mentor or work alongside this person? What impact did you have on him or her?

Use the answers to these questions to craft a powerful recommendation.

When requesting a recommendation, it's important that you request the recommendation from within LinkedIn's interface. Whatever you do, don't send the request for a recommendation via an outside email address. Emailing the request makes it difficult for your contact to figure out how to provide the recommendation. By sending the request from LinkedIn's recommendation page, your contacts can easily click the link that LinkedIn provides, making it easy for them to give you a recommendation.

Here's how to request a recommendation from within LinkedIn:

- 1. In the LinkedIn search bar, type the name of the person you want to recommend and click the search button.**

A list of profiles matching the name appears.

- 2. Open the profile of the person you want to recommend by clicking the search result.**

- 3. Click the More . . . button located in the intro section.**

- 4. Select Request a Recommendation.**

A dialog box appears, asking, "How do you know [*this person*]?" as shown in Figure 3-10.

- 5. Choose your relationship to the person.**

You have numerous options. Read through the list carefully and choose the relationship that most closely echoes yours. Unfortunately, there is no "other" option, so you must determine the best fit. Luckily, the other person has a chance to make changes, so if he or she doesn't feel you used the proper relationship option, he or she can change it for you.

- 6. Choose your position at the time from the drop-down list.**

The drop-down list contains a listing of your experiences as listed on your LinkedIn profile.

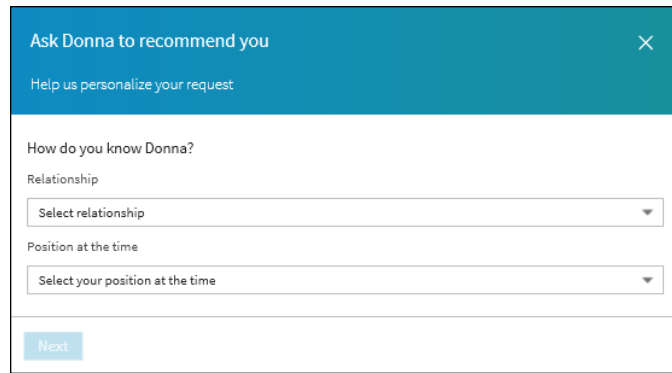
- 7. Click the Next button.**

- 8. Provide a personalized message to send with your recommendation request.**

LinkedIn provides a simple, pre-written message: "Hi, can you write me a recommendation?" As I have stated, it is best to add the recommendation for the person or at the very least, guidelines to what you want covered in the recommendation.

- 9. Click the Send button when you are ready to send your request.**

FIGURE 3-10:
LinkedIn's
recommendation
request form.

The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn recommendation request form. At the top, there is a teal header bar with the text "Ask Donna to recommend you" and a close button (X). Below the header, there is a sub-header "Help us personalize your request". The main form area is white and contains the question "How do you know Donna?". Underneath, there are two dropdown menus: "Relationship" with the placeholder text "Select relationship" and "Position at the time" with the placeholder text "Select your position at the time". At the bottom of the form, there is a blue "Next" button.

Your request for a recommendation is sent as a LinkedIn message. Depending on your LinkedIn settings, you may also receive a notification alert via email.

Ditching the default request text

When requesting a recommendation from a connection, LinkedIn provides a pre-written request for you to send. Rather than use LinkedIn's default text, personalize the message instead. Try something like this:

Dear Fran,

It's been a pleasure working with you and accomplishing so much together. It would be an honor to include a recommendation from you on my LinkedIn profile. I know how busy you are so I took the liberty of writing the recommendation for you. Please feel free to make any edits, and if you would prefer to write your own recommendation, please do so. Thank you in advance and I hope we can do lunch together soon.

<insert pre-written recommendation>

—Ollie

Once the recommendation request is sent, rather than wait for the other person to respond, I highly suggest reaching out to the person directly to let them know that you requested a recommendation. Give them a call and walk them through the steps of providing the recommendation. Let them know how appreciative you are of the help they are providing.

Accepting a recommendation

One of the perks of writing the recommendation for the other person is how quick the recommendation is usually accepted and posted. My clients who accepted this advice have reported back that most people, when provided with a pre-written

recommendation, post it almost immediately. You'll know when the person responds because LinkedIn sends an email notification. In addition to the email, you also get a LinkedIn message from the person giving the recommendation. This message contains a preview of the recommendation and a link to manage your recommendations. Here's how to accept it:

- 1. Go to your messaging screen by clicking the Messaging icon on LinkedIn's main navigation bar.**

In your list of messages on the left is the recommendation the person wrote for you along with a link to review it.

- 2. Click the Review Recommendation link.**

A dialog box that shows a preview of the recommendation appears.

- 3. You can choose to either Dismiss, Ask For a Revision, or Add to Profile.**

- 4. If you need to request a change, click Ask for a revision.**

- 5. Type the reason you are requesting a change.**

To make it as easy for the person as possible, you may want to copy his or her previous recommendation, make the change yourself, and paste the recommendation into the messaging section.

- 6. Click Send.**

It may seem insulting and wrong to request a replacement, but it's an important thing to do. You don't want to publish a recommendation filled with typos. That would defeat the purpose of the recommendation.

- 7. If the recommendation looks great, click Add to Profile.**

Reordering recommendations

Recommendations are listed in the order they were received on your LinkedIn profile. The two most current recommendations sit at the top visible to your reader, and a link to see more leads to the complete list of recommendations you have received. I've heard from people who stopped accepting recommendations because they want a specific recommendation to remain at the top of their profiles and they don't want another lesser recommendation to take the top spot.

At one time, you could indeed reorder recommendations so a prized recommendation could remain in the top visible position. Unfortunately, with the latest interface change, you can no longer reorder recommendations.

Because it is no longer possible to reorder recommendations, please do not let that stop you from getting recommendations. Yes, a fantastic recommendation will be replaced by another on your profile, but all recommendations are visible when a person clicks “See more.” Besides, you never know when an even better recommendation will be received that blows that old prized recommendation out of the water!

Removing recommendations

Careers change, people change, and sometimes, a recommendation you accepted a long time ago may not be a recommendation you want on your profile today. Although it’s not possible to delete recommendations, you can prevent them from showing on your profile. Here’s how:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll down and click the pencil (edit) icon next to the Recommendations section.**

The Manage recommendations window appears.

3. **Change the toggle to Hide for a recommendation you wish to remove, as shown in Figure 3-11.**
4. **Click Save.**

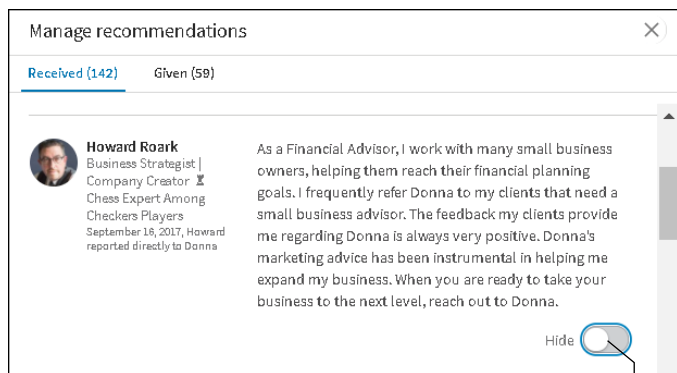


FIGURE 3-11:
Removing a recommendation from your profile.

Toggle to hide

Recommendations that have been hidden can be found in the Manage Recommendations section. Just click the Hidden recommendations link at the bottom of the page. If you hide a recommendation, don’t worry: The other person is not notified that the recommendation was removed.

Recommending others

Everyone knows it's important to get recommendations, but it's also just as important to give recommendations to other people. Think about it. You want to brand yourself as a leader and executive. Leaders and executives don't just get recommendations, they give them!

Most people only provide recommendations when asked. Instead, give recommendations out of the goodness of your heart. Make it a part of your professional life. Once a month, look back and determine who did good by you. Who inspired and impressed you? Without anyone asking, send a glowing recommendation. You might be surprised by the good things that happen when all that karma comes back to you.



TIP

In addition to good karma, writing recommendations for others is a great way to promote yourself. Within the recommendation, introduce yourself and explain what you do. Not only does this give the recommendation context and credibility, but also it serves to get the word out about you.

Here's an example of a self-promoting recommendation:

As a Financial Advisor, I work with many small business owners, helping them reach their financial planning goals. I frequently refer Jill Schwettie to my clients that need a small business advisor. The feedback my clients provide me regarding Jill is always very positive. Jill's marketing advice has been instrumental in helping me expand my business. When you are ready to take your business to the next level, reach out to Jill.

People who read this recommendation may find themselves not only impressed with the person recommended, but also curious about the person providing the recommendation. Remember, the power of LinkedIn recommendations is the ability to click to learn more about the person providing the recommendation, and when you provide a well-written recommendation, a person may click on your profile to learn more about you, the recommender.

Here's how to give a recommendation:

- 1. In the LinkedIn search bar, type the name of the person you want to recommend and click the search button.**
A list of profiles matching the name appears.
- 2. Open the profile of the person you want to recommend by clicking the search result.**

3. Click the More . . . button located in the intro section and select Recommend, as shown in Figure 3-12.

A dialog box appears that walks you through the recommendation process, as shown in Figure 3-13. The first thing you must do is state how you know the person and the person's position at the time.

4. In the How do you know the person's Relationship field, choose your relationship to the person.

You have numerous options. Read through the list carefully and choose the relationship that most closely echoes yours.

5. In the Position at the Time field, click the drop-down list to choose the position of the person you are recommending.

The drop-down list contains a listing of the person's experiences as listed on his or her LinkedIn profile.

6. Click the Next button.

7. In the next dialog box that appears, write the recommendation for the person.

Be careful not to include any notes to the person you don't want others to see, and don't make any typos!

8. Click the Send button when you are ready to send your recommendation.

LinkedIn displays a banner at the bottom of the page that lets you know the recommendation was sent successfully.

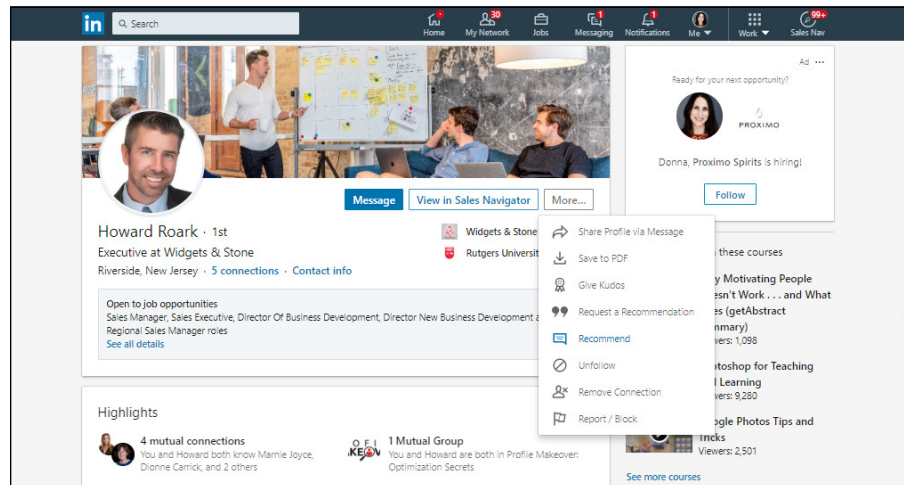
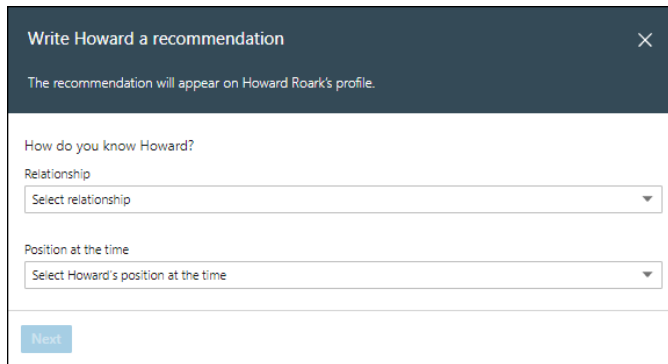


FIGURE 3-12:
Providing a
recommendation.

FIGURE 3-13:
Filling out the
recommendation
form.



Write Howard a recommendation ×

The recommendation will appear on Howard Roark's profile.

How do you know Howard?

Relationship
Select relationship

Position at the time
Select Howard's position at the time

Next



WARNING

Some experts out there may tell you that you can have too many recommendations on your LinkedIn profile. I subscribe to the old adage that you can never be too nice, too rich, or have too many recommendations on your profile. As long as the recommendations are genuine, authentic, come from people within your network, and align you with your career future, you truly can't have too many.

I have over 100 recommendations on my profile. I regularly go through and cull the weaker recommendations. I also make sure that the person who is recommending me is a person who is respectable and professional. Otherwise, I remove the recommendation. The ultimate advice I can give you is to accept and show genuine recommendations from good people and never be afraid to remove a recommendation.

In the next chapter, I show you how to jump in and start building your profile. Don't worry, the very first thing I cover in Chapter 4 is how to turn off profile updates so your entire network isn't alerted to the massive changes about to take place!



Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started

IN THIS PART . . .

Look at how to optimize the invisible nooks and crannies of your profile, including how to create a customized link to your profile and market your profile for more views.

Set up your digital “calling card” — the upper most section of your profile — and give readers an optimized overview of who you are.

Understand why it is important to include your contact information and how and where to add it to your profile.

See why you need a profile picture and how to present yourself in the best possible light.

Craft a compelling headline to grab your readers’ attention and make them want to learn more about you.

Look at how to add flair to your headline, including adding symbols and saturating your headline with keywords.

- » Keeping your profile changes a secret
- » Knowing when LinkedIn sends out an activity update on your behalf
- » Creating a customized link to your profile for marketing
- » Marketing your profile for more profile views

Chapter 4

Optimizing the “Behind the Scenes” Sections

Not every part of your LinkedIn profile is there for the whole wide world to see. In this chapter, I take you behind the scenes of your profile to make sure every invisible nook and cranny is optimized for success. You learn how not to bombard your LinkedIn connections with notifications that you updated your profile. You also discover when and how to turn notifications back on and how that helps you rank higher in LinkedIn search.

Managing Profile Changes

When you make changes to your LinkedIn profile, a notification may be sent out alerting your network. These alerts may take the form of a post in your network’s LinkedIn feed (see Figure 4-1), an in-app notification, or an email notification. These notifications are designed to help remind your connections of you. After seeing a notification, your connections then may find themselves compelled to click on your profile to learn more.

Notifications may be broadcast to your connections if you perform the following changes to your profile:

- » Job changes (adding a new *current* position)
- » Education changes
- » Work anniversaries

Don't expect the notification to send immediately. It can take up to 48 hours for your network to be notified.

At one time, LinkedIn sent a notification out to your network if you so much as added a comma to your profile's content. People were hesitant to make changes to their profile, scared they would inundate their network with silly updates. Another effect it had was that few people followed their LinkedIn feed because of all the useless profile updates from their connections that clogged the feed and blocked good content. Those days have passed. LinkedIn has made a concerted effort to make its network sticky. Yep, sticky! LinkedIn wants people to stick around and read the newsfeed, so it stopped the silly notifications that constantly went out.

Job change notification

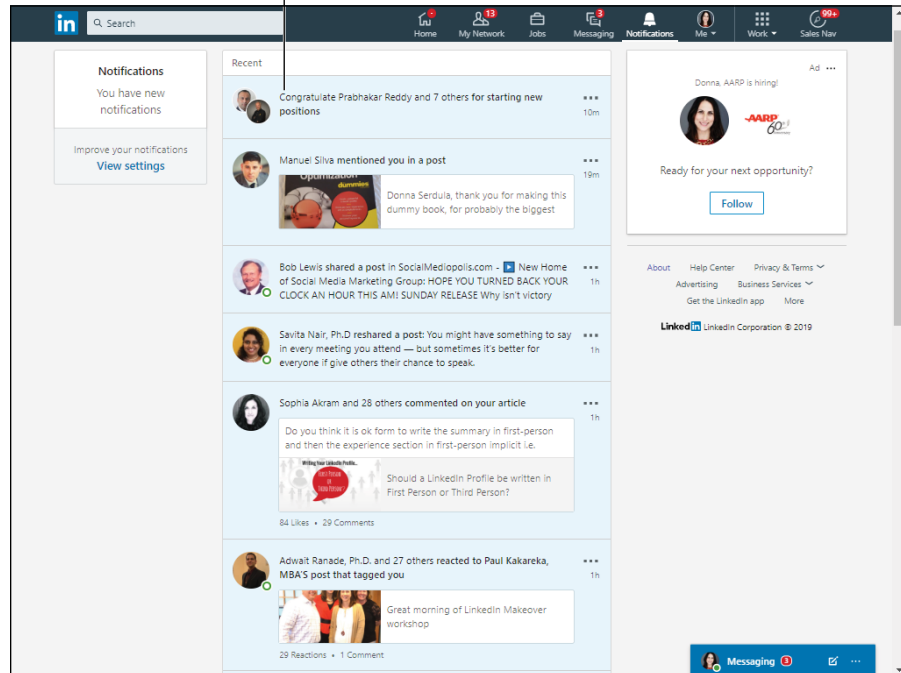


FIGURE 4-1:
A newsfeed
notification of a
job change.

Turning off update alerts

Regardless of the benefits, there may be times you don't want people to know you are starting a new position or celebrating a work anniversary. For example, perhaps after reading Chapter 11, you decide to add a current experience that states, "Looking for my next opportunity." You will definitely want to turn off alerts just in case you are looking for over a year. I've seen notices congratulate a person for his one-year anniversary at "Looking for my next opportunity." Yikes! I've also heard from people who have called me in a tizzy because they forgot to update their LinkedIn profiles after getting laid off and suddenly, they are getting well wishes for celebrating an anniversary with a company they haven't worked at for a year. Double yikes!

To turn off LinkedIn update alerts, follow these steps:

1. Click the **Me** icon from LinkedIn's main navigation bar.
2. Click **Settings & Privacy** from the drop-down menu that appears.
3. Click the **Privacy** tab.
4. Click "Change" next to **Share Job Changes, Education Changes, and Work Anniversaries from Profile**.
5. Toggle the **Yes/No** button to "No," as shown in Figure 4-2.

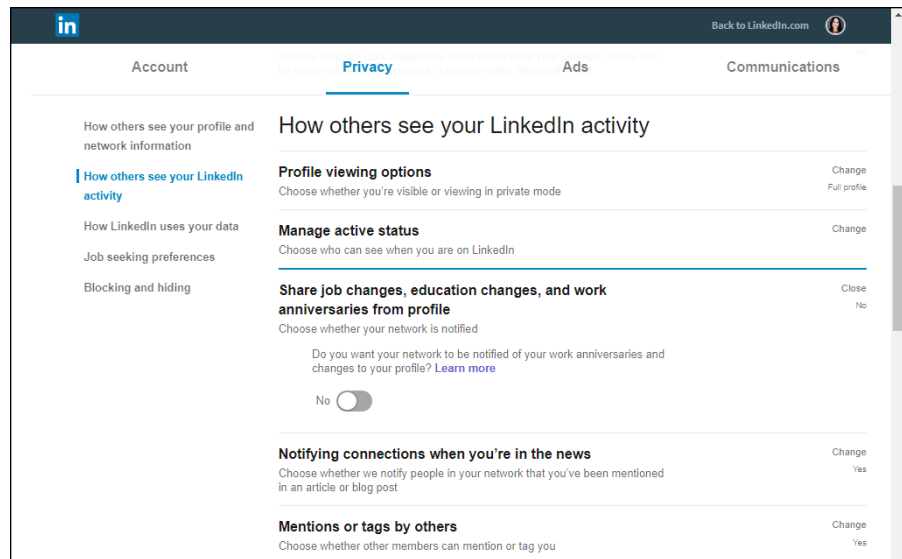


FIGURE 4-2:
Turning off
update alerts.



TIP

Turning off profile updates doesn't turn off your profile visibility. It's the notifications associated with starting a new job, work anniversaries, and education changes that is turned off; your profile is still on and any changes that you save are visible to visitors of your profile.



TIP

You may feel the temptation to keep those update notifications set to No all the time, but I highly suggest allowing update alerts. Often when people see you are celebrating a work anniversary or a job change, they are compelled to visit your profile. Most people want more views to their LinkedIn profile, and this is such an easy way to drive traffic to it. Don't feel shy. Your network wants to stay up to date on your professional career.

If you don't intend to have a current experience stating that you are looking for your next position nor do you mind well wishes each year you spend at your current position, by all means, keep this section enabled. Most people are on LinkedIn because they want to network and they want to be top of the mind, and this setting is a great way to do both.

Removing competitors from your profile

A secret setting is hiding on LinkedIn's privacy settings page. Few people are aware of it, but I am going to let you in on the secret. When viewing people's profiles, a sidebar shows up along the right side of the screen that states, "People Also Viewed." Within this sidebar is a list of similar professionals!

This is great information if you are looking at a recruiter's profile, for example. Skimming through the People Also Viewed list from that recruiter's profile provides you with additional recruiters to contact and send your resume. But what about the reverse situation? Perhaps a recruiter is looking for someone like you? The recruiter likes what she sees, but then her eyes move to the People Also Viewed sidebar and suddenly she is distracted by other similar professionals such as yourself! You may lose an opportunity. Even if you aren't using LinkedIn for job search, this section has far-reaching repercussions. If you are optimizing your LinkedIn profile for sales and prospecting, you may find your competitors listed on your LinkedIn profile.



TIP

Regardless of why you are on LinkedIn, I say, turn this section off!

To turn off Viewers of this profile also viewed, follow these steps:

1. Click the **Me** icon from LinkedIn's main navigation bar.
2. Click **Settings & Privacy** from the drop-down menu that appears.

3. Click the Privacy tab.
4. Click “Change” next to Viewers of This Profile Also Viewed, as shown in Figure 4-3.
5. Toggle the Yes/No button to “No.”

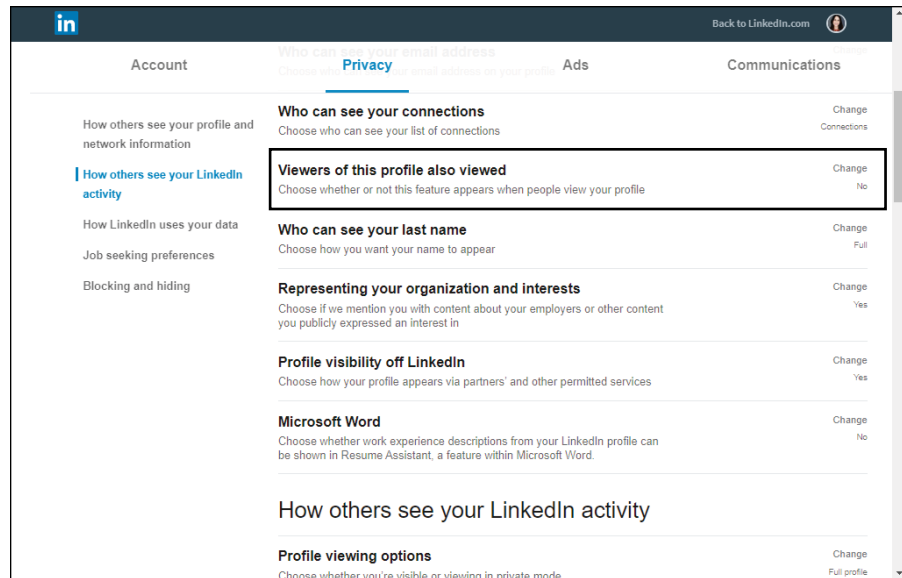


FIGURE 4-3:
Edit this section to stop competitors from showing up on your LinkedIn profile.

CREATING A HIGH-RANKING PROFILE

As I discuss in Chapter 2, LinkedIn is more than a professional social network. It is also a search engine of profiles. As such, it is in LinkedIn’s best interest to ensure that the profiles that appear in search results are relevant and pertinent to the person searching. Profiles that are freshly updated are often rewarded with higher placement in search results than a profile that hasn’t been touched in years. LinkedIn wants to deliver the right results, and an old, out-of-date profile should never rank high in LinkedIn search.

Get into the habit of updating your profile at least once every few months, if not sooner. Not only are you keeping your profile fresh, but also you are ensuring that your profile ranks high for those people looking for someone like you.

Turning On Your Public Profile

Your LinkedIn profile is not just visible within LinkedIn. You can allow the world the ability to see your profile by turning on public version of your profile. Once your public profile is turned on, it is indexed by search engines and returned as a search result for pertinent searches. Anyone can view your public profile regardless of whether they are logged in to LinkedIn or not.

Your profile on LinkedIn is your outpost on LinkedIn. Not everyone is on LinkedIn, and your public profile acts as your outpost on the entire World Wide Web.

If you want your public profile to be found and seen outside of LinkedIn, follow these steps to turn it on:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click “Edit your public profile & URL” located in the right sidebar (see Figure 4-4).**
- 3. Under the section, “Edit Visibility” located in the right column, toggle Your Profile’s Public Visibility to On.**
- 4. Select the radio button next to “Public,” as shown in Figure 4-5.**
- 5. Scroll down and click Save.**

Your LinkedIn profile now appears in search engines and is visible to non-LinkedIn members.

In addition to controlling whether your profile is visible by the public, you determine the profile sections that appear for public consumption. Depending on your privacy needs, you choose what sections appear and which remain hidden.

As shown in Figure 4-5, some sections can be toggled on or off like honors and awards, organizations, interests, and so on. Other sections have enhanced controls. For example, you can turn off your current experience but leave your past experiences on. You may choose to show your current or past job titles but not the job description details. This works well when you want to show your career trajectory, but not allow the public to see every accomplishment and responsibility.



REMEMBER

Although you can toggle sections off, remember, this is only your public profile. Logged-in LinkedIn members see all completed profile sections.

Click to edit your public profile

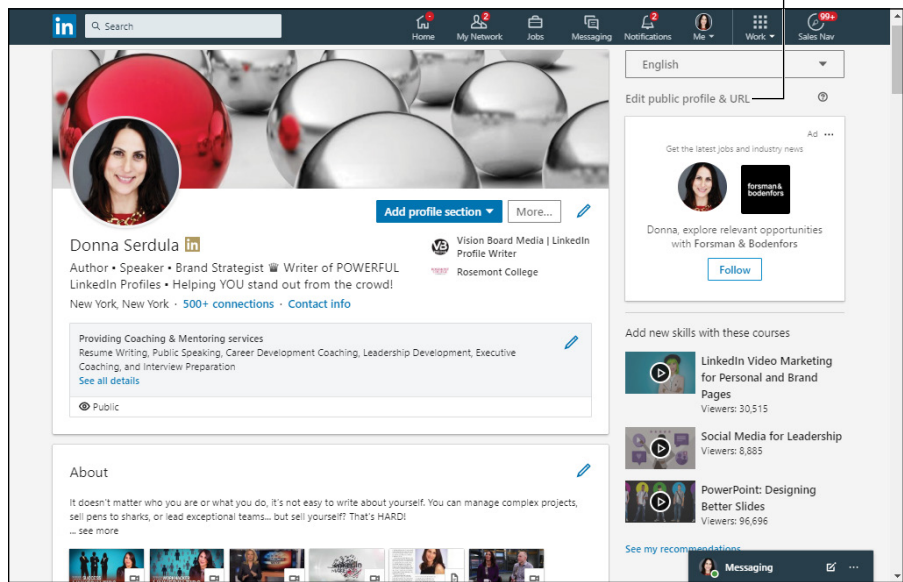


FIGURE 4-4:
Customize
your public
profile URL.

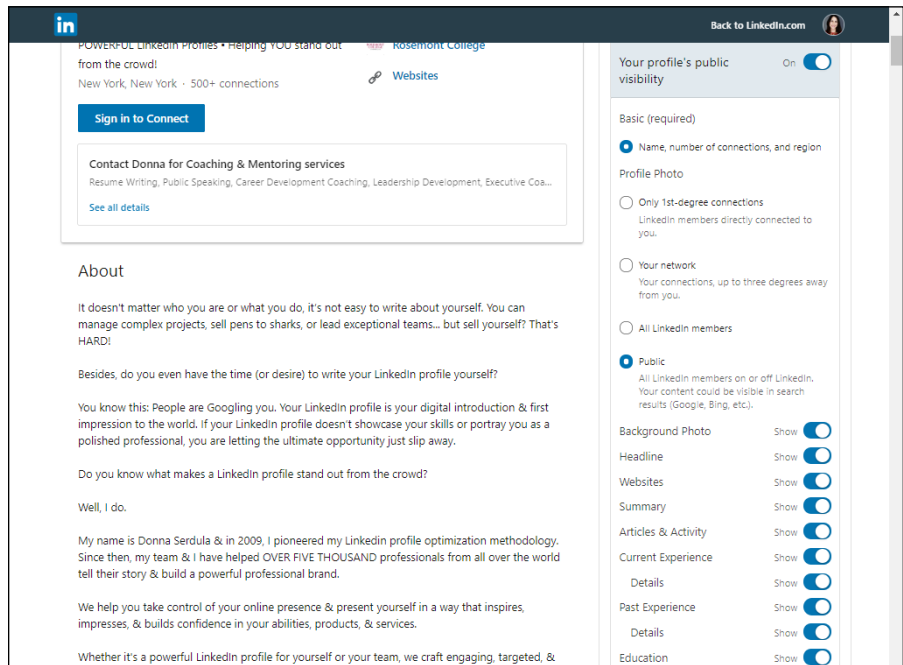


FIGURE 4-5:
You can control
how your profile
appears outside
of LinkedIn.

Here's how to preview your public profile and turn sections on and off:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click “Edit your public profile & URL” located in the right sidebar.**
- 3. In the “Your Profile’s Public Visibility” section, use your mouse to toggle the switch to the right next to the sections you wish to appear in your public profile.**

The word “Show” will replace the word “Hide.” Toggling the switch to the left prevents that section from appearing. As you add and remove sections, you can preview what your public profile looks like to the outside world.

- 4. Scroll down to see a preview of your profile.**
- 5. When you are satisfied with your choices, exit the screen.**

Your choices are saved automatically.

You may feel compelled to turn off your public profile and prevent people from outside LinkedIn to view it. Your LinkedIn profile is intended to tell your story and control how others see you. I strongly advise you to take a deep breath and leave your public profile on and visible.

It's a different world out there, and people are interested in learning more about you. By providing them with your LinkedIn profile — *your* story told *your* way — you are allowing them to find something out about you on your own terms. By preventing this information, the person looking to learn more about you may decide to dig even deeper and find information about you that you cannot control.

Creating a Personalized URL

There may be times you want to send people directly to your LinkedIn profile. Most people include a link to their profiles in their resume letterhead, email signatures, website bios, or even on business cards. Providing a link to your profile is even more important when you have a common name. Without a link, a person wanting to connect to you on LinkedIn must perform a name search. It's not easy finding the right John Smith or Peter Jones in ten pages of search results. Alternately, it's hard to find the right Charles or Jennifer. Did they list their name as Chuck, Charlie, Charles, Jenna, Jen, Jenny, or Jennifer?

When you sign up for a LinkedIn account, LinkedIn automatically assigns your profile a static web address link. However, this default address is a jumble of letters and numbers that is not easy to remember or market. Luckily, LinkedIn gives

you the ability to change this URL to one that is easy to remember and easy to promote, something that looks like this:

`https://www.linkedin.com/in/firstnamelastname`

Here's how you create a customized link to your LinkedIn profile:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click "Edit your public profile & URL" located in the right sidebar.**
3. **Under the section, "Your Public Profile URL," which appears in the right column, click the pencil (edit) icon next to your URL, as shown in Figure 4-6.**
4. **Type your new customized URL in the text box that appears.**

Your custom URL can have 3 to 100 letters or numbers. Spaces, symbols, or special characters are not allowed. The customizable part of the URL is case insensitive. This means DavidJones or davidjones take you to the same profile.

5. **Click Save.**

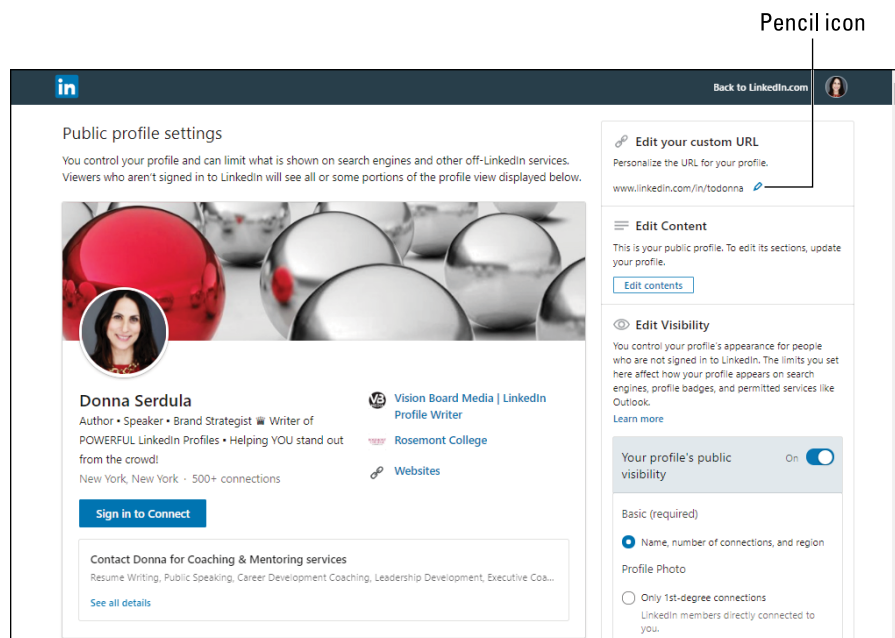


FIGURE 4-6:
Click the pencil icon to edit your URL.



TIP

Recruiters often tell me that a personalized URL is a sign that the person has kept up with technology and is a true professional. Recruiters won't pass by a profile because of a non-customized URL, but they may pass silent judgment on that candidate.

Using your name

When choosing the text for your customized URL, don't worry about getting creative. Choose your name because it is *your* profile. Whatever you do, do not use your company's name for the URL. Your public URL is a permanent link to your LinkedIn profile. Companies are not permanent, and although you can change your URL, old links with the old URL may exist for some time. Create a URL that is permanent by using the one thing that is permanent for you: your name.

Oh no, my name is taken!

Unfortunately, most common names are already taken. When this happens, you simply must find an alternative way of stating your name.

Pretend your name is David Jones. Here are some ideas of rephrasing your name that might not yet be taken:

- » First initial and last name: DJones
- » First name, middle initial, and last name: DavidXJones
- » First and middle initial and last name: DXJones



TIP

I highly discourage users from adding numbers to the end of their customized URLs. When I see a number at the end of a URL, I think the person is just one of many. A number gives the feeling of an assembly line of professionals rather than a unique brand. When your name is taken and there is no other way of stating it, utilize a prefix rather than a numerical suffix.

Here are some ideas:

- » ToDavidJones
- » GoDavidJones
- » ImDavidJones
- » theDavidJones
- » SeeDavidJones
- » YourDavidJones
- » MeetDavidJones

Marketing your public profile URL

The beauty of your LinkedIn profile is that when people visit, they can connect with you. By connecting with you, they are subscribing to your activity feed. When you post an activity update or blog, they receive a notification. By driving people to your profile and asking them to connect, you are ensuring a long relationship with them rather than a once-and-done visit.

There are a number of areas you can place your public profile link:

- » Brochures
- » Business cards
- » Email signature
- » Facebook profile
- » Letterhead
- » Resume
- » Sales literature
- » Tattoo across your forehead (just teasing!)
- » Twitter bio
- » Website

Scanning Your LinkedIn QR Code

Have you even been to a networking event or conference and collected business cards from the people you met? Then, that night, you keyed the names of the business cards into LinkedIn. Some people you found instantly, others you searched and searched. It's such a pain in the neck, isn't it?

There's a better way!

LinkedIn's mobile app provides an easy way to connect to people you meet by embedding a QR code and scanning tool. Rather than collecting a business card with the intention of connecting on LinkedIn later, you can connect immediately with the person provided you both have your smartphones on you and the LinkedIn app installed.

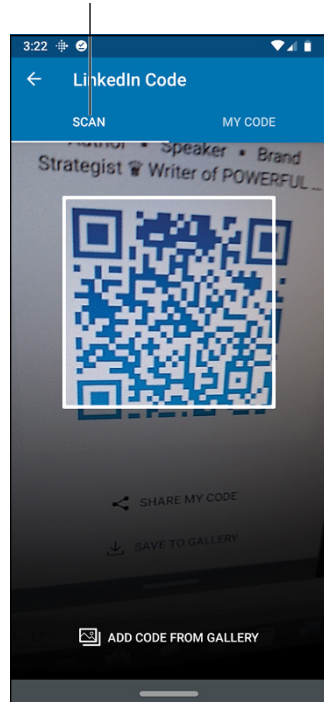
Here's how to scan a person's QR code:

1. **Open the LinkedIn app on your mobile device.**
2. **Tap the QR code (four squares) in the Search bar on the Home screen.**
3. **Tap the Scan tab, as shown in Figure 4-7.**

You may be prompted to enable permissions for your phone's camera.
4. **Hold your mobile device directly above the LinkedIn member's QR code.**

The app will recognize the code, and the member's LinkedIn profile will immediately open within the app.
5. **Click the Connect button to connect with the person.**

Click to scan and read another person's QR code



Click to share your QR code

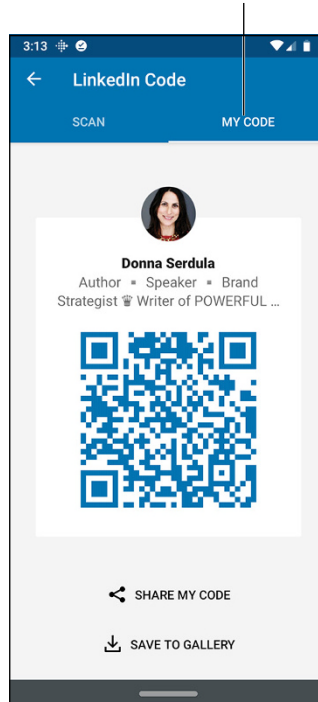


FIGURE 4-7: Using LinkedIn's QR code to connect.

Here's how to have your QR code scanned:

1. **Open the LinkedIn app on your mobile device.**
2. **Tap the QR code (four squares) in the Search bar on the Home screen.**

3. Tap the My Code tab (see Figure 4-7).
4. Hold your mobile device out so the other person can scan your code with his or her mobile device.

Your profile will open on the other person's mobile device.

This functionality is only available on LinkedIn's app and is not available on LinkedIn's desktop experience.



TIP

You can save your QR code and have it printed on the back of your business card. Or if you are delivering a presentation, add the QR code to the slide where you provide your contact information and ask attendees to scan your code from their seats.

You can see my QR code in Figure 4-8. Try it out: Scan my QR code and visit my profile. I'd love if you'd follow me on LinkedIn so we can stay in touch.

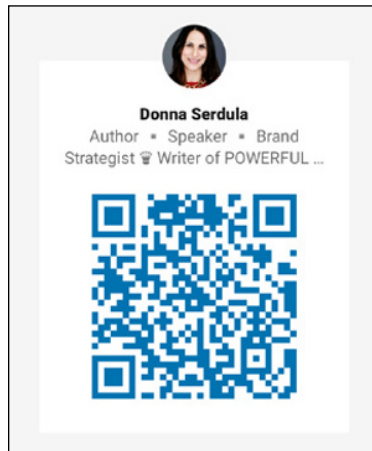


FIGURE 4-8: Scan my QR code and follow me on LinkedIn.

Improving Your Profile's Strength

LinkedIn cares about your profile. It wants you to take your profile seriously and update it regularly. LinkedIn even provides a rating to your profile to show you how well you are doing. The Profile Strength meter, shown in Figure 4-9, sits on the top of your profile. This meter measures how well you optimized your profile.

Profile strength is divided into five levels:

- » Beginner
- » Intermediate

- »» Advanced
- »» Expert
- »» All-Star

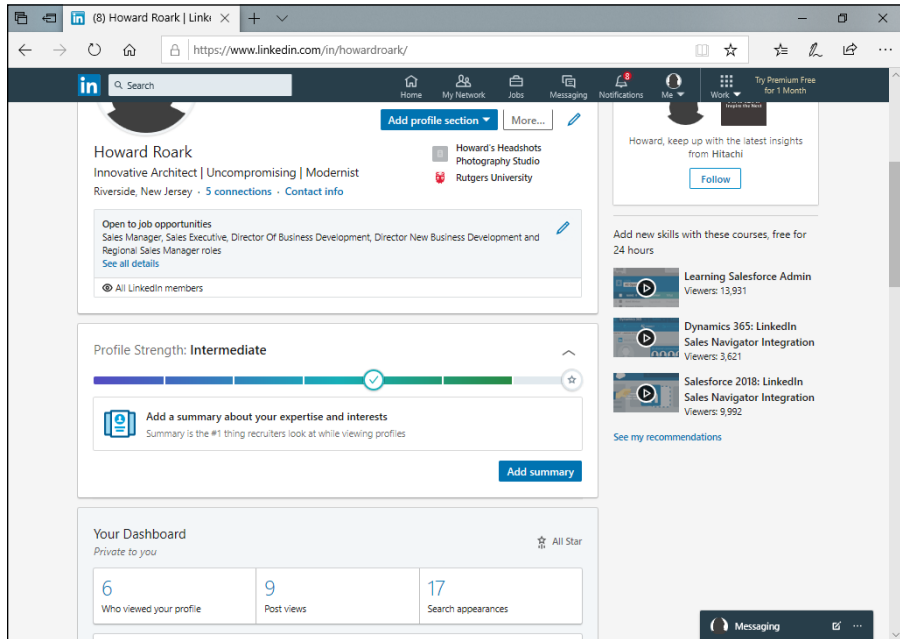


FIGURE 4-9:
Your profile strength meter rates the effectiveness/robustness of your profile.

The stronger your profile, the more successful your profile. LinkedIn has stated that “intermediate profiles are 8 times more likely to get noticed by hiring managers and recruiters and 10 times more likely to be contacted.” All-Star profiles are “27 times more likely to be found in recruiter searches” and will gain “up to 3 times more profile traffic from Search, Feed, and My Network.” LinkedIn hasn’t revealed its search engine algorithms, but knowing how important it is for LinkedIn to provide relevant and complete profiles in search results, it would make sense that stronger profiles are rewarded with high placement on search result listings.

It’s worth noting that your profile strength is not broadcast out for everyone to see. Only you, logged in and looking at your profile in edit mode, can see it.



TIP

Your profile strength increases as you add more content to your profile. All-Star is the highest level of strength. In order to achieve a perfect LinkedIn profile that ranks as an All-Star, you must have the following sections completed on your profile:

- » Your industry
- » Your location
- » Education
- » Skills (minimum of five)
- » A position (past or current)
- » A profile picture
- » About section

At one time, you could not attain an All-Star profile if you didn't have a current position or if you didn't add education to your profile. This made it difficult if you were a displaced worker looking for your next opportunity because your profile would only rate Expert because you did not have a current experience. That's why so many people added a current experience with a company name of "Looking for my next opportunity." As long as you have one past position, you can achieve All-Star status. You can also still achieve All-Star status without any schools listed on your profile.



TIP

As you move through this book, keep an eye on your profile strength meter. There's great satisfaction in seeing the meter start to jump forward, from Beginner to Intermediate to All-Star.

Know that with each section of content you add, you are defining your personal brand and telling your unique professional story that can get you noticed and found for the right opportunities.

Expanding Your Network

It doesn't matter if you have an All-Star profile if your LinkedIn network is tiny. Building a diverse and relevant network of connections is the backbone of LinkedIn. Without a strong network behind your profile, your profile will never fare well. Let's get started building a strong network now so when your profile is optimized, people can find it, view it, and notice you.



REMEMBER

Connections are key to your success on LinkedIn. When you search LinkedIn for people, the results are comprised of people within your LinkedIn network who meet your search criteria. When people search for you or someone like you, you will appear in their search results as long as you reside within their LinkedIn network. The more people you have in your network, the higher you rank in LinkedIn search, and the more often you are found.

LinkedIn uses connections to provide additional insight unlike any other social network. LinkedIn doesn't just show with whom you are directly connected. LinkedIn unveils how you are connected to other people.

Your LinkedIn Network consists of first-, second-, and third-degree connections. These degrees describe how a person is connected to another person. A first-degree connection is someone you have added to your network or someone who has added you to their network. A second-degree connection is a person connected to your first-degree connection but not directly connected to you. If a person is a second-degree connection, that means you have a mutual connection in common. A third-degree connection is someone who is connected to a second-degree connection. If a person is a third-degree connection, they know someone who knows a person you know directly. A person is considered outside of your network if you do not share any connections within three degrees of that person.

To truly leverage LinkedIn and get to All-Star profile strength, you must get your online network to reflect your offline network. Here are some ideas of people you can invite to connect on LinkedIn:

- » Alumni
- » Current colleagues
- » Current employer
- » Family
- » Friends
- » Past colleagues
- » Past employers

LinkedIn provides a tool to make connecting easy. It's called People You May Know. Rather than wracking your brain trying to come up with people to connect, the People You May Know screen provides suggestions based upon commonalities.

LinkedIn shows you the name, current job title, and profile picture of people who you may know. They base these suggestions off of similar profile information such as working at the same company or going to the same school. LinkedIn also looks at the contacts you've imported from your email and mobile address books and offers profiles with the same contact information.

To use People You May Know to help expand your network, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. From LinkedIn's main navigation bar click, My Network.**

3. Scroll down to “More suggestions for you” to view the connection suggestions, as shown in Figure 4-10.
4. When you see someone you know and would like to add to your network, click the Connect button.

Clicking the Connect button immediately sends a default LinkedIn connection request.

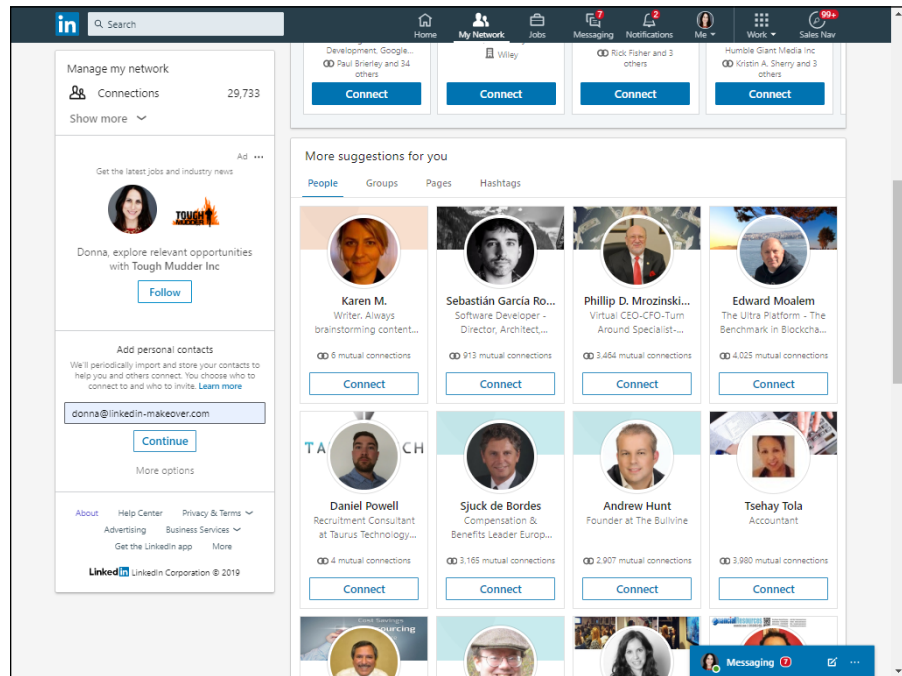


FIGURE 4-10: The “People you may know” section suggests profile connections.

You cannot personalize the invitation to connect message from the People You May Know page. If you would like to personalize your invitation to connect message, do the following:

1. Hover your mouse pointer over the person’s name and click.

This takes you to that person’s LinkedIn profile.

2. Click the Connect button, as shown in Figure 4-11.

A pop-up menu appears prompting you to either add a note or send the invitation immediately without a personalized note.



TIP

If the Connect button doesn't appear in the profile introduction section, you may have to click the More button located below the background photo and then choose Connect from the drop-down list.

3. **Click Add a note.**
Although you can send an invitation to connect, it's best to always add a personalized note.
4. **In the Message (optional) field, personalize the invitation as you wish (see Figure 4-12).**
5. **Click the Send Invitation button.**

FIGURE 4-11: To send a personal connection invitation, you need to go to that person's profile directly.

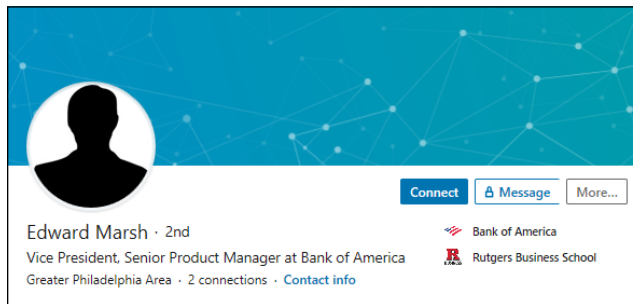
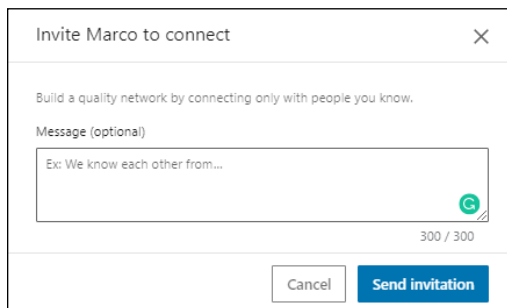


FIGURE 4-12: Customizing your connection request.



By expanding your network, you will turn up more often in searches, have more views to your profile, and find more opportunities via LinkedIn. Next, you take a look at setting up your digital calling card.

- » Adding and editing your name
- » Selecting your field of business
- » Adding your contact information

Chapter 5

Establishing Your Calling Card

Think of the top part of your LinkedIn profile as your calling card. In fact, LinkedIn even calls it your intro card. This upper most section of your profile gives your reader a quick overview of who you are and what you do. This area also provides the information a person needs to reach out to contact you. In a single glance, your reader sees:

- » Your profile picture
- » Your background photo
- » Your headline
- » Whether you are a premium LinkedIn member
- » Your location
- » Your current company
- » A school you attended
- » The number of first-degree connections you have
- » Your contact information
- » Whether you provide services or if you are openly looking for new opportunities

In this chapter, I show you how to set up this section of your LinkedIn profile in the most optimized manner to ensure the right people are able to find and contact you. Let's start with your name.

Using the Name Field Correctly

What can be easier than adding your name to your LinkedIn profile? Turns out, the name field is an area where people repeatedly make mistakes.



TIP

First, when adding your name to your profile, you don't need to use your full, official name. Instead, use your nickname. If your name is Christopher, but everyone knows you as Chris, use Chris on your profile.

Imagine going to a networking event or conference. You meet a man named Ricky. He hands you a business card that states his name is Rick. Later that evening, you log in to LinkedIn to connect with the people you've met, working off the business cards you collected. You type in "Rick" and click through pages of results to no avail. You try Ricky. It, too, yields no results. You try Richard and still nothing. You take a stab in the dark and try Ricardo and bingo!

Don't let this happen to you. Few people are as persistent as our example. Make it easy for people to connect with you by using the name you are known by on your LinkedIn profile.



TIP

A good rule of thumb is to make sure your name is consistent across your resume, business cards, website, email signature, and other social media profiles. Make it easy for people to find you by keeping a consistency with your name.

If you have a common name and want to differentiate yourself from others with the same name, adding a middle initial works great. However, don't just add the middle initial to your LinkedIn profile. Make sure you add it everywhere your name is used. It's a Google world out there, and you want to make sure you are easily found.

Editing your name

First things first, check out your LinkedIn profile. How does your name appear? I can't tell you how many times I see profiles that have the first and last name reversed. Once you see how it appears, decide if you want to change it. You may decide to add your maiden name or update your first name to your nickname. Whatever your need, here's how to change your name on LinkedIn:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.**

Your profile opens in edit mode, as shown in Figure 5-1.

3. **Type your first and last names in the name fields.**

If you have a former name, such as a maiden name, add it to the former name section and then choose who sees it by selecting My Connections, My Network, or Everyone. The former name field displays on your LinkedIn profile encased in parentheses between your first and last name. It does not display on your public profile, however.

4. **Click Save.**

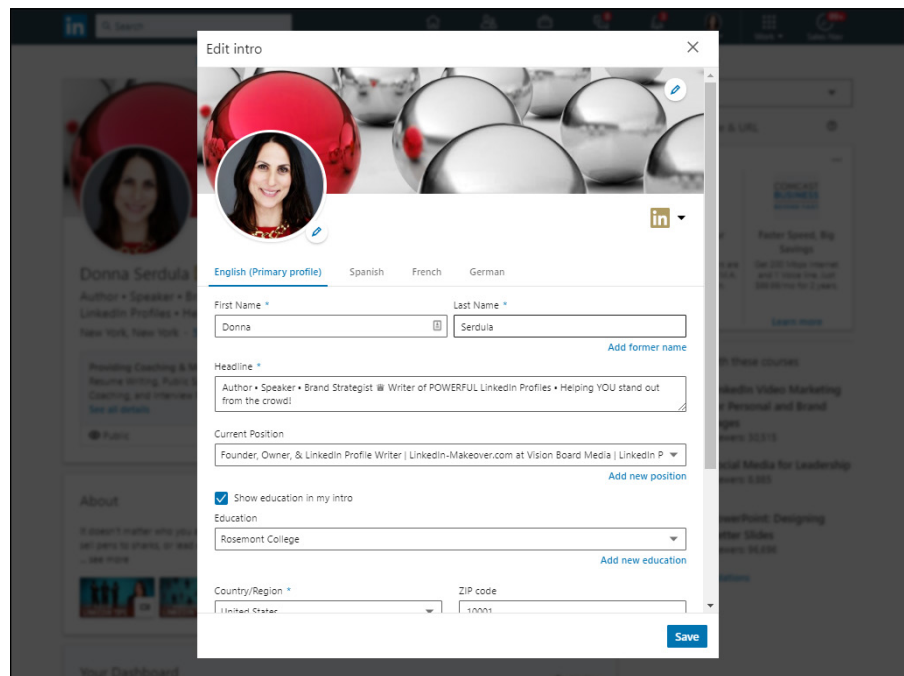


FIGURE 5-1:
Editing your
name.

Adding prefixes to your name

Do you have certifications that you want to highlight on your profile? Lots of LinkedIn members like to add “MBA” or “SHRM” as a prefix to their last names. At one time, this was the only way to highlight your credentials on your profile. Now there is a Certifications section of the profile to display this information.

THE DOWN LOW ON LIONS

Some members of LinkedIn subscribe to the old-school *LION connection* philosophy. LION stands for *LinkedIn Open Networker*. Rather than connecting with only the people they know and trust, they connect to anyone and their brother. There aren't any crazy hazing rituals or consideration panels to pass to be considered a LION. All you need to do is follow one rule: Never mark anyone who chooses to connect with you as I Don't Know or SPAM. To show that you are a LION, you simply state it in your profile. Many members add the word "LION" or their email addresses to their name fields. I highly caution against doing this. Not only is it against LinkedIn's user agreement to use the name field for information other than your name, but also doing so potentially makes it harder for people to find you.

I recommend keeping your name field clean. I know you want to shout your MBA from the rooftops, but hold off on putting it in the name field. When people search for you on LinkedIn, they aren't including prefixes. And because LinkedIn is matching the searched name with the name of a member, you want to make it match as best you can.

Keeping your profile confidential

Do you want to maintain your privacy and keep your LinkedIn profile confidential? There is an option that allows you to include only your first name and the first initial of your last name on your LinkedIn profile. Your first-degree connections see your full name, but everyone else sees your first name and last initial.

To access this option, you must first turn off your public profile. Once your public profile is turned off, the option to display your name with only your last initial appears within your Name field.



TIP

If you are on LinkedIn only to connect with a select few individuals and not looking for additional opportunities, displaying just the first initial of your last name may work for you. However, most people use LinkedIn to network and connect with people and to forge business opportunities. Displaying your full name shows you are serious in these goals. Unless you are using LinkedIn under confidential circumstances, my recommendation is to display your full name.

I often hear from people who want to turn their profile off entirely while they work on their profile. Unfortunately, LinkedIn doesn't provide the option to hide your profile. You can turn off your public profile so people outside of LinkedIn can't see your profile. You can hide your last name so people searching for you

can't find you. You can turn off your activity feed so people aren't notified that you made changes, prompting them to check out your profile. However, those who are already first-degree connections with you will see your profile if they seek your profile out.

Filling Out Location and Industry

At the top of your public profile, right below your headline, LinkedIn displays your location. This information also shows up in search result listings. Industry is available within the intro card section, but it doesn't display publicly on your profile. Even though it does not show, it still plays a big role because people can still query that field in the All People Filters screen. When recruiters search for a candidate, they often filter the search results by location or industry. (I cover filters in Chapter 2.)

If you were sourcing a position located in Texas that doesn't come with a relocation package, why see results with people located in Maine? When searching for a Medical Device Account Manager, recruiters will narrow the results by industry to ensure they are not looking at Account Managers with backgrounds in Automotive, Telecommunications, or Machinery.

Although these fields would seem easy to fill out, I can't tell you how many times people forget to update their locations when they move or choose the first industry that looks good to them. Medical device sales reps often choose Hospital and Healthcare because it's the first choice they see. Rarely do they scroll down to Medical Devices.



TIP

Because the location and industry fields are front and center and play a big role in search, you want to make sure they are absolutely accurate.

Choosing your location

LinkedIn uses postal codes to determine your location. If you live just outside a major city, LinkedIn provides a couple options. You can choose the actual town and state or the closest major city. When I enter postal code 10001, I can choose New York, New York or Greater New York Area, as shown in Figure 5-2.

Determining which location to choose, think in terms of your market and audience. A small business owner who services clients in a town may prefer to list the town and state. A professional who commutes to the city to work might prefer to list the greater city location.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit intro' form in LinkedIn. It contains the following sections and fields:

- Current Position:** A text field containing 'Founder, Owner, & LinkedIn Profile Writer | LinkedIn-Makeover.com at Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Pr' with a dropdown arrow and a blue link 'Add new position'.
- Education:** A checkbox 'Show education in my intro' is checked. Below it is a text field with 'Rosemont College' and a dropdown arrow, with a blue link 'Add new education'.
- Country/Region:** A dropdown menu set to 'United States'.
- ZIP code:** A text field containing '10001'.
- Locations within this area:** A dropdown menu with a list of options: 'New York, New York', 'Greater New York City Area' (highlighted in blue), 'New York, New York', and 'Marketing & Advertising'.
- Contact info:** A text field with a pencil icon and a blue link 'Save' at the bottom right.

FIGURE 5-2: Choosing your location.

What do you do if you commute farther than LinkedIn assumes? There are many professionals who take the express train into New York City but live in the northern outskirts of Philadelphia. In this situation, use the zip code where your office is located. Here’s how to fill out the location field:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the pencil (edit) icon just below your profile background picture, as show in Figure 5-3.**

Your profile’s intro section opens in edit mode.

3. **Scroll down to the zip code field and enter your zip code, as shown earlier in Figure 5-2.**

Depending on your location, LinkedIn may offer alternative locations. Choose the most apt location from the “Locations within this area” drop-down list.

4. **Click Save.**

Using multiple locations for job search

What if you live in Philadelphia but you don’t want to be limited by just that location? New York City and Delaware are close by, and maybe you want to be considered for positions in those areas, too. LinkedIn enables you to cite multiple locations, but not in the Location field. You must first mark yourself open to new opportunities (there’s a setting for this). And within this setting, you can choose multiple locations as well as multiple positions that you would be open to learning more about.

Click to enter Edit mode

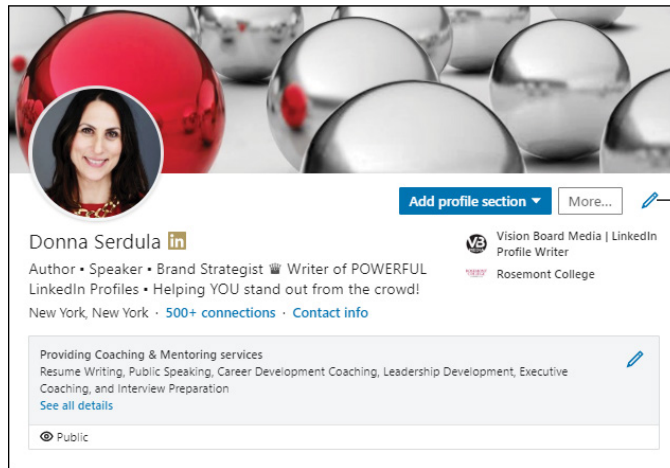


FIGURE 5-3:
Getting location
and industry into
edit mode.

Here's how to mark yourself open to new opportunities and select multiple locations:

1. **Click the Me icon from LinkedIn's main navigation bar.**
2. **Click View Profile from the drop-down menu that appears.**
3. **Click Get Started in the "Show recruiters you're open to job opportunities" box at the top of your profile, as shown in Figure 5-4.**

A Job Preferences pop-up window appears, as shown in Figure 5-5.

4. **Add the job titles you are interested in by clicking Add Title+ and typing the name of the job.**
5. **Select jobs from the drop-down list suggestions.**

You only can choose five.

6. **Under Job Locations, enter the locations you are interested in.**
7. **Select the Job Types you are interested in by clicking in the check box(es).**
8. **Choose the visibility of this section.**

You can choose all LinkedIn members or only recruiters who subscribe to LinkedIn's Recruiter product.



WARNING

When selecting Only Recruiters, LinkedIn strives to not show your job-seeking interests to recruiters at your current company, but it can't guarantee complete privacy. This means if you are currently working at a company and you choose to show your interest to new opportunities to only recruiters, recruiters who

contract for your current company may notice and blab to management that you aren't in it for the long haul.



You need to decide how obvious you want to be regarding your interest in a new opportunity. If you are currently working and don't wish to rock the boat, select Only Recruiters and cross your fingers that your company doesn't outsource recruiting efforts. If you are a displaced worker, select All LinkedIn Members. Yes, everyone will know that you are open, but heck, that's a good thing, right? No one will ask you to the ball if they think you are going steady with someone else!

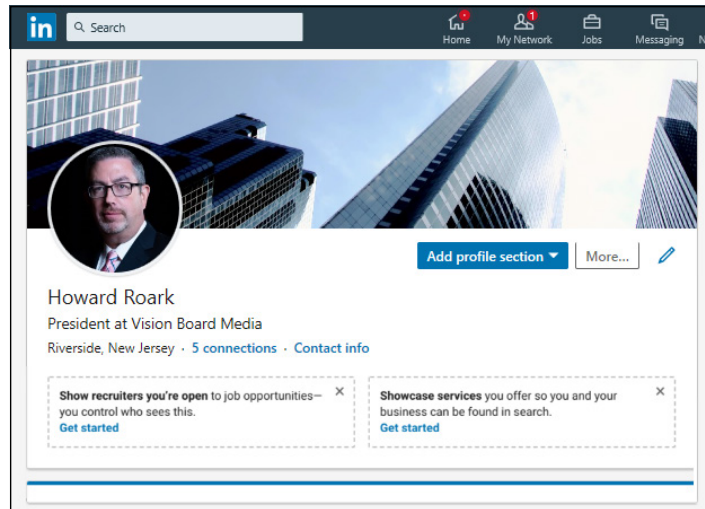


FIGURE 5-4:
Turning on
Open to New
Opportunities.

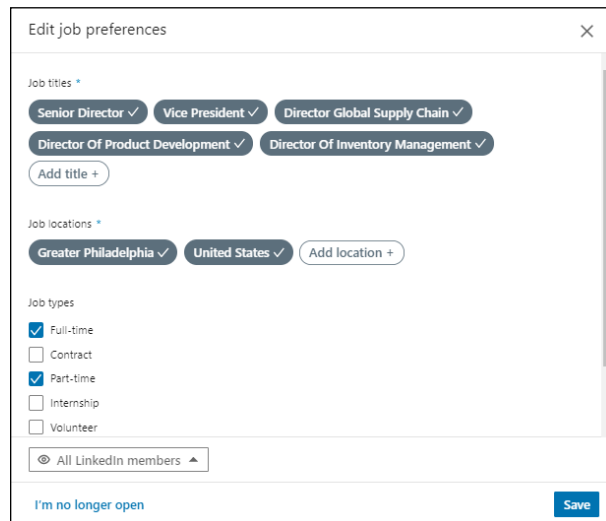


FIGURE 5-5:
The Job
Preferences
dialog box.

Choosing your industry

The industry section of your LinkedIn profile enables you to choose the industry that most aligns with your career. Remember, this area is used to filter searches, so when you select your industry, think in terms of the person searching for you. What industry would that person choose?

LinkedIn provides a long list of industries from which to choose. To select your industry, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the pencil (edit) icon just below your profile background photo.**
Your profile opens in edit mode.
3. **Scroll down to the “Industry” section and select your industry from the drop-down list, as shown in Figure 5-6.**
4. **Click Save.**

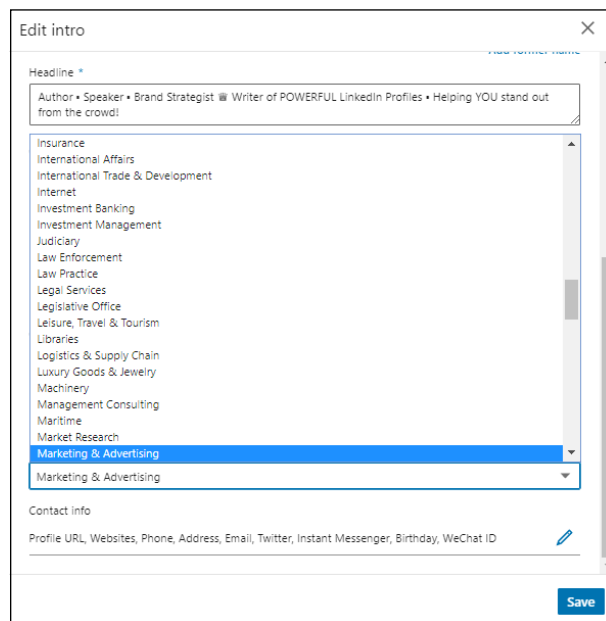


FIGURE 5-6:
Choosing your industry by scrolling through the drop-down list.

If you are a job seeker looking to make a career transition, you may wonder, “Do I choose my current industry or my desired industry?” When recruiters and other hiring professionals search LinkedIn to find potential candidates, the industry field is one area they often target, as it’s a great way to narrow results and drill

down to the right people. To get found, choose the industry you are targeting in your job search. This way, you can collide with the right opportunities.

What happens if your work bridges two industries? Sadly, you must make a choice. LinkedIn doesn't allow you to select more than one industry. And no, you can't create a second profile for the other industry. LinkedIn's user agreement forbids more than one profile per user. When you need to choose between two industries, imagine your target audience and what they would choose for you when searching.

Scrolling through the list, don't stop at the very first matching industry you find. Keep scrolling through until you view the entire list. Most professionals find that they fit into multiple industries. Just because you found one industry that matches, that doesn't mean it's the best one. For example, if you are a resume writer, you may notice that there is a Marketing and Advertising industry as well as a Writing and Editing industry. Which one do you choose? You might think, "Well, I help professionals market themselves, so Marketing and Advertising is the best one for me." Instead, think like your target audience. Most regular Joes would categorize a resume writer as a writer and editor, not as a marketer, so Writing and Editing is what you want to use. Don't get too fancy or over-think the industry.



Still not sure what industry to choose? Visit the profiles of colleagues and competitors to see what they list on their profiles. If you are seeing two different industries listed, go with the one the most successful person has chosen.

Suggesting a missing industry

LinkedIn's industry list is finite, and your industry may not yet be listed. In this situation, LinkedIn welcomes suggestions. To suggest an industry to LinkedIn, follow these steps:

- 1. Enter this link into your browser's address bar:** <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/solve/feedback>.
- 2. In the Area of Feedback textbox, type:** Missing Industry.
- 3. Note the missing industry in the Your Question field, as shown in Figure 5-7.**

You may write something like:

Dear LinkedIn,

Please include the missing industry, Super Villainy in the industry list of the LinkedIn profile. Thank you!

—Lex L.

- 4. Click Submit.**

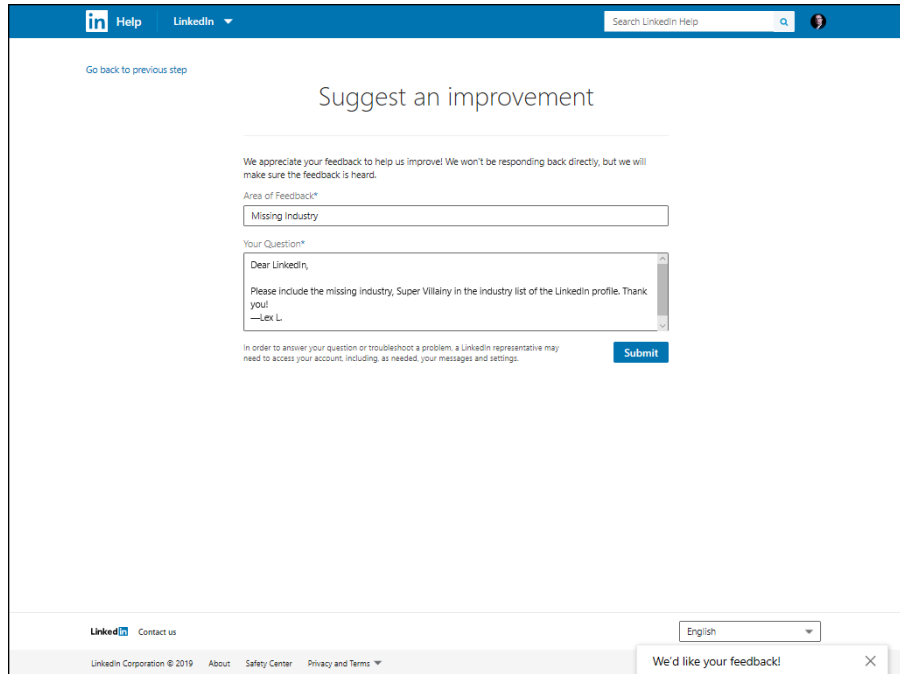


FIGURE 5-7: Sending feedback to LinkedIn.

If you do send LinkedIn a request to add a missing industry, don't expect to get notification that it was added. LinkedIn receives zillions of requests to add industries. After making the request to add an industry, check the industry drop-down list to see if it was added. If after a few weeks it hasn't appeared, LinkedIn may not agree that it makes sense to add it. Go back through the industry drop-down list and see if there is another industry that applies.

Including Your Contact Information

The LinkedIn profile has a dedicated section for your contact information. The Contact Information section is located directly underneath your headline in the intro card. Clicking "Contact Info" opens a window that reveals the full card of information, as shown in Figure 5-8.

The area that contains your email address, phone number, instant messaging (IM) address, and mailing address is only visible to your first-degree connections (unless you go into Settings & Privacy and switch Who Can See Your Email Address to "public"). This means that people who are not directly connected to you cannot see your phone number or email address within the Contact Information section of your profile.

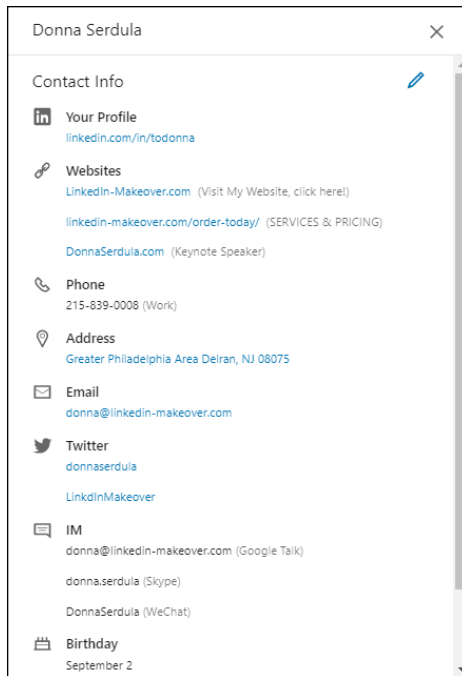


FIGURE 5-8:
The Contact Information section expanded on your desktop.



TIP

You can also add your Twitter handle, birthday, and three website links. This portion (minus your birthday) of the Contact Information section is visible to everyone on LinkedIn.

Adding your email addresses

It's important to add the email addresses you use on a frequent basis to your LinkedIn account. Whatever you do, don't just add your work email address. Work email addresses are rarely permanent. You can easily get locked out of your LinkedIn account if you forget your password and the only email they have on file for you is the work address that was turned off when human resources handed you a cardboard box.

Alternately, you don't want to just add your personal email address. When people upload their email address books to have LinkedIn autoconnect for them, you want to make sure that whatever email address they have listed for you matches your LinkedIn profile. If you list your personal email address but the person uploading his or her email address book only has your work email, you won't be matched and you will have missed an opportunity to connect. Instead, add all of the email addresses you use frequently, which for most people are their work addresses and personal addresses.

To add your email address, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info located under your headline.**

The Contact Info window opens.
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon in the upper-right corner.**

You are now in edit mode.
- 4. Under Email Address, click your hyperlinked email address.**

You are now in LinkedIn's Login and Security settings section.
- 5. Click Add Email Address.**
- 6. Add your email address in the open field and click Send Verification.**

LinkedIn sends a verification email to the new address.
- 7. Open your email client and check for an email from LinkedIn.**
- 8. Confirm your email address by clicking the link in the LinkedIn email.**
- 9. Go back to LinkedIn and click Done.**

Within the list of addresses, note that the Send Verification link has changed to Make Primary, as shown in Figure 5-9.
- 10. Select Make Primary next to the email address you want displayed and at which you want to receive email from LinkedIn.**

If you have additional email addresses, add them by following Steps 5–8.
- 11. Click the Back to LinkedIn.com link in the upper-right corner of the page when you have finished adding all the email addresses you wish to add.**

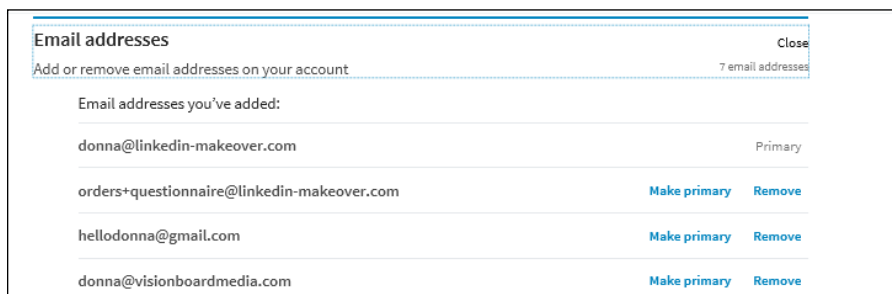


FIGURE 5-9: List of email addresses associated with your LinkedIn account.

LinkedIn allows people to upload their email address books to find potential connections. Rather than connecting one by one, uploading your address book is a quick way to connect with many people all at once. However, you need to make sure you add all your email addresses in your LinkedIn Contact Information section. When a person uploads his or her email address book, the email address he or she has for you might be an old or personal email address. If you don't have that email address associated with your LinkedIn account, LinkedIn will not make the match, and you will lose out on that connection request.

This might seem strange but this is exactly the reason why I also do not recommend removing past work-related email addresses. Sure, that old work email might not work, but that email address may still reside in someone's email address book. Keep it attached to your profile as a secondary email address, not primary. By doing so, people from your past work lives are still able to find you.



REMEMBER

Strong networks = a successful LinkedIn experience. Make it easy for LinkedIn to suggest you as a contact to others by including all your email addresses.

Making your email visible to all

Recruiters reach out to people every day on LinkedIn. When they reach out to someone who is not in their network, they must use an InMail credit. They only get about 20 of these credits a month with the Recruiter Lite premium account.



TIP

Most recruiters will try to bypass InMails if they can. One way to make their lives easier is providing them with an email address. In subsequent chapters, I tell you to add your email address to your About section and at the bottom of each experience. It's important to sprinkle your contact information throughout your LinkedIn profile in addition to adding it to your contact information area. Instead of just adding it to the contact information area, I want you to go one step further and make it visible to everyone. Here's how:

1. Click the **Me** icon from LinkedIn's main navigation bar.
2. Click **Settings & Privacy** from the drop-down menu that appears.
3. In the "How others see your profile and network information" section, click **Change** next to **Who Can See Your Email Address**.
4. From the drop-down list, select **Anyone on LinkedIn**.
5. Click **Back to LinkedIn.com** that appears in the upper-right corner of the screen to return to your newsfeed.

If you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting reason, I believe keeping your email address public is a good thing. Make it easy for people to reach out to you and do business with you. If you are a VIP and fear that adding your email address on LinkedIn will create a swarm of telemarketers emailing you for the best time to call you, feel free to leave your address visible to just your first-degree connections or just visible to you.

Adding a phone number

LinkedIn provides one field for your phone number. You can designate it as home, work, or mobile. Enter the phone number you want displayed on your profile and accessible to your first-degree connections. To add a phone number to your profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click Contact Info under your headline.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon.**
You are now in edit mode.
- 4. Enter your phone number in the Phone text field.**
- 5. Select whether the phone number is Home, Work, or Mobile from the drop-down list.**
- 6. Click the Save button.**

LinkedIn can be compared to an old fashion Rolodex. People used a Rolodex to store their contacts' contact information. Nowadays, many people hop over to LinkedIn to find contact information. For this reason, it's imperative to include your phone number.

Believe it or not, there are some people who have concerns about adding their phone numbers on their profiles. You might think their concern is rooted in a fear of identity theft, but instead they are more scared of telemarketers!

Yes, by listing your phone number on your profile you may receive a cold call from a salesperson, but you may also receive a call regarding your dream position or an amazing partnership. Are you willing to dismiss potential opportunity because you would prefer to not get bothered by a salesperson?

Success on LinkedIn is getting off LinkedIn. Strong relationships are forged in the real world. Don't be afraid to leave the digital comfort of LinkedIn for a real-world connection. Add your phone number to your profile and make it easy for people to contact you.



TIP

There is another option if you aren't comfortable putting forth your phone number. Consider registering for a Google Voice number and listing that number on your profile instead. Google Voice (www.google.com/voice) is a free service that provides you with a virtual phone number. You may have it forward to your actual phone number or go straight to voicemail. It's an easy way to provide a number while still maintaining your privacy.

Adding your IM address

The next information field is IM, which stands for *instant messaging*. Instant messaging is a way to send and receive short text-based messages instantly either by phone or by using a chat client on your computer. The instant messaging types that LinkedIn accepts are:

- » Skype
- » ICQ
- » Google Hangouts
- » QQ

You may choose up to three IM addresses to list. If you have an old ICQ username but never use it, don't add it. If you don't IM, leave the field blank.



TIP

Skype is a great IM to add. Not only is it free, but many companies use Skype as an integral part of the hiring process. Skype is used for virtual job interviews. By including a Skype username, you are showing that you are easily available to recruiters and hiring managers and you won't require much help to get up and running. That's definitely a bonus for busy recruiters or human resources professionals. If you don't have a Skype account, don't worry. It's easy to register. Simply visit www.skype.com and register for a free account.

To add an IM address, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the Contact Info link below your headline.**
3. **Click the pencil (edit) icon.**
You are now in edit mode.
4. **Select "Add instant messenger," which appears under the Twitter settings.**

- 5. Add your handle or username in the open field in the instant messenger field that appears.**
- 6. Select the IM type from the drop-down list.**
Repeat Steps 3–5 to add up to two more IM addresses.
- 7. Click the Save button.**

Adding your work address

The Address field in the Contact Information section is for your work or office address. If you work from home, omit the street address and enter just your city, state, and zip. This way people can't get door-to-door directions to your house, but they will know where you are generally located.

If you work from an office complex, but are still hesitant to enter your address on your LinkedIn profile, you may leave the address field empty. However, I've found that the people who hate to add their office address on LinkedIn somehow have no problem tossing their business card into a fish bowl to win a golf club raffle.

To add your work address, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Contact Info link under your headline.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon.**
The Contact Information section opens.
- 4. Enter your office address information in the Address field.**
- 5. Click the Save button.**

Adding your Twitter account

Not only can you add your Twitter account so people know how to find you on Twitter, you can also enable cross-posting between these two awesome social networks. By linking your Twitter account with your LinkedIn account, you are able to kill two birds with one stone. When you post a LinkedIn status update, you can have that status message go to both LinkedIn and Twitter.

This cross-posting only goes in one direction: from LinkedIn to Twitter. If you want LinkedIn to post your Twitter updates, you need to use a third-party social media aggregator such as Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com).

To set up this cross-posting ability, you must have a Twitter account already established. If you have more than one Twitter account, you are in luck — LinkedIn allows you to add multiple Twitter accounts.



TIP

If you use Twitter for primarily personal reasons, you should opt not to connect it to your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn is a professional network. You don't want to lead professional connections to your Twitter account where they can read your tweets about television programs, sports teams, or see pictures of your kitten. On the other hand, if you are tweeting your knowledge, providing advice, directing people to interesting articles, and adding value, absolutely connect your Twitter feed to LinkedIn. Here's how:

1. **Click the Me icon from LinkedIn's main navigation bar.**
2. **Click Settings & Privacy from the drop-down menu that appears.**
3. **Click Partners and Services, which is located under the Account tab.**
4. **Locate Twitter settings and click Change.**
5. **Click "Add your Twitter account."**
6. **Click the Authorize App button to allow LinkedIn to access the Twitter account you are already currently logged into.**

Once your Twitter account is successfully linked, you may need to provide your Twitter username and password. You will see it listed in the Contact Information section.

7. **Choose who can see your Twitter account by clicking the drop-down list under your Twitter account name and choosing Everyone or No One.**

I strongly recommend selecting Everyone unless your Twitter account is used for personal activity. In that situation, choose No One.

8. **If you add more than one Twitter account, select the preferred account LinkedIn uses to share status updates from the drop-down list.**
9. **Click Save Changes.**

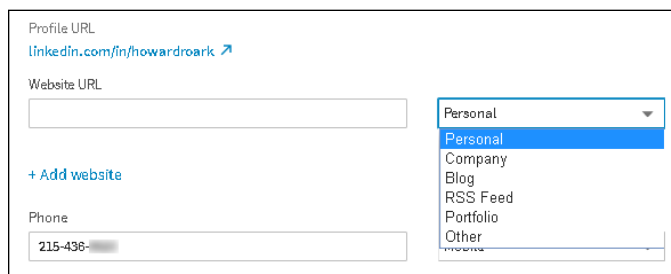
Adding websites

In addition to all the other types of contact information, you can also add three website links to your LinkedIn profile. If you have a blog, a company website, an online portfolio, or some other Internet destination, this is the place to add the URL. (see Figure 5-10).

When you get into the edit mode of the website area, you see there are two fields: a text field to enter the website's URL and a drop-down for the anchor text. *Anchor text* refers to the hyperlinked words on a web page. These are the underlined words you click that link you to another website. The drop-down list choices for the anchor text are:

- » Personal
- » Company
- » Blog
- » RSS Feed
- » Portfolio
- » Other

FIGURE 5-10:
An empty
website section.



The screenshot shows a form for editing a website section. It includes a 'Profile URL' field with the value 'linkedin.com/in/howardroark' and a blue arrow icon. Below it is a 'Website URL' field which is empty. To the right of the 'Website URL' field is a dropdown menu with 'Personal' selected. Below the 'Website URL' field is a '+ Add website' link. At the bottom is a 'Phone' field with the value '215-436-...'.



TIP

You could choose from LinkedIn's drop-down list — it makes sense to choose Personal, Company, or Blog — but how boring and non-descriptive is that? Instead of accepting the default choices, my recommendation is to ignore all of those choices and instead go with Other. By choosing Other, you are able to enter more descriptive text to customize your anchor text. Customizing the hypertext helps your reader identify the link easily and makes the link more attractive to click.

Instead of choosing Company, type in the name of the company. For example:

Vision Board Media's Website

Instead of choosing Portfolio, describe exactly what the person will find when clicking the link:

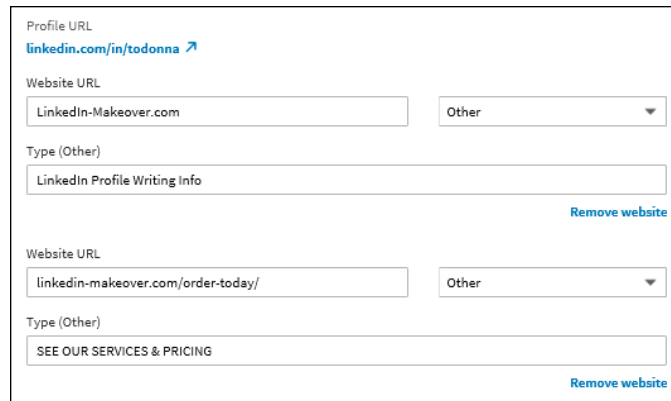
Portfolio of Business Headshots

Instead of choosing Blog, get more descriptive:

Supply Chain Mgmt Articles

Notice how I abbreviated Management? You only have 30 characters available for anchor text so you must be brief.

Check out Figure 5-11 to see how an optimized website section appears in edit mode.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile edit interface for website URLs. It features two identical sections. Each section has a 'Profile URL' field with a blue link icon, a 'Website URL' text input field, a dropdown menu with 'Other' selected, a 'Type (Other)' text input field, and a 'Remove website' link. The first section's 'Website URL' is 'LinkedIn-Makeover.com' and its 'Type (Other)' is 'LinkedIn Profile Writing Info'. The second section's 'Website URL' is 'linkedin-makeover.com/order-today/' and its 'Type (Other)' is 'SEE OUR SERVICES & PRICING'.

FIGURE 5-11:
This is how an optimized website section appears in edit mode.

To enter up to three website URLs to your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Contact Info link below your headline.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to edit your contact information.**

The Contact Info window opens.

- 4. Click “Add website.”**
- 5. In the URL text field, enter the URL of the website.**
- 6. Click the down arrow next to the drop-down list and choose Other.**

An additional text box to enter your website title appears. If you enter the full URL including `http://www.`, LinkedIn will strip it upon saving. You only need to enter the actual domain without the `http://` or the `www`.

IDENTITY THEFT: FEAR IS LEGITIMATE BUT NOT CONCERNING

Identity theft is a legitimate fear. Having your contact information and career trajectory out there for the world to see could invite nefarious behavior from evil people. The thing to remember is that there are over 500 million people on LinkedIn. Identity theft could happen, but with that many people utilizing the service, there are better people than you to target. Plus, you aren't putting your Social Security number out there. There. (Never put your Social Security number on social media!)

My recommendation is to be smart. Don't list your home address. Instead, simply add your city, state, and zip code. Don't upload your resume to your profile. Instead, let people know they can request it via email or LinkedIn messaging. Don't add your birthdate. Keep the more important information secure, but don't remove the information that prevents opportunity.

- 7. In the Type (Other) text field below the Website URL field, enter the hyperlinked text.**
- 8. Repeat Steps 4–7 for up to two additional websites and then click Save.**

In the next chapter, get ready to *vogue!* I show you everything you need to know to take a professional profile picture that impresses. Let's go!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding why you need a profile picture
- » Choosing and uploading your profile picture
- » Deciding between a selfie or professional photographer
- » Presenting yourself in the best professional light

Chapter 6

Impressing with the Right Profile Picture

Your LinkedIn profile picture is an integral part of your personal branding statement. It's imperative that you get it right, and yet so many people get it wrong. The highest-level executive uploads a snapshot of himself wearing a Hawaiian shirt. A smart entrepreneur uses a photo from her friend's wedding and crops out three-quarters of her date's face. The professional who can manage complex projects chooses a photo of himself holding the family pet.

Your LinkedIn profile picture should showcase you as a professional who commands respect. This chapter walks you through the steps of finding just the right profile picture that presents you in the most professional light and elevates your professional brand. You learn why you need a great photo, how to take your own photo, how to work with a photographer if you get a professional photo taken, and how to upload your photo to LinkedIn.

Why You Need a Profile Picture

Your LinkedIn profile picture can either help or hinder your success on LinkedIn. According to LinkedIn's official blog (<https://blog.linkedin.com>), profiles with profile pictures get 11 times more views than profiles without a photo. You are also 14 times more likely to be viewed on LinkedIn if you have a profile picture.

The inclusion of a professional profile picture shows the world you are a serious LinkedIn user and networker. It's hard to trust the authenticity of a profile without a photo.

Imagine you are shopping online and the item you want to purchase is for sale, but a photo hasn't been included in the listing. Would you buy it? Not usually! It's hard to trust a sales listing without a photo. The same thing goes for a profile without a profile picture. A professional picture shows your reader that there is a real person behind the profile, and that you are on LinkedIn for business purposes.



REMEMBER

Profile pictures are not just relegated to your profile. When your profile appears in search results, your picture shows up next to your name and subliminally implores your reader to “Read all about me!” Profile pictures also appear along with your LinkedIn Group messages, Network Updates, recommendations, and more.

Because your profile is used in so many places, it really is your digital stand-in. Your profile picture is your visual impression with your network. Although it's important to look good, you don't need to look like a supermodel. Your picture should capture the image of a professional person who looks friendly, clean, and well-adjusted.

Determining If You Need a New Profile Picture

Not sure if you are using the best profile picture? It is difficult to see yourself as others see you. I've created a list of questions to help you determine whether it's time for you to replace your profile picture.

Open your LinkedIn profile and try to look at your profile picture objectively. Answer each question with either Yes or No:

- » Is your profile picture over three years old?
- » Was your profile picture snapped at a family gathering, such as a wedding?

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF PROFILE PICTURES

Do's

Have a professionally taken photo.

Look straight into the camera.

Use a plain, indistinct background.

Dress professionally.

Zoom in close, frame your face!

Don'ts

Use a picture taken at a wedding.

Wear sunglasses or look away from the camera.

Have a distracting, busy background.

Use a logo or cartoon character.

Use a full-length shot or have others in the frame with you.

- »» Does your profile picture contain another person in addition to yourself?
- »» Are there remnants of another person cropped out of your profile picture?
- »» Are there animals in your profile picture?
- »» Are you wearing a hat or sunglasses in your profile picture?
- »» Is your profile picture of a cartoon character, business logo, symbol, or artistic representation?
- »» Can you easily discern the background of your profile picture?
- »» Are you looking up or down or anywhere other than straight into the camera's lens?
- »» Is the quality of the image grainy or dark?

- » Do you look serious (not smiling)?
- » Are you wearing a T-shirt, bathing suit, or jeans in your profile picture?
- » Are your elbows or knees visible in your profile picture?
- » Did you have someone other than a professional photographer take your profile picture?

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions, it’s time to get a new profile picture. Even if you answered “no” to all of the questions, there is a good chance you still need a new profile picture. You may be happy with your current picture, but does it truly cast you in the best light? If you aren’t sure, keep reading!



TIP

A powerful LinkedIn profile picture is cropped, centered, and recently taken. The image is not too dark, grainy, or taken from afar. Most important, you are the focus of the photograph, and the image spotlights you as a professional!

Using a Photo Already Taken

There are rare occasions when people have a photo already taken that works well as a profile picture. Typically, they have already visited a photographer and had a business headshot taken. Sometimes people have a picture that was snapped at an event or while they were on stage giving a presentation. Perhaps you have a photo from your website’s About page that is part of your brand, and you use it across all your social media profiles.

At one time, the rule of thumb was to use the same photo across all the social media sites — Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on. Now, having that one consistent photo isn’t necessary. Each social media site has a different viewpoint and audience. If you use Facebook for family and like to stay more personal, use a personal, informal picture for your profile picture there. It doesn’t need to be the same one you use on LinkedIn.

As long as the photo you want to use is professional-looking and casts you in the right light, go ahead and upload it. However, if you are doing this because you are cheap or so busy you don’t have time to get a new, better picture taken, stop and keep reading. Your profile picture is an investment in your brand and your future self. Many of my clients fight me over getting a profile picture, but once they have a great one taken, they are amazed at the results and how often they are able to use it even beyond LinkedIn.



TIP

For readers who have recently transitioned from the military, don't use an image of yourself in uniform as your profile picture. I have seen recruiters dismiss candidates because they assume the person is still in the service. Instead, take a profile picture in a professional outfit and then, if you want to reinforce your military background, utilize a background image with your military emblem.

Working with a Photographer

A professional photographer has the right equipment and a trained eye and knows how to capture everyone in the best possible light. And the real secret is that most professional photographers are quite affordable! Remember, this is an investment into your future, and it's worth spending money to make yourself look your best.



TIP

When deciding on a photographer, you will find that there are many different types of photographers out there. Some photographers specialize in headshots, while others do portraits. You may think these photographers are interchangeable, but they are not. A portrait photographer's goal is to showcase the subject in an aesthetically pleasing way, whereas a headshot photographer's goal is to market and promote the subject in a professional manner. A glamour shot by a portrait photographer is great to hang on your wall or give to your loved one, but it's not fitting for your LinkedIn profile. You want to find and work with a headshot photographer. Plus, a headshot photographer should also be able to direct you during your studio session, helping you find the right poses that produce a great headshot. As an example of what a headshot photographer can do, check out some before and after shots from Philadelphia-area photographer Jason Ranalli (<https://jranalliheadshots.com>) in Figure 6-1.



TIP

Come to your photo shoot armed with ideas and headshots of other people you find inspiring. I have a notebook filled with headshots of professional women I find compelling and will one day send to a photographer as inspirational images for my next professional headshot. Also bring a list of adjectives of how you want others to see and perceive you. Think in terms of what you want your headshot to say about you. Competent and friendly? Warm and professional? A good headshot photographer can incorporate these ideas into the headshot to ensure you are perceived correctly.

I know it's hard for busy professionals to find the time to schedule a session with a photographer. As tempting as it might be to ask the photographer to come to your office, resist that urge. Go to the photographer's studio where she has professional lighting and attractive backgrounds.



FIGURE 6-1: A good headshot photographer knows how to market and promote you in a professional manner.

*Photographs courtesy Jason Ranalli
(<https://jranalliheadshots.com>)*

The right photographer is most likely just down the street from you. All you need to do is an Internet search for photographers in your city or town. Once you have a list of potential photographers, it is important you check out their websites and look at examples of their work. As you peruse their online portfolios, think in terms of the end results. Are you impressed with their work? Do they have good examples of business headshots they've already taken? The photographer may do impressive work with brides and children, but that doesn't mean he can do a professional headshot well.



WARNING

I have a number of clients who chose to go to a department store or a big-box store with a portrait studio for their headshots. In almost every case, the quality of the resulting headshot is embarrassingly bad. The reason for this is that although the photographer at these places is using professional equipment, often the person taking the headshot is not a trained, professional photographer.

Most surprisingly, when all is said and done, these sessions cost about the same as an independent photographer. My recommendation is to use a professional photographer and stay away from the shopping mall.



WARNING

When choosing to work with a photographer, make sure you the photographer knows exactly how you intend to use the resulting image and get the rights to the image. I once sent a bunch of my writers to a photographer to get headshots for our website. After the session, I presented my writers with their headshots and they dutifully uploaded their images to their LinkedIn profiles. Within hours, I received a call from the photographer stating that our contract stipulated that the images were only for use on my website and that I would have to pay more money for them to be used elsewhere. This was a shock to me and it should be a warning to you. Don't assume you can use the image everywhere — be clear with the photographer so you don't have any issues later on.

Professional photographer rates

Photography rates vary by region. A photographer in New York City is going to cost more than a similar photographer in Tupelo, Mississippi. Photography is a creative service, and most photographers set their prices by their reputations. The better the photographer, the higher the cost of his or her session.

Expect to pay somewhere in the ballpark of \$100 to \$500 a session. You may then have to pay extra for the actual retouched photo or any additional shots. In some instances, expect to pay even more than that. I once spoke to a photographer who charged well over \$1,000 for a session. She may have charged a lot, but she guaranteed you would get an amazing portrait that conveys your professional brand and truly impresses.

You may find that you are able to obtain a photographer at a much lower cost. In this situation, do make sure you get examples of his or her work before booking. Remember the adage: You get what you pay for.

And consider this: A good headshot should last about three years. Spread the amount you pay for your headshot over a three-year period and it doesn't seem like so much!

Delaying the shoot with excuses

One of the most common excuses I get for delaying the photo shoot is that people intend to lose weight and once they are down 20 pounds, they'll get an appointment scheduled. When my clients tell me this, my response is: Get pictures taken *now* and when you lose those 20 pounds, you can get more pictures taken. I know it's hard, especially in this hyper image focused world we live in now. Just remember, when you work with good professional photographers, they will adjust the lighting and the camera angle to make sure you look as good as possible.

Taking Your Own Profile Picture

Professional photographers are really not that expensive. The investment is worth it. Of course, I can say this until I am blue in the face and people still just want to do it themselves. If I haven't yet convinced you to hire a professional photographer to take your headshot, here's how to take a professional-looking profile picture yourself.

My motto when it comes to your profile picture is: Just say no to the selfie. When taking a picture of yourself, it's hard to get enough distance between you and the camera; arms are only so long. When taking selfies, people often look at their images on the camera screen, rather than at the camera lens, thus the resulting image looks slightly off. Plus, it takes a *lot* of pictures to get the right one. If your arm doesn't give up from holding the camera for so long, you might get tired running back and forth from the tripod holding your camera.

The solution is to enlist a friend to take the photo for you. This way you can concentrate on posing and smiling and leave the actual photography to someone else. The less stress you are under, the better you look.

Professional photographers have professional equipment. Sometimes you are lucky to have a digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera or know a friend with one. In that situation, consider yourself lucky. When you don't have access to good camera equipment, use what you own. A good point-and-click digital camera or even your smartphone works. When working with amateur equipment, make up for it with good lighting, which I discuss next.

Understanding the importance of light

Good lighting makes all the difference between a great photo and a horrible one. When having your picture taken by a professional, studio lighting can work wonders. When you have a friend taking your photo, and professional lighting isn't available, find an area with lots of natural light. Avoid using the camera's flash or direct sunlight, as both cause harsh shadows.

Good professional photographers make sure to capture a reflection in your eyes from the lights. It's called a "catch light." Without that reflection, eyes look dull (see Figure 6-2). When taking the picture yourself, try to create your own catch light by turning on a nearby lamp. If you don't have a bright enough lamp, add the reflection afterward in a photo editor.

FIGURE 6-2:
A catch light makes the eyes in the right image pop more than those in the left.



Finding the right background

Distracting backgrounds can immediately derail a fantastic picture. When choosing the background, remember that you are the focus of the picture. The background should be as plain and indistinct as possible (see Figure 6-3). When you are taking the picture yourself or with a friend, look for a plain wall to serve as the background. If you are an avid decorator and can't find a wall that isn't full of pictures, consider taking the frames down temporarily. You can always use a photo editor if picture hooks show up in the final image.

FIGURE 6-3:
The good, the bad, and the ugly of photography studio backdrops. Less is always more!



When working with a professional photographer in her studio, there should be many different backgrounds available. Avoid backgrounds that are busy or overly colorful. Bamboo trees, laser light shows, and clouds are all backgrounds to pass on. A plain, white background often looks great, but I've also seen black backgrounds look lovely. Use your best judgment when selecting. Take into account the

color of your outfit. If you are wearing white, a white background looks odd. Feel free to ask photographers their professional opinions. They do this for a living and are able to guide you.

It's best to be in the studio for the great lighting. If you want a specific background like your city's skyline, incorporate that into your profile's background photo instead. See Chapter 8 for information on how to reinforce your brand with a background image.

Framing the shot

There are many considerations to make when framing your shot. The camera should be around your eye level. You do not want shots taken at too low of an angle or too high of an angle. Too low of an angle makes you appear looming; too high of an angle makes you look diminutive and subservient.



WARNING

Don't zoom in too close just yet. Keep space around your head so you have more cropping options later. The final image on LinkedIn is a perfect square, not a long rectangle. Zooming in too close or shooting with a long rectangle in mind may produce an image that can't be cropped later for LinkedIn's dimensions.

You will not get your ideal photo in one click. It may take hundreds of shots before you get the best picture. Time and time again, my clients come back and tell me that the winning photograph was taken at the very end of the session. It's not a coincidence. Right around the time you start to feel comfortable in front of the camera is when the best picture is snapped. So be patient and stay calm. As the camera clicks, move around a bit. Keep your shoulders angled, not squared, with the camera. Jutting your jaw out may feel odd but it tightens your jawline and stops that pesky double chin. Vary your expression but always look at the camera. Think in your mind: happy, friendly, confident, calm.

Please smile. The goal is to look professional, not serious. Striving to look serious by not smiling only makes you look angry and unapproachable. When you smile, let your eyes crinkle. A genuine smile engages the entire face. Scared your crow's feet will show? That's what you are aiming for! A smile without eye wrinkles isn't genuine.

Once you have worked your inner supermodel for about 5 to 10 minutes, ask the photographer to review the shots taken thus far. By checking the photos mid-session, you can see if what you are doing is working, and what changes you may want to make.

Finding the right outfit

The outfit you wear in your headshot can make or break your final profile picture. Luckily, a headshot is mainly just your head, so what you wear on the bottom isn't as important as what you wear on the top. Make sure whatever you choose fits well in the shoulders and neck because that is what shows in the photo. When deciding on what to wear, consider an outfit you might wear to a client meeting or a job interview. If you work at an office that does business casual, choose an informal outfit.

When I was starting out in my career, my mother told me, "Don't dress for the job you have, Donna, dress for the job you want!" So although your office environment is a casual one, you still may decide to opt for a more formal business outfit in your profile picture. This is especially true if you have higher aspirations for your career.

My recommendation is to bring two or three different outfits with you to your session. Often what looks nice in person doesn't translate well to a photograph. By bringing a couple different outfits, you can salvage a studio session gone wrong by the wrong wardrobe choice.

When choosing your outfits, go with soft, neutral colors or stick with gray, navy, or black. If you like bold colors, go for it! Just keep it to one bold color rather than a huge palette of bold colors. Skip the ruffled shirts or crazy prints. Choose ties with either a solid color or simple pattern.



TIP

Here's a tip for men: Wear a suit to the photography session. Take the first photos wearing the full suit. After a while, take off the tie, but keep the suit jacket on. Then for the final time remaining, remove your jacket and open the top button of your white shirt. By doing this, you get three different looks with one outfit: formal, semi-dressy, and casual.

People often think they need to remove their eyeglasses when getting their picture taken. I believe your glasses are a part of your brand. People are accustomed to seeing you in your glasses, and you should look familiar in your headshot. Numerous studies have shown that glasses give the impression of intelligence and professionalism. You might not get a date as Dorothy Parker said, but at least you will get hired.



TIP

However, there can be a problem with glare. When you wear glasses in a studio, many times the glare of the lights reflect on the lenses. If you find this is the case, here is a solution: Remove the lenses. Put the lens-free glasses back on your face and smile for the camera.

Choosing and Uploading Your Profile Picture

It's hard to see yourself objectively. When it comes time to choose the right photo for your profile picture, it's often best to ask for help. Friends and family or even colleagues often notice things you miss about yourself, and they can give you insight as to how you appear to others.

Photographers often provide you with a website that hosts all the shots from your session. Share this link with a friend and ask for his or her assistance.

Don't just ask any friend. Make sure you choose a friend who is business-minded and not afraid to speak the truth. There have been a few times where I had to very gently tell a client that the pictures taken were not of the best quality and they needed to be retaken. This is never a comfortable situation, but it's better to hear the truth than to upload a ridiculous-looking profile picture that has people wondering if you are possibly insane or a professional clown.

The final image should not depict a glamorous supermodel, but rather a friendly, happy, approachable, well-adjusted professional. Notice how I did not use descriptors like "serious" or "corporate." When striving for serious or corporate, people end up looking dour and sometimes even downright angry. Opportunities are not given to sourpusses who look sullen and disinterested. The final picture you choose should depict a person who is likeable, happy, and professional.

Cropping to profile picture dimensions

Once you have chosen your final image, it's time to crop it to the perfect dimensions for LinkedIn. When working with a professional photographer, it's a good idea to ask for high-resolution and low-resolution formats. The high-resolution image is for printing. The low-resolution version is for uploading to LinkedIn.



REMEMBER

The ideal profile image size for LinkedIn is between 400 x 400 pixels and 7,680 x 4,320 pixels (width x height). Photos larger than this will not upload. The maximum file size is 8MB. LinkedIn recommends uploading a photo that doesn't require much cropping, so make sure the image you upload is close to perfect in size.

Crop to maximize your face in the frame. Aim for the top of your head down to just above your collarbone, with only a sliver of shoulder showing. By zooming in, you are getting closer to the viewer of your profile. Subliminally you are drawing them closer to you, showing you have nothing to hide.

Another reason to zoom is that the profile picture gets even smaller when viewing on the LinkedIn phone app. By maximizing your face, you are making it easier for people to see and recognize you on the smaller device.

LinkedIn accepts two file formats: JPG or PNG. Which one is best? Although both formats will work just fine, JPGs excel at photographs and realistic images. PNGs work better for images that contain line drawings, text, or simple iconic graphics. When you have a choice, choose JPG, but if your photo is already saved as a PNG, don't worry about it.

Resizing and saving a high-res image

Is your final image too big? Whether the image straight out of your camera is too big or the photographer is unable to provide you the image within the proper dimensions, all is not lost. You can always open the file in Microsoft Paint or another image editor and resize the shot yourself.

Follow these steps to resize a high-resolution image in Microsoft Paint:

- 1. Open Microsoft Paint.**
- 2. Select File ⇨ Open and select the image you wish to resize.**
- 3. Click the Resize button that appears in the Toolbar.**

The Resize and Skew dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 6-4.

- 4. Replace the horizontal and vertical dimensions with smaller dimensions closer to 1,000 x 1,000.**

Do not skew the image! You must maintain its dimensions, otherwise the image may elongate or widen.

- 5. Click OK to close the Resize and Skew dialog box.**
- 6. Select File ⇨ Save As and save the image as a JPG.**



WARNING

The proverbial “airbrush” is a wonderful thing. If used properly, retouching can make a good photo even better. However, if used improperly, retouching is detrimental. Retouching is best done minimally. Use it to hide dark circles, but don't zap away all of your crow's feet. Use it to hide a zit, but not to reduce the size of your nose. The final image needs to be of you. You don't want to upload an image of a stranger.

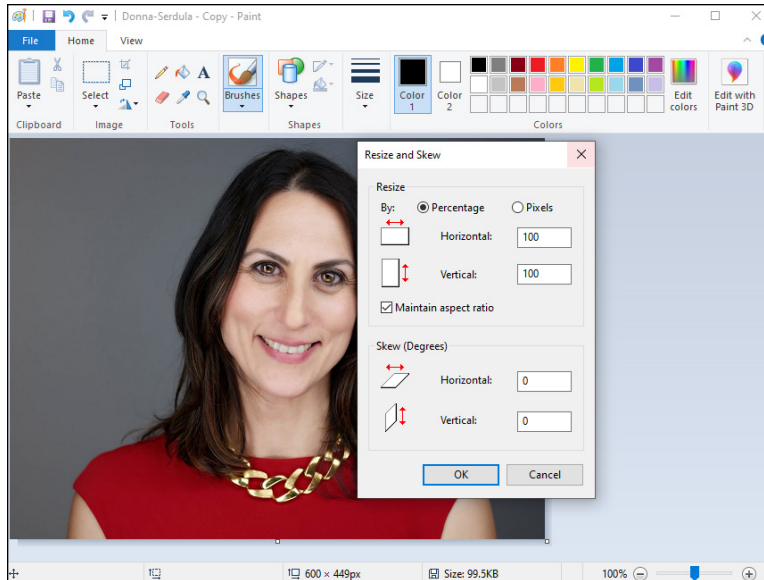


FIGURE 6-4: Resizing a profile picture in Microsoft Paint.

Uploading your photo

Now that you have your business headshot ready to go, here's how to upload it to LinkedIn:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.**
- 3. If you already have a profile picture uploaded and want to upload a new picture, click the pencil (edit) icon below your profile picture.**

If you don't already have a profile picture uploaded, click the camera icon.

- 4. Click the Change photo button.**

A window opens that enables you to select a photo from your hard drive.

- 5. Find your photo and click the Open button.**

A preview of the selected photo appears in the Edit Photo dialog box, as shown in Figure 6-5. LinkedIn offers numerous image editing options: Crop, Filter, and Adjust. Crop your photo by moving the Zoom slider to the right. You can even straighten your photo using the straighten slider. Click Filter to apply different lighting and color overlays to your photo. If your picture is too dark, click Adjust to change the brightness and contrast of the picture.

- 6. When you are happy with your photo, click Apply.**

Your picture now appears on your profile page.

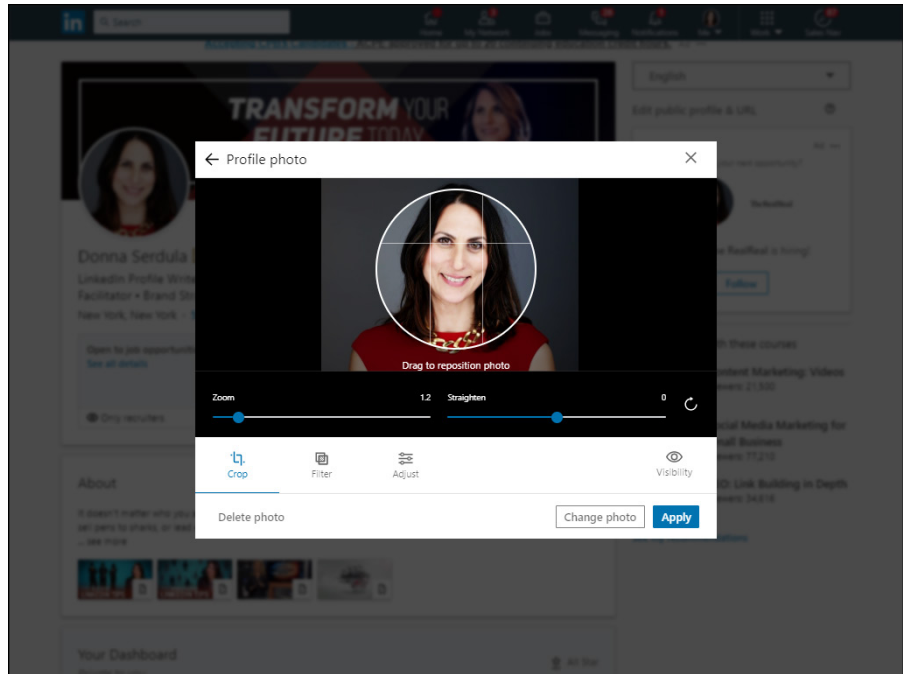


FIGURE 6-5:
Uploading your
new profile
picture.



WARNING

LinkedIn strictly forbids uploading a profile picture that is not a photograph of yourself. The idea behind the profile picture is that it is there to help people recognize you. In Section 8.2 of LinkedIn's User Agreement (www.linkedin.com/legal/user-agreement) it states, "You agree that you will not: Use an image that is not your likeness or a head-shot photo for your profile." Therefore, do not upload photos of company logos, caricatures, cartoon characters, landscapes, animals, illustrations, words, or phrases.

Using LinkedIn's filters to make your picture better

Once your photo is uploaded, LinkedIn provides numerous photo filters and editing tools to help you enhance your profile picture further. You can crop and straighten your photo. You can also apply one of six filters that change the tone and color of your photo. My favorite filters are Spotlight and Luminare. I find that regardless of the photo, one of these two filters offer serious improvement.

Additionally, you can tweak the brightness, contrast, and saturation of the image. There's also a vignette setting that creates a ring of darkness at the edge of the photo and lightness toward the middle. This is a subtle way of drawing interest into the center of the image . . . *you!*

The best thing to do is experiment with the filters and editing tools. Remember, less is more. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.

Here's how to apply filters to your image:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.**

The Edit Intro screen opens.

- 3. Click the pencil icon below to your profile picture.**

Your profile image opens in crop mode.

- 4. Click the Filter button to open the filter options.**

LinkedIn provides six filters to choose from, in addition to the original image:

- *Spotlight*: Amps up the light on your face.
- *Prime*: Darkens the image by creating more contrast.
- *Studio*: Introduces a warmer, orange light.
- *Classic*: Remove the colors, making the image black and white.
- *Edge*: Creates more contrast hardening the edges of the photo.
- *Luminate*: Softens the light and creates a luminosity of the image.

Clicking the different filters previews the filter so you can choose what you prefer.

- 5. Click Adjust to update the light and colors of the image.**

LinkedIn provides four controls:

- *Brightness*: Add or reduce the amount of light in the image.
- *Contrast*: Add or reduce the darkness of the image.
- *Saturation*: Add or reduce the richness of the color.
- *Vignette*: Create a dark halo around your image.

- 6. When you are happy with the changes, click Apply.**

Your updated picture now appears on your profile page.

Changing photo visibility settings

Some people are simply uncomfortable having their pictures appear in an online, public forum. When clients of mine object to uploading their profile pictures,

more often than not they are comfortable with their network seeing their pictures but not the whole world. Although I highly recommend making your profile visible to all, LinkedIn allows you some control over who sees your picture. You can't change visibility settings on a person by person basis, but you can choose between your first-degree connections, your LinkedIn network, LinkedIn members, or everyone. Here's how:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.**
3. **Click the pencil (edit) icon below your profile picture.**
You are now in the profile photo editing mode.
4. **Click the Eye (Visibility) icon that appears below your profile picture, as shown in Figure 6-6.**
5. **Choose between Your Connections, Your Network, All LinkedIn Members, or Public.**

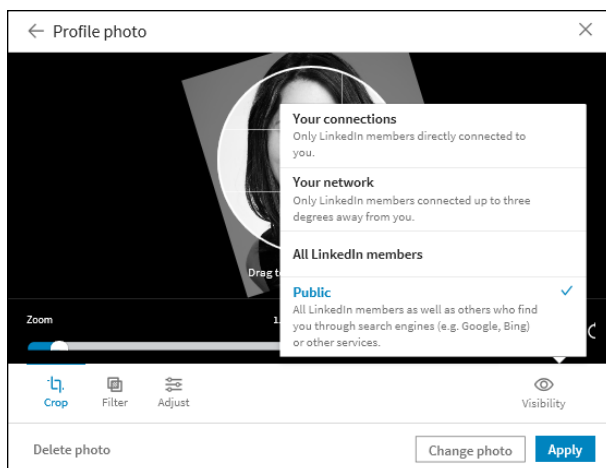


FIGURE 6-6: Changing the visibility options of your LinkedIn profile picture.

My recommendation is to keep it at Public, but if you only want people with whom you are directly connected to see your picture, choose My Connections. If you would prefer only people within your LinkedIn network, choose My Network. If you would prefer to make it public to LinkedIn members and not to the entire world, choose All LinkedIn Members.

Now that you have an impressive profile picture, in the next chapter I show you how to maximize your LinkedIn headline for enhanced search and branding purposes.

TIPS AND TRICKS FROM HEADSHOT PHOTOGRAPHERS

I asked a vast array of headshot photographers what they think is the number one thing you should know about taking a great profile picture. Here's what they said:

In a business setting, you generally want to show confidence with approachability. After that, it's important to define what you want your "brand" to be. A criminal attorney wants to convey a different message than a career coach — they both have different brands, different audiences. — Barry Braunstein (www.linkedin.com/in/barrybraunstein)

A photographer who charges more does so because he/she has experience and talent in their corner that makes their client look professional whether through posing or lighting or obtaining proper expression. Your headshot is one of your biggest marketing pieces. Why would you want an image of yourself floating out there that isn't professionally lit and retouched? — Donna Lere (www.linkedin.com/in/donnalere)

Don't over-retouch an image. Keep it as natural as possible and update it every two to three years. — Eli Berkowitz (www.linkedin.com/in/eliberkowitz)

For me, it's about communication. Photographers are masters in turning words into images. Describe what you do, what you make, and who you are, and these words will be translated into the best version of yourself, while staying on brand. And go to bed early. — Frank Pronesti (www.linkedin.com/in/frankpronesti)

Pros are trained to take care of all the details that most know nothing about, including lighting, minimizing distractions, retouching, wardrobe selection, and of course, getting your best expression and look that reflects the true you. Trust them — invest in yourself and reap the rewards! — Gary Newlen (www.linkedin.com/in/garynewlen)

Your LinkedIn resume is a diamond and your tagline is pure gold, but if your profile picture doesn't tell the viewer this is someone I can work with or someone I can do business with, then all of your efforts will go down the drain. — Hector Pachas (www.linkedin.com/in/hectorpachas)

Too often we see headshots that are stale and boring. Headshots have to get viewers to feel something. Make them want to know you more. Make them want to hire you. Make them want more, period. If people aren't using an effective headshot to help tell their life's story, then they are pushing out a book without much of a cover. — Ian Johns (www.linkedin.com/in/ianjohns)

You can use a photo that shows you know how to get dressed in the morning, or you can use a headshot that shows exactly why you're where you are in your life and career. Seems simple, right? — Jason Ranalli (www.linkedin.com/in/jasonranalli)

Something that is often overlooked is the photographer's personality. If you don't feel comfortable with the photographer who is taking your picture, it will show. So always schedule a pre-consultation with the photographer. — Kris Giacobbe (www.linkedin.com/in/kris-giacobbe-634867b9)

One tip I educate clients on is, every image carries a message. When viewers stop at your profile in this swipe right, swipe left or scroll up or down society, make them stop and notice you. Don't lose the clients you never see because of a poor visual first impression. — Landen Connor (www.linkedin.com/in/landenconner)

Your profile photo is your digital handshake. In the good ole days, lots of business was made by shaking someone's hand . . . face to face. Today most of that is done digitally, so make sure your profile picture captures your personality and messaging authentically. — Lori Keefer (www.linkedin.com/in/lorikeefer)

Your photo shows how much you care. Cheap scrappy photo = I don't care about my brand. Yes, it's your voice, your style, your chance to stand out . . . but the main thing is showing that you care. — Mike Lloyd (www.linkedin.com/in/mikelloydcoaching)

Make sure it looks like you, not you with loads of make-up or enjoying a summer holiday unless you're a travel agent! — Richard Barron (www.linkedin.com/in/richardatrkabworks)

When planning for your headshot, make sure your photographer understands what you are looking for. Offer some examples of other profile pictures that you admire on LinkedIn. Prepare by showing up well-groomed, dressed in attire that befits your style, and be authentic. Make it a fun experience and deliver a one-of-a-kind memorable brand image. — William E. Goldsmith (www.linkedin.com/in/williamgoldsmith)

- » Determining the type of headline you need
- » Paying attention to SEO
- » Creating a headline that impresses

Chapter 7

Developing a Compelling Headline

Your LinkedIn headline is extremely important. It is the shortened version of your profile. It shows up right underneath your name on the top of your profile, and it tells who you are in 120 characters or less. It is your readers' first impression of you, and it determines whether they read your profile or click to the next one. This chapter covers how to craft a compelling headline that grabs your readers' attention and makes them want to learn more about you.

Grabbing Your Reader's Attention

The LinkedIn headline is one of the main fields of a LinkedIn search result. It also appears at the very top of a LinkedIn profile. The headline also shows up on invitations to connect, above status updates, on LinkedIn messages, and within Group discussions, Pulse articles, recommendations, Who's Viewed Your Profile stats, and the People You May Know section. Since so many people have the potential to see it, you want to make sure your LinkedIn headline communicates your value and compels people to open your profile to learn more about you.

Your headline sums up your professional identity in just 120 characters (including spaces). You want this phrase to be catchy, bright, and clever. To grab your

reader's attention, the headline should alert people to what you are about and how you can help them.

When you first create a profile, LinkedIn automatically populates your headline by using your current job title and company name. Although LinkedIn creates the headline for you, you can override this default, boring headline and add your own.

Take a look at Figure 7-1. See the difference between the default headline LinkedIn added and an optimized one? Which profile would you rather read?

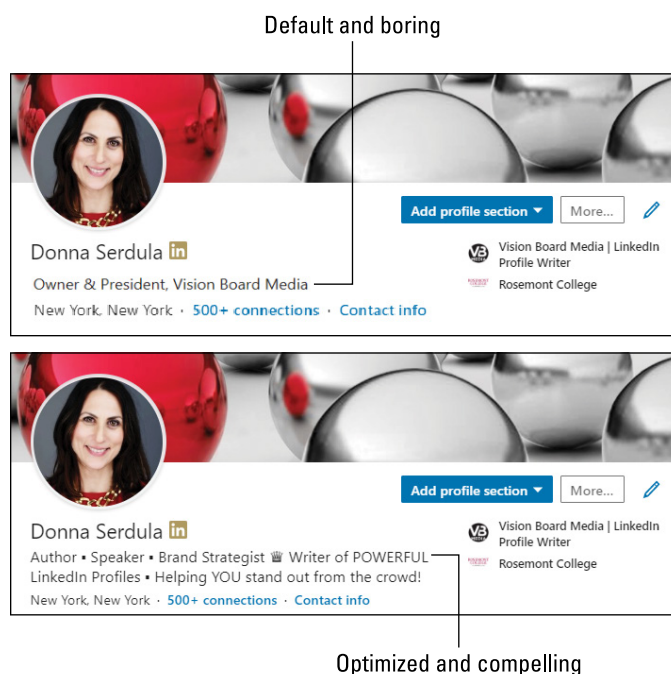


FIGURE 7-1:
The default headline versus an optimized headline.



TIP

Ditch LinkedIn's default headline. Your headline should be like a headline in a newspaper — it should compel people to want to read more. Read on to learn how to make your headline a compelling brand statement.

Adding Flair to Your Headline

A great way to really make sure your headline attracts attention and helps you stand out from the crowd is to use symbols. Take a look at Figure 7-2 for an example of a headline that makes use of symbols. See how boring the first and third headlines are when compared to the second optimized one?

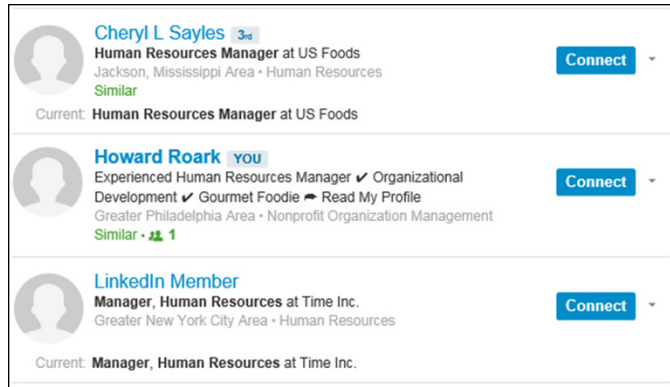


FIGURE 7-2:
The middle profile pops because of the symbols in the headline.

Although there are work-arounds, LinkedIn doesn't make it easy to add symbols or any type of formatting to your LinkedIn profile. In fact, LinkedIn doesn't natively allow any formatting at all. You can't bold, italicize, or underline text within the LinkedIn editing fields. LinkedIn hasn't ever stated why it doesn't natively allow formatting, but I believe it doesn't want to become like the old, defunct social network, MySpace.

Back in the early 2000s when MySpace reigned supreme, it allowed not just simple formatting but full on CSS coding to its profiles. Before long, MySpace profiles were twinkling and flashing like the Las Vegas skyline. Most people aren't graphic designers and when given the opportunity to format and prettify, they tend to go overboard. By not providing the ability to format, LinkedIn is keeping its users' tendency to overdo things at a minimum and thus keep its site elegant in its simplicity.

So how do you add symbols to your profile? If you are looking for a magic symbol button, you are out of luck. But here's a secret: Just because LinkedIn doesn't provide the ability to add symbols or format text, doesn't mean it's impossible to do. Text is text and text comes in more than just straight letters and numbers. All you have to do is locate the symbols you want to use and copy and paste them into your LinkedIn profile. You can do the same thing with formatted text.

I discuss adding symbols and formatted text to your LinkedIn profile in more detail in Chapter 11, when I discuss adding them to your job title, but for now, the easiest way to add symbols to your LinkedIn profile is to visit my LinkedIn profile to find a list of symbols you can use, then copy and paste the ones you like into your headline.

To add symbols to your headline, follow these steps:

1. **Open your web browser and go to www.Linkedin.com/in/todonna.**

2. Once at my profile, scroll through until you get to the Experience section.

I curated a list of different symbols you can use on your LinkedIn profile on my current experience for Vision Board Media (see Figure 7-3).

3. Highlight a symbol you like and copy it.

Copy by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).

4. Open your LinkedIn profile and click the pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.

5. Paste the symbol into your headline.

Paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac).

6. Click the Save button.

Your headline now includes the symbols you selected.

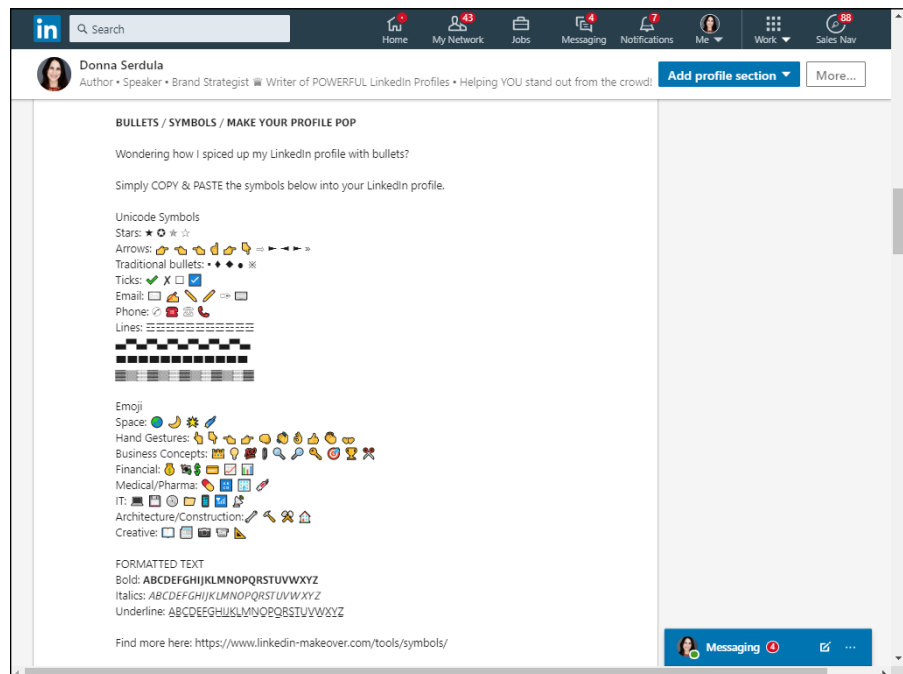


FIGURE 7-3:
Here are the symbols you can copy and paste from my profile.

Although I have a curated list of professional symbols on my profile, it's by far not a complete list. If you want to see even more symbols, there are a number of sites to check out. Here are just a few:

My full list of symbols (www.linkedin-makeover.com/tools/symbols)

My LinkedIn Text Formatter (www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-text-formatter)

Copy and Paste Emoji (www.copyandpasteemoji.com)

JRX (<http://jrgraphix.net/r/Unicode>)

Unicode Character Table (<http://unicode-table.com/en>)

Wikipedia Symbol Block List (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unicode_symbols#Symbol_block_list)



WARNING

Choose only one or two types of symbols to use in your LinkedIn headline. The more symbols you use, the cheaper and low level your profile appears. Remember, less is more!

Symbols may appear differently across the different devices and operating systems you use to access your LinkedIn profile. That means what you see isn't necessarily what another person sees when viewing your profile. Smartphones tend to take symbols and convert them to emoji. Emoji are small, colorful icons that are typically used to express ideas and emotions.

If you are viewing your LinkedIn profile on a PC, the symbols in your headline may appear black. Viewing your LinkedIn profile on a smartphone or on a Mac desktop, the symbols in your headline may appear colorful and almost cartoon-like. iPhones and Android phones use different art and so the symbols may look different depending on your smartphone.



TIP

When choosing symbols to populate your LinkedIn profile, the simpler the better. Stars, circles, squares, arrows, and check marks are universal and display with consistency across almost all devices. Using more complex symbols like those of folders, books, phones, paperclips, tools, and other items, you risk the symbol either showing differently on some devices or not at all.

Emoji are standardized, but the differences in display come from the different platforms (smartphone manufacturers, messaging apps, chat clients) designing their own emoji art and interpreting the standard differently.

I remember finding a symbol of a magnifying glass that looked lovely in my headline and on my PC's monitor, but unfortunately it didn't display for everyone. I received numerous emails from people telling me that instead of the symbol, they saw an empty block (see Figure 7-4).

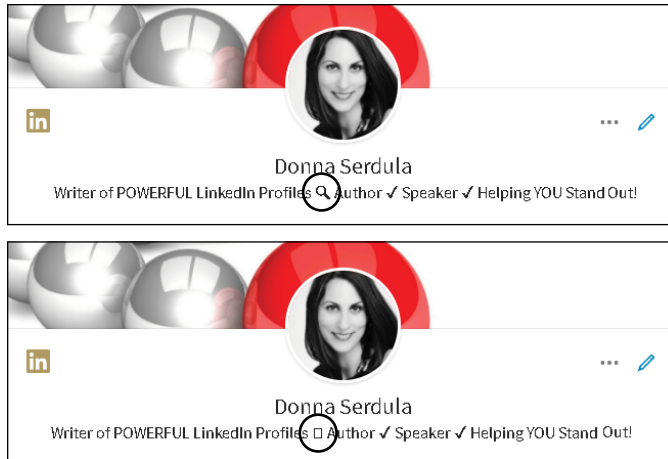


FIGURE 7-4:
What happens
when a symbol
doesn't display.

As much as I loved using the magnifying glass icon, I had to replace it with a more universal Unicode character that displayed for everyone. When utilizing symbols, the best symbol may not be the right symbol. Choose simple symbols that display for everyone.



WARNING

Although you can use formatted text in your headline, I caution against doing so. Formatted text on LinkedIn isn't the same as formatted text in Microsoft Word. Formatted text are symbols that look like real text. This means it isn't searchable. Sure, it may look like Project Manager is in bold, but LinkedIn reads it as something totally different. If you want to be found, do not use formatted text in your headline.

Saturating Your Headline with Keywords

As I discuss in Chapter 2, your headline plays a big role in LinkedIn search results. To enhance the likelihood of being found on LinkedIn, your headline should be chock-full of the keywords people are using to find someone like you. I've found that when performing a keyword search on LinkedIn, profiles that contain those keywords in their headlines turn up higher in the search results.

To create a keyword-saturated headline, you must first consider your target audience and why they are looking for someone like you. What are the keywords a person might type into LinkedIn search to find you? These are the words you want to incorporate into your headline. Get out that list of keywords you created back in Chapter 2. If you want to rank high for those words, it is important to work as many of them into your headline as possible.

If you are job seeker, it's important to add your job title or targeted job title to your headline. Your headline is extremely sensitive when it comes to search engine optimization (SEO). Many recruiters and hiring managers, when performing searches for talent, search for job titles. Make sure you include your title so that you increase your chances of being found on LinkedIn.

However, rather than simply stating your current job title, start with an adjective first and then add your title. Here's a bunch of adjectives to get you started:

| | |
|--------------|--------------|
| Accomplished | Expert |
| Animated | Gifted |
| Certified | Holistic |
| Dynamic | Influential |
| Effective | Innovative |
| Energetic | Masterful |
| Engaging | Professional |
| Exciting | Skilled |
| Executive | Unabashed |
| Experienced | |

Select one of these adjectives that you feel most accurately describes you in your current role. Then, it's time to add your job title.

Add your job title

Now that you have a good adjective to describe your current role, it's time to add your role/position/business title and follow it with a symbol. It should look like this:

Accomplished Sales Professional *

Experienced Human Resources Manager *

Creative Marketing Director *



TIP

If you are not a job seeker or not interested in targeting a specific job, generalize your position: Healthcare Executive or Client Services Professional. The reason to use your job title is for search and identification. Always think of your target audience and what they need to know about you. Using your exact job title isn't imperative; the right keywords to find you are.

Add your specialty

The next item to add to your headline is another keyword. If you are a sales professional, what do you sell? If you are writing your profile for reputation management, what is your specialty? What are you known for? If you are a job seeker, what is your differentiator? What do you bring to the table that would make a company hire you?

Here are some examples of specialties:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies *

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development *

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches *

If you are struggling to come up with your specialty, think in terms of how people describe you. Do you hear people say things like, “That Tom, he’s amazing at customer service!” Most times other people see us clearer than how we see ourselves. If you are struggling, ask other people what they think you do well.



TIP

I have found that most people are blind to their own strengths. Because strengths come rather easily, we expect that everyone else has these strengths — that they aren’t unique to us. Talk to other people to get their input. Once you know what they admire about you, stop dismissing your strengths and start developing them into your brand message.

Alternately, when we are good at something, we often describe it in complex terms. When writing your LinkedIn profile, you need to think in terms of the layperson. Talking to others is also a great way to get a simplified view of what you do.

Here are some ideas for specialties:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| App Developer | Financial Forecasting |
| Branding | Google Analytics |
| Business Development | Information Technology |
| Client Engagement | Internet of Things |
| Cloud Computing | Marketing |
| Content Creator | Product Development |
| Customer Care | Product Marketing |
| Electronic Medical Records (EMR) | Project Management |
| | Prospecting |

Real Estate Development

Scientist

SaaS

Social Selling



TIP

Once you have your specialty, add a symbol. You can always use an asterisk (*) or a pipe (|) in the meantime. When your headline is completed, go back and copy and paste real symbols.

Add an extracurricular hobby

Now it's time to take a step on the personal side and add an extracurricular activity. By including a hobby or cause you care about, you turn yourself from a boring corporate creature into a three-dimensional human being. People do business with people, and showing your human side allows people to empathize with you. Here are some examples of headlines that include an extracurricular interest:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies * Golfer *

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development * Gourmet Foodie *

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches * Classic Film Buff *

Add a happy ending

The very last piece of a keyword-saturated headline is a happy ending. Conclude your headline on a high note, mini benefit statement or with a clear call to action. I talk more about benefit statements in the next section. Here are some examples of ending phrases for your headline:

- » Best in Breed
- » I Make Things Happen
- » I Move the Needle
- » Helping Organizations Run More Effectively
- » Providing CRM solutions that help organizations grow
- » Looking to Positively Impact a New Organization
- » Open to new opportunities in the manufacturing industry

This is what your keyword-saturated headline looks like:

Accomplished Sales Professional * Office Supplies * Golfer * Let's Connect

Experienced Human Resources Manager * Organizational Development * Gourmet Foodie * Game Changer

Creative Marketing Director * Product Launches * Classic Film Buff * Making Things Happen



REMEMBER

You only have 120 characters for your headline. If you didn't use all 120 characters and have more room, add more keywords! If you don't have enough room, remove the adjective and extracurricular activity.



TIP

From time to time, you may see a LinkedIn headline that extends beyond 120 characters. There was a bug in the mobile app that allowed people to go up to 200 characters in their headlines. This bug has been fixed, but some people capitalized on it and now have an extra-long headline.

Creating a Benefit Statement Headline

Instead of infusing your headline with keywords, another way to develop a compelling heading is to create a benefit statement headline. A benefit statement explains to potential readers exactly how you can help them and what they will get from working with you.

When crafting a benefit statement headline, ask yourself, "How do I help individuals or businesses?" "What benefit do others receive from working with me?" Think in terms of the outcome for your audience. If you are selling a service or product, why would a potential client buy from you? What do they get from the service or product?

Benefit statement headlines typically start with an action. Here are some examples:

Accomplishing

Developing

Changing

Directing

Crafting

Eliminating

Creating

Growing

Delivering

Helping

Maximizing
Promising
Reducing

Saving
Teaching

Once you have the action, what is the core value you provide to your target audience?

A customer service representative might state: “Helping Turn Unhappy Customers into Loyal Clients.” A sales person specializing in office supplies might state, “Keeping Offices Running Smoothly with a Complete Catalog of Office Supplies: Whatever You Need, When You Need It!” Individuals using LinkedIn to position themselves as technology thought leaders might use a benefit statement like: “Helping Corporations Embrace Cloud Computing Technologies to Enhance Workplace Productivity and Security.”



TIP

When crafting a benefit statement, consider how your target audience reacts to you emotionally. What is it that you do that makes life/work easier and better for your target audience?

Think in terms of your target audience’s need for:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Abundance | Peace of mind |
| Affordability/money savings | Prestige |
| Being liked | Productivity/time savings |
| Confidence | Respect |
| Convenience | Security |
| Ease of use | |

Put these items together and voila! You have a benefit statement headline! To get you started, check out some of these examples of benefit statement headlines:

Insurance Broker & Agent ► Giving You Peace of Mind by Protecting Your Home, Car, and Assets

Financial Advisor ★ Taking Away the Guesswork from Investments ★ Helping You Plan and Achieve Your Future Goals

Real Estate Agent ► Helping Families in New York City Find the Home of Their Dreams!

Sales Consultant ► Helping Businesses Develop Strong Sales Forces through Intensive Sales Training Programs

Are you looking for a new job? You can showcase your expertise and value through a benefit statement headline, too. You might be thinking, “But I am a job seeker; I don’t help companies or individuals. I just do my job, when I have one.” If you truly can’t come up with a benefit statement, move back to the keyword-packed headline and go in that direction. However, everyone — no matter what job he or she does, provides value — otherwise, you wouldn’t get paid.



TIP

If you don’t work directly with clients, consider your colleagues and how you help them. Think also in terms of your department and how it supports the organization and moves the business forward.

Differentiation is also a benefit to employers. Do you provide more than others because of a unique talent, interest, or ability? Your benefit might be that you are bilingual or you are really good with numbers. Perhaps despite being steeped in technology you can effectively interface with sales people and get them to understand complex programs.

Here are some headline examples for job seekers:

Software Engineer ► Building the Applications That Make Your Business Life Easier

Project Manager with a Passion for Coding and Technical Writing, Looking to Positively Impact a New Organization

IT Specialist Devoted to Creating Stable, Scalable Solutions for Small Businesses

Business Analyst | Helping Companies Translate Their Business Goals and Ideas to Operational Reality and Positive ROI

Business Advisor » Helping Manufacturing Facilities Realize Significant Gains through Process Improvement

Interim CEO ⇄ Solving urgent leadership problems . . . when your CEO steps down, I step up!

Adding Your New and Improved Headline to LinkedIn

Now that you have your new and improved headline, it’s time to update it on your LinkedIn profile. To add a new headline to your profile, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click the pencil (edit) icon located just below your profile background photo.**

3. Type in your new and improved headline in the Headline field.

As you type, LinkedIn shows you the number of characters you have left until you reach the maximum count of 120. If you go over the 120-character limit, the frame around the field turns red and LinkedIn prevents you from saving.

4. Click Save when you are finished adding your new headline.

Don't forget to add symbols to give your new headline some eye-catching flair!

Your newly updated headline is now acting like a welcoming beacon, directing people to view your profile. In the next chapter, I show you how to make sure that all these new visitors see an optimized Experience section that is impressive and interesting.

LINKEDIN HEADLINE GENERATOR

It can be tough coming up with a headline on your own. If you need additional help, I created a free online application that walks you through creating a keyword-saturated headline. In less than ten clicks of your mouse, you'll have a compelling LinkedIn headline to immediately copy and paste right into your LinkedIn profile. The generator even adds symbols to your headline automatically. Access the app here: www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-headline-generator.

- » Understanding the role of a background photo
- » Finding the right image that illustrates your brand
- » Uploading an optimized image

Chapter 8

Reinforcing Your Brand with a Background Photo

LinkedIn profiles used to be so plain, especially when compared with Twitter and Facebook where you are able to upload large, eye-catching banner images. LinkedIn eventually came around and now allows you to upload a background image to visually spice up your profile.

Strangely enough, most users have not taken advantage of a background photo. Not sure whether you have or not? All you need to do is view your LinkedIn profile, and if you see a blue-green image that looks somewhat like a constellation behind your profile photo, you are still using the LinkedIn default. Even if you do have a custom background photo, don't ignore this chapter because odds are, you can improve what you already have.

When a person looks at your LinkedIn profile, there are two images that immediately pop: the profile picture and the background image. Without reading a single word, the visitor to your profile is forming an impression of you. Let's make sure that your background image is helping and not hindering your profile.

Finding the Right Image to Showcase Your Brand

When choosing a LinkedIn background image, make sure the image matches your personal/professional brand and conveys your unique message. Choose images that inspire you or reflect what you do.

Here are some ideas:

- » An image of the products you sell or produce
- » A picture of your office building or interior
- » A team photo
- » An illustration or photo that shows an analogy of what you do (lighthouse, magnifying glass, owl, tree, and so on)
- » A picture of you at a podium or presenting in front of an audience



REMEMBER

The image you choose must be professional and it must reflect your professional brand.

Spend time thinking about how you want to be seen on LinkedIn. The biggest issue I find is that typical users will find an image that speaks to them personally. I've seen images of beaches, fields of flowers, and snowcapped mountains. For that executive who loves to surf and surfing is a part of his brand, an image of the beach might work fine for him. But for the hard-working professional who wants to be seen as an integral force within the manufacturing industry, rather than a stock image of a sandy beach, an image of the 3D printer she was instrumental in bringing into her organization may be the better option.

There are always exceptions to this rule. You may decide to use a background image to spark conversation and commonality and upload an image that showcases something personal like a hobby. For example, a client of mine is a cyclist — one of those get up super early, don bike shorts, and bike 100 miles before 6 a.m. types. After 6 a.m. he works in advertising and is responsible for pitching his agency to Fortune 500 accounts. He and I discussed the importance of his background image and he considered using a gorgeous photo of his office's conference room overlooking New York City, but instead he decided to upload an image of himself on his bike. He knew that many of the accounts he has closed were forged because of this hobby. And sure enough, he later told me that this background image spurs conversations and gets people interested in wanting to talk to him. Did the background image on its own generate revenue? No, but it certainly helps put him in a position where he could do what he does best.



TIP

If opting to use a more personal image, think in terms of how others will view it. Will they understand your connection to the image? Will they feel connected to the image? If you aren't sure, it might be best to opt for something more professional.

Ideally, you want to choose an image that immediately conveys to the reader who you are and what you do. Take a look at Figure 8-1. Looking at just the background image, you can surmise what the person does for a living. What profession do you think each image represents?



FIGURE 8-1: Looking at just the background photo you immediately get an idea of what the person does for a living.

The top image shows a man working on an architectural drawing. Did you guess architect? The second background image shows a man in front of a classroom. You immediately thought teacher, right? The third background image is a computer monitor showing code. You may have thought computer programmer or someone who works in IT. The bottom image shows the Wall Street sign in NYC. I bet you thought investor or stockbroker.

Working with a Professional Graphic Designer

Depending on your goals and budget, you may want to reach out to a graphic designer for assistance. If you are on LinkedIn as a business owner or leader, working with a graphic designer is a great way to differentiate yourself from the masses and prove to others that you are successful and polished. You can find a local graphic designer by calling your local Chamber of Commerce or doing a Google search for *Graphic Designer [Your City, Your State]*. You can also try fivrr (www.Fivrr.com), Upwork (www.Upwork.com), or 99Designs (www.99Designs.com). These sites allow you to find graphic designers outside your local area.



A graphic designer will seek to understand what you are trying to convey and then craft an image that captures the spirit of your brand, company, or expertise. Make sure the graphic designer you work with asks questions and gets your input.

If working with a graphic designer is outside your budget, don't worry! It's easy to create a background graphic yourself using free, online tools, which I discuss in the next section.

Using Online Graphic Tools to Create an Image

When looking for an image to turn into your LinkedIn background, you must be careful not to steal. Just because you saw an image on Google search or on another person's website doesn't mean it's ripe for the picking. If you found an image you truly love and is perfect for your background image, you can attempt to reach out to the creator of the image and ask permission to use it. Rather than get caught up in finding email addresses and asking permission, it's actually easier to simply visit websites that provide royalty-free stock images.

A few of my favorite sites that specialize in free images are:

- » Freemages (www.freeimages.com)
- » Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>)
- » UHD Wallpapers (www.uhdwallpapers.org)
- » Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)

Have you ever heard of the old saying, “you get what you pay for?” With royalty-free stock images, the quality of images isn’t always grade A. If you aren’t finding any free images you like, you may decide to shop for images instead.

Here are a few sites where you can search and purchase professionally rendered images:

- » GraphicRiver (<http://graphicriver.net>)
- » iStock (www.istockphoto.com)
- » Shutterstock (www.shutterstock.com)

Are you interested in getting a branded image from your company’s website? You can grab images off your company’s website fairly easily. Using a print screen tool like Microsoft’s Snipping Tool, which is available in the Accessories folder (if you are on a Mac, press Cmd+Shift+4), you can capture images from your website. Depending on how the website is coded, sometimes all you need to do is hover your mouse over the image, right-click your mouse, and choose Save Image As.



TIP

Regardless of how you obtained the image, you must resize it to the requisite dimensions of 798 wide by 192 pixels tall, although I recommend you double up on those pixels — 1,584 by 396 — because many desktops and laptops, and most devices, have twice the pixel density than usual. Images sized incorrectly look blurry or pixelated and that comes across as very unprofessional.

My favorite free online tool for resizing images and creating interesting, personalized photo montages is Canva (www.canva.com). Canva is an online graphic design application that offers access to free and paid design tools and templates.

Here’s how to use Canva to create an interesting background image for your LinkedIn profile:

1. Visit www.canva.com in your favorite browser.

If you have never used Canva before, you need to create an account. It’s easy to sign up with your Facebook account.

2. Click the Custom Dimensions link that appears on the right side of the screen.

3. In the Width field enter 1584. In the Height field enter 396.

4. Click the Create Design Button.

You can also open this link with your browser: <http://bit.ly/linkedin-background-template>.

5. Click the Uploads tool that appears in the left sidebar.

6. Click the “Upload an image or video” button.

An Open dialog box appears.

7. Locate the background image you want to resize, highlight it, and click the Open button.

The image uploads to Canva.

8. Locate the uploaded image and click and drag it to the white canvas on the right side of the screen.

The image fills the canvas.

9. If the image is too small, expand the image by clicking a corner and dragging to resize it, or add another image so that it becomes a montage of images.

10. Click the Text tool in the left sidebar to add words to your image.

Make sure the text is located in an area that is visible.

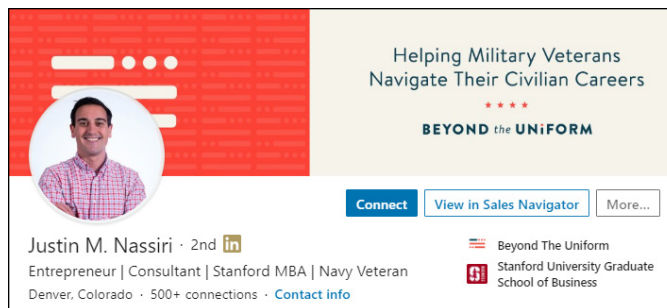
11. Once you are finished designing your image, click the Download button at the top of the screen, and in the drop-down box that appears, click Image:high quality (PNG).

A Save As dialog box appears.

12. Select where on your hard drive you would like to save the image and click Save.

You can see an example of a beautiful background image in Figure 8-2.

FIGURE 8-2:
An example of a gorgeous background image as inspiration.



Adding a Background Image to Your Profile

Now that you have a beautiful background image, here's how to add it to your LinkedIn profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the pencil (edit) icon in the intro section of your profile.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon that is located in the upper-right corner of the Background photo.**

If you do not have a background photo uploaded, an Open dialog box appears.

- 4. If you have a background photo uploaded that you want to replace, click the Change Photo button.**
- 5. Locate the background image file from your hard drive and click Open.**

The image is uploaded and appears in preview mode. You can zoom or align the image by clicking on the Zoom and Straighten sliders.

- 6. Once you are happy with the look of your image, click Apply.**

Your background image appears at the top of your profile.

In the next chapter, I show you how to let the world know you are open to new opportunities and whether you have services to offer.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Adding services you provide to your LinkedIn profile
- » Including your interest in new job opportunities
- » Determining who gets to see your career interests

Chapter 9

Showing You Are Open for Business or Job Opportunities

Have you ever visited a person's profile that didn't provide much information and wondered, "Why is she on LinkedIn?" Not everyone is like you, investing in themselves and their profile to have a clear, optimized, and branded presence on LinkedIn. Most people just sign up and put in the least amount of information. LinkedIn recently rolled out feature updates to help people truly clarify their goals and the types of interaction and engagement they want out of LinkedIn.

Not only is LinkedIn helping people clarify what they want out of the platform, but also it made it easier for other people to help them! Imagine you are a recruiter looking for the perfect job candidate. Most profiles provide such little information, you can't always be certain if a person is open to new opportunities. Alternatively, what if you are looking not for an employee but instead for a vendor to help you in your business? Finding service providers on LinkedIn used to be difficult to do.

I remember years ago trying to find a career coach for a client of mine. I searched LinkedIn and found a number of coaches who looked like a great fit. I emailed them and received zero responses! No one wanted my heaping spoonful of opportunity!

Not anymore. Within the intro card of the LinkedIn profile, you can now let the world know you are open to business and/or job opportunities. In this chapter, I show you how.

Showing You Are Open for Business

It's time to take better advantage of your LinkedIn network. Enabling LinkedIn's Open for Business feature allows small business owners and professionals showcase the services they offer and get found by people looking for a service provider like them. Before we dig in, let's first make sure that if you are a premium member, you are open to receiving all messages on LinkedIn.

Turning on the Open Profile setting

Open for Business is free to use, but in order to have people outside your first-degree network message you, you need to be a premium LinkedIn subscriber with the Open Profile setting enabled. Enabling Open Profile allows anyone on LinkedIn to contact you for free, even if they're not in a first-degree connection.

Here's how to turn on the Open Profile feature so that anyone can message you freely on LinkedIn:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click "Add new profile section" located in the right sidebar to add the Experience section to your profile page.**
- 3. Click the Edit icon to the right of your profile picture.**
- 4. On the LinkedIn logo in the top-left corner of the pop-up window, click the Edit icon.**
- 5. Next to Open Profile, switch the toggle to the right to enable Open Profile so anyone can message you freely via LinkedIn.**



WARNING

Remember, you must be a premium member to enable Open Profile. If you are not a premium member, you will not be able to enable Open Profile. Refer to Chapter 2 to determine if paying for LinkedIn makes sense for you.

6. Click the Save button.

Figure 9-1 illustrates Open Profile enabled on my account.

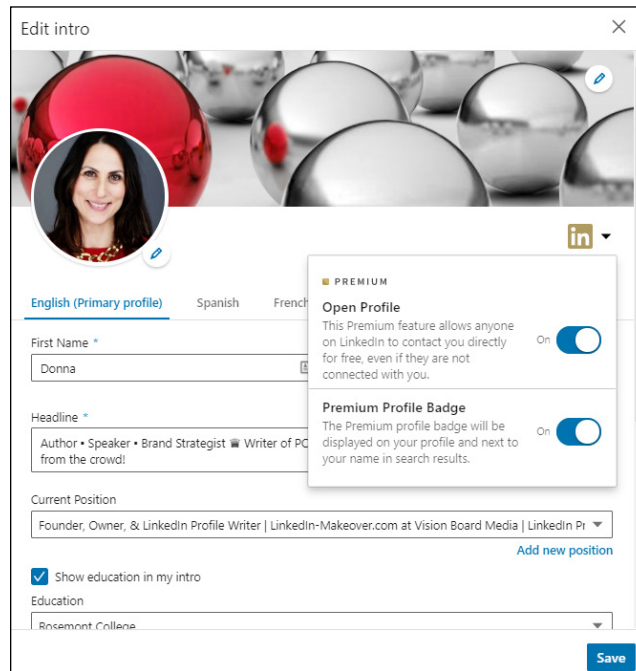


FIGURE 9-1: Enabling the Open Profile feature.

If you choose not to upgrade to premium, don't worry. You can still use the Open for Business feature, but you can only receive (and send) messages from your first-degree network. People outside of your first-degree network can message you if they are premium subscribers by using one of their limited InMail messages. If you find that you are getting a lot of traction from this section, you may decide that it's worth the cost of upgrading so you can make it easy for everyone and anyone to send you a message on LinkedIn without them having to do so at a cost.

Enabling the Open for Business feature

Let's show LinkedIn members that you are open for business! Enabling this section is like erecting a billboard. You are now letting everyone know what you do and how you can potentially help them. Here's how:

1. Open your LinkedIn profile.

2. Click **Add Services** in the “**Showcase services you offer as a freelancer or small business owner**” section in your intro card, as shown in Figure 9-2.

If you don't see the ability to enable Open for Business on your profile, LinkedIn may not realize you are a business owner or freelancer. In this situation, make sure you have a current experience that lists you as a business owner or freelancer. If your experiences are correctly labeled and you still don't have access to the Open for Business feature, reach out to LinkedIn's Tech Support.

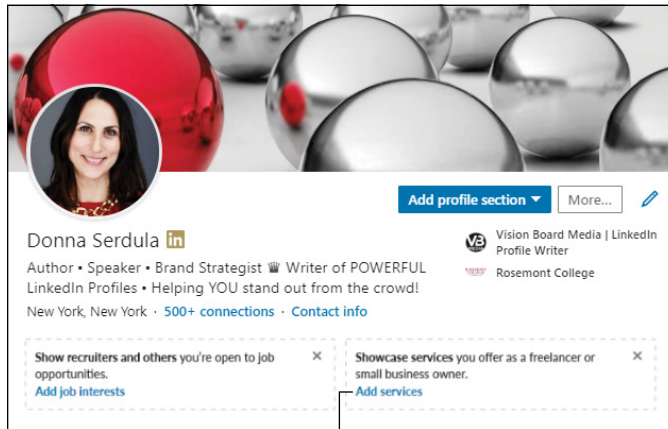


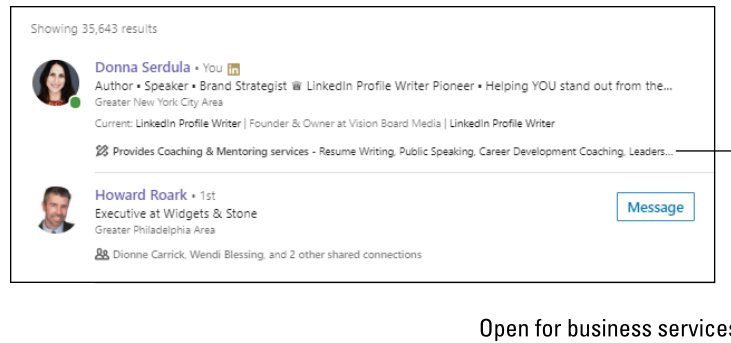
FIGURE 9-2: Enabling the Open for Business feature.

Click to add a business focus

3. Choose your business focus from the **Business Focus** drop-down list.
 4. Click the plus signs to add the services you provide within that business focus.
- See the following section, “Choosing your business focus,” if you need help with choosing services.
5. Under **Work location**, click whether you work from a specific location or if you are available to work remotely.
 6. Click the **Save** button.

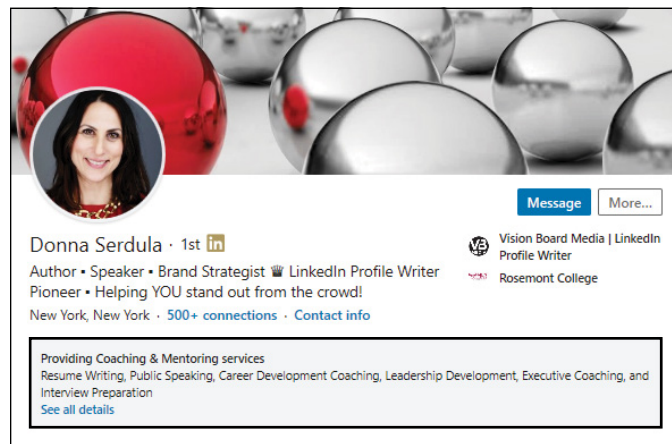
Now that you are Open for Business, if a person searches for someone like you and you are included in the search results, your search listing will include your services (see Figure 9-3). It's easy for people to see exactly what you offer and whether your profile is one they should click to read more.

FIGURE 9-3:
How Open for Business appears in a search results listing.



In addition, anyone who opens and looks at your LinkedIn profile will see your services listed in your intro card under your location information (see Figure 9-4). This information is also displayed on your public profile — the profile people who are not logged in to LinkedIn see. A person can click the “See all details” link to see expanded information that includes your work location and whether you prefer working onsite or remotely. There is also a section that details whether you accept free messages and business inquiries from LinkedIn members.

FIGURE 9-4:
How Open for Business appears on the LinkedIn profile page.



Choosing your business focus

Currently, there is a limited number of services you can list on your profile. You first must select a business focus and then LinkedIn provides the services provided. You can choose all or some within one business focus. I compiled the different business focus options and the services associated with them provided on LinkedIn at the time of this writing. You can only choose services from one business focus, so choose wisely.

Following are the current LinkedIn business focus and services options:

Accounting

Tax Preparation

Accounting

Personal Tax Planning

Financial Accounting

Bookkeeping

Financial Advisory

Small Business Tax

Business Advisory

Coaching & Mentoring

Life Coaching

Public Speaking

Resume Writing

Career Development
Coaching

Interview Preparation

Leadership Development

Executive Coaching

Consulting

HR Consulting

Business Consulting

Management Consulting

Project Management

Public Relations

Healthcare Consulting

Advertising

Nonprofit Consulting

Education Consulting

Legal Consulting

Political Consulting

Pricing Strategy

Tax Advisory

Finance Consulting

Brand Consulting

Marketing Consulting

Environmental Consulting

Email Marketing

Design

Logo Design

Animation

Graphic Design

3D Design

User Experience Design (UED)

Videography

Visual Design

Wordpress Design

Ad Design

Web Design

Print Design

Industrial Design

UX Research

Brand Design

Illustration

Interaction Design

Interior Design

Video Editing

Finance

Financial Advisory

Financial Planning

Financial Analysis

Retirement Planning

Wealth Management

Insurance

Financial Accounting

Home Improvement

Architecture

Interior Design

Landscape Design

Information Technology

Computer Repair

Computer Networking

Backup & Recovery Systems

Home Networking

IT Consulting

Insurance

Health Insurance

Insurance

Life Insurance

Small Business Insurance

Commercial Insurance

Auto Insurance

Homeowner's Insurance

Law

Immigration Law

Property Law

Patent Law

Divorce Law

Business Law

Personal Injury Law

Family Law

Tax Law

DUI Law

Entertainment Law

Consumer Law

Labor and Employment Law

Corporate Law

Bankruptcy Law

Copyright Law

Criminal Defense Law

Estate Planning Law

IT Law

Wills Planning Law

Trademark Law

Trust and Estate Litigation

Intellectual Property Law

Notary

Marketing

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Digital Marketing

Marketing Consulting

Lead Generation
Social Media Marketing
Advertising
Content Marketing
Content Strategy
Blogging
Real Estate Marketing
Market Research
Mobile Marketing
Direct Mail Marketing
Event Marketing
Brand Marketing
Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Email Marketing
Public Relations

Photography

Event Photography
Portrait Photography
Commercial Photography
Videography
Headshot Photography
Sports Photography
Real Estate Photography
Pet Photography
Nature Photography
Wedding Photography
Video Editing

Real Estate

Real Estate Marketing
Commercial Real Estate
Commercial Lending
Real Estate
Mortgage Lending
Real Estate Appraisal
Property Management
Relocation
Property Law

Software Development

Mobile Application Development
Application Development
Web Design
Web Development
Custom Software Development
Business Analytics
Database Development
Information Security
Enterprise Content Management
Software Testing
iOS Development
SaaS Development
Information Management
Cloud Application Development
Cloud Management
Android Development
User Experience Design (UED)

Writing

Copywriting

Translation

Writing

Editing

Content Strategy

Technical Writing

Ghostwriting

Blogging



TIP

These services may change and expand to new areas. Keep an eye out and you may find items added. If a service you offer is missing, reach out to LinkedIn tech support and let them know what you'd like added.

Showing You Are Open to Job Opportunities

In addition to showing the services you offer in your intro card, you can also signal that you are open to job opportunities. This is perfect for either the working professional open to new opportunities, the displaced worker actively looking for a job, or even for the freelance service provider who may be considering reentering the workforce. Enabling the Open to Job Opportunities setting lets recruiters and job posters on LinkedIn know you are interested in learning more about compatible job openings.

Are you worried that your current employer may find out and not take too kindly to your interest in finding a new job? Totally understandable. You can choose whether only recruiters using LinkedIn Recruiter can see your interest or if you want anyone on LinkedIn to see it. LinkedIn even goes one step further and takes steps to preventing recruiters who work at your company and related companies from seeing your interest in new career opportunities. The thing is, LinkedIn can't guarantee that your profile will be cloaked 100 percent of the time. Many companies don't tie their affiliated companies together on LinkedIn, and many companies use freelance or outsourced recruiters.

Following is information directly from LinkedIn's FAQ about the subject (www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/76791):

In order to protect your privacy, we take steps to keep Recruiter users who work at your company, as well as related companies, from seeing the career interests that you share.

We do this by comparing a unique number (Company ID) assigned to the current employer listed on your profile with the Company ID for recruiters on our network. If a recruiter's Company ID is the same as the current employer listed on your profile, or the same as a company affiliated with that current employer based on our platform mapping, then we won't show your career interest preferences.

We can't guarantee, however, that every company is accurately identified, or that affiliated companies are accurately mapped on our platform. We also can't guarantee that every recruiter has an up-to-date and correct Company ID, so there's a small chance that your career interest preferences will be visible to a recruiter at your current employer or an affiliated company.

My suggestion is not to worry. There is nothing wrong with being open to new opportunities. I have heard many stories from clients who brazenly updated their profiles to let the world know they are interested in bigger and better things, and they were surprised at how much nicer they were suddenly treated at work. Not only were they wined and dined, but also they received much delayed raises after making the profile changes. You see, it's far cheaper to keep an employee than have to find a new employee, train him or her, and then deal with the transitionary period until the new employee is up and running at full speed. Besides, whether or not it feels like it, you work voluntarily — you are not a slave.



TIP

I believe every professional should be open to new job opportunities. It's a different world out there today and 30-year careers at one company are becoming more and more rare. The landscape is competitive, and experience in many different companies add to your marketability. Think about it from an employer standpoint: Do you want to hire a person who has been at one job for 20 years where he or she only saw one way of doing business or someone who has worked at four different companies and experienced many different ways of doing business and has fresh perspectives and is clearly open to change? When people stay at a company for an extended length of time, their salaries becomes capped. Their yearly raises never come close to the market uptick. By knowing what's out there, you can know what you should be paid and what your worth and value are.

I remember a man called me to help him with his LinkedIn profile and resume. He was in his late 50s and his department was being let go. He was petrified. We worked on his profile and resume and turned on the career interests section of LinkedIn. Six months later he called to tell me that not only did he find a job closer to his home with a much shorter commute, but also he was getting paid 40 percent more. He was happier in the new culture and finally felt his experience was valued and not a detriment. Change is not necessarily a bad thing.

Enabling the Open to Job Opportunities feature

Follow these steps to enable the Open to Job Opportunities setting:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click Add Job Interests in the “Show recruiters and others you’re open to job opportunities” section in your intro card, as shown earlier in Figure 9-2.**
3. **Under Job Titles, click Add Title and begin typing the job titles you are interested in.**

As you type, LinkedIn will attempt to complete the title for you. Select the appropriate title from the drop-down list that appears. You are limited to five titles.

4. **Under Job Locations, click Add Location + and type the location you are open to working (see Figure 9-5).**

As you type, LinkedIn will attempt to complete the location for you. Select the appropriate location from the drop-down list that appears. You are limited to five locations.

Figure 9-5 shows the 'Edit job preferences' dialog box. The 'Job locations' section is highlighted, showing 'Greater Philadelphia' selected with a checkmark and an 'Add location +' button. The 'Job types' section lists various options with checkboxes: Full-time, Contract, Part-time, Internship, Volunteer, Temporary, and Remote. The 'Only recruiters' dropdown is also visible.

FIGURE 9-5: Select the location you are interested in working.

- 5. To control who sees this setting, click and select the Only Recruiters privacy drop-down menu.**

A pop-up window appears where you can choose who sees you're open to jobs.
- 6. Select All LinkedIn Members if you want this section enabled for all to see on your profile, or Only Recruiters if you only want recruiters to see that you are open for new opportunities.**

Read the section that follows in this chapter to understand the pros and cons of each option.
- 7. If you want to turn the Open to New Job Opportunities feature off, click the "I'm no longer open" link.**
- 8. When you have finished making changes, click the Save button.**

Selecting only recruiters or all LinkedIn members

You can opt to have the Open to Job Opportunities setting appear only to recruiters, or you can choose to have it show on your profile for all to see. Usually when I explain this to people they automatically say "Only recruiters!" To which I reply "Hold your horses!" There are a few things you need to know and understand before you can make a decision.

You would think that by "recruiters," LinkedIn is referring to recruiters in a general sense, like, anyone who is listed as a recruiter can see this information, but that's not true. LinkedIn has three premium recruiter levels: Recruiter, Recruiter Professional Services (RPS), and Recruiter Lite. Recruiter RPS starts at about \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year. Recruiter Lite costs \$1,200 per year. Guess which levels can see Open to Job Opportunities? Yep, Recruiter and RPS. Recruiter Lite cannot see this information or search or filter for it.

LinkedIn doesn't state how many recruiters subscribe to the different levels, but my suspicion is that most recruiters use Recruiter Lite.

Here's another thing to realize: Many recruiters *do not* pay for LinkedIn! A large percentage of recruiters use the free version of LinkedIn and search the LinkedIn network using Google. If you choose Only Recruiters, only a small subset of recruiters will see this setting. So don't rely on it completely.

However, if you choose All LinkedIn Members, everyone and their sister (if she visits your LinkedIn profile) will know you are open to new opportunities, as shown in Figure 9-6. This could be problematic if you are currently working for

another employer or you never told your friends that your six-week yoga trip had more to do with a pink slip than a radical sabbatical.

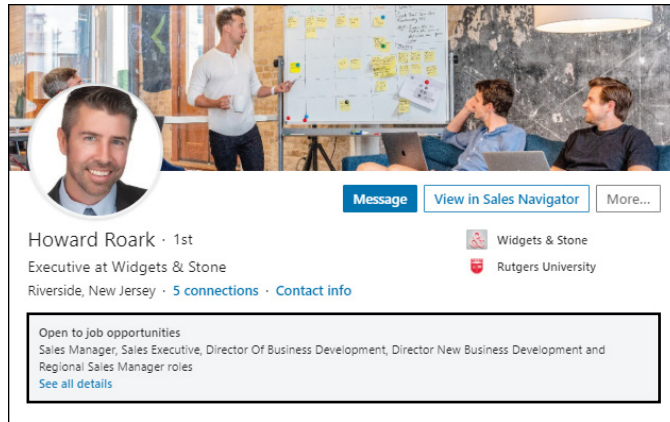


FIGURE 9-6: How it looks when you show everyone your interest in new job opportunities.



My suggestion is if you are displaced, absolutely show the world. People want to help you and being very direct about your goals will help you accomplish them. If you are currently working and quite happy, keep it for recruiters' eyes only. If you are currently working but not enjoying your current role and don't mind ruffling a few feathers because you have a six-month emergency fund saved, by all means, set it to All LinkedIn Members.

When you enable Open to Job Opportunities, you signal recruiters using Recruiter and RPS that you are open to being approached. Just make sure that when you are approached, you are nice and responsive. Check your LinkedIn Messages every few days. Also, make sure you have an updated resume ready to send. There's no better feeling in the world than being able to say, "You want to look at my resume? Give me five seconds to hit send!" Almost every Friday I get a call from a person who was approached by a recruiter and needs a resume developed by Monday. Great resumes aren't created during a crunchtime. If you are going to let recruiters know you are open to new opportunities, you should be ready for new opportunities and that means having an updated resume, cover letter, thank-you letter, briefcase, polished shoes, and a great looking, clean outfit that fits perfectly. Only when you are ready for opportunity is when opportunity will find you. Like the great poet Rumi wrote, "What you seek is seeking you."

In the next chapter, I show you how to make sure that all these new visitors (potential clients and recruiters) see an optimized Experience section that is impressive and interesting.

3

**Detailing
Your Career
Trajectory and
Creating the
Ultimate First
Impression**

IN THIS PART . . .

Understand why you don't want to copy and paste your resume into your profile.

Determine the career trajectory you want to showcase in your profile and learn how to decide what to include and what to omit.

Learn how to craft the perfect job experience description, including how to add your company logo.

Optimize your job titles and accomplishments to increase your chances of being found on LinkedIn search.

Learn how to introduce yourself to your target audience with an impressive, compelling About section that makes your readers want to read on.

Understand why you should write your About section in the first person and how to format this section to make it easy to read and eye-catching.

- » Detailing your career trajectory
- » Deciding what to include and what to omit
- » Dealing with job gaps

Chapter **10**

Getting Your Experiences Ready

The Experience section on your LinkedIn profile is where you explain your career path and highlight your background, successes, qualifications, and abilities. Most people immediately jump in and start adding experiences without thought to where they've been or where they are going in their career. Before you dive in and start adding your past positions to LinkedIn, it's important to take a step back and look at your complete career trajectory.

Many people, looking to save time, simply copy and paste their resume experiences directly into their LinkedIn profiles. Although copying and pasting from a resume does save time, it is also a huge mistake. The time you save will be made up in lost opportunity.

Not everyone is on LinkedIn for job search. It's important to make sure your Experience section matches your goals as well as your career trajectory. As soon as you paste in your old resume, whatever LinkedIn goal you have suddenly looks like you are desperately looking for a job. However, when your goal is in fact job search, your LinkedIn profile and resume shouldn't be a one-to-one match. Instead they should work in tandem. The resume and profile should build off of each other.

When a person starts off reading your resume, he or she should want to check out your profile to learn more about you as a person. That profile should provide even more information and compel him or her to reach out directly to you. Conversely, if a person starts off with your profile, he or she should want to request your resume to learn more about your accomplishments and history. When the resume and profile are a carbon copy of each other, the person reading them may ultimately become disappointed because you haven't shown them anything new or different, and he or she may suspect you have nothing more to provide them.

In this chapter, I show you how to determine the career trajectory you want to showcase on LinkedIn. This chapter is all about the important strategic planning you must do before you begin the actual editing of your profile's Experience section.

Referencing Your Resume

As you sit down to work on the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile, it's a good idea to print out your resume. Your resume serves as a reference or outline — a tool to help you flesh out your experiences. If you don't have a resume, don't fret! It's easy to create an outline of your career arc. Simply get out a sheet of paper and create four columns with the following headings: Company Name, Job Title, Start Date, and End Date, as shown in Table 10-1.

TABLE 10-1

Career Template

| Company Name | Job Title | Start Date | End Date |
|--------------|-----------|------------|----------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Then, fill in the chart with your current and past job positions. Start with your most current experience and then move backward in time. If you can't remember a date, don't worry! Skip it and keep moving, recording other positions. Once the list is completed, go back and research the dates and titles you can't remember.

The reason to get out your resume (or create an outline) first, is that it's important to have a master list. With a one-sheet overview of your career arc, you see how your career has unfurled and where it is heading. As you look back on your career, do you have any gaps in which you weren't working? If you were out of

work for a year or longer, make sure you provide context around that time off. (See “Dealing with Employment Gaps” later in this chapter for more information on dealing with job gaps.)

Determining Which Experiences to Keep and Which to Merge

Remember, your LinkedIn profile is *not* your resume. Resumes are targeted for specific positions that you apply for. Your LinkedIn profile is your digital introduction, online reputation, and first impression. It should tell your professional story and compel your target audience to take a specific action.

I often see profiles that list a single company with a current job title and the date range spans 15 years. People did this on purpose because at one time, LinkedIn didn’t provide a way of showcasing progression within a company. If you wanted to showcase your tenure, you had to ignore your promotions. If you wanted to showcase your promotions, you had to list the company multiple times which looked like you jumped around a lot.

All of this has been fixed. Now, when you add a company multiple times and use the exact company name for each title, LinkedIn automatically rolls them together and shows the past positions nested under the one company, as shown in Figure 10-1.

A benefit of showing promotions is that it provides you with more opportunity for keyword optimization and potential for higher ranking in search results. The more job titles you have, the more keywords you use, the higher your profile will rise in the search results for those keyword combinations.



REMEMBER

How you trace your career trajectory differs depending on your LinkedIn goals. If you are a job seeker, you want to make sure your profile echoes your resume closely in terms of positions and time periods. Recruiters and hiring managers often compare the two, and if they notice a difference, that’s a red flag. If you are on LinkedIn for reputation management, highlighting each promotion with a new experience reinforces your successes.

It’s less important to dredge up every success when you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting or even if you want to be seen as a thought leader. Think in terms of your target audience. What’s important to them? Do they need to see every promotion, or is it enough to know you spent time at one company and rose through the ranks?

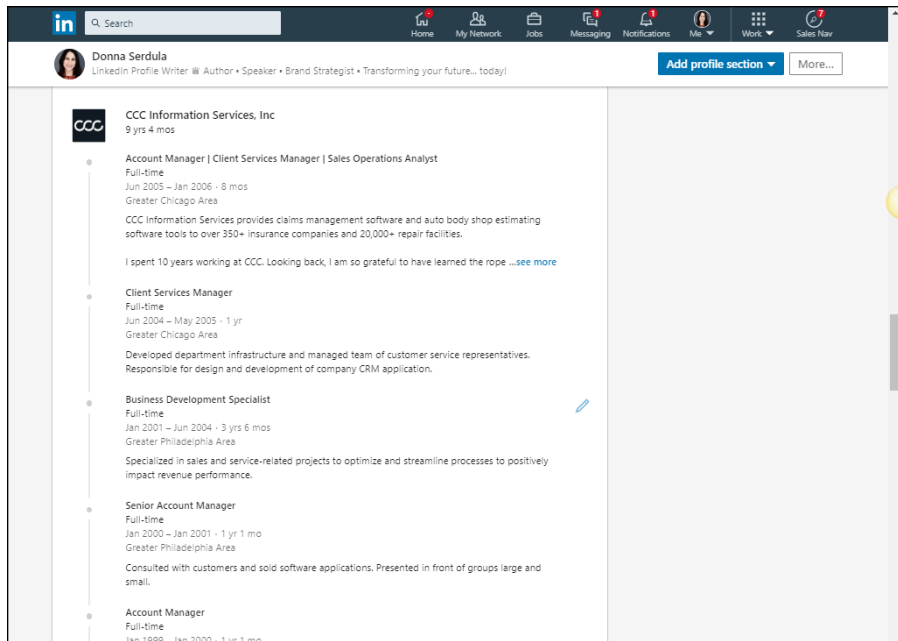


FIGURE 10-1:
Experiences
nested under one
company name.

Once you have an idea of what is most important to your target audience and your goals, go ahead and delete and merge experiences.

Keep your target audience in mind

When you are on LinkedIn for sales or branding reasons (such as reputation management or thought leadership), having a profile that echoes your resume isn't necessary. Certainly, you always want to make sure that the information you share on your profile is accurate. But always think in terms of your target audience. As a salesperson looking to prospect and network on LinkedIn, does your target audience of potential clients care that you were promoted three times or made President's Club or that you closed \$1.5M in Q1 of 2019, a 25 percent increase over the previous year? No! They want to know about the services and products you sell and how those services and products help them. In this situation, you don't need to fill your Experience section with a long list of accomplishments and job descriptions. Instead, you want to write for your target audience explaining your role within the organization and how you help your prospects and clients.

On the other hand, if you are a salesperson who is looking to switch companies and you are hoping to intersect with job opportunities, your target audience is now recruiters and human resources professionals. In this situation, you want your profile to align with your resume and show enough information to get your target audience interested in learning more so that they request a full copy of your resume.

Ultimately, when you are on LinkedIn for job search, make sure your resume and LinkedIn profile align and that you include three to five achievements for your more current job experiences. If you are on LinkedIn for executive branding or reputation management, you may not want to concentrate on achievements, but rather showcase your career trajectory and provide a high-level overview of your accomplishments. By providing a high-level overview and not drilling into minutiae, you are differentiating yourself from most other LinkedIn users, especially job seekers. Remember, it's all about what your particular target audience needs to know about you. If you are using LinkedIn for executive branding, your target audience isn't interested in granular, detail-oriented accomplishments as much as your full career trajectory and background. By providing too much information, you may seem like you are in job search mode.

Salespeople should show at least three total positions, but they don't need to go into detail as to their job descriptions or accomplishments unless they also have a desire to attract other job opportunities. Prospects don't want to know that you can sell a pen to a shark.

Salespeople looking to use LinkedIn to prospect and sell more effectively can use their current experience descriptions to instead talk about their company and the benefits of their products or services. The job description is also a great area to detail a customer success story.

How far back do I go?

If you have been in business for the last 30 years, it's not necessary to go all the way back to the 1990s. When you started your career, the Internet, technology, and business were different. Also, over 30 years, careers tend to shift and go in different directions. Look at your career path and decide what positions have helped you get to where you are today. Which positions continue you on a forward trajectory into the future? Those early, beginner positions can probably be merged into one position or discarded completely.

It's important to be smart when you identify and document your career journey. Even though you can decide when to start documenting, you always want to be authentic and as transparent as possible.

One of my greatest pet peeves is the CEO who lists his or her first and last positions as CEO. There is so much more to that story, and people want to know it. How did they get to the top? What did that path look like? Even if you aren't CEO (yet!) people want to know your journey. Don't be afraid to tell it.



TIP

At the very least you should have one current position and two past positions. This helps you achieve an All-Star profile ranking, a way LinkedIn rates profiles. I talk more about profile ranking in Chapter 4.

Creating a Work History for Recent Graduates

A complete LinkedIn profile contains one current and two past positions listed in the Experience section. What do you do if you are a recent graduate just starting out in your career or a young professional with limited professional experience?

Don't worry; you can list internships and volunteer positions to flesh out your experience history. You may also consider grouping summer jobs together into one experience. By grouping low-level summer jobs together that are not relevant to your future job search, you are showing that you have employment experience, but you aren't shining a spotlight on jobs that aren't part of your career vision. It's far better to showcase non-paying internships and volunteer experiences over a summer job scooping ice cream. As your career develops, you can delete these positions when you add newer and better positions. Figure 10-2 illustrates an example of how recent graduates might fill out their Experience sections.

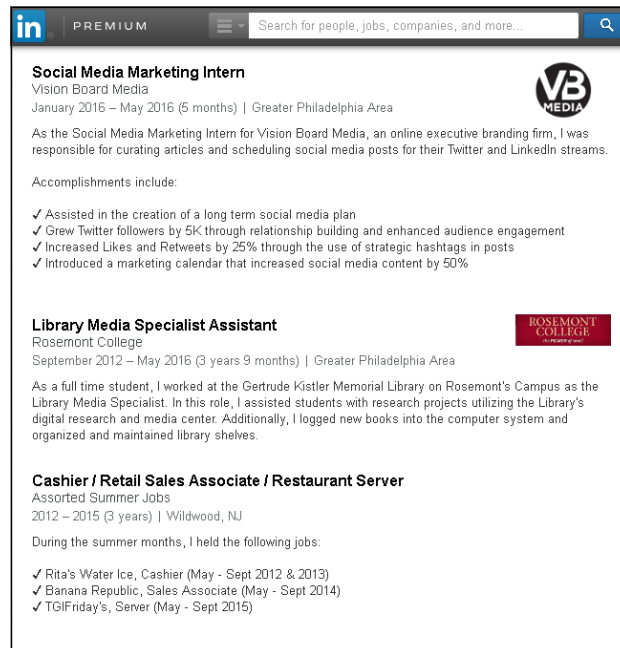


FIGURE 10-2:
An example of how a recent graduate might combine summer positions.



TIP

As a young professional currently working, you can break out your current experience to show any promotions you received so that it counts as two experiences rather than just one. By breaking out your experiences, you can achieve All-Star profile ranking.

Dealing with Employment Gaps

The dreaded employment gap often keeps people up at night, but I have a fool-proof way to deal with it successfully. Whether you took time off to raise your kids, went back to school, nursed an ailing relative back to health, experienced sickness yourself, or just needed to rest up and enjoyed a radical sabbatical, it's best to explain the employment gap but not dwell on it.

The thing to remember is that employment gaps happen. Hiring managers and human resources professionals know that gaps occur; they just want to understand the reason around it. Mention the gap in the Experience section of your profile and provide context for your reader. It's important to convey that during your downtime, you stayed active in your career and community. List courses you took, books you read, or organizations you participated in. This information can either go in the position listed prior to the gap, or you can create a new position for the gap.

For example, here's how a person with an employment gap caused by a health crisis can explain it on LinkedIn:

Company Name: Family Health Sabbatical

Title: VP of Marketing

Time Period: January 2009 to June 2009

Description: It was in January 2009 that my husband was diagnosed with cancer. The next six months were spent caring for him and taking him to treatment. During this time, I focused mainly on my husband and our family, but I did take time to stay active in my career, too. I read marketing books and attended a number of online webinars. I also mentored a young professional I had hired prior to my husband's diagnosis and am overjoyed that using my advice and support, she received a promotion six months sooner than expected.

Lastly, I took an online course, "Leadership Communication in Organizations," in which I earned a certificate. This four-week course delved into the different communication techniques innovative leadership uses within a corporate setting.

Once my husband's cancer went into remission, I reentered the workforce in June 2009.

In this example, the title states *VP of Marketing*. You can't leave a job title blank; this field must be filled in. VP of Marketing is the position she held prior to her sabbatical and most likely is the title she holds upon reentering the workforce. By using her previous title, she reinforces her position and level and increases the chance of ranking highly for that keyword in LinkedIn search. Keywords placed in the job title hold greater strength than in other profile fields.

In the next chapter, I show you the structure of a powerful job experience and walk you through how to optimize your Experience section to really wow your reader and rank higher in LinkedIn search.

- » Adding, editing, and removing experiences
- » Showcasing your career trajectory
- » Optimizing your experiences for LinkedIn search
- » Highlighting your accomplishments

Chapter **11**

Creating a Powerful Experience

A powerful experience on your LinkedIn profile is different from a powerful experience on your resume. People are checking you out on LinkedIn to learn more about you. A powerful experience provides just enough information to compel your reader to want to learn more. For that reason, don't simply copy and paste your resume experiences into your LinkedIn profile. Instead, tell a story about your experience. In a conversational voice, explain to your reader your roles and responsibilities. Highlight a few accomplishments. Give readers something elevated from what they'd find on your resume.



REMEMBER

Unlike your resume, your LinkedIn profile is public, and pretty much anyone can see it. It's important to be careful when crafting your profile's experience sections. The information you include must not be confidential or potentially damaging to anyone; it also must be completely true.

If readers are so moved by what they see on your LinkedIn profile and they request your resume, the worst thing in the world is for your resume to look exactly like what they just saw on LinkedIn. You've left them wanting more only to give them a duplicate of what they already know.

In this chapter, I discuss the perfect structure of a job experience description. I show you how to add a new experience to your LinkedIn profile and how to make sure the company logo appears on your profile. You find out how to optimize your

job titles to increase your chances of being found. You also find out how to make your accomplishments stand out and wow your reader.

Adding a New Experience

Whether you are starting from scratch or updating your profile with your current position, it's important to know how to add a new experience to your LinkedIn profile. You don't need to worry about adding experiences in chronological order; LinkedIn automatically lists your positions by date, with the most recent on top, receding in time as you scroll down.

Here's how to add a new experience to your profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Add Profile Section drop-down menu located in your intro card.**
- 3. Click the plus (+) icon next to Work Experience to open the Add Experience window.**

If you don't see Work Experience listed, you may have to click Background to expand the window first.



TIP

If you have already added experiences, you can also scroll down to the Experience section and click the pencil (edit) icon to edit a previously added experience or click the plus (+) icon next to the Experience section to add a new experience entry.

- 4. In the Title field, type your job title.**
- 5. In the Employment type drop-down menu, select from Full-time, Part-time, Self-Employed, Freelance, Contract, Internship, or Apprenticeship.**
- 6. Enter the name of the company where you worked:**

a. In the Company Name text box, begin typing the company name.

As you type the name of the company, a drop-down list appears showing all the companies that have LinkedIn company pages in LinkedIn's vast company page network.

b. If the company appears in the drop-down list, select it from the list to link the company to the LinkedIn company page.

If several companies have the same name, choose the correct company by confirming the accompanying logo to the left of the name.

c. If the company is not listed, keep typing to add it.

7. In the Location field, type the major city closest to where you worked.

As you type, a drop-down list of locations appears. Choose the location from the list. If the suggested locations are inaccurate, type in the city and state.

8. In the Start Date and End Date fields, enter the dates you worked:

- a. Click Choose to choose the month you started followed by a field for the year.
- b. Enter an end date. If you are currently working at this company, choose Current.

9. In the Description field, briefly summarize the company where you worked, describe your role and responsibilities, and list a few high-level accomplishments.

You can choose to update your industry to match the company's industry, and you can choose to update your headline to your job title. However, I caution against updating your headline this way (see the sidebar, "Stopping LinkedIn from Overwriting Your Headline" for more information).

10. Click the Save button.

Your new experience is added to your LinkedIn profile's Experience section.

Figure 11-1 illustrates a completed experience.

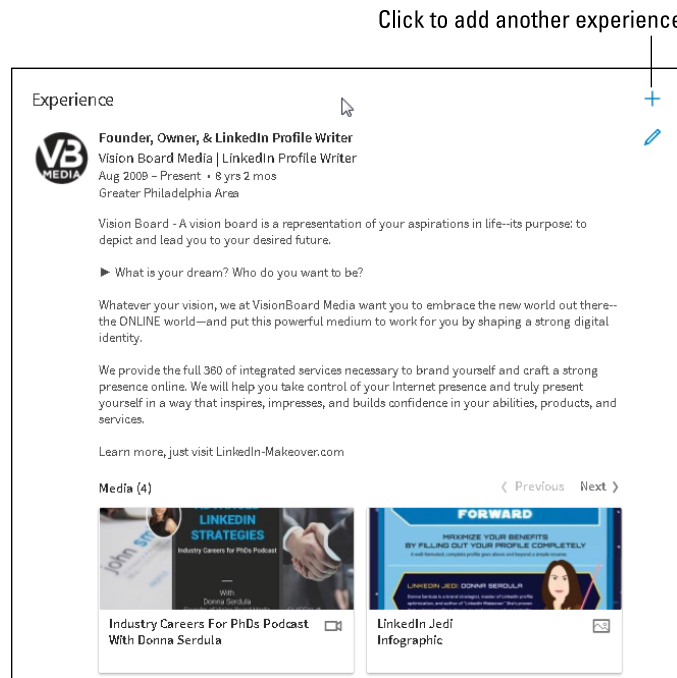
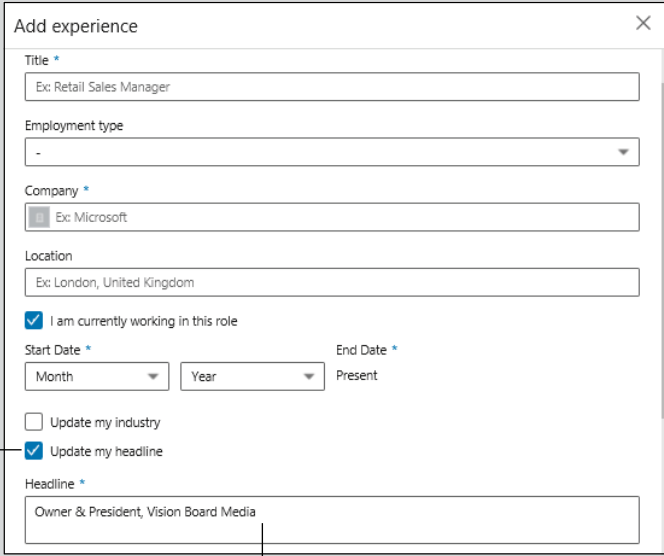


FIGURE 11-1:
A completed experience.

STOPPING LINKEDIN FROM OVERWRITING YOUR HEADLINE

When you add a new current position, LinkedIn updates your LinkedIn headline to match this new job title. As soon as you click the checkbox next to “I Currently Work in this role,” a new option appears directly below. This new option states, “Update my headline:” and LinkedIn immediately fills in this field with your new job title, as shown in the following figure.



The screenshot shows the 'Add experience' form on LinkedIn. The form includes fields for Title, Employment type, Company, Location, Start Date, End Date, and Headline. The 'Update my headline' checkbox is checked, and the headline field is filled with the job title 'Owner & President, Vision Board Media'. A callout box points to the headline field with the text 'LinkedIn automatically fills this in'. Below the callout box, the text 'Uncheck to leave the current headline unchanged' is displayed.

LinkedIn automatically fills this in

Uncheck to leave the current headline unchanged

This might seem like a wonderful idea, but your previous headline will be deleted. If you spent time creating an optimized headline, all that previous work will be lost. In addition, as I describe in Chapter 7, your LinkedIn headline should be different from your current job title. Your job title is just that, a job title. Your LinkedIn headline showcases who you are and it compels people to read the rest of your profile.

I recommend unchecking the “Update my headline:” box and do not allow LinkedIn to update your headline to your new job title.

Making the start and end dates match your resume

One of the biggest blunders I see on LinkedIn profiles are discrepancies between people's LinkedIn profile and their resume's start and end dates. If you are searching for a job, it's absolutely imperative that the information on your resume match your LinkedIn profile. Rather than create a one-to-one copy of your resume on your profile, instead, have your profile complement the information on your resume.



TIP

As you add new experiences on your LinkedIn profile, make sure the start and end dates match your resume. When there is a discrepancy between dates, the person reading may wonder if you are simply not a stickler for details or possibly lying. If you can't get the dates right, what else are you fudging?

Using month and year or just year

People often ask if they should use the month and year or just the year for their experiences start and end dates. If you are on LinkedIn with the goal of job search, I highly recommend adding both the month and the year. When a job seeker omits the month, it may send a red flag to recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals. By using just a year, such as 2012, someone might think you started with a month or less left in the year. Most people omit months because they are trying to hide a gap. The best thing to do is own up to a gap and explain it in the job description section of your profile.

When people use LinkedIn for reputation management or to be seen as thought leaders and job search is the furthest thing from their mind, they may omit months if they so choose. When providing a simple trajectory of where and when, it's not important to get caught up in the exact month one's tenure began.



TIP

If you do choose to omit months, omit the months from all experiences. It looks sloppy and inconsistent when some experiences have a month and year and others only have years.

Getting the company logo to appear

Scrolling through a LinkedIn profile, it's hard not to notice the company logos sitting to the left of the experiences. These logos add flair and credibility to your profile. Most people assume that the way to get a logo next to their experience is to upload it. Truth is, LinkedIn adds the logo from the company's LinkedIn page. What this means is if the company hasn't created a LinkedIn page or didn't upload its logo to its LinkedIn page, there is no way to add a logo next to your experience.

So, if long ago you worked for a now defunct company, there is a very good chance you won't be able to add a logo. If you work for a company that doesn't embrace social media and it doesn't have a LinkedIn page, you too are out of luck.

The good news is, it is easy to get a company logo to appear next to your experience as long as the company has a LinkedIn company page created and a logo uploaded. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll through your profile until you see the experience you want to edit in the Experience section.**

DEALING WITH AGE DISCRIMINATION

Age discrimination is a legitimate fear, and many LinkedIn users figure they can offset age discrimination by cloaking their age by omitting dates on their LinkedIn profile. A profile without dates is a profile that is clearly hiding something. Recruiters see this as unethical. In fact, when a profile is missing information, those who pass by it aren't discriminating against you because of your age, but because you aren't providing accurate information.

Omitting dates is not the right thing to do, but let's say you do it and manage to get asked to interview at a company that doesn't place value on age and experience. Your physical appearance gives away your real age when you show up at the interview. It doesn't matter how well the meeting with the hiring manager goes, you will never get the job. Age discrimination is out there and it's ugly. The good news is, just as there are companies that devalue age, there are plenty of companies who value your wisdom and experience.

By cloaking your age, it's clear you believe you have something to hide. You don't! You've heard that 40 is the new 30? Well people are working well past 65. In fact, I can't tell you how many calls I get each month from people who retired and hate it and want to reenter the workforce. As a society, we are living longer, healthier lives and we have so much to give.

Instead of hiding your age and experience, lead with it. Showcase your strengths, your knowledge, your experience, and your true self. You will get discriminated against by some companies and that's okay. Why waste your time on a company that doesn't respect you? The good companies that realize your value and strengths are out there and those are the companies to pursue. They will find your LinkedIn profile and love what they see. Don't hide your age; turn it into a benefit.

3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode.

The Edit Experience window appears.

4. Click in the Company field and type the name of the company where you worked.

A drop-down list appears with companies that match the letters you type.

5. When you see your company name appear, click the name from the drop-down list to choose it.

By selecting the company from the drop-down list, you are allowing LinkedIn to dynamically link your profile to the LinkedIn company page. As long as the company page has a logo uploaded, it shows on your profile next to the experience.

As shown in Figure 11-2, by typing the name of your company into the Company field, a drop-down list appears. Selecting the name that LinkedIn provides creates a link that enables the company logo to display on your LinkedIn profile.

English (Primary profile) Spanish French German

Title *
LinkedIn Profile Writer | Founder & Owner

Employment type
Full-time

Company *
Vision Board Media
Vision Board Media
Marketing and Advertising

I am currently working in this role

Start Date *
August 2009 End Date *
Present

You have 3 other current positions. Would you like to end any of them?
 End this position

Share with network
OR If enabled, your network may be informed of job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries. This may take up to 48 hours. [Learn what's shared](#)

Delete Save

FIGURE 11-2:
Getting a
company logo to
show on your
LinkedIn profile.

Linking to your company's LinkedIn page

By linking the company name to the company's LinkedIn page, you are creating a link from your profile to the company page. When a person clicks the logo or the company name from within your profile, the company's LinkedIn page opens. When you create this link from your current experience to the company page, LinkedIn recognizes and associates you as a current employee of the company. A section of the company page shows viewers which employees the company is connected to. If you are connected to the viewer of the company page, your profile picture may be displayed.



TIP

The How You're Connected section of the company page is a wonderful way to find inside connections at companies you are interested in. The true power of LinkedIn is that it makes invisible connections visible. Because LinkedIn keeps track of your network and your network's network, you are able to see deeper into relationships and find inside connections that may help you.

When viewing a LinkedIn company page, it's easy to see how you are connected to people within that company (see Figure 11-3). By choosing the Company Name from the drop-down list, LinkedIn is able to link people back to the company page as employees. That's how when viewing a company page, you see who works there and how you are connected to them.

How connected you are to the company

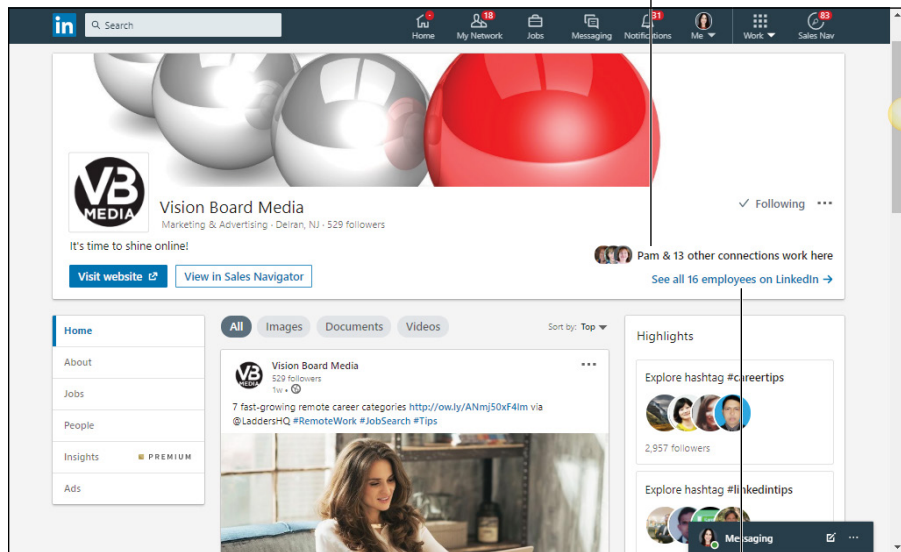


FIGURE 11-3: The company page shows how you are connected to a company's employees.

Click to view profiles of employees of the company



TIP

There is a work-around when you can't add a company logo. A client of mine worked at MTV China. When we went to add MTV China, only the mother company, Viacom, was available. It was important for my client to showcase his global experience and that meant displaying MTV China's logo. Because the logo wasn't available, only Viacom's, we simply added Viacom to the Company Name field and edited the display name to state MTV China. Then, within the experience we added the MTV logo to the experience. This logo didn't show to the right of the experience but right below the experience's description. It wasn't exactly what he wanted, but it was better than nothing.

Creating a LinkedIn Page

If you are a business owner, you can create a LinkedIn page for your company. LinkedIn pages allow you to tell your company's story, mission, and goals. It offers a centralized place where LinkedIn users can stay up to date on your company news, products, services, business opportunities, and job openings.

Not only does a LinkedIn page provide you with a presence on LinkedIn, but also it allows your employees the ability to link to your LinkedIn page on their personal LinkedIn profiles. Linking to your company's LinkedIn page means employees are able to show allegiance to your company, and by doing so, your company logo appears on their LinkedIn Profile pages, giving your company more visibility. This logo is a live link that allows readers to quickly and easily connect to your LinkedIn page where they can learn all about your company. When people visit your company's LinkedIn page, they will not only see company information and recent news, but also a dynamic listing of current employees that highlights connections to their LinkedIn networks.

A LinkedIn page also allows you to broadcast posts from your company rather than you as an individual. When people follow your LinkedIn page, they receive these status updates on their LinkedIn feeds.

By broadcasting posts, you are engaging and interacting with people (potential customers, business partners, and employees) interested in learning more about your company. Followers of your LinkedIn page are also providing marketing opportunities by having your logo on their LinkedIn profiles.

Ultimately, a LinkedIn page is a digital outpost that provides insight and credibility to others looking to learn more.

To create a company page, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Work icon in the top-right corner of the LinkedIn toolbar.**
- 3. Click Create a Company Page.**
- 4. Select the Page type you'd like to create from the following options:**
 - Small business
 - Medium to large business
 - Showcase page
 - Educational institution



TIP

Most business owners creating a LinkedIn Page will choose Small business or Medium to large business.

A new page opens called Page Identity, as shown in Figure 11-4.

- 5. Enter the name of your company.**
- 6. Choose the slug for the public URL for your page.**
- 7. Enter the direct link to your business's website.**
- 8. Select your company's industry from the drop-down menu.**

You can only choose one industry from the list.
- 9. Choose the size of you company from the drop-down menu.**
- 10. Select the Company Type: public company, self-employed, etc.**

Now it's time to choose your logo.
- 11. Click choose file to upload your company's logo.**

This is a perfect square so you may need to tweak your logo if it's rectangular to get it to fit. The recommended size is 300 x 300 pixels. You can choose either JPG or PNG.
- 12. Add a tagline that briefly describes what your company does.**

Review Chapter 7 if you need help.
- 13. Check the verification box to confirm you have the right to act on behalf of that company or school in the creation of the page.**
- 14. Click Create Page.**

Once your page is created, you can go back in and add more details to display on your page, such as description, phone number, locations, and more.

FIGURE 11-4:
Creating a
company's
LinkedIn page.

Less Is More — Stop Disqualifying Yourself

I often see people filling their LinkedIn profiles to the brim with unending job descriptions and accomplishments. I never advocate an empty profile, but I do believe less is more. When you provide too much information, you may come across as desperate. Contrary to popular opinion, your LinkedIn profile does not qualify you for a position, but it may disqualify you. Saying too much may lower your chances of getting called in for an interview. The goal of your LinkedIn profile is to illicit action from your target audience.

As you write your job descriptions for each experience, write with the goal of getting people interested, whetting their appetite so they want to learn more. Don't give everything away upfront. You want to have enough information left in your back pocket for future conversations.



TIP

Recruiters typically tell people that they should have their full resume reiterated on LinkedIn as well as attach a PDF copy of their resume. The reason recruiters suggest this is because it makes their own lives easier. They don't need to reach out to you; everything they need to dismiss you is right there for them. Remember, your profile is public — recruiters as well as your colleagues, clients, and friends can see everything you have listed. Recruiters are professionals and they can ascertain if you are the right candidate for a position without having every

little bit of detail on your profile. Make them pick up the phone and call you to get more information. Have them request your resume and you decide if the position is one where you throw your hat in the ring and submit your resume. Remember, you are empowered and you have value. You don't need to give away the farm.

Optimizing your job title with keywords

The Title field of an experience contains your job title, right? Well, right and wrong. Although most LinkedIn users complete this field with their job titles, they are missing an opportunity to optimize their profile for search and branding purposes.



REMEMBER

The job title is one of those high impact search engine optimization (SEO) fields within LinkedIn. (I discuss SEO in even more detail in Chapter 2.) When a person searches LinkedIn for keywords, LinkedIn returns profiles that match these keywords. When those keywords appear in the job title, that profile turns up higher in search results than a profile that just states that keyword in another less sensitive area of the LinkedIn profile.

In addition, the Title field is at the top of the experience and in a larger font size, so the field pops out at people scrolling through your profile. Truly catch their eye by including more than just your job title.

What do you want to add in addition to your job title? That's easy, keywords!



TIP

A common mistake people make is using abbreviations in their job title. If you are a job seeker, you may choose to play it safe, and so if your title can be abbreviated, enter it both ways. You don't want to list yourself as VP and miss out on appearing in search results because a recruiter searched on Vice President. For example:

VP / Vice President of Marketing

Many companies use different job titles for similar jobs. Some companies prefer using nebulous job titles, while others use job titles that are non-descriptive of the role or responsibilities. Although you never want to lie, it is acceptable to add a more common job title with more description to make it easier for your reader to understand. By using a more common job title, you also improve your chances of getting found by recruiters looking for specific job titles.

I've stated it before and I must state it again: Do not exaggerate or lie when it comes to your job title. Instead aim for more description to assist your reader. For example, look at the differences in these job titles:

BEFORE: *Customer Development Team Member*

AFTER: *Customer Development Team Member ► Customer Service Representative ◆ Client Assistance Specialist*

BEFORE: *Lead Generation Specialist*

AFTER: *Lead Generation Specialist ► Cold Caller ◆ Telemarketer ◆ Business Development ◆ Prospecting*

In the first example, the “Before” title did not adequately describe the job seeker’s function. “Customer Development Team Member” might be the official job title, but this is not a common job title used across Corporate America. By adding additional, lateral job titles that are more common, the person is now not only describing exactly his or her role but also making it easier to get found.

In the second example, the job title, “Lead Generation Specialist” is descriptive, but by including a few additional keywords, this person is making sure he or she matches different search terms a recruiter or hiring manager might use instead, such as cold caller, telemarketer, business development, or prospecting.

Making your job title pop with symbols

Reading through the job title examples shown throughout this chapter, you may have noticed that they all contained symbols that separate the job title from the keywords and separate keywords from each other. Symbols are a great way to catch the eye and provide flair to your job title.

You can’t format your LinkedIn profile natively within LinkedIn. Bold, italic, and underlined text is not allowed. You can’t even include a bulleted list. There isn’t even a bulleted list option. Even though LinkedIn doesn’t provide you with the ability to format text, you can add pizzazz by using Unicode symbols.

JOB TITLE CHARACTER LIMITS

There are 100 characters available in the experience Title field. Use as many of these characters as possible. As you type into the Title field within your LinkedIn profile, you will know you hit your character limit because you will suddenly find that no matter what you type, your cursor only blinks and no new characters are added. In this situation you must backspace the word that is incomplete and determine what keywords you want to keep and which you want to remove.

Where do you find these symbols? In addition to the numbers, letters, and punctuation marks that you see on your keyboard, there are additional characters you can use. These extra characters can be added to your profile by passing your keyboard.

Because directions to get to these symbols vary depending upon your operating system, the easiest way to add symbols to your LinkedIn profile is to visit my LinkedIn profile to find a list of symbols you can use. Here are the steps to do so:

- 1. Open your web browser and go to www.Linkedin.com/in/todonna.**
- 2. Once at my profile, scroll through until you get to the Experience section and expand my most current experience at Vision Board Media.**
- 3. When you find a symbol you like, highlight it, copy it, and then paste it into your profile.**

I curated a list of different symbols you can use on your LinkedIn profile.

Copy and paste by using the right-click menu or by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac) to copy and Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac) to paste.

In addition to using symbols in your job title and as a bulleted list, you can also use symbols for emphasis. For instance, add symbols around your call to action or use them to break up paragraphs.



TIP

Whatever you do, don't go crazy. Using too many symbols makes your profile look silly and juvenile. As they say in the fashion world, less is more. Choose one or two different types of symbols and use them sparingly throughout your profile. Symbols should spotlight your content, not detract from it.

Describing your roles and responsibilities

Now that you have an optimized job title, it's time to dive into your role and responsibilities at your company. This section is where you provide an overview of the scope of your position. Do not use resume speak or silly corporate jargon. Instead, write in a first person, conversational manner.

Here are some sentence starters:

In 20XX, I was brought on board to . . .

I was handpicked for this position to . . .

In this role, I . . .

As the XXX, I specialized in . . .

My role within the organization was to . . .

During this time, I . . .

I am most proud to have . . .

My responsibilities included . . .

It was during my tenure at XXX, that I . . .

I was hired to . . .

As the XXX, I was tasked with . . .

By describing your position in just a few sentences, you create context for your reader. Through this description you are painting a picture for your readers and they begin to formulate an idea of who you are and your capabilities. It's okay to pull out your resume and take a look at what you have listed, but you don't want to do a direct copy and paste. Instead, speak directly to your reader and describe your role within the company.

Here are some questions to help you uncover your role and responsibilities:

What are your top four to five general job functions?

What is expected of you? What are the specific tasks or duties you perform? What are the activities or obligations you are assigned and held accountable for?

Do you manage a budget? How much?

Do you have direct reports? How many? What is their level and areas of accountability? Think in terms of projects, processes, operations, and applications.

Are you responsible for managing a specific territory, region, or location?

Do you have P&L responsibility?

What is your value? What do you contribute?

Were you hired to meet a particular challenge for the company?

Crafting an impactful achievement

With your roles and responsibilities described, now it's time to showcase the times you went above and beyond. Achievements describe projects and actions you performed that were exceptional and positively impacted your colleagues, clients, and ultimately, the overall business. This seems so simple, but most people have a hard time telling the difference between an achievement and a responsibility. Responsibilities describe your day-to-day actions. These are those duties that are minimally required of you to keep your job. Achievements describe not just the task but the results of the task.

If you have an up-to-date, professionally written resume, take a look at the achievements that are highlighted. Think in terms of your target audience. Which achievements are the most important to him or her? If you have 15 achievements listed under one position on your resume, you do not want to list all 15 achievements on your LinkedIn profile. First, you don't want to give away the farm to every single viewer of your LinkedIn profile. Second, you want to spotlight only the achievements your target audience finds most interesting and impressive. Aim for three to five achievements per experience. By showcasing only the top achievements, you are whetting your readers' appetites and providing them with a reason to reach out to learn more about you. When you overload your readers with too much information, nothing is left to deliver later.

Most employees are so busy getting their jobs done that they don't stop and think about what they accomplished. In fact, most are so busy with work and with their lives and family that they don't even remember half of what they've accomplished. You always hear about how you should have a to-do list and that once items are finished, you should cross them off. But that promotes forgetting what was done. I say celebrate your accomplishments and don't cross them off! Move them to another list of your successes. Not only does this help you feel better about yourself and what you've done, it's helpful when it's time to update your resume and LinkedIn profile.

In the meantime, here's a list of questions to help spur your memory and get you thinking about what you've accomplished:

What processes or procedure did you suggest, design, or implement? What were the results?

Did you help increase sales? How and by what percentages or monetary amount?

What specific projects, techniques, processes, operations, or applications that were instrumental in increasing revenues, company growth, or increased productivity did you develop or were involved in?

Did you save your company money? How much and under what circumstances?

Thinking in terms of your day-to-day tasks, when and how did you deliver results ahead of deadline, under budget, or above expectations?

Were you appointed to any teams? Why and what did you provide to the team?

What special projects have you worked on? Why were you chosen and what were the results?

Have you done anything to foster or improve customer or employee or strategic relationships with the company?

Have you done anything to improve communications, either internally or externally?

Did you recruit new customers for the business?

Did you recruit new employees for the business?

Were you chosen to train, mentor, or guide others?

Were you rewarded with any additional responsibility?

Once you have chosen your top achievements, you want them to stand out. Because LinkedIn doesn't allow any formatting such as bolding or italicizing text, you need to do something different. Remember those symbols that you used to separate the keywords from your job title in the Title field? Copy one of those symbols again and paste it into your Description field. You are now going to use these symbols to create a bulleted list of accomplishments.



TIP

Make sure you hit the spacebar between the symbol and the first letter of the accomplishment. Also, you want to hit the Enter or Return key on your keyboard twice between accomplishments. This creates an empty line between accomplishments. Whitespace is important and helps make your profile visually attractive and easier to read.

If you really want to differentiate your accomplishments, you can use a LinkedIn text formatter like the one on my website (www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-text-formatter) to set the word "Accomplishments" in bold. Paste it right above your bulleted list and you'll have people calling you to find out how you did it.

EXPERIENCE CHARACTER LIMITS

LinkedIn gives you 2,000 characters to describe each position in the Experience section. This translates to between 300 to 350 words. Aim for around 200 words per experience. Remember, you are not writing a novel.

It's a balancing act between too much and not enough. Showcase your top-level achievements, but don't go overboard. A person who is interested in learning more can always request your resume.

Summarizing the company with a boilerplate description

In the previous edition of this book, I instructed people to start with a brief boilerplate description of the company to build credibility and provide the reader with important company information. Things have changed since that first edition. Namely, LinkedIn now collapses the job description, and if people want to read more, they need to click the See More link to see the full content. Because LinkedIn now truncates your Experience sections, you want to make sure you hook readers up front and grab them with compelling information about your role and accomplishments. The old method of starting with a company description doesn't provide enough of a hook, so if you work at a company that is not very well known, it's best to add a company description toward the end of the experience description.

By providing a brief boilerplate description of the company, you are continuing to build credibility and potentially answering that one question in some people's minds, "Now what is this company she works for?" Everyone knows Apple, but not everyone knows Applebaum Associates. The best boilerplate language describes the company in the simplest and easiest-to-understand terms. It should be so clear that a child can understand what the company does.

Effective company boilerplate language may contain the following items:

- » Annual revenue
- » Headquarters location
- » Industry
- » Number of employees
- » Number of locations
- » Private company or publicly traded
- » Products and/or services



TIP

Don't wrack your brain trying to come up with this company boilerplate description on your own. Most likely this description exists elsewhere. You just need to find it, copy it, paste it, and then tweak it a little.

Let's find your company's boilerplate description:

- 1. In any search engine, type the name of your company into the search field followed by the word *is*.**

For example, "Applebaum Associates is" or "Vision Board Media, LLC is."

2. On the results page, you should see a short description of the company:

Applebaum Associates is a Philadelphia, PA based accounting company that provides tax preparation services for thousands of small businesses located in the Delaware Valley area. Founded in 2011, Applebaum Associates has three offices and employees over 250 professionals. Applebaum Associates is often cited as a Great Place to Work by Philadelphia Magazine.

This brief description is nearly perfect and you haven't even opened up the company's website. Sometimes a search engine fails to bring up an adequate description, in which case you have to dig a little further and visit the company website's About page to find a company summary. You can also visit the company's LinkedIn company page to find a brief company description.

3. Copy and paste the company summary into the experience's Description at the end.

4. Tweak the company summary so it reads succinctly and incorporates just enough information to give your target audience the information it needs to know.

It's simple to add a company boilerplate description to the experience's Description field. Just a few sentences provide the context a reader needs to understand more about the company and the work you did there.

By providing a brief company description, your readers now understand the context around where you work and it is easier for them to understand your roles and responsibilities as well as your accomplishments.

So, what if you do work for Apple? Should you add a description that states:

Apple is a manufacturer of mobile devices and personal computers. With worldwide annual revenue over \$233 billion, Apple employs over 80,000 people with offices and store locations all over the world.

Absolutely not! It's silly to describe Apple. Instead of providing known information, focus on the unknown by describing the department or division of Apple in which you work. Instead, mention the size of your department, the number of employees, what the division/department specializes in, and how it affects the overall business. Here's an example:

The Life Insurance division of Insurance, Inc., employs over 3,500 professionals and is responsible for 25% of Insurance, Inc.'s total revenues.

Giving your reader a call to action

Your experience is just about perfect. You have a description of your roles and responsibilities, a listing of your greatest accomplishments, and a company boilerplate summary. What's left? Just one thing: a clear call to action!

Remember how I said you want to whet your readers' appetites and leave them wanting more? You now need to give them a reason to reach out to you:

For a detailed list of accomplishments, please request my resume.

By adding this sentence, you are letting your readers know that you have other accomplishments than just what you listed. You are also letting them know you are open to talking. In fact, if you are interested in job opportunities, you may want to also provide your contact information as well. People outside your first-degree network can view your profile, but if they aren't directly connected to you, they can't see your contact information in the Contact Information section of your profile nor can they easily message you. By providing your contact information, you are making it easy for that recruiter, hiring manager, or human resources professional to reach out to you.

If you aren't looking for a job, but rather are using LinkedIn for sales and prospecting, you might state:

To learn more about Applebaum Associates and how we help our clients do more, be more, earn more, check us out online at www.ApplebaumAssoc.com.

Editing an Existing Experience

When optimizing your profile, it's not always necessary to add new experiences. Usually you just need to edit older experiences you have previously entered. In this situation, rather than deleting and adding new, you simply want to edit the experience and update it. Perhaps you want to optimize your job title or add an end date or include additional, new accomplishments.

To edit a previously created experience, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll through your profile until you see the experience you want to edit in the Experience section.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter edit mode, as shown in Figure 11-5.**

The Edit Experience window appears.

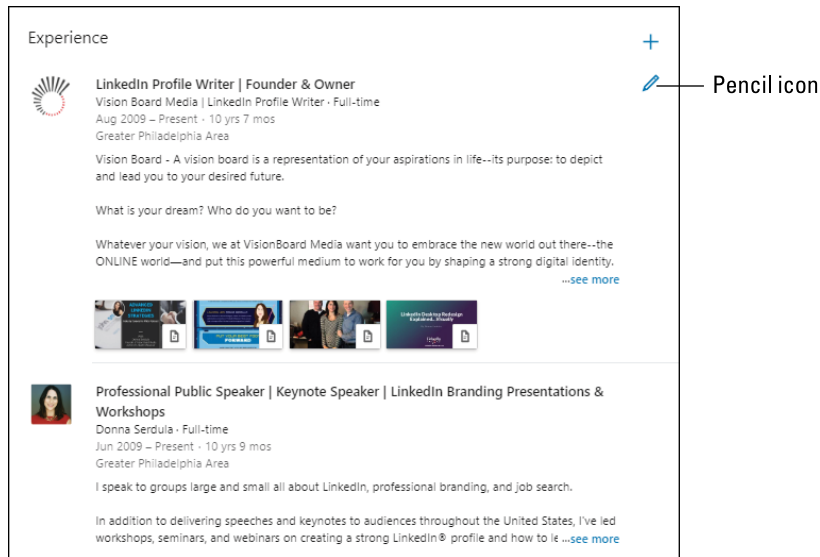


FIGURE 11-5:
Click the pencil icon to edit an experience.

4. **Make the edits to the experience by clicking your mouse and typing your new content.**
5. **When you are ready to save your work, click the Save button at the bottom of the edited experience to save your work and go back to your profile page.**

Reordering Concurrent Experiences

I often get asked if it's possible to reorder experiences. The short answer is no. LinkedIn sticks with a straight chronological structure with the most current position at top and older positions cascading toward the bottom of the profile.

However, there is one exception to this rule: concurrent, current experiences. If you hold two current experiences at the same time, you can choose the order in which to list them on your profile. Here's how:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll through your profile to the Experience section and hover your mouse pointer over the current position you'd like to rearrange.**
3. **Click and hold the Reorder icon (four horizontal lines) to the right of your position name and drag it into the desired position.**

When you reorder experiences, the top-most experience leads in the Current line in the top section of your profile.

Removing an Experience

Sometimes you want to delete an experience. Perhaps you have a duplicate experience you need to delete or a job didn't work out and you don't want to highlight an extremely short stint. Or maybe you added a promotion as a separate experience but now want to consolidate all promotions into one main experience. In these situations, you need to remove the experience. Here's how to do it:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Scroll to the Experience section.**
3. **Click the pencil (edit) icon next to the experience you want to delete to enter edit mode.**

The Edit Experience window appears.

4. **Click Delete.**

When you select this button, a dialog box appears asking you if you are sure you want to remove this position.

5. **To permanently delete the experience, click Delete.**

If you change your mind, click No Thanks.

Examples of Great Experiences

It's easy to describe how to do something, but it's not always so easy to actually take the instructions and do it. I'll try to get your creative juices flowing by providing some examples of optimized experiences. As you read each of these examples, take notice of the profile's goals, how each profile is written for the target audience, and how each incorporates keywords.

Salesperson looking for a new opportunity

Company Name: Corporate Leasing, Inc.

Title: Senior Business Development Executive ► Account Management ◆ Social Selling ◆ Prospecting

Dates: November 2007–July 2015 (7 years 9 months) Greater Philadelphia Area

Description: I was initially hired as an Account Executive at Corporate Leasing but in less than 6 months I was promoted to a Senior Business Development Executive. As a Sr. Business Development Executive, my primary job is to identify and close

new business opportunities, collaborate with enterprise clients, and support existing clients.

Although I am thoroughly comfortable cold calling, I have found social media to be an amazing channel for prospecting. Utilizing Facebook and LinkedIn, I am able to forge online relationships that yield sales. Social Selling combined with traditional prospecting has allowed me to grow my territory by 200% over a three-year period.

Select major accomplishments include:

- ▶ Named Top Regional Performer for the last 2 years.
- ▶ My sales pipeline averaged 10MM. The typical deal size was 75K+.
- ▶ Closed the largest account in company history totaling over \$1.5M over 3-year period
- ▶ Consistently attained 100%+ of quota.

Corporate Leasing is one of the largest equipment finance companies in New Jersey. Providing commercial financing products and services focused on small and mid-size businesses, over 100,000 businesses have used our financing services.

If you are interested in learning more about my involvement in these areas, please feel free to connect with me on LinkedIn.

Salesperson looking for more prospects

Company Name: Corporate Leasing, Inc.

Title: Senior Business Development Executive ▶ Equipment Finance ♦ Commercial Financing ♦ Product Leasing

Dates: November 2007–July 2015 (7 years 9 months) Greater Philadelphia Area

Description: In 2007, I came on board Corporate Leasing after having spent years focused on sales and marketing for small businesses. Corporate Leasing provides financing to businesses so they can acquire new equipment and technology while preserving capital. One of the largest leasing companies in New Jersey, Corporate Leasing is committed to helping small business grow.

As the Senior Business Development Executive for Corporate Leasing, I am responsible for providing small businesses in New Jersey with financial options that allow them to acquire the equipment and technology they need.

I love keeping in touch with my clients through social media and love providing learning opportunities for them as they grow their businesses.

If you would like to learn more about our company and services, please visit our website at CorporateLeasingInc.com.

Human resources professional using LinkedIn for reputation management

Company Name: Technology Startup, Inc.

Title: Senior Human Resources Manager ► Mergers & Acquisitions ♦ Retention ♦ Employee Relations ♦ Performance Management

Dates: 2015–2016

Description: In my role as Senior Human Resources Manager, I help support the successful integration of talent from newly acquired companies by focusing on successful onboarding and increasing employee satisfaction. In addition, I recruit top talent and specialize in employee development.

Accomplishments include:

- ✓ Managed the successful integration of over 100 newly merged employees by creating and delivering workshops and communication tools to educate this new staff of their role in our corporate culture. Attrition from the merger dropped by 75%.
- ✓ Introduced online tools and social media to the existing traditional tools of employment agencies and job fairs to recruit talent and successfully filled more than 250 positions in a record setting 3-month time frame.
- ✓ Created and managed a new employee referral program, which resulted in higher employee referrals and new hires.

For detailed list of accomplishments, please request my resume.

Technology Startup, Inc., is growing by leaps and bounds. Founded in 2015, Technology Startup, Inc., provides the products and services that shape Startup growth.

Adding Multimedia to Make Your Profile POP!

LinkedIn allows you to add work samples to your profile. You can add rich media to your Experience and Education sections. Adding multimedia is a great way to further your professional brand on LinkedIn and truly make your profile eye-catching. Types of multimedia samples you can add include:

- » Documents
- » Images
- » Presentations

You can also link to:

- » Images
- » Online videos
- » Rich media (such as foursquare check-ins, polls, Kickstarter campaigns, Tumblr, and so on)

The areas of your profile that allow multimedia work samples are:

- » Education
- » Individual job experiences
- » About section

Determining what to highlight with multimedia files

Adding multimedia to your profile is a great way to showcase your work and provide your audience with proof of your abilities. Certainly when you are in a creative field, adding work samples is pretty easy. It's your best portfolio pieces that you upload to your About section and individual Experiences. But what if you aren't in a creative field?

Think in terms of your goals and target audience. If you are on LinkedIn to be seen as a thought leader and expert, upload that podcast interview or link to that video interview on YouTube. Scan that newspaper article in which you were quoted.

Looking to be seen as a leader? Upload a picture of you and your department at a team building event.

Using LinkedIn for prospecting and sales? Upload that presentation slide show or video demo you created.

On LinkedIn for job search? Showcase your work by uploading a white paper or a dashboard report (minus any confidential or proprietary information) showing your past successes.

Make sure that what you choose makes sense to your reader. It's best to include a title and descriptions for each multimedia file or link you attach to your profile.

Once you decide what to upload, here's how to do it:

- 1. Open your profile on LinkedIn.**
- 2. Scroll to either your Experience section or Education section where you want the multimedia work sample to reside.**
- 3. Get into Edit mode by clicking the pencil (edit) icon next to that section.**

You can choose to either Upload or Link to your media depending on the type of media you want to embed on your profile, as shown in Figure 11-6.

- 4. To add a link to external media, click the Link button and paste the URL into the blank URL field and click the Save button.**
- 5. If you prefer to upload media that resides on your hard drive, click the Upload button.**

An open dialog box appears. Locate the file on your hard drive and click the Open button.

- 6. Enter a title and description, as shown in Figure 11-7.**
- 7. Click Apply then click Save.**

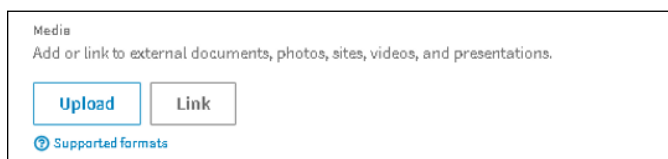


FIGURE 11-6:
Adding
multimedia files.

Resisting the urge to upload your resume

You may run into “experts” who insist you upload a copy of your resume to your LinkedIn profile. I don't agree. You want your LinkedIn profile to be the hook that gets people to request your resume. That way, you have control and can determine who gets to have access it. Your resume contains your complete career trajectory and you don't want just anyone able to download it.

Recruiters love it when a resume is attached to your profile — this way they can read it without ever contacting you and they can immediately dismiss you without ever talking to you. You want recruiters and hiring managers and human resources people to contact you so that you can show them you are a real person — you can ask questions and make a great impression while engaging in human contact.

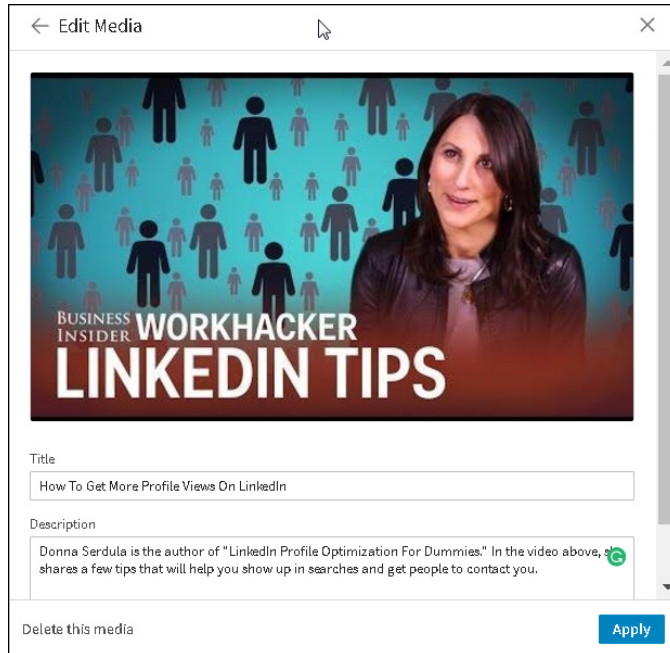


FIGURE 11-7:
Adding a
description to a
work sample
media file.

VIDEO RESUMES: WHEN THEY WORK AND WHEN THEY DON'T

Every now and then I see video resumes on LinkedIn profiles. Video resumes are used in addition to the traditional resume and cover letter. Usually one to three minutes in length, a video resume features job candidates talking straight to the camera, introducing themselves, summarizing a success they achieved, and explaining their ideal position.

Many companies tout video resumes as the key to getting that elusive job offer. The problem I have is that few people are comfortable in front of a camera. Just as the possibility is there that a video resume can get you the job, it can also help you lose a job. So often video resumes come across as rather silly, and the person often looks stilted and uncomfortable. If you are exceptionally good-looking and have been trained to work the camera, then by all means, go for it. If you are a regular Joe or Judy, you may decide to go for it or just steer clear of the whole fiasco. Just because you can, doesn't mean you should.



TIP

However, if you decide to upload your resume to your LinkedIn profile, consider removing your home address and any confidential information you aren't comfortable sharing with the whole wide world. Your employer may not be too keen on you publicly sharing how you singlehandedly saved it from bankruptcy twice in the past six months.

Although I don't recommend uploading your resume to your profile, you may feel otherwise. If you are clear on the reasons not to and still think it makes sense to do, here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Move your mouse pointer over the section to which you want to add your resume and click the pencil (edit) icon.**
- 3. Under Media, click the Upload button.**

An Open dialog box appears.

- 4. Locate and select your resume file from your hard drive and click Open.**

A picture of your content displays, and sometimes LinkedIn automatically fills in the Title and Description fields with information from the file. Regardless, update the Title and Description fields to something that makes sense for your reader.

- 5. Click Save.**

With your Experience section optimized and brimming with impressive results, it's now time to turn to the About section of your LinkedIn profile. In the next chapter, I show you how to craft a LinkedIn About section that acts as a digital introduction and striking first impression.

- » Writing an impressive LinkedIn About section
- » Showing, not telling, your strengths
- » Formatting an eye-catching About section
- » Adding Multimedia

Chapter **12**

Writing a Compelling About Section

The About section of your LinkedIn profile is where you introduce yourself to your target audience and tell your professional story in a conversational manner. The About section is your digital introduction and first impression.

When attempting to write the About section, many LinkedIn members are immediately rendered paralyzed. Others find themselves wandering into their kitchen or garage, intent to reorganize. Any task, regardless of how odious, is suddenly more attractive than facing a blank About section with the goal of writing about yourself.

In this chapter, I show you how to easily write an impressive, goal-oriented About section that attracts and satisfies your target audience. I discuss why it's important to write your About section in the first person, and I show you how to format your About section so that people find it easy to read and attractive. I also give you the tips you need to conquer the About section so that you can get this monumental task off your back.

Editing Your LinkedIn About Section

It's best to draft and edit your About section in a word-processing program rather than directly in the About text field. My team and I have written thousands of LinkedIn profiles, and more than a few times computers have crashed, Internet connections were lost, LinkedIn went offline, and summaries written in the text field disappear in a blip. It is horrible when it happens, and no amount of cursing or crying brings unsaved work back to life. I know this through direct experience.

The most popular word-processing program in the known universe is Microsoft Word. If you don't have access to Microsoft Word, don't panic. If you are a Mac user, you can use Pages for Mac. Google Docs works great regardless of operating system. Open Office is a free word-processing program that you can download and install. Do try to make sure that whatever program you select, it comes with spelling and grammar check.

After you write your About section in a word processor, copy it and paste it into the About section of your profile. Here's how to add your finished About section into your LinkedIn profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll to the About section, and click the pencil (edit) icon to open it into edit mode, as shown in Figure 12-1.**
- 3. Open the About section text you composed in your word-processing program and copy it to the Clipboard by clicking Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).**
- 4. Return to your LinkedIn profile and paste your About section text into the About text field by clicking Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac).**
- 5. Click the Save button.**

Now that you know how to add your About section to LinkedIn, let's look at how to draft your best possible About section to catch readers' eyes and compel them to reach out to you.

Click to edit the About section

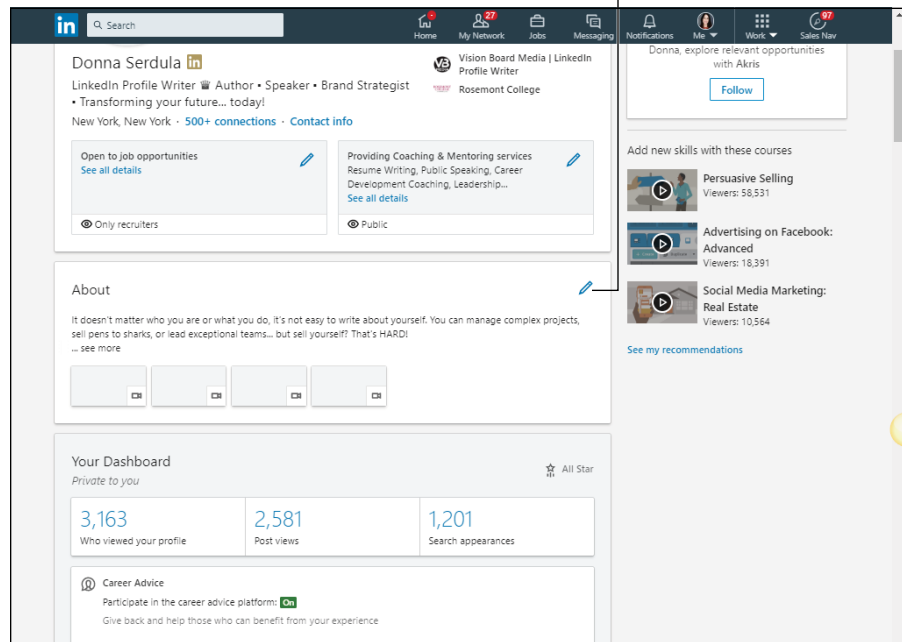


FIGURE 12-1:
Getting into edit
mode of your
About section.

Writing in First Person

You've probably seen LinkedIn summaries that start like this: "John Gates is a respected executive with an impressive track record of accomplishments . . ." You know it's his profile. Either he wrote it himself or he copied and pasted it from a bio. Reading it, it feels strange and oddly off-putting. The reason you may react this way is because the profile was written in a third-person narrative voice. In a third-person narration, a narrator tells a story about someone else. Pronouns such as "he," "she," "it," or "they" are used to refer to the characters.

Because the LinkedIn profile clearly belongs to the person writing it, third person is inauthentic and disingenuous. As I mention in Chapter 1, LinkedIn is a social network, and its goal is for members to interact and forge strong relationships with their networks. By writing in third person, you create distance between you and your reader. Instead, be sociable and draw your reader in by writing in the first-person narrative form ("I"). Don't be afraid to use "I." Claim your story and tell it proudly in your voice.



WARNING

With that said, I must warn you, don't start every sentence with "I." It's a balance. Use "I," but don't overdo it. Check out the end of this chapter where I include examples of powerfully written LinkedIn summaries. All the summaries are written in first person, but none abuse "I."

There are always exceptions to the rule. If you are using LinkedIn for prospecting and sales, you might decide to write in second person narrative. Second person narrative is when you refer to the reader directly using the word "you." For example, "Do you want to improve your productivity and save money?" Speaking directly to your reader is engaging and gets prospects involved. On the other hand, I've worked with executives who have accomplished some almost super-human tasks. When a person has a lifetime of extraordinary accomplishments, sometimes third person is truly the best option. If you aren't quite sure where you fit, go with first person: It's authentic, engaging, and fits most people's goals on LinkedIn.

Avoiding Resume Speak

It's hard to write about yourself. That's why so many profiles on LinkedIn are simply copied and pasted from old resumes. The problem then becomes the original resume. Few people actually work with a professional resume writer to create a succinct and clear history of their professional accomplishments. Instead, the majority of resumes use generic, general descriptions that don't spotlight accomplishments or tell an engaging professional history. Here's an example:

Results-driven and goal orientated professional commanding over 10 years of progressive leadership success. Top-performing, dynamic manager delivering track record of consistent achievements. Recognized strengths include excellent interpersonal skills, strong client relationship building, and leadership in the effective implementation and use of technology. Exemplary commitment to company and personal success, exhibiting strong leadership, problem-solving, communication, and technical skills.

Reading that paragraph, do you have an idea what that person does on a day-to-day basis? Do you understand who this person is and what he or she loves to do? Do you have an idea of what industry this person works in, what type of job he or she has, or even what he or she is capable of accomplishing? Do you want to reach out to learn more? No!

That paragraph is a lot of gobbledygook words strung together simply taking up space. To create a powerful, compelling About section, stay away from resume speak. Write instead in a natural, conversational manner.



TIP

Read the paragraph out loud to judge whether it sounds natural or stilted. Ultimately, the goal is for readers to feel that you are speaking to them directly, telling them exactly what they need to know about you.

Even if your resume was professionally written, you still don't want to copy and paste it into the About section. Resumes are for job search. If your goal isn't job search, already your profile is portraying you in an inaccurate manner.

If your goal *is* job search, copying and pasting your resume still doesn't work. Let's say a hiring manager discovers your profile on LinkedIn after performing a search for the company's ideal candidate. The hiring manager is impressed and reaches out to you to request your resume. What happens when that resume is a one-to-one copy of your profile? That hiring manager is going to be disappointed.

Here's another scenario. Suppose you submitted your resume for a job listing, and the hiring manager decides to check you out on LinkedIn. Once again, the hiring manager wants to learn more about you, but he is getting the same information he already has in his possession. What a letdown! Here's your chance to make an impression and seal the deal, but instead, by recycling content, an opportunity may be lost.

By creating a unique and high-level LinkedIn profile that extends your brand and delivers targeted content, each interaction with your target audience builds interest and confidence and propels the reader through to a successful conclusion.

Revisiting Your LinkedIn Goals and Target Audience

Before you begin writing your About section, it's important to remember why you are on LinkedIn and who is your target audience. As I discuss in Chapter 1, a powerful LinkedIn profile is written toward your goal and target audience. It's not what you want to say, but rather what your target audience needs to know. Your LinkedIn About section should connect to your audience and align with your objectives.

If you haven't already, write down your LinkedIn goal(s) on a piece of paper:

- »» I want to find a new job.
- »» I want to find new prospects.
- »» I want to enhance my reputation.

Next up, who is your target audience? Try to be as explicit as possible. Who are these people, what do they do, what are they looking to achieve, where are they located? For example:

- » Recruiters and hiring managers looking for a data architect with experience in online banking applications located in Fort Worth, Texas.
- » Small business owners in Illinois looking to save money on their credit card processing.
- » Event planning professionals interested in finding oil and gas experts to speak at industry conferences.

Keep this list in front of you as you begin to write your About section. Look at it and write to your goal and write to your target audience. Ask yourself, “What does my target audience need to know about me?” “What do I offer that will get my audience to take notice and feel good about me?” Use that sheet of paper to jot down ideas.

Catching Your Reader’s Attention

A strong LinkedIn About section needs to catch a reader’s attention immediately. LinkedIn collapses your About section; therefore, it’s important to use those first 40 or so words in an eye-catching way so your reader will want to click “See more” to expand the section.

There’s a number of ways to catch a person’s attention. You can use your favorite quote:

Greatness is first and foremost a matter of conscious choice and discipline.

— JIM COLLINS, GREAT BY CHOICE

Quotes are great because if they are well chosen, your reader will immediately get a better sense for who you are, and they may find a commonality with you if they too find that quote inspiring. You can also elaborate on why this quote has meaning to you and why it drives you. So few people dig deep, and by doing something so different, you’ll instantly stand out.

You can also hook your reader by mentioning an enormous accomplishment, or a lofty goal you accomplished or intend to accomplish . . . and it doesn’t even necessarily need to be professional.

Brad Finkeldei, a career coach writes: “Why is there a rubber chicken in my profile picture? A mentor of mine was killed in a terrorist attack and I am paying his message forward by giving out 10,000 tiny rubber chickens to inspire and empower people to step into their fears, stop being chicken, and do what they love.”

If you are on LinkedIn for prospecting and sales, you could start with a statement that shows you truly understand your prospects’ pain points and the gains they want to achieve. This is a great way to catch their attention and make them want to learn more.

If all of these starting points leave you feeling empty, there’s one other way to catch your reader’s attention, and that is by stating your elevator pitch. An *elevator pitch* introduces yourself to your reader and summarizes in a sentence or two what you do and how it affects your reader. The reason it is called an “elevator pitch” comes from the idea that you are in an elevator with a VIP and you have just the amount of time it takes to ride an elevator a few floors to succinctly and compellingly explain a product, service, person, group/organization/company, or project to gain this person’s interest and buy-in.

Let’s say you have just met a person and she asks, “What do you do for a living?”

You could answer, “I am a Realtor.”

Or, you might provide an elevator pitch that would draw the other person in and may even get her interested in you: “As a Realtor in the Greater Philadelphia area, I partner with families, helping them get their house ready to attract buyers so that they can sell at the best possible price. I work hard to understand their needs so I can quickly and easily find them their dream home.”



REMEMBER

Your reader wants to know who you are and what you do, but more important, what that means to them.

An easy way to get started crafting your elevator pitch is to imagine you are explaining what you do for a living to a small child. Simplify what you do down to the core concepts. Do not use words such as *contextualize*, *organic*, *synergize*, or *paradigm*. And stay away from silly corporate jargon. Instead, concentrate on the results you offer and how what you do helps people and businesses.

Here’s an outline to use to create your elevator pitch:

I help individuals/businesses/_____ create/discover/implement
_____ so they can achieve _____.

By including an elevator pitch in your LinkedIn About section, your readers will understand who you are and what's in it for them, compelling them to continue reading the rest of your profile.

Creating Your Professional Manifesto

Once you have your eye-catching introduction and elevator pitch, it's time to tell your professional story. Your reader now has a general idea of who you are and what you do. Next you need to fill in the rest of the pieces. Think of the About section as your professional manifesto. Here are some questions to think about to help you create your manifesto:

- » Why do you do what you do?
- » What drew you to your current industry and position?
- » What are you most passionate about accomplishing?
- » What motivates you to succeed?
- » How do you view the future of your industry?
- » What's up ahead and what must a company do to find success?
- » What makes you credible in your industry?
- » What have you accomplished that makes you proud and builds credence to your brand?
- » What is your career philosophy?
- » What concept or philosophy guides you through your career?

As you brainstorm ideas for your About section, think of author and speaker Simon Sinek's quote:

People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. . . . Very few people or companies can clearly articulate WHY they do WHAT they do. By WHY I mean your purpose, cause or belief — WHY does your company exist? WHY do you get out of bed every morning? And WHY should anyone care?

You could create an About section that simply states what you do and how you do it. You could also simply list your strengths, one right under another. The issue with that is it's not compelling or interesting, nor does it portray you as someone who should command respect and notice. By diving deep and truly turning your About section into a professional manifesto, you are shaping your image into one that is high level, interesting, and attractive.

Explain your benefits

Your About section should explain *your* benefits. What strengths do you have? How do they help your reader? What does your reader want to know about you? What are they seeking? The answers to these questions determine what you should write.

Here are some benefit sentence starters:

- » One of my strengths is . . .
- » I gain immense satisfaction from . . .
- » I am equally comfortable setting up a . . . or . . .
- » My mission is to . . .
- » My passion is . . .
- » I am inspired by . . .
- » My motivation comes from . . .
- » I have a deep belief that . . .

If you are looking for a specific job, find a job description for your desired position. Incorporate those skills and qualities the job demands into your About section. You can find job descriptions on the hiring page of a company's website or on a job listing site. By targeting your profile toward that job description, you show that hiring manager or recruiter that you are the perfect person for the job.



WARNING

Whatever you do, you don't want to come across as desperate in your About section. That's a surefire way of scaring off potential employers. How do you change desperation into motivation? Rather than talk about the job you need, tell your reader what you offer in strengths and quantifiable results that intersect with what that job requires. If you cast yourself as the perfect fit, you are ensuring the person sourcing for that job reaches out.

If your goal is sales and prospecting, your target audience is scanning your profile, thinking, "Can this person help me?" Tell your readers how they will benefit from working with you. Include a success story of a past client and what they were able to achieve by working with you. Make your value clear to your readers so that they feel confident in you and the solution you provide.

When your goal is reputation management, you may decide to talk about activities outside of your career's day-to-day functions. You might mention your involvement in your community and your commitment to continuing your education.

Your profile is your digital persona. Include the best parts of who you are and showcase them on your profile.

Highlight your top achievements

Although your job experiences contain career successes and achievements, your About section is the place to mention one to three career highlights. A career highlight isn't a simple success, but rather an amazing accomplishment.

By including a few career highlights, you are providing quantifiable evidence of your abilities. You want your reader to come away with a feeling of confidence that you are who you say you are. But whatever you do, don't provide too many career highlights. It's important to leave some successes in your back pocket so there are things to discuss when a person reaches out to you directly. And, it is important not to get too detailed with the highlight — keep the description at a high level.

When you add a career highlight, ask yourself the question, “So what?” It's important the highlight answers that question. It's not enough that you set up a new department. You want to showcase the true impact: You set up a new department with 50 employees that immediately became profitable and brought the company an additional \$25M in revenue.



TIP

If you want to really set off your career highlights, preface the highlight with a symbol. (Check out Chapter 7 where I show you how to add symbols to your profile.) A star, arrow, or check mark act as great eye catchers, ensuring your reader pays attention to your accomplishments.

Keep the About section focused on you

I often see LinkedIn profiles that only describe products, services, or a business. It's a good idea to provide additional information for context, but remember, your profile is your own! People are reading it because they want to learn more about you. People do business with people. Your About section helps people see you as a real person. If your readers wanted to learn about your company, they would click to the company's LinkedIn company page or website.

For some people, it's scary to open up and talk about themselves. Realize that with your LinkedIn profile, you provide only the information you are comfortable providing. You never have to state anything that makes you uncomfortable. However, it is important to open up somewhat. Decide what you are comfortable sharing. Figure out what you want people to know about you. Once you know how you want to be perceived, create an About section that showcases that persona.

ABOUT SECTION CHARACTER LIMITS

The About section can contain up to 2,600 characters. This roughly translates to 350 words. Don't feel that you need to fill your About section with 2,600 characters' worth of content. The most important thing is to tell your story at a high level and leave your reader wanting to learn more. If that's 1,500 characters or 2,600 characters, it's all good.

I often hear people say, "Oh, I don't want to tell a long story, no one will read all that!" Here's the thing, it's not always about the person reading; you also need to keep in mind the search algorithm. The more story you tell, the more you organically use keywords. By telling a story, you are feeding the search beast yummy keyword morsels and you will be rewarded with more frequent results and appear higher up in the listings. Remember, LinkedIn is all about relevance, and a person who spends the time and provides a longer story sure does seem more relevant and caring than a person who could only produce a small paragraph of content.

Create a clear call to action

A successful profile converts. That means the person reading the profile is compelled to do something other than click to another person's profile. If you are a job seeker, this conversion might occur with the reader calling you to request your resume to talk about a potential job opportunity. If you are in sales, the person reading your profile may visit your website to learn more about the products or services you offer. If you are a reputation seeker, the reader could follow you on LinkedIn to read your future long-form blog posts.

To compel your readers to do something after looking at your profile, you must provide them with a clear call to action. If you don't tell your readers what to do, often they just surf away.

What do you want your reader to do?

You have a number of options:

- » Visit my website.
- » Send me an email.
- » Call me.
- » Connect with me on LinkedIn.
- » Follow me on Twitter.

- »» Download a white paper or marketing literature.
- »» Listen to a podcast.
- »» Watch a video.



Any information you include in your About section is visible to the world. By providing your email address or phone number, it is available to not just the people in your network, but also to people outside your network and non-LinkedIn users.

Unless you have grave privacy concerns, I suggest including a telephone number or email address. The VIPs of this world are direct people, and when they want to contact you, they want to do it immediately. If they can't find your phone number, they may move on to the next person in their LinkedIn search results. You are on LinkedIn to network and find business opportunities. By trying to avoid the occasional telemarketer, you may also avoid real opportunity.

Once you have your contact method chosen, it's time to conclude your About section. Here's one example:

I am currently looking for that next position that allows me to grow revenue, develop strong client relationships, and affect positive change.

You can request my resume by contacting me either by phone 215-839-0008 or email donna@gmail.com.

Or:

I am on LinkedIn to forge strong professional relationships. Whether you know me directly or not, please feel free to send me a connection request.

Assisting other professionals and acting as a connector is a passion of mine. If I can help you, give me a call or Skype me.

Phone: 215-839-0008 / Skype: donna.serdula

Another way to craft this call to action is by tempting your audience with a carrot. Give your readers a reason to get in touch with you. Will you provide them with a free phone consultation? Do you have experience that you are open to sharing?

Here are some examples:

Call me today for a free phone consultation to see if your business can benefit from my services. Let's put the proper solutions into action and together we'll turn your goals into reality.

Or:

I'd love to share with you some of the insights I've gleaned from building and managing data centers over the last 10 years.

Let's talk! My number is: (215) 839-0008.

Perhaps you really don't want your reader to take any action. Some people are on LinkedIn to simply shape how people perceive them, and it's not important for the reader to reach out. In this situation, gently end your About section in a positive way, leaving your reader feeling inspired and impressed.

Here are a few examples:

My success is my clients' success. I gain enormous satisfaction helping my clients optimize their marketing efforts. Building successful campaigns and generating positive word of mouth is what keeps me striving forward in my career.

Or:

The bottom line is I help my clients save money and plan for a secure future.

Or:

My focus moving forward is to continue to improve processes and affect positive change within this amazing organization.

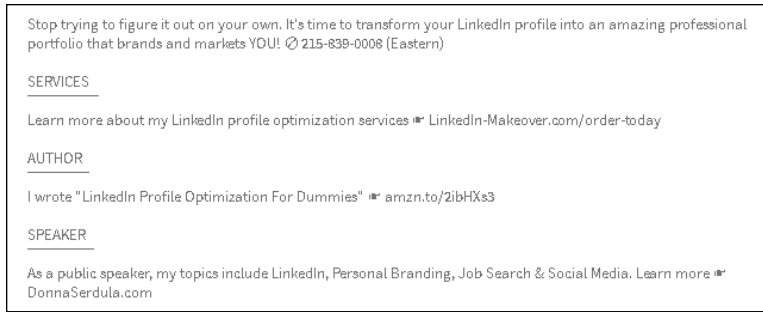
Formatting a Sleek LinkedIn About Section

Formatting? There's no formatting allowed within a LinkedIn profile! That's true, but it's also not true. There are a number of things you can do to make sure your About section is easy to read and attractive to the eye.

For example, space between paragraphs means white space, which makes content look less dense and easier to read. To create an extra line of space between paragraphs in your About section, press the Enter or Return key on your keyboard twice after the end of every paragraph.

You can also use symbols to spice up your text. (I show you how to copy and paste symbols in Chapter 7.) Symbols can be used to create horizontal lines to divide your content. Stars, circles, or check marks can be used as bullets to show off your accomplishments. Check out Figure 12-2 to see how I used symbols to create what appears to be an underline and bullets to draw attention to my call to action.

FIGURE 12-2:
Use symbols to
dress up your
profile.

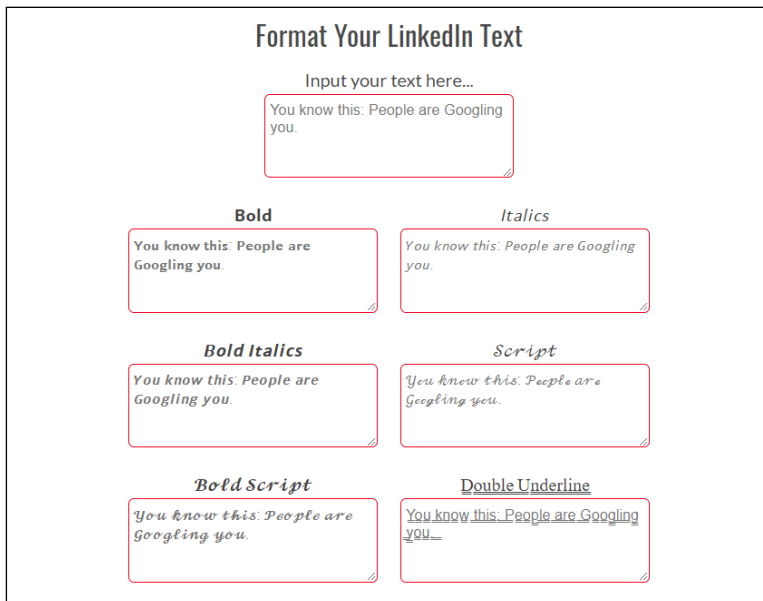


TIP

A few, well-chosen symbols are a great way to amp up your content, but remember: Overdoing symbols can take a great About section and make it look amateurish and tacky.

You can also make text appear bold, italicized, or underlined by taking advantage of a tricky work-around: Unicode characters. Check out my LinkedIn Text Formatter at www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-text-formatter, which is a tool that enables you to enter text and have it automatically convert to bold, italics, script font, and more. Once you see the different formats, copy the format you like and paste it into your LinkedIn profile (see Figure 12-3).

FIGURE 12-3:
The hack that
lets you format
text in your
LinkedIn profile.





WARNING

The text looks like it is bold and/or italicized, but the words that it makes aren't the same as the non-formatted version. When you type "leadership," it's a real word with meaning. The characters are mapped to our alphabet letters and have meaning when placed together. But when you use other Unicode characters, the mapping isn't the same and the meaning of the word is lost even though it looks just fine. The reason why I delve into this is because if you choose to use my LinkedIn Text Formatter or another formatting tool, you must realize that those formatted words aren't searchable within LinkedIn anymore. Go ahead and format text for headings and short snippets to catch a person's eye (see Figure 12-4), but not areas that you want to be indexed and found by LinkedIn's search engine. There is also a chance that the formatted text may not display universally on every device. Lastly, the Unicode text is not accessible by those who use a screen-reader. Screen-readers don't understand the meaning behind the Unicode and instead read them out individually as Unicode character names.

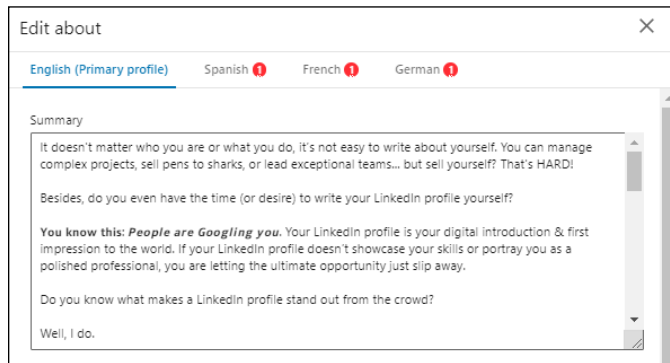


FIGURE 12-4:
Only format small sections of text.

Examples of Compelling and Engaging About Sections

Here are examples of compelling and engaging About section that you can use to help you create your own. Don't worry if you can't find an About narrative that matches your role completely. Read through all the examples with an open mind. You should be able to pull sentences and paragraphs from the different examples into an About section that authentically reflects you!

Healthcare (job search)

The healthcare industry is undergoing unprecedented disruption. With a combination of novel treatments and increasingly digitized business processes, the options

to improve the health and the health services of the global community are growing at a swift pace.

As an (account manager) specializing in (healthcare services), I help clients achieve their business and IT initiatives by providing innovative cost-effective solutions that are at once practical and efficient. Working closely with (healthcare providers), I deliver targeted needs for varying levels and functions of organizations.

I am currently seeking new opportunities in similar roles in the (healthcare services) industry.

I have a proven track record in achieving —and exceeding— sales goals. During my tenure at (company), the scope of my portfolio included diverse clients across (hospitals, healthcare systems, private medical practices, and so on) where I specialized in (healthcare IT services, professional services, healthcare recruiting, and so on).

I'm proactive in project management and work diligently to ensure excellence in customer service, tackling issues head-on when they arrive. An (account manager) is essentially about customers, regardless of what they sell or manage, and I'm dedicated to quality in everything I do from communications to meeting deadlines. This is the driving force of sustainable business practices and company growth.

Another essential element of a successful business is a healthy company culture. I place an emphasis on collaboration, trust, and respect, and am proud to be known as a professional that honors and supports diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

I strive each day to make a positive impact in a field that I love and look forward to new opportunities to contribute my expertise and help companies thrive. Connect with me on LinkedIn or contact me here:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Real estate professional (sales and prospecting)

Trustworthy. Knowledgeable. Reliable. These qualities are the foundation of my success in the Real Estate industry. From first contact to closing, I am a well-rounded Real Estate professional that puts the needs of my clients first to give them the confidence they need for a positive efficient process.

My name is Andy Gates and I am a licensed Realtor in Fort Worth, TX with Widget Real Estate Partners. I help clients with a wide range of properties from Single Family Homes to Commercial Real Estate. With ten years of experience in the

Real Estate industry, I understand what it takes to find the right property at the right price and am with potential homeowners and investors every step of the way.

A key component of my success is an emphasis on top quality service. It's about streamlined processes, transparency and accessibility in communications, and a dedication to listening to client priorities and concerns. This serves as the foundation for successful Real Estate experiences in both residential and commercial transactions.

Proficiencies include Residential Real Estate, Commercial Real Estate, Investment Properties, REO, Foreclosures, Short Sales, Listing, Marketing, Social Media, First Time Home Buyers, and Closing Deals.

Industry Credentials:

* (National Association of Realtors)

* (National Multifamily Housing Council)

* (Institute of Real Estate Management)

As an enthusiastic leader and experienced Real Estate professional, I keep an ever-present eye on market trends and utilize the latest technology to discover the best options for client needs. Leveraging my market knowledge and data-driven strategies, I drive success for commercial real estate investors and families across the greater (city) area.

Let's start a conversation about your Real Estate needs.

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Consultant (sales and prospecting)

Digital transformation is at the forefront of a growing economy — and a profitable company. Business operations have to be managed with strategic precision to maximize production while controlling costs that affect the bottom line.

As a professional consultant, I help business leaders optimize their operations and boost profits. From aligning team members with company priorities to seeking out weaknesses in E-Commerce strategies, I bring a holistic approach in the support of business success.

Is your company lacking synergy?

Are you struggling with the escalation of mobile-first consumers in the global marketplace?

I leverage a (dual business and tech background) to help clients discover opportunities to improve business processes and strengthen organizations across levels and departments. I work with established small to medium businesses as well as startups in multiple industries including (retail, hospitality, manufacturing, professional services, and so on).

Agility is required for twenty-first century business longevity. I focus on innovation and bring a future-forward strategy to not only achieve short-term goals but also to implement data-driven solutions that promote competitiveness through continuously-evolving markets and customer demands.

Specializations: Management Consulting, New Market Entry, Market Expansion Strategy, Corporate Strategy, CRM, Multichannel & E-Commerce Strategy, Organizational Development.

I'm happy to start a conversation about the full extent of my services. Connect with me on LinkedIn or reach me here:

Email: _____

Phone: _____

IT professional (reputation management)

According to the renowned Brookings Institution, countries that lead the world in generating advanced technologies and leveraging the full productive capacity of their digital economies can gain a strategic competitive advantage. With vibrant innovation and business dynamism, IT companies can be true change makers and global industry leaders.

As the Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, virtual reality, artificial intelligence (AI), cognitive technology, blockchain, and other technologies grow increasingly important to the international economy, being on the forefront of change will be key to market penetration and profit building.

As a results-driven IT professional, I help companies maintain agility and relevancy to ensure they are serving the evolving needs of customers — driving the achievement of business growth goals. Utilizing data-driven strategies and efficient processes, I understand what it takes to pave a pathway for continued success.

I'm enthusiastic about the future and am inspired into action by pioneering leaders such as Elon Musk ("I'm interested in things that change the world or that affect the future and wondrous, new technology where you see it, and you're like, 'Wow, how did that even happen? How is that possible?'"")

I thrive when I'm part of making wondrous things happen.

I have a proven track record in (SaaS, cloud computing, CRM, big data, e-commerce, and so on) and continually seek out new ways to expand my knowledge and abilities. I am a collaborative leader and place an emphasis on clear communications to ensure projects are completed efficiently and accurately. I work diligently each day to execute future-proofing strategies that drive the achievement of company goals — leading as a visionary guide to realize positive change.

I'm continually seeking exciting conversations and opportunities to contribute in the IT industry.

Product management (job search)

My name is Jana Gates and I am a powerhouse in product management. Using my expertise in retail marketing of technology products and my ability to work within the structure of technology companies, I have developed successful programs leading to robust sales of profitable products, and have increased market shares in very competitive markets.

Among other career accomplishments, I am proud to have spearheaded product launches that have paid off for my employers. Being considered a trusted advisor and functional expert in my area of specialization gives me great satisfaction.

I firmly believe that for today's technology companies to continue to be successful, they must rely on someone like myself who understands the changing dynamics of retail product management, marketing and sales, along with the impact of new technologies.

With the advent of new shopping paradigms such as participatory shopping and new mobile shopping options, it's more important than ever before to drive innovation. My goal is to help shape strategy, achieve higher customer retention, and deliver profitability that increases year after year.

As a team leader, I feel it's important to unleash the potential of those working with me and to share my passion for success with them. With our combined energy we can develop better products that respond to and exceed consumer needs.

I am on LinkedIn to meet others who share my commitment to doing great work and to share best practices. Please reach out and let's connect!

Leadership (reputation management)

"Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional" (Roger Crawford). I faced many challenges in my work life and worked hard to never admit defeat. I have built a track record over a ten-year career of delivering outstanding results and operational efficiency.

In my current position as VP of Operations for Widgets, Inc., a leading national manufacturer, I've assembled an organization that sets new standards in efficiency and delivers excellent production quality.

I believe that as a leader, the most important success factor is cultivating excellence in people. The employees you hire and train are capable of great things. It's up to the leader to unleash their capabilities in support of the company mission. It's important that they understand business goals and how they can play a part in achieving them.

To that end I work closely with team members and have developed a number of training programs focused on career learning. These programs have received national awards for integrating training execution, results measurement, and personal recognition in a way that yields a learning culture. My initiatives were named 2015's Top Training Program by *Training Magazine*.

My areas of expertise include:

- * Employee engagement and culture building
- * Operational effectiveness and Six Sigma
- * Change management
- * Leadership development and organizational growth

I am always looking out for new opportunities that utilize these skills. To explore how my areas of expertise might benefit your organization, please connect with me via LinkedIn.

Retail (sales and prospecting)

As a retail leader and store operations manager for Widget Style, a leading U.S. fashion retailer, it is my responsibility to set clear goals and objectives for a team of over ten associates so that everyone works together to achieve the highest level of customer service.

Every associate at Widget Style is the face of the company to our customers. I pride myself on the training and development opportunities I provide for our team members so that they can fulfill this responsibility. In addition, a key part of my role as retail leader is to inspire the team, maintaining morale and productivity so that they deliver value and service while driving store revenues.

During a career of seven years in retail management, I have developed strengths not only in team building but in leading business operations and building

relationships with key influencers. As a result of my solid track record, I've been promoted to positions of increasing responsibility. Today, I am proud to run the flagship store of the company's regional operations.

As a leader of a significant enterprise in our area, fostering community relationships is an important part of my job and I am passionate about supporting the community. In addition, I am on the Board of the Bucks County Orchestra, and have worked with charitable foundations in our area to raise money for worthwhile causes.

I feel that the lessons I have learned in working my way up a retail enterprise can offer valuable insights to others. Please connect with me via LinkedIn and we can share our ideas for creating exceptional customer experiences.

Accounting (sales and prospecting)

I am proud to be a partner with Thompson, Gates, and Thompson, the leading certified public accounting (CPA) firm in the Dallas, Texas area. We have been in business for 15 years and are the firm of choice for many in our area because of our wealth of experience regarding accounting issues.

As individual and business tax reporting and filing requirements have become increasingly complex, clients know we deliver the highest quality results. They rely on us as strategic partners and reliable advisors. I have been a partner since 2011 and in my tenure have gained expertise in many areas of the tax code, which benefits our clients.

As it relates to the selection of a CPA partner, I would suggest asking the following questions before making a decision:

- * How confident are you in managing today's complex tax returns yourself?
- * As a business owner, how important is it to you to have confidence in the company managing your firm's tax returns?
- * How important is it to you to receive personalized service?

Personalized service is a hallmark of our firm. We assist clients in navigating the complex tax code environment. Long-term clients often express their appreciation for our service. My own priority is to be personally responsible to our clients, understanding their unique situations and making sure each one has the needed services so services are customized to their needs.

To learn more about our services, which include tax preparation, cash flow management, estate planning and preparation of financial statements, among others, please contact me at TGTCPA.com or by phone at 215-839-0008.

Student (job search)

As a recent graduate of Widget University, I am seeking opportunities to apply the wide-ranging skill set I have gained through rigorous academics and multiple internships. My goal is to obtain an entry-level marketing position with a mid-to-large consumer brand company based in New York City.

* Internships Yield Valuable Experiences

While completing my education, I gained real-world experience via multiple internships. These hands-on internships taught me how various departments and functions really work. While successfully carrying out assigned projects in support of company goals I learned accountability. Through internships I expanded my experience, learned new industries, and gained invaluable insights from my mentors that I can apply on behalf of a future employer.

* Rigorous Academics Prepare for Meeting Tough Challenges

In the academic world, competition is fierce, and so provides a model for business success. Through university training, I have developed critical thinking skills and the ability to prioritize. My degree in Business Administration gave me a strong foundation, and team-based projects taught me that through collaboration, winning outcomes can be achieved for all.

* Contributing in Today's Business World

Self-motivated and self-directed, I am eager to embark on a career where future employers can count on me to deliver my best efforts for the good of their organization.

To discuss how my experiences may be a perfect fit for your company, please connect with me via LinkedIn or contact me directly student@gmail.com.

In the next chapter, I show you how to round out your profile with additional sections like Honors and Awards, Organizations, and more. I'll meet you there!

ADDING MEDIA SAMPLES TO THE ABOUT SECTION

As I write this, LinkedIn announced that the area below the About section where you can add rich media work samples will be removed. In its place, LinkedIn is introducing a new section of the LinkedIn profile called *Featured*. The Featured section will sit at the top of your LinkedIn profile and will allow you to showcase samples of your work and prove your knowledge, skills, and experience to viewers of your profile.

The items you can add to the Featured section will include:

- LinkedIn posts
- Articles
- Links to outside websites
- Rich media like images, documents, presentations, and videos

If you are reading this book and still have the ability to upload rich media to your About section, flip to the end of Chapter 11 to see how and what to upload. The multimedia section in the Experience and Education sections work identically. If you have the Featured section, keep an eye on my blog (www.linkedin-makeover.com/blog). I'll be sure to upload directions on how to best utilize this new section there.

4 **Rounding Out Your Profile and the Final Reveal**

IN THIS PART . . .

Learn how to compile and record all your professional accomplishments, skill sets, certifications, and abilities to tout on your profile.

Learn how to join LinkedIn Groups, follow the right Influencers, and show your allegiance to companies and schools to strengthen your brand vision.

Discover how you can interact and engage with others through the LinkedIn feed.

Learn the difference between articles and posts, as well as how to tag people and market yourself as a thought leader.

See what finishing touches you should add to your profile, including rearranging sections into a logical order.

Once your profile is complete, learn how to market your profile to get more and more views.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Detailing your professional career
- » Listing education, licenses, and certifications
- » Discovering accomplishments and adding them to your profile
- » Branding yourself through activities and interests

Chapter **13**

There's More to You than Your Jobs

Most people think of LinkedIn as a place to state the positions they've held throughout their careers. LinkedIn is so much more than just a compendium of where you worked. Your LinkedIn profile is a 360-degree view of you as a professional. Throughout your career you won awards, joined industry organizations, ran projects, received patents, wrote publications, and more.

In this chapter, I show you how to compile and record all of these professional accomplishments to create a complete profile of you. And it's not just accomplishments; certain professions demand certain skill sets, certifications, and abilities. LinkedIn spotlights your education, licenses and certifications, and volunteer experiences directly under the Experience section of your LinkedIn profile.

Scrolling further down, LinkedIn provides the Accomplishments section for you to record the honors and awards you received, publications you appeared in, organization you are a part of, patents you hold, languages you speak, courses you've taken, and test scores that make you even more marketable. Reading that list you may think, "But I don't have any of that!" Stick with me because there's a good chance you have much more than you think. Keep reading to find out how to capture all your accomplishments, even when you don't necessarily think of them that way.

Adding Your Education, or Lack Thereof

At one time, LinkedIn hinged your profile's All-Star ranking (which I discuss in deeper fashion in Chapter 4) on having a school listed in the Education section of your LinkedIn profile. I think that those LinkedIn employees working in Silicon Valley with their Ivy League educations just assumed everyone went to a good school and had a great education. It was only until recently that LinkedIn changed its profile completion meter's requirements and stopped including Education as a must for a complete profile.

When I first began working as a LinkedIn profile writer over a decade ago, I was shocked by the number of executives, entrepreneurs, small-business owners, and plain ol' professionals who didn't have college degrees. I quickly realized that many movers and shakers of this world aren't content sitting in a college classroom. These "do-ers" have better things to do, such as build businesses, get jobs to support their families, and generate revenue. And for those executives and entrepreneurs who were doing just fine without a college degree, instead of getting a college education, they just hired someone with one. You no longer have to cloak not having a degree on your LinkedIn profile, but there are more options for you to showcase what you do have.

Keep reading to find out how to make the Education section work for you regardless of whether you graduated from college or university, or graduated after a longer than typical spell, or didn't graduate at all.

Divulging the year you graduated

People tend to omit the years they attended college. As I see it, the reason is either that they prefer to disguise their real age, or they do not want people to realize it took them more than the usual amount of time to graduate.

If you are not listing your graduation date because you are trying to hide your age, I say, "Don't worry about it!" Embrace your age. By putting the years you attended university, LinkedIn is able to link you to other people who graduated with you. This means more people to add to your network, which means the potential for more opportunity. And that is a good thing.



WARNING

In addition, a profile that is missing years is a huge red flag to potential employers, recruiters, and human resources professionals. Omitting dates is a sign that something isn't quite right. It's better to be viewed as old than someone who is hiding something.

LISTING YOUR HIGH SCHOOL

Every now and then I see clients who come to us with their high school educations listed in their profiles' Education section. For the longest of time, I preached, do not include high school on your LinkedIn profile unless:

- You are a recent high school graduate.
- You attended a prestigious high school that provides great networking potential.
- You didn't continue on to college or university.

I believed that listing your high school is not needed if you have a higher-education degree, but I changed my mind. Here's what happened. A prospect called me and as we chatted, I checked out his LinkedIn profile. Scrolling down through the sections, I noticed that we both graduated from the same high school right around the same time. He didn't notice this because I didn't have it listed on mine. I mentioned also attending Pennsbury High School and suddenly our conversation moved into deeper territories. Sharing the same school and knowing many of the same people served to create a bond between us. This wouldn't have happened had he not listed his high school. At that moment I realized that adding one's high school isn't a bad thing. You never know where commonality will be found, and you may be surprised at what happens when commonality is discovered. Go ahead and list your high school unless it's a chapter of your life you want closed.

On the other hand, if you are omitting dates because it took you longer to graduate than the norm, at the very least, enter the year you graduated. This way you are still able to connect with your fellow graduates without divulging the length of time it took you to complete your schooling.

Preparing activities and societies

Before we get started adding your Education, let's take a moment to prepare the Activities and Societies and Description sections. It is tempting to leave these fields blank, but profiles that are completely filled out rank better than profiles missing information. This means you should enter *something* in these fields.

In what clubs, activities, fraternities, or sororities did you participate? Determine the activities that portray you as a well-rounded individual and list them. Here are a few examples: Foreign Language Club, Debate Team, Football, Theater, Delta Delta Delta Sorority, Chess Club.

The Description field is where you provide information about your educational background and experience. Did you graduate with honors? Were you the recipient of a scholarship? Take the most interesting notes and add them into your profile. Here are a few examples: Fulbright Scholarship. Graduated cum laude. Study Abroad Program, Junior Year, London, England. Matriculated while working full time. Wrote thesis entitled, *Liberation of Literature during Fin de siècle France*. Minored in English, with a concentration in American Literature.

Don't get too carried away with this section. Just add a couple items and move on.

Adding your education

If you graduated university or college, this part is easy: Add the institutions you received degrees from. If you have a ton of degrees, crack your knuckles and get going! If on the other hand, you attended a school for a few years but didn't graduate, you may choose to add the school but omit the degree since you didn't receive one. If you attended a bunch of schools but never graduated, you might consider adding the school where you spent the most time (but if you don't feel an affiliation to the school, I suggest you just skip this section all together). If you didn't graduate, but you decided to add a school because you spent time there and forged relationships, make sure to read the section "Reordering education" later in this chapter because it shows how to stop the school from showing up at the top of your profile.

Here's how to add a school:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Education area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, as shown in Figure 13-1, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don't have the Education area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

- 5. Expand the Background section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Click the plus (+) sign next to Education to add it to your profile.**
- 7. In the School field, start to type the name of your school.**

A drop-down list with schools matching the characters you type appears.

8. Select the school name from the list.

By selecting your school from the drop-down list, the school's logo appears alongside your education section, the LinkedIn university page for your school is dynamically linked to your profile, and you are included in the alumni data. LinkedIn also may show you other alumni who graduated with you in the People You May Know page, helping you create an even more robust LinkedIn network.

9. In the degree field, start to type the degree you earned and select the degree from the drop-down list that appears.

If you don't see a degree that matches your degree, continue to type your degree and do not choose from the drop-down list.

10. Under Field of Study, start to type your major and choose your major from the drop-down list LinkedIn provides.

If your major doesn't match what LinkedIn suggests, add your own major by simply not selecting LinkedIn's suggestions.

11. In the Grade field, enter your GPA or whether you graduated Cum Laude, Summa Cum Laude, or Magna Cum Laude.

If you don't have a respectable GPA or can't remember back that far, don't worry. Leave this field blank. Having written thousands of profiles, I have added information to the Grade field only a few times.

12. In the Activities and Societies field, enter the clubs and activities you participated in during your time at that school.

13. Under Time period, choose the year you started to attend the school and the year you left the school in the drop-down lists.

For the end date, choose the date you graduated or the year you expect to graduate.

14. In the Description field, enter your educational background and experiences that will impress your reader (see Figure 13-1).

15. Click Save.

Adding multimedia

Add documents, photos, links, videos, and presentations to your entries in the Education section. Are you proud of your thesis? Upload it to your profile! Is there a picture you'd like to include? Upload it to your profile!

FIGURE 13-1:
Adding educational background and experience information to the Education section.

English (Primary profile) Spanish French German

School *
Rosemont College

Degree
Bachelor's Degree

Field of study
Humanities/Humanistic Studies

Start Year
1992

End Year (or expected)
1996

Grade
Cum Laude

Activities and societies
Foreign Language Club, Jest and Gesture, Yearbook, etc...

Share with network
Off

If enabled, your network may be informed of job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries. This may take up to 48 hours. [Learn what's shared](#)

Delete Save

Follow these steps to add multimedia to your education entries:

- 1. Within the Education section of your profile, select the appropriate button below Media: Upload or Link.**

You can upload or link to documents in the following formats: .pdf, .doc, .docx, or .rtf.

You can upload or link to photos in the following formats: .png, .gif, .jpg, or .jpeg.

You can upload or link to presentations in the following formats: .pdf, .ppt, .pps, .pptx, .ppsx, .pot, or .potx.

- 2. Click Upload to display the media on your profile or click Link to type in a website URL to link to content that exists on another site, and then click Continue (see Figure 13-2).**

If you chose to upload a file, select the file from your desktop. A picture of your content displays. LinkedIn sometimes automatically populates the Title and Description fields if it can surmise it from the information available.

- 3. If the prepopulated Title and Descriptions fields aren't correct, click and edit them to your liking.**
- 4. Click Apply.**

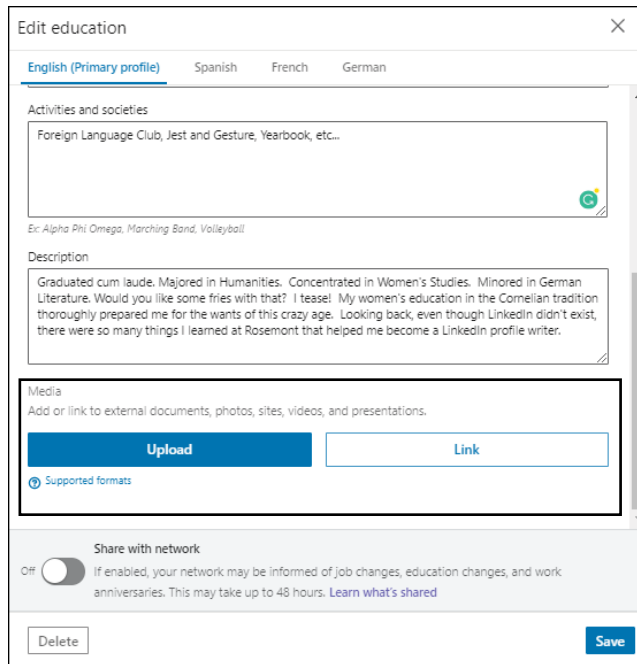


FIGURE 13-2:
Adding
multimedia
work samples
to your
education.

Reordering education

If you went to multiple schools and want to list them in a specific order, it's easy to reorder them. You are not constrained in any way when reordering your schools. You can have the most current at the top or the first school you attended at the top. The schools in between also do not need to be in any order. You have full control over how you want your education displayed. It's important to note that the first school you list in the Education section is the school that shows at the top of your profile. As soon as you reorder, the top school magically appears at the top of your profile's intro card.

Here's how to reorder schools:

1. **Hover your mouse pointer over the education entry you'd like to rearrange.**
2. **Click and hold the Reorder icon (four horizontal lines) that appears to the right of your school name, as shown in Figure 13-3.**
3. **Drag the school into the desired position.**

Click and drag to reorder your listed schools

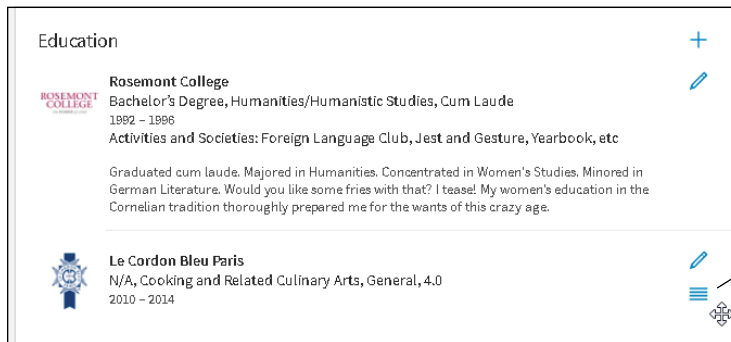


FIGURE 13-3:
Reordering the schools in your Education section.

Changing the school displayed in your intro card

At the top of your LinkedIn profile is your intro card. I talk all about the intro card in Chapter 5. In the upper-right corner of your intro card, the only school or the school you listed first in the Education section of your profile displays for all to see. If you added a school that you didn't receive a degree from, you may choose to omit it from your intro card.

A client of mine took a leadership program at Columbia University. He didn't receive a degree, but he received a certificate of completion. He could have added it as a certification in the Licenses and Certifications section, but he wanted to add more information to the entry than what the that section allows, so we decided to add it to the Education section. Suddenly at the top of his profile it stated "Columbia University" and it looked like he was a graduate of this Ivy League school. As much as his mother loved how it looked, we both felt it wasn't ethical. The fix I suggested was simply removing it from the top of his profile.

Here's how to change the way schools are displayed on your intro card:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Within the intro card section of your profile, click the pencil (edit) icon to get into edit mode.**
3. **To remove education from showing on your intro card, remove the checkmark from "Show education in my intro," as shown in Figure 13-4.**

FIGURE 13-4: Changing how education is displayed on your profile's intro card.

Click to add or remove education from your intro card

4. To change the school that displays, click the Education drop-down menu to choose a different school you have added to your profile's Education section.
5. Click Save.

Listing Licenses and Certifications

Certain professions demand certain skill sets and certifications. Increase your marketability by spotlighting your professional development. Add the certifications, licensures, and clearances you've earned throughout your career to your profile.



WARNING

A common issue I see, however, is that many people enter certifications in the Education section of their profiles. At one time, the LinkedIn profile didn't contain these extra sections, and the only way to record a certification was to add it as part of the Education section. Remember, the Education section is where you enter

degrees received. If you received a certificate, enter it in the Certifications section. There are always exceptions to the rule, though. In the preceding section, I mention how a client of mine earned a Certificate of Completion for an executive leadership program and wanted to add more context around this program, so we added it under Education. This also allowed him to add the courses he took and associate them with the program because it was added as Education.

Here's how to enter a certification to your profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Certifications area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don't have the Certifications area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

- 5. Expand the Background section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Scroll through the list until you get to Licenses & Certifications and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
- 7. Type the name of the Certification in the Name field.**
- 8. Enter the Issuing Organization in the next field.**

The Issuing Organization is the trusted organization or company that is guaranteeing your knowledge or ability.

- 9. Under Issue Date, choose the month and year from the drop-down lists.**

If the certification has no end date, place a check mark next to "This credential does not expire."

- 10. Enter the certification number/ID in the Credential ID field.**
- 11. In the Credential URL field, add the website address where more information on this certification can be found.**
- 12. Click the Save button.**

See Figure 13-5 for an example of adding a certificate.

IMPORTING CERTIFICATIONS FROM LYNDA.COM

LinkedIn acquired Lynda.com (www.lynda.com), the leader in online professional development classes. This acquisition means easy integration of your Lynda.com course completion certificates and your LinkedIn profile. If you're a member of both Lynda.com and LinkedIn, when you complete a course on Lynda.com, you'll receive an email with a link that lets you post your Certificate of Completion to your LinkedIn profile. Click that link and the Certificate of Completion appears in the Certifications section of your LinkedIn profile. Voila!

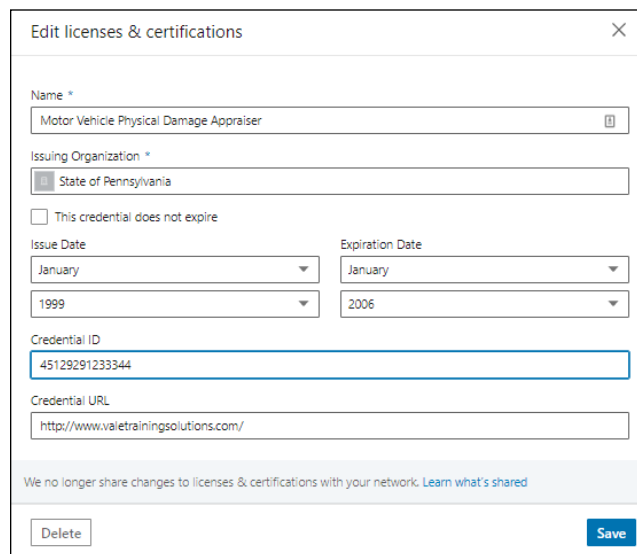


Figure 13-5 shows the 'Edit licenses & certifications' form. The form includes the following fields and values:

- Name: Motor Vehicle Physical Damage Appraiser
- Issuing Organization: State of Pennsylvania
- This credential does not expire
- Issue Date: January 1999
- Expiration Date: January 2006
- Credential ID: 45129291233344
- Credential URL: http://www.valettrainingsolutions.com/

At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Delete' button and a 'Save' button. A message at the bottom of the form reads: 'We no longer share changes to licenses & certifications with your network. [Learn what's shared](#)'.

FIGURE 13-5:
Adding a
certificate to
the Licenses &
Certifications
section.

Adding Volunteer Experiences

You are more than just a corporate creature. There are causes that you care about and support after work hours. Showing your philanthropic and humanitarian interests proves you are a well-rounded individual, which readers of your profile may find interesting and relatable.

Do you belong to a service organization such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, Shriners, or Lions Club?

Do you donate to the Salvation Army, Toys for Tots, Doctors Without Borders, UNICEF, or St Jude Children’s Hospital?

Do you take part in the Susan B. Komen Race for a Cure or have you donated time to a charitable organization?

The Volunteer section is where you add these items to your LinkedIn profile. These Volunteer experiences allow you to showcase the breadth of your work. You can add the name of the organization, your role, the cause it supports, dates of your tenure, and a description.

Here’s how to add a volunteer experience to your profile:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Volunteer Experience area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don’t have the Volunteer Experience area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking “Add new profile section” located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

- 5. Expand the Background section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Scroll through the list until you get to Volunteer Experience and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
- 7. Type the name of the Organization in the Organization field.**
- 8. Click Role and add your role or the type of volunteer work you do.**

This field shows at the top of the individual volunteer experience; it should spotlight either your role or what you are doing specifically. Here are some roles that might work for you: Angel, Backer, Contributor, Supporter, Patron, Donor, Grantor, Giver, Sponsor, Subscriber.

- 9. Click the Cause drop-down list and choose the applicable cause from the list.**

If nothing from the list correctly identifies this volunteer experience, choose the top option that looks like a minus sign to leave this field blank.

- 10. In the Date fields, choose the month and year from the drop-down lists.**

LinkedIn defaults to present with no end date. If this Volunteer Experience is no longer current, enter an end date by deselecting I Currently Volunteer Here.

11. In the Description field, enter information about the volunteer experience.



REMEMBER

It's better to add context around your experiences and the easiest way to do it is to visit the organization's About Us page on its website.

12. Click the Save button.

See Figure 13-6 for an example of a completed Volunteer section.

Organization *

Vision Board Media

Role

U.S. Veteran Assistance

Ex: Meal Server, Mentor

Cause

Economic Empowerment

I am currently volunteering in this role

Start date - Present

January

2013

Description

At Vision Board Media, LLC we believe in supporting our US veterans and active duty military. We provide all our products (DIY Kit, Toolbox, eBooks) to veterans and active duty military at no cost.

To learn more, please visit: <http://www.linkedin-makeover.com/veteran-support/>

Ex: I raised funds for our annual charity 5K.

We no longer share changes to volunteer experience with your network. [Learn what's shared](#)

Delete Save

FIGURE 13-6:
A completed
Volunteer section.

Citing Your Accomplishments

LinkedIn has an entire section devoted to your accomplishments. LinkedIn is rather liberal in what it considers an accomplishment. Were you raised bilingual? Accomplishment! Do you pay dues to belong to an association? Accomplishment! Rather than get into the nitty-gritty of what is truly an accomplishment, this profile section is important and shouldn't be ignored. When a person reads your profile, the further they scroll, the more qualified you become as a prospect. If they get down to your Accomplishments section, that means they are really interested in learning about you. Make sure you give them some good things to read about.

The Accomplishments section includes the following categories:

- » Publications
- » Patents
- » Courses
- » Projects
- » Honors & Awards
- » Test Scores
- » Languages
- » Organizations

The order the accomplishments appear is by how many items you have within each bucket, most to least. Unfortunately, there's no way to reorder or rearrange accomplishments.

Looking at the different buckets, there are some that are quite pie in the sky for most people: Patents, Publications, and Languages. But don't let those deter you! The other buckets are far more achievable, and most likely you already have things that fit. Keep reading to find out how to beef up this section with things you already have accomplished!

Showcasing organizations

The Organizations area of the Accomplishments section of your LinkedIn profile is the place to record the real-world associations and clubs to which you belong. Listing professional membership organizations on your profile proves you are an integral force within your community and an involved member within your industry.

I often see LinkedIn members add LinkedIn Groups or their volunteer experience to the Organizations area. This is a mistake. LinkedIn Groups are forums within LinkedIn focused on a specific topic. Within a LinkedIn Group, members post and comment on discussions. It's a great way to come together with like-minded individuals for discussions around shared interests. I discuss Groups in Chapter 14. However, you do not want to list your LinkedIn Groups within the Organizations area, as LinkedIn Groups automatically appear at the bottom of your profile.

Another issue is listing Volunteer Experiences in the Organizations section. The Volunteer Experience section of LinkedIn is where you list those humanitarian organizations to which you donate money or time. Not sure where to add a particular organization? To determine which organization goes into which section,

ask yourself the question, “Is this organization’s goal philanthropy, and am I donating my time or money?” If so, enter it into the Volunteering Experience section, which I covered earlier in this chapter in “Adding Volunteer Experiences.”

To determine the organizations to list in your profile, answer the following questions:

- » Do you belong to any industry organizations?
- » Do you belong to any user groups?
- » Are you a member of a networking group?
- » Do you pay dues to any association?
- » Are you a part of a local government organization?
- » Do you sit on a board of directors?

Make sure you include organizations that forward you professionally and are interesting to your target audience. It’s okay to leave out organizations that are of a personal nature or may alienate your target audience.



TIP

Everyone has causes that move them but you must be smart about what you list on your profile. You may love animals but showing your support of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) may alienate some people. Likewise, listing your National Rifle Association (NRA) membership may upset others. It’s certainly fine to stand behind your convictions whatever end of the spectrum they might be on — just realize that not everyone will agree and opportunity might be redacted because of what you list on your profile. You can’t please everyone, so be strategic and think through the pros and cons; consider the avatar of your target audience and what will resonate or deter them prior to adding organizations to your profile.

To add professional membership organizations to the Organizations area of your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Organizations area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don’t have the Organizations section added to your profile yet, add it by clicking “Add new profile section” located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile (see Figure 13-7).

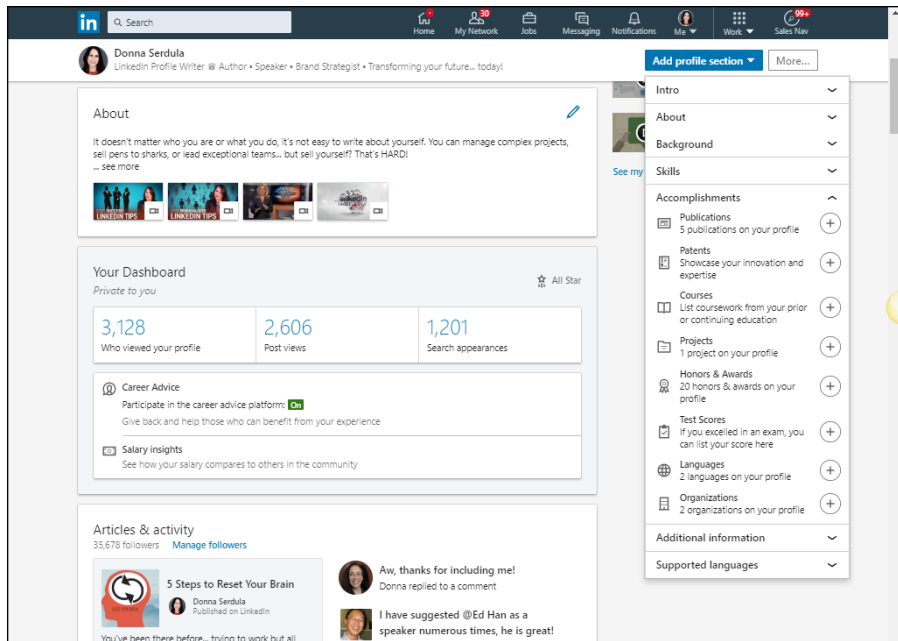


FIGURE 13-7:
Add additional sections to your profile.

5. **Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
6. **Scroll through the list until you get to Organizations and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
7. **In the Name field, type the name of the organization, association, club, or entity.**
8. **In the Position Held field, type the position you held.**
If you didn't have an official title, such as President or Treasurer, you can use Member, Key Contributor, Team Member, Patron, Supporter, Sponsor, Subscriber, Angel, or Backer.
9. **In the Associated with field, select the current or prior experience to connect this organization to a particular role.**

The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences. If you are part of this organization not because of a current or past role, feel free to skip this field. At one time, by linking the organization to a position, the organization would show up in the Organizations section and directly under the position it is paired with. Currently, although you can link an Organization with an Experience, nothing visibly happens that a reader would see that they are linked. Perhaps in the future this field will get removed or they will start creating a visible link.

10. In the Start Date fields, choose the month and year you started your membership from the drop-down lists.

LinkedIn defaults to no end date. If this organization is no longer current, enter an end date by deselecting Membership Ongoing.

11. In the Description field, enter information about the organization.

12. Click the Save button.

See Figure 13-8 for an example of an organization added to the Organizations section.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit organization' dialog box in LinkedIn. It contains the following information:

- Name ***: National Speakers Association (NSA)
- Position held**: Member
- Associated with**: Professional Public Speaker | Keynote Speaker | LinkedIn Branding Presentations & Workshops at Donna S.
- Membership ongoing**:
- Start date**: May 2012 (with a '- Present' label next to the year field)
- Description**: The National Speakers Association (NSA) is the premier organization for professional speakers. Since 1973, NSA has provided the most comprehensive resources and education designed to advance the skills, integrity and value of its members and the speaking profession. View my directory listing <http://bit.ly/publicspeaker>

At the bottom, there is a note: "We no longer share changes to organizations with your network. [Learn what's shared](#)". Below this are "Delete" and "Save" buttons.

FIGURE 13-8:
Adding an organization membership.

Uncovering your honors and awards

The Honors & Awards section of your LinkedIn profile is the area to enter any honors and awards you earned throughout your career. Working with clients, I find that the Honors & Awards section is one of the hardest areas to fill out. Many people don't keep a list of the honors and awards they have received, and when it finally comes time to list them, they simply can't remember.

Here's something to remember: If you don't record these honors, no one else will. You never know when it might come down to you and another highly lauded individual for a job, promotion, or project. You don't want to miss out simply because they recorded and touted their accomplishments and you didn't.

To determine your honors and awards, think in terms of certificates, plaques, and trophies you received. Open up your closet and check the top shelf — are any of these items collecting dust in a box? Jot down on a piece of paper these awards. Once you have identified any certificates, plaques, or trophies, let's dig deeper. Honors and awards don't have to be tangible items.

Here are some questions to help you remember other types of honors and awards you may have received:

- » Were you ever quoted in a newspaper article?
- » Were you ever profiled in a magazine?
- » Did you ever give a speech or deliver a keynote address?
- » Did you ever sit on a panel or act as a moderator?
- » Were you ever asked to work on a special project?
- » Were you chosen to provide training or mentoring to colleagues?
- » Were you ever appointed to a committee?

Choosing the right honors and awards

Are your brain juices pumping now? Before you start adding all these amazing honors and awards to your profile, you need to take a step back and decide what to add and what not to include.

Look over the list of honors and awards you compiled. Did you list things that occurred over 20 years ago? In the professional world, it's all about what you did lately. With that said, once an Oscar winner, always an Oscar winner. The older awards that are for amazing accomplishments, you may decide to keep. However, if the accomplishments were great at the time but don't point you in the direction of your desired career future or impress your greatness upon your target audience, ditch 'em!



TIP

I can't tell you how many top-level executives have asked me whether to include their Eagle Scout award. Although this award is from childhood, it does showcase perseverance, and I tell them to include it on their profiles. Besides, there are a lot of former Boy Scouts in high places, and the Eagle Scout award impresses them.

Did you earn your black belt in Karate? You might decide to list it under Honors & Awards, especially if it is a recent achievement. It's up to you, but always keep your target audience in mind and consider what they might deem as an impressive professional accomplishment.

Ultimately, it comes down to being smart. If you *only* have awards that are over five years old, include them. As you receive new awards, start deleting the older ones. Also, if you earned President's Club or another top sales award five years in a row, you don't need to list it five times. Condense it into one entry and state it is for multiple years.



REMEMBER

Don't go overboard. It's better to have three to five high-level honors listed instead of 15 to 20 so-so awards.

Creating a strong description

Once you have your final, master list of honors and awards, you now want to do some research to create an optimized description that provides context around the award and showcases your contribution as award worthy.

Start with a boilerplate explanation of the organization that presented the honor or award. Who are they and what do they do? Then describe the honor or award and what you did specifically to get the award. You want to aim for a couple of sentences, not a full-blown novel.

The best way to get this information is to consult the Internet. Run searches on the organization and check its website's About Us page. Then search for the honor or award. Even if it's not the exact award you received, you may find wording that is close to what you need. Rather than plagiarizing, use this content as a springboard and tweak it to make it work for you.

Now that you have descriptions, it's time to enter these honors and awards into your LinkedIn profile. Here's how:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Honors & Awards area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don't have the Honors & Awards area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

- 5. Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Scroll through the list until you get to Honors & Awards and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**

- 7. In the Title field, enter the name of your honor or award.**
- 8. In the Associated with field, select the current or prior experience to connect the honor or award to a particular role.**

The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences.

- 9. In the Issuer field, enter the organization or person or group that bestowed you with the honor or award.**
- 10. In the Start Date field, choose the month and year you received the honor or award from the drop-down lists.**

If this is an honor and award that spans multiple years, or a date simply doesn't pertain, feel free to leave the date field blank.

- 11. In the Description field, enter information about the honor or award.**

Remember, it's better to add context around your honors and awards, and the easiest way to do that is to search the web for already created content that you can tweak.

- 12. Click the Save button.**

Keeping your honors and awards updated

If you take anything away from this chapter, I want it to be this: Honors and awards aren't bestowed on just anyone. *Honors and awards are typically given to people who have asked for recognition.*

It's time for you to start strategically identifying honors and awards and doing what it takes to obtain them. Make sure it's known that you are interested and worthy. Keep an eye out for initiatives where you can volunteer to be seen. Honors and awards prove to your audience that you have what it takes to be a success and deserve recognition.

And as you begin to accumulate more honors and awards in your career, revisit this section on your LinkedIn profile. Remove older awards and add new ones. Always include a description. Don't be shy and don't dismiss this section. You are worthy of recognition.

By adding these awards, you aren't bragging; you are merely reporting on what was presented to you. By adding your honors, regardless of how silly they may seem to you, potential employers or customers take notice. No one else will toot your horn, so it's important that you do it!

The three P's: Projects, publications, and patents

There are times when you go above and beyond within your professional life. In these instances, you don't want to group these extraordinary accomplishments with less ordinary accomplishments. Projects, publications, and patents deserve their own spotlighted area on your LinkedIn profile. Keep reading to see what is considered worthy of the spotlight and how to add these “three P's” to your profile.

Adding projects

The Projects area of the Accomplishments section is the perfect place to spotlight your involvement in company-driven initiatives. Long-range, high-yield projects that deserve a bigger spotlight than a simple bullet in your Experience section belong in the Projects area. Choose projects that make you proud and show that you helped move the corporate needle, but most of all, choose projects that will impress your target reader.

This area of the Accomplishments section also allows you to add a URL that links to an external website to add even more context to the project. Another great part of this section is that you can pull in other team members and link them to the project to show the full range of contribution.

To add projects to the Projects area of your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Projects area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
- 4. If you don't have the Projects area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking “Add new profile section” located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

- 5. Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Scroll through the list until you get to Projects and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
- 7. In the Project name field, enter the name of the project.**
- 8. In the Date field, choose the month and year you worked on the project from the drop-down lists.**

If this project spanned a period of time, click Switch to Date Range to add an end date.

9. Add another contributor by clicking the “Add creator” link and start typing a name.

If the team member is one of your first-degree connections on LinkedIn, his or her name appears in a drop-down list.

10. Select the creator(s) you wish to add to the project from the drop-down list.

You can add contributors even if they aren't on LinkedIn, but they will not have profiles dynamically linked within the project.

11. Under Creator, select the current or prior experience to connect the project to a particular role.

The drop-down list is populated by your current and previous experiences. By linking the project to a position, the project shows up in the Projects section and directly under the position it is paired with.

12. In the Project URL field, add the website where more information on this project can be found.

If this project doesn't have a web presence, skip this section.

13. In the Description field, add context around your project so that your reader has an idea of the extent of your success and why this project was singled out.

14. Click the Save button.

See Figure 13-9 for an example of adding a project to the Projects area.



TIP

Just as you can add a person to a project you created, others can add you to a project they created. If you aren't happy with your inclusion on a project on someone else's profile, you can't remove it yourself. You must reach out to the person and ask him or her to remove you from the project.

Adding publications

The Publications section of LinkedIn is the place for writers to add published work. This section is a great place to spotlight your writing ability and showcase your knowledge.

Do not think that this section is only for the books you wrote. If you wrote an article that was published or broadcast in some manner, add it to this section and share it with the readers of your LinkedIn profile. Cite magazine articles, newsletter pieces, guest blog articles, and more. Here's how to add your publication history to your profile:

FIGURE 13-9:
Adding a
project to
the Projects
area.

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **If you have the Publications area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
3. **Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
4. **If you don't have the Publications area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**

A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.
5. **Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
6. **Scroll through the list until you get to Publications and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
7. **In the Title field, enter the name of the publication.**
8. **In the Publication/Publisher field, enter the name of the publication if it's a magazine or periodical, or the name of the publisher if it is a book.**
9. **In the Publication Date field, choose the month, day, and year the text was published from the drop-down lists.**

10. In the Publication URL field, add the website address where more information on this publication can be found.

If your publication is a book, you might consider adding a link to the book on Amazon. If it is an article you wrote, add a link to the article. If this publication doesn't have a web presence, skip this section.

11. In the Author(s) field, add the name of a first-degree LinkedIn connection to tie them to the publication, if applicable.

If you are the sole author, skip this step.



REMEMBER

When adding additional authors, they have the opportunity to add the publication to their profiles (or not). The authors' names will not be linked to the publication, and the publication will not show up on the authors' profiles, until they approve.

Your name is always listed first when you add a publication to your profile. To rearrange the additional author's name, simply click a name and drag it into the desired order within edit mode.

If you remove the publication after the additional author added it to his or her profile, the publication will remain on that author's profile.

12. In the Description field, provide some detail around the publication.

This is a great place to add a boilerplate description of the books and/or articles you've published, and you can even provide a brief excerpt. LinkedIn allows a maximum length of 2,000 characters, which is approximately 300 words — just enough room to provide context, but not enough room to write a novel.

13. Click the Save button.

See Figure 13-10 for an example of adding a book to the Publications section.

Adding patents

A patent is a professional accomplishment and should be shared on your LinkedIn profile. If you are an inventor with patents to your name, the Patents area is the place to showcase your work.

Here's how to add a patent to the Accomplishments section:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. If you have the Patents area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
- 3. Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**

Edit publication [Close]

Title

Ex: Giving and receiving feedback

Publication/Publisher

Ex: Harvard Business Review

Publication date

Coauthors
 [Add another coauthor](#)

Publication URL

Description

FIGURE 13-10:
 Adding a
 book to the
 Publications
 section.

- 4. If you don't have the Patents area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**
 A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.
- 5. Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
- 6. Scroll through the list until you get to Patents and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
- 7. In the Patent Title field, enter the name of the patent.**
- 8. In the Patent Office drop-down list, select the appropriate Patent Office.**
- 9. Type in the Patent/Application Number.**
- 10. Add any additional inventors by clicking the "Add inventor" link and typing a name.**
 To choose a name from a drop-down list, additional inventors must be first-degree connections on LinkedIn. If they aren't first-degree connections, you can still add their names, but they won't have a profile dynamically linked.
 Your name is always listed first when you add a patent to your profile. To rearrange the additional inventor names simply, click a name and drag it into the desired order within edit mode. If you remove the patent after additional inventors added it to their profiles, the patent will remain on their profiles.
- 11. Under Status, select Patent Issued or Patent Pending.**
- 12. In the Issue Date field, choose the month, day, and year from the drop-down lists.**

13. In the Patent URL field, add the patent’s URL where more information on this patent can be found.

14. In the Description field, provide some detail around the patent.

This is a great place to add more description about your patent, and you can even provide a brief sample from the patent itself.

15. Click the Save button.

See Figure 13-11 for an example of adding a patent.

The screenshot shows a 'Add patent' form with the following fields and values:

- Patent title: Folding Bottle
- Patent office: United States
- Patent or application number: 12 123456
- Inventor: Donna Serdula
- Status: Patent Issued (selected)
- Issue date: Month, Day, Year (dropdowns)
- Patent URL: (empty field)

At the bottom right, there is a blue 'Save' button. A footer note reads: 'We no longer share changes to patents with your network. [Learn what's shared](#)'.

FIGURE 13-11: Adding a patent to the Patents section.

Adding courses

If you take a one-off course that doesn't deliver a certificate nor is part of a much larger degree program, the Courses section of LinkedIn is for you. In addition, more and more students are joining LinkedIn, realizing the huge opportunities for networking and job search. The Courses section is where you spotlight recent courses that deserve to be highlighted outside of the degree you are working toward.

Here's how to add a course to your LinkedIn profile:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **If you have the Courses area already added to your profile, simply scroll to it and expand it by clicking the down arrow on the right side.**
3. **Click the pencil (edit) icon to enter into edit mode, then go to Step 7.**
4. **If you don't have the Courses area added to your profile yet, add it by clicking "Add new profile section" located in your intro card.**

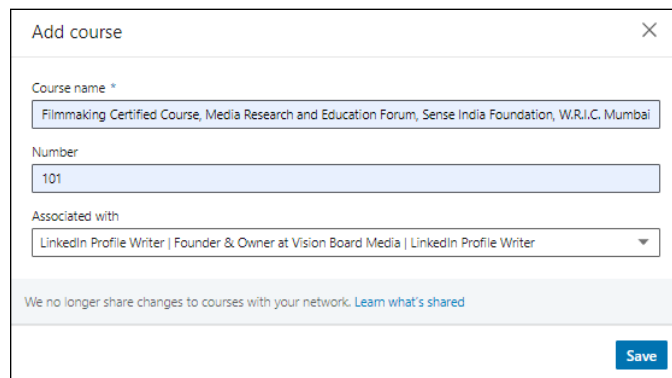
A drop-down list appears with additional profile sections you can add to your profile.

5. **Expand the Accomplishments section by clicking the down arrow.**
6. **Scroll through the list until you get to Courses and click the plus (+) sign to add it to your profile.**
7. **In the Course Name field, type the name of the course.**
8. **Enter the course number in the Number field.**
9. **If this course was taken for a position you held, select that position from the drop-down list under the Associated With section.**

By linking to a past or present work experience, readers can see the courses you took for that position, thus providing even more robustness to your profile and work history.

10. **Click the Save button.**

See Figure 13-12 for an example of adding a course to the Courses section.



The screenshot shows a modal window titled "Add course" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. It contains three input fields: "Course name *" with the text "Filmmaking Certified Course, Media Research and Education Forum, Sense India Foundation, W.R.I.C. Mumbai"; "Number" with the text "101"; and "Associated with" with a dropdown menu showing "LinkedIn Profile Writer | Founder & Owner at Vision Board Media | LinkedIn Profile Writer". Below the fields is a light blue banner with the text "We no longer share changes to courses with your network. [Learn what's shared](#)". At the bottom right is a blue "Save" button.

FIGURE 13-12:
Adding a course
to the Courses
section.

Adding the languages you speak

Sprechen sie Deutsch? Ja, me neither. But if you do speak other languages, add them to your LinkedIn profile. Simply choose the language(s) from the drop-down list and then indicate your level of proficiency.

Choose from:

- » Elementary proficiency
- » Limited working proficiency
- » Professional working proficiency
- » Full professional proficiency
- » Native or bilingual proficiency



TIP

If you add a foreign language to this section, be sure to also add your native language to the list of languages you speak. You don't want potential alliances to dismiss you because they assume you hired a translator to create your LinkedIn profile and don't speak their language.

Creating a Profile in Another Language

For those global business people who work throughout the world, you can make multiple versions of your profile in different languages. This way, the person viewing your profile sees your profile in the language that matches his or her primary language. If this person is using LinkedIn in a language that doesn't match any of your languages, he or she sees your profile in your primary language.

When you initially created your profile, the language you chose becomes your primary language. Once your primary language is chosen, it can't be changed. However, you can add as many secondary language profiles as you like, provided there are languages available. (Sorry, Klingon is not supported.)

LinkedIn doesn't automatically translate your profile; you are responsible for editing your profile and adding the translated text yourself.

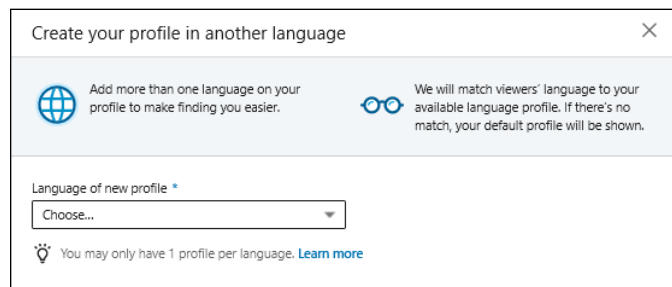
To create a profile in another language, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click “Add profile in another language” located in the right sidebar.**

A text box appears, as shown in Figure 13-13. If you have already added a profile in another language, you will see that this area states your primary language.
3. **Choose a language from the drop-down list.**
4. **If your first name and last name are different in the new language, update your name in the First Name and Last Name fields.**
5. **In the Headline field, update your headline in the new language.**
6. **Click the Create Profile button to go to the Edit Profile page of your new language profile.**

You are now at the new secondary language profile. Your original profile sections have been transferred to the new secondary language profile with the titles, company names, and recommendations intact. When you click into sections, the descriptions remain; you must delete the content and replace it with your translation. Once the original primary language is deleted, LinkedIn provides your primary language text below the fields to aid you in translating.

7. **Refer back to the chapters of this book to optimize your profile in your new language.**



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Create your profile in another language" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The dialog is divided into two main sections. The top section contains two columns of text: on the left, a globe icon followed by "Add more than one language on your profile to make finding you easier."; on the right, a glasses icon followed by "We will match viewers' language to your available language profile. If there's no match, your default profile will be shown." The bottom section features a label "Language of new profile *" above a dropdown menu with "Choose..." as the selected option. Below the dropdown is a lightbulb icon and the text "You may only have 1 profile per language. [Learn more](#)".

FIGURE 13-13:
Creating a profile
in another
language.

In the next chapter, I show you how to truly trick out your profile by following group, companies, and Influencers. I also take a giant dive into Groups, looking at how they work and how to better leverage them.

- » Handpicking the groups on your profile
- » Following the right Influencers and news topics
- » Showing allegiance to companies and schools

Chapter **14**

Following Groups, Companies, and Influencers

Your LinkedIn activity is reflected on your profile. The LinkedIn Groups you join and the Influencers and news topics you follow all show up at the bottom of your LinkedIn profile. Rather than ignore this area, build up your brand and online persona by following the right groups, Influencers, news topics, companies, and schools to align with your LinkedIn goals.

In this chapter, you learn the importance of joining LinkedIn Groups (and it's not just for the discussion value) and how to choose the best groups. I also show you how to optimize the Following section by choosing the right Influencers, news topics, companies, and schools to complete the construction of your profile to your desired brand vision.

Understanding the Importance of Groups

The groups you join on LinkedIn are listed toward the bottom of your profile in the Interests section. By clicking See All, and selecting the Groups tab, the group logos appear, showing your reader your online involvement in your industry and community (see Figure 14-1).

LinkedIn Groups are forums devoted to discussions around a single topic. When reading your LinkedIn newsfeed, you see status updates with discussions, quotes, and links to articles about a myriad of topics. With such a wide range of topics taking place, some people find it overwhelming. On the flip side, when you visit a LinkedIn Group, the discussions are focused on the group topic, ensuring your interest in the discussions taking place.

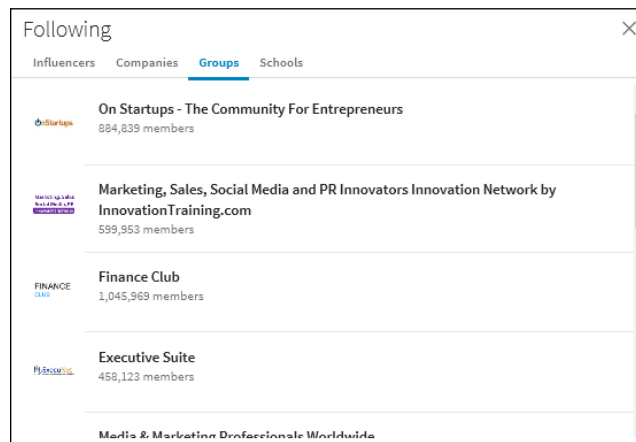


FIGURE 14-1:
The LinkedIn Groups you belong to appear near the bottom of your profile.

When you join the groups that interest you, and you engage successfully, LinkedIn Groups provide you the ability to forge new business relationships with like-minded professionals. Within the group, you can post news, participate in discussions, and network. It is a great way to add value and learn from others.

The only issue when it comes to LinkedIn Groups is your own time limitation. There are a slew of LinkedIn experts and professionals who claim to use LinkedIn Groups to find amazing business opportunity. There is certainly business to be mined, but it takes time and energy that not all of us have in abundance. If you have the time and enjoy interacting in group discussions, do it and reap the rewards. On the other hand, if you are a busy person and do not have the time nor inclination to engage in group discussions, I have another way for you to take advantage of LinkedIn Groups in a passive way that provides real results.

It is not a well-known fact, but LinkedIn Groups expand your LinkedIn network. Your LinkedIn network is comprised of connections within three degrees. The people you are directly connected to by exchanging and accepting a LinkedIn invite are considered your first-degree connections. The people directly connected to your first-degree connections are considered your second-degree connections. The connections of your second-degree connections are considered your third-degree connections. Your LinkedIn network is also comprised of the members of groups you have joined.

When you perform keyword-based searches on LinkedIn, you are only searching your LinkedIn network. In order to find people and get found, you need to have an extensive network. The fastest and easiest way to expand your network is through joining LinkedIn Groups. People in the same LinkedIn Groups as you are considered part of your LinkedIn network even if they aren't first-, second-, or third-degree connections.



TIP

You can join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups. My suggestion is to join 100 groups so you can strengthen and expand your network as wide as possible.

Simply by joining groups, you receive the massive benefit of expanding your LinkedIn network. When you have a strong, large network, you get more views to your profile and collide with more opportunities. You do not have to participate in every single group you join. The only thing you need to ensure is that you join groups that contain your target audience.

Determining the types of groups to join

The LinkedIn Groups you join should contain your target audience — not your competitors. Most people join only groups that reflect their interests and careers. As an example, let's say you are an insurance broker. You may find yourself tempted to join only groups for insurance brokers. When you do that, you are filling your LinkedIn network with your competitors. You don't want to find or be found only by insurance brokers. Instead, think in terms of your target audience. You want to find and be found by prospective customers. Your prospective customers probably belong to LinkedIn Groups for business owners and human resource professionals. Figure out what LinkedIn Groups attract your target audience and join those groups.



TIP

Job seekers should join groups that contain recruiters and human resources professionals. They should research the companies where they want to work and join groups where the employees of their dream companies are members.

Those who are using LinkedIn for executive branding and thought leadership should join groups that contain their target audience. Do you want to be found by reporters and journalists? Join groups for media professionals. Do you want to be asked to speak at conferences? Join groups that cater to conference and event planners. Do you want to be asked for radio interviews? Join groups for radio broadcasters and podcasters.

One of the easiest ways to determine which groups attract your target audience is to visit the profiles of your current customers or target audience members. Scroll to the bottom of their profiles and look at the groups they have listed on the bottom of their LinkedIn profile. After viewing a number of their profiles, you may start to see certain groups repeated across their profiles. Those are the groups you should join.

The other thing to consider when joining LinkedIn Groups is the number of members within the group. Your network grows by the number of people in the group, so choose LinkedIn Groups with the most members. The bigger your network, the more people you find and the more people who find you.

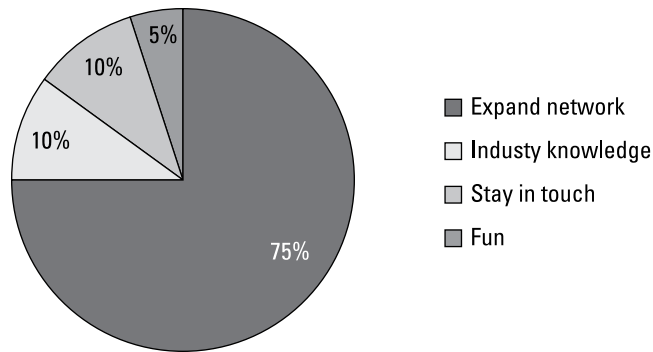
In addition to the groups that fill your network with your target audience, consider joining groups that demonstrate your expertise and industry knowledge. These groups may contain more of your competition than target audience, but that's okay as long as you don't join too many of them.

Another type of groups to join are the groups I like to call "Glory Days." Your university alumni group falls into this category as well as any groups devoted to old companies at which you worked in the past. By joining these groups where old colleagues, schoolmates, and friends are, you are making sure that if you are not directly connected to them yet, they are still in your network. You never know when one of these old relationships may need your new expertise.

Lastly, join a couple groups that are strictly fun. Do you love martial arts? There are a number of great groups devoted to discussions on martial arts. Do you enjoy technology or history or professional development? There are groups related to all of those topics. It's important to have fun on LinkedIn, and it's okay to delve into things you enjoy even if they aren't pertinent to your career. LinkedIn is all about networking, and networking with people who share common interests is a great way to forge real relationships.

Check out Figure 14-2 to see the ideal breakdown of groups you should join on LinkedIn.

FIGURE 14-2:
A breakdown of
the LinkedIn
Groups you
should join.



If you are so inclined to participate in LinkedIn Groups, choose two or three LinkedIn Groups for your focus. Get into the habit of checking out the group discussions once a week. Participate as you can. Add discussions and comment on already occurring discussions. And guess what? If you simply don't have enough time to keep up with a few groups, don't worry about it. You can still find amazing benefit from LinkedIn Groups without any true participation.



TIP

If you love participating in groups but find it hard to dedicate time, you can access LinkedIn Groups through the LinkedIn mobile app. Using the mobile app makes it easy to interact with your LinkedIn Groups wherever you are . . . watching TV at home, in a coffee shop, or trying to look busy during a boring meeting.

Turning off group notifications

I am sure you have heard the horror stories about that poor person who decided to join LinkedIn to see what all the buzz was about, and within seconds had sent everyone in his address book invitations to connect or join, right before bombarding the entire network with notifications that he was updating his profile and joining groups dedicated to job search.

What a nightmare! But things have changed in the LinkedIn world. I can't stress this enough: *LinkedIn has changed!* It no longer sends out unending notifications to your entire network that you joined a group or updated a project in the Accomplishments section or blinked your eyes.

At one time, I warned people to turn off group notifications, but now this is not something to worry about. You don't need to turn off group notifications like you once did because LinkedIn doesn't send out notifications when you join a group.

If you truly want to turn off all notifications, here's how to do it:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **Hover your mouse pointer over the thumbnail image of yourself in the upper-right corner of your screen and click Settings & Privacy.**

LinkedIn's settings page opens.

3. **Along the top of the settings page, click Privacy.**
4. **Under the section How Others See Your LinkedIn Activity, click "Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile."**

This setting expands to show more information

5. **If "Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile?" is switched to Yes, click it to switch it to No.**

By selecting No, your network will not be notified of job changes, education changes, or work anniversaries.



TIP

In this Privacy section of LinkedIn's settings, you can also stop LinkedIn from notifying your connections if you ever appear in the news, and you can stop people from mentioning and tagging you in their LinkedIn posts.

Joining recommended groups

There are over two million groups on LinkedIn. Search LinkedIn to find groups that match your target audience and interests or allow LinkedIn to recommend groups to you. LinkedIn looks at commonalities you share with members of different groups such as companies, schools, or industries. Those groups with members that share the most attributes with you are presented as groups you might want to join.

Now, you might think you need to go to the LinkedIn Groups section to find recommended groups that align with your goals and target audience. Nope! (At least not as of this writing.) In order to find recommended groups, you need to go to My Network. Here's how:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **Click My Network in the menu bar at the top of the screen.**

A page showing all the people you might know appears and lots more!

3. **Scroll down to Groups You May Be Interested In.**

LinkedIn displays recommended groups based upon your background, interests, and connections (see Figure 14-3).

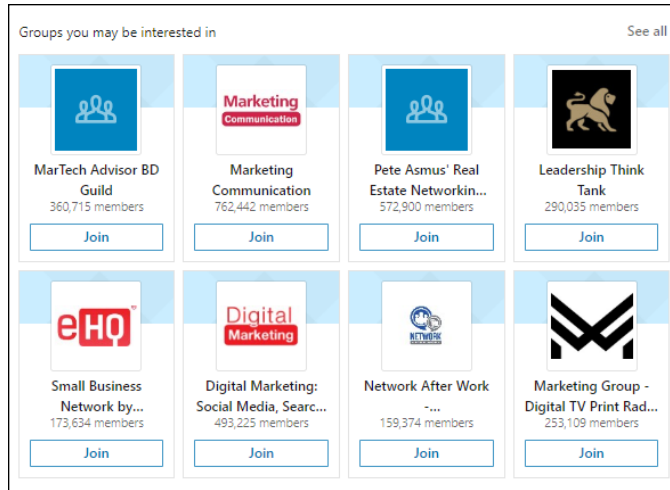


FIGURE 14-3: LinkedIn recommends groups you might be interested in.

4. Scroll through LinkedIn’s recommended groups, and if you see a group you would like to join, click the Join button.

Notice the total number of people in the group. The larger the number, the more your network expands when you join. Also, LinkedIn shows you the number of people you know within the group.

Searching for groups

Rather than just accepting groups that LinkedIn deems worthy of you, search for groups. LinkedIn has two types of groups: listed and unlisted. When searching for groups, you only see listed groups. Unlisted groups are unlisted and do not turn up in Search. The only way to join an unlisted group is to be invited to join.

Here’s how to search for listed groups that match your interests, goals, and target audience:

1. From any LinkedIn page, enter a group topic that would attract your target audience in the search bar at the top of the page.

Some keyword topic ideas include: Executives, Real Estate, B2B Marketing, CAD, CRM, Sales, Cloud Computing, Supply Chain, Retail, Fashion, Maritime, Military, and so on.



WARNING

When entering your keywords, LinkedIn offers numerous filters as you type. Choose from the suggested results (see Figure 14-4) and then skip to Step 5. If you don’t see anything that matches, click the Search button to be presented with a page of search results.

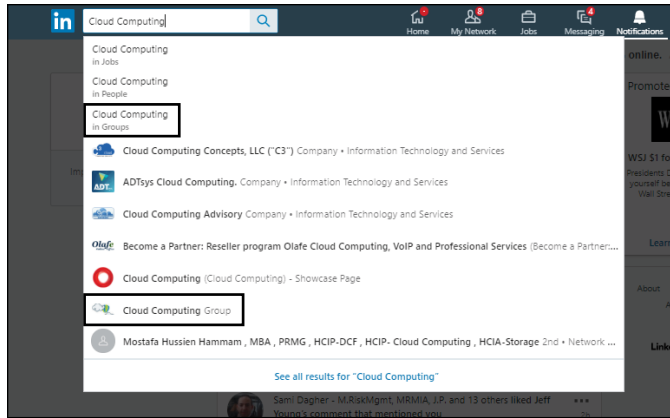


FIGURE 14-4: Choosing from the filtered drop-down list.

2. Click More to filter by groups at the top of the page

A list of groups displays, followed by the total number of members in the group and a short description, as shown in Figure 14-5.

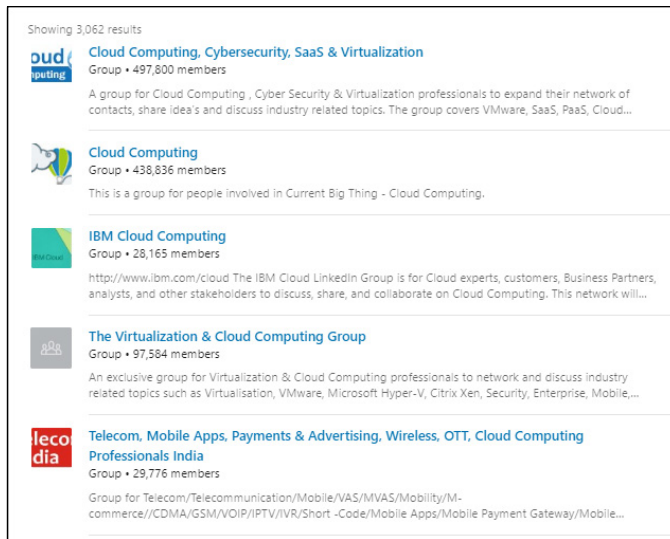


FIGURE 14-5: Going through group search results.

3. If the group looks interesting, click the hyperlinked name of the group to visit the group overview page.

The group overview page shows you the admins of the group and who within your connections are members. If you wish to join, click the Ask to Join button; otherwise click your browser's back button to go to the previous screen of search results.

4. If you decide to join the group, click the Join button to immediately become a member, or if the group's membership is moderated, click Request to Join.

Deleting groups

Now that you understand the strategy behind LinkedIn Groups, you may want to delete some groups that aren't providing the value you need. Here's how to delete groups you have already joined:

1. From any LinkedIn page, click the waffle (More or Work) icon located in the menu bar at the top of the screen and click Groups.

The list of groups you belong to appears. If you manage any groups, they appear at the top of the list.

2. Scroll through the list until you find the group you want to remove.
3. Click the three dots that appear to the right of each group listing and select Leave This Group, as shown in Figure 14-6.

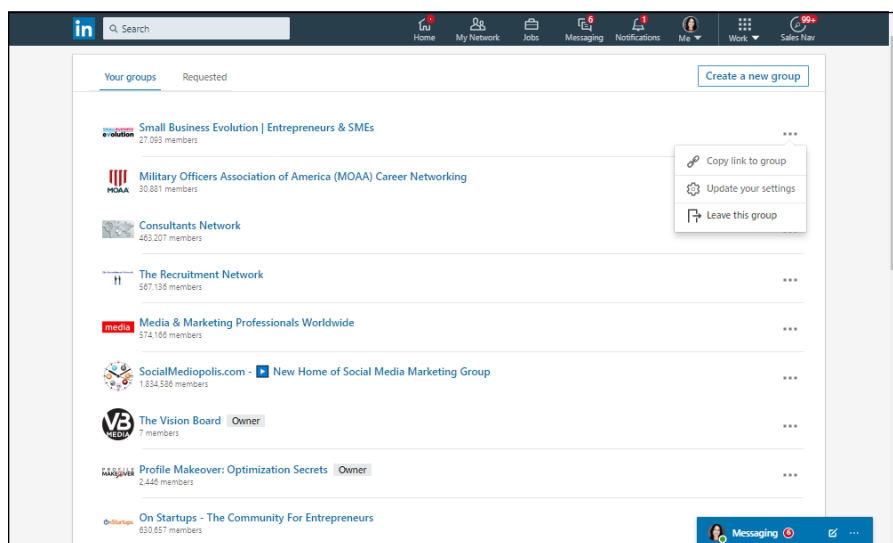


FIGURE 14-6:
Leaving a
LinkedIn Group.

Turning off group communication email

You've joined 100 groups and suddenly you are beginning to see more views to your LinkedIn profile. As wonderful as that is, you are also seeing your email inbox fill up with LinkedIn Group update emails. It's easy to turn off the LinkedIn Group communication email. Here's how:

1. **Go to `LinkedIn.com`.**
2. **Click the thumbnail image of yourself that appears in the upper-right corner of your screen and click `Settings & Privacy` in the drop-down menu.**

LinkedIn's settings page opens.

3. **Along the top of the settings page, click the `Communications` tab.**
4. **Under `Notifications by Channel`, click `Email (received via your primary email)`.**

The Email settings page opens. This is where you choose what email notifications you want to receive from LinkedIn.

5. **Scroll down and click `"Network: Groups, events, anniversaries, invites, birthdays."`**

This is where you can toggle on or off email updates.

6. **Click `Group Daily Digests` to see options for all the groups you belong to.**

You can choose between Weekly digest, Daily digest, off, Individually, or Recommended, as shown in Figure 14-7.



TIP

While you are on this screen, you may want to scroll down and see if there are any other email notifications you want to turn off. LinkedIn gives you control over how little or much it notifies you by email.

Choosing which groups to highlight on your profile

Your profile displays group logos on your profile with the option to expand to show the complete list. Although LinkedIn lists the groups on your profile randomly, you can determine whether to exclude a group from appearing.

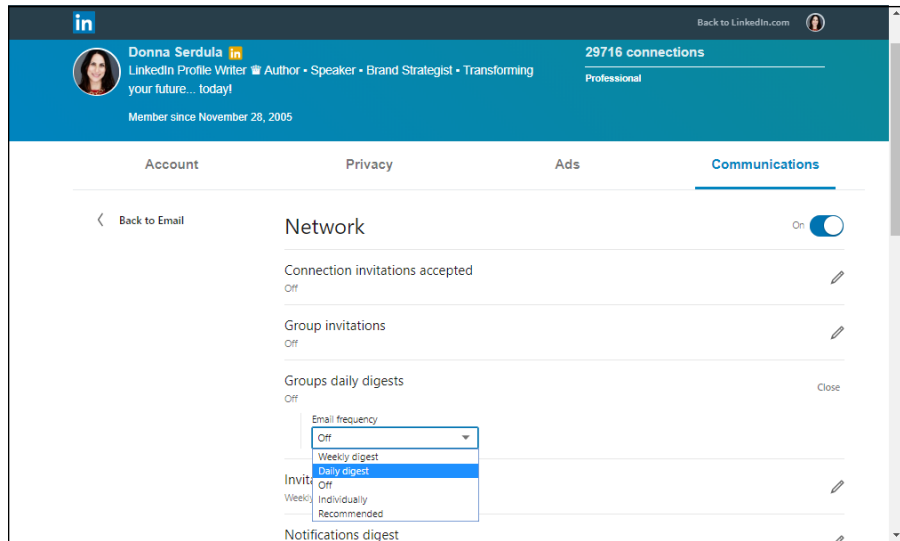


FIGURE 14-7: Stopping all those group emails from deluging your inbox.

Instead of leaving it to LinkedIn to showcase your group membership, it's important you take control and determine the best groups to populate your profile to impress your target audience. Remember, it's a Google world, and people are looking you up. They want to learn more about you. You control how they perceive you. As a reader scrolls through your profile, you want to make sure that the groups you are associated with build your brand and impress others.

In the section, “Determining the types of groups to join,” I suggest adding a few groups that showcase your industry knowledge. These groups are great to add to the top of your profile. Always think of your target audience. What group memberships might impress them? Which might make them feel confident in you?

Once you have an idea of the groups to spotlight on your profile, here's how to display the logo on your profile:

1. **From any LinkedIn page, click the waffle (More or Work) icon located in the menu bar at the top of the screen and click Groups.**
The list of groups you belong to appears.
2. **To hide groups on your profile, click the three dots that appear to the right of the group name of the group you want to hide, as shown in Figure 14-8.**
3. **Click Update Your Settings.**
4. **Toggle the “Display group on profile” option from Yes to No.**

Now, the group's logo will not appear on your profile.

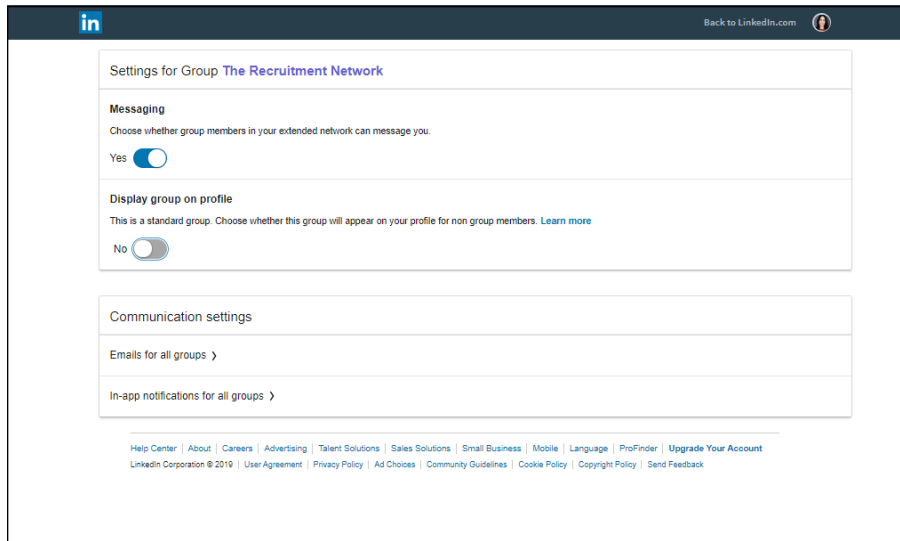


FIGURE 14-8: Changing the visibility of group logos on your profile.

Cultivating Your Following Section

When you first log in to LinkedIn, you land on the LinkedIn home page, which is where you write posts that are potentially seen by your network of connections. It's also where you read your network's posts. Think of this LinkedIn feed as your own customized newspaper, curated by all of your direct, first-degree LinkedIn connections. You are not limited to just status updates from first-degree connections, however. You can also subscribe to news topics of interest to you, company and school updates, and original content from Influencers. To tap into this stream of information, all you have to do is follow companies, news topics, Influencers, and schools that interest you.

By following companies, Influencers, and schools, you get their posts delivered to your LinkedIn feed. You show your interest and allegiance to them on your LinkedIn profile in the Following section, which appears at the very bottom of your profile. Within this section, logos of the Influencers, companies, groups, and schools you follow are displayed. To populate this section, you must join groups and follow some companies, Influencers, and schools; otherwise the Following section does not appear on your profile, and the opportunity to showcase potential commonality is lost.

You can follow as many as 1,000 companies and an unlimited number of Influencers and schools.

Choosing the right companies to follow

Just as individuals have LinkedIn profiles, companies have LinkedIn pages. A LinkedIn page is where a company tells its story, mission, and goals on LinkedIn and posts open positions. When employees and past employees list the company in their LinkedIn profiles' experience sections, the logo that is displayed on their profiles comes from this LinkedIn page. A link is also created from the employees' profiles to the LinkedIn page.

In addition to providing a digital outpost for the company on LinkedIn, the LinkedIn page provides the ability to post status updates as the company rather than as an individual. When you visit a LinkedIn page, you have the ability to follow that page and receive the updates it posts. Some LinkedIn pages have showcase pages. Most companies post statuses on a large variety of topics, but not all followers want to read such a wide range of topics. Showcase pages are for the different topics a LinkedIn page might broadcast. Visitors can then subscribe to the showcase page of the topic they are most interested in reading. When you subscribe to a showcase page, that logo is displayed on your profile as a company.

Curious about how to create a LinkedIn page for your company? Flip over to Chapter 11.



TIP

Follow at least ten companies and/or showcase pages to demonstrate you are using LinkedIn as a way to get information and updates. These company logos also show your allegiance and interest in the company. Imagine you are in the running for a position at a certain company. The hiring manager decides to look at your LinkedIn profile and sees her company's logo at the bottom of your profile page. Weird? No! Impressive! That hiring manager is going to know that you have done your due diligence and researched her company and you are now following the company's posts to stay up to date. This is certainly a way of separating yourself from the crowd.

Not sure what companies to follow? No worries; here are some ideas to get you started:

- Your current company
- The companies where you worked in the past
- Your dream company(ies)
- Companies that are current or prospective customers
- Companies in the news
- Companies that are leaders within your industry or customers' industries
- The companies where your friends and family members work



WARNING

Unlike with groups, you cannot control whether a company is displayed on your profile. If you are not comfortable potentially showcasing a certain company on your profile, don't follow it!

Following companies

It's easy to follow companies on LinkedIn. Here's how:

- 1. From any LinkedIn page, click in the search bar and start typing the name of a company you'd like to follow.**

As you type, LinkedIn recommends matching LinkedIn pages.

- 2. If the page you are searching for appears, click it to open the LinkedIn page.**

If LinkedIn doesn't recommend the correct LinkedIn page, click the search button to display the search results.

- 3. Scroll through the results and click the LinkedIn page you'd like to follow.**

The LinkedIn page opens.

- 4. Click the Follow button.**

The button text changes to Following and the company appears in the Following section on your profile.

Unfollowing companies

If you go overboard and follow more companies than you are able to keep up with, or if you've changed your mind about showing allegiance to a certain company, simply stop following a company and its updates.

To unfollow a company, follow these steps:

- 1. Go to your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll to the bottom of your profile to the Interests section and click See All.**

The list of companies you follow appears. You may need to click the Companies tab at the top of the page.

- 3. Click the Following link next to the company you wish to unfollow.**

Once clicked, you no longer follow that company and it is removed from your profile's Interests section and you will no longer receive its broadcasted status updates.

Showcasing Influencers on Your Profile

Not only does LinkedIn provide curated content from around the web, you can also tap into original content by big-name thought leaders. These Influencers share their knowledge and insights through original articles found exclusively on LinkedIn. When you follow Influencers, you receive their latest articles via your LinkedIn home page's newsfeed. Not only do you get to read their latest missives, but also you get to show your admiration and interest in them on your profile.

When people check out another person's LinkedIn profile, they often scroll to the bottom to check out whether they have any Influencers in common. Seeing an admired thought leader on another person's profile shows more than just a common interest; it shows a common philosophy and thought pattern. By following certain Influencers, you raise your reputation and viewpoint.



TIP

There is a difference between following and connecting. When you connect, you are sharing your connections with that person and that person is added to your LinkedIn network. As part of your LinkedIn network, when you search LinkedIn, that person potentially shows up in searches as does his or her first- and second-degree network. By following a person, they are not added to your LinkedIn network. You are simply subscribing to their updates and long-form posts. You approve connections; you don't approve followers.

Deciding which Influencers to showcase

Unlike with groups, you cannot control the which Influencers are displayed on your profile. Just because you adore a certain Influencer, consider if that person is a polarizing individual, especially within your industry. Rather than choosing Influencers you truly love and want to follow, you may decide to choose Influencers who showcase you as you want to be seen.

If you want to be seen as a conservative, traditional leader, you may decide to follow Jack Welch rather than Mark Cuban. Although LinkedIn includes a number of politicians as Influencers, you may decide not to follow them and alienate half your audience. Or you may choose to show your allegiance and side with half your audience. The choice is yours and there really isn't a right or wrong answer. Just know the repercussions of your choices.

LinkedIn doesn't provide a list of Influencers. Rather than have you blindly search for Influencers, I've compiled a list of the most popular and prolific (see Table 14-1). See if any strike a chord with you. If they influence you, go ahead and follow them.

TABLE 14-1**List of Interesting Influencers**

| | | | |
|------------------|--|-----------------|--|
| Adam Grant | Author and organizational psychologist at Wharton | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/adammgrant |
| Beth Comstock | Author and former vice chair of GE | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/elizabethjcomstock |
| Bill Gates | Co-chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/williamhgates |
| Brené Brown | Research professor, CEO, and author | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/brenebrown |
| Gary Vaynerchuk | Chairman, VaynerX and CEO, VaynerMedia | Marketing | www.linkedin.com/in/garyvaynerchuk |
| Gretchen Rubin | Writer, podcaster | Human Resources | www.linkedin.com/in/gretchenrubin |
| Jeff Weiner | Prior CEO of LinkedIn | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/jeffweiner08 |
| Jill Schlesinger | Business analyst, CBS News | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/jillonmoney |
| Josh Bersin | Principal and Founder, Bersin by Deloitte | Human Resources | www.linkedin.com/in/bersin |
| Laszlo Bock | SVP, People Operations at Google and author of <i>Work Rules!</i> | Human Resources | www.linkedin.com/in/laszlobock |
| Lou Adler | CEO, Adler Group and author of <i>The Essential Guide For Hiring and Being Hired</i> | Job Search | www.linkedin.com/in/louadler |
| Marla Gottschalk | Director of Organizational Development, Allied Talent | Human Resources | www.linkedin.com/in/marlagottschalk |
| Meg Whitman | CEO of Hewlett-Packard | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/megwhitman |
| Melinda Gates | Co-chair, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/melindagates |
| Richard Branson | Founder, Virgin Group | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/rbranson |
| Ryan Holmes | CEO at Hootsuite | Marketing | www.linkedin.com/in/rholmes |
| Sallie Krawcheck | CEO and Co-Founder of Ellevest | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/salliekrawcheck |
| Simon Sinek | Author | B2B/Leadership | www.linkedin.com/in/simonsinek |

Finding specific Influencers

Not all big names are Influencers. Although you can follow pretty much anyone, only Influencers you follow show up at the bottom of your LinkedIn profile under the Interests section. Check to see if a person you admire is an Influencer by following these steps:

1. **From any LinkedIn page, enter the person's name in the search bar at the top of the page.**

As you type, LinkedIn presents you with name matches.

2. **If the person's name appears, click it to open his or her profile.**
3. **If the person's name doesn't appear, click the search button and review the search results, clicking the person's name to open his or her profile.**

If the person is an Influencer, in the top-left corner of the profile, there is the Official LinkedIn Influencer badge that looks like a speech bubble that says "In." Although you can connect with Influencers, the Follow button is highlighted, as shown in Figure 14-9.

You may see 1st, 2nd, or 3rd next to the person's name, meaning that not only is the person an Influencer, but also you are connected to that person and that person is in your LinkedIn network.

4. **Click the Follow button to subscribe to the person's long-form posts and status updates.**

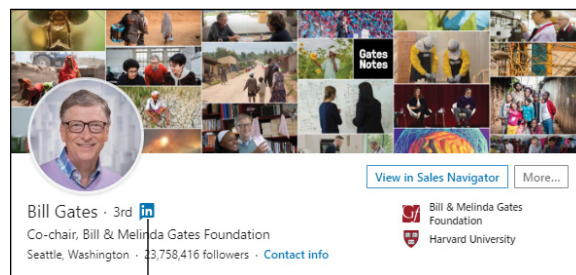


FIGURE 14-9:
Connecting with
an Influencer.

Official LinkedIn Influencer badge

Discovering recommended Influencers

LinkedIn provides you with a partial list of recommended Influencers. Here's how to access that list and follow those Influencers LinkedIn recommends for you:

1. From any LinkedIn page, click **My Network** in the top toolbar.
2. Click **People I Follow** from the left sidebar.

If you already follow any Influencers, a list of those Influencers you follow appears.

3. Click the **"Follow Fresh Perspectives"** link at the top of the page.

A list of recommended Influencers appears, as shown in Figure 14-10. You can also navigate directly to the Fresh Perspectives page (www.linkedin.com/feed/follow).

This list is a combination of official Influencers and people that LinkedIn believes you should follow. Not everyone you follow will appear in your Interests section. You will also see hashtags and companies that LinkedIn believes may interest you.

4. Hover your mouse pointer over an Influencer that interests you and click **Follow**.

The plus (+) sign becomes a gray check mark, showing that you are following that Influencer.

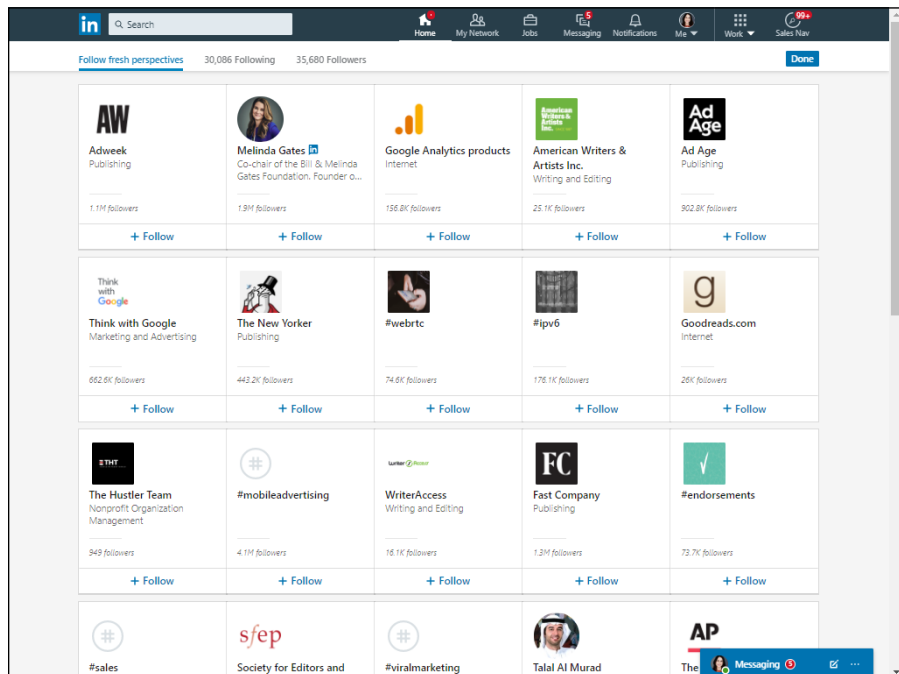


FIGURE 14-10:
Following Influencers is as easy as clicking a plus (+) sign.

Removing Influencers

It's a good idea to audit and edit your list of Influencers every few months. Not only does LinkedIn add Influencers, but also some Influencers you follow may lose their luster, and it's best to remove them. Remember, nothing on LinkedIn is written in stone. Not only are you developing as a professional within your career, so are your interests and future vision of yourself. Make sure that you are always keeping your profile updated as to who you are right now in time.

Here's how to remove Influencers from your profile:

- 1. Go to your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Scroll down to the Interests section and click See More.**

A list of Influencers you are following appears. You may need to click the Influencers tab at the top.

- 3. Click the Following button to the right of the Influencer.**

Once you click, that Influencer is removed from the Following section of your profile. You will no longer receive their status updates or long-form posts on your newsfeed.

Following Schools

When you click See More in the Interests section, you see the person's list of Influencers, Companies, Groups, and Schools. I've shown you how to follow Influencers and companies in this chapter. I've also taught you to join groups strategically. Now it's time to follow some schools to round out your Interests section.

What schools do you want to follow? Here are some ideas:

- » The schools you attended
- » The school you would love to attend
- » Schools your college-bound child(ren) want to attend
- » The school your spouse is attending or attended
- » Schools that are your clients/prospects
- » Schools that specialize in your field of expertise
- » Schools that provide continuing education that you are interested in learning more about

Now that you have a list of schools in mind, here's how you follow the school so that it shows up at the bottom of your LinkedIn profile's Interests section:

- 1. From any LinkedIn page, enter the school's name in the search bar at the top of the page.**

As you type, LinkedIn presents you with name matches.

- 2. If the school name appears, click it to open its LinkedIn page.**

- 3. If the school doesn't appear, click the Search button.**

To filter for just schools, click More and then choose Schools.

- 4. Review the search results, click the school to open its LinkedIn page.**

- 5. Click the Follow button to subscribe and have the school show up in your Interests list.**

Once you follow the school you attended, don't stop there! Click the Alumni section of the page to see some really great information. You can search for alumni between certain dates as well as search for alumni by job title, keyword, or company.

This is great if you are applying for a position at a certain company and you want more information or maybe even an introduction. Check out the alumni section to see if you went to school with anyone who works there! Talk about commonality! If you scroll even further down, you can see more information about where alumni work and love. Scrolling down further you can see a list of all alumni.

Your Interests section is now fully optimized, you are also following some really interesting people, groups, and learning institutions making your LinkedIn feed a little more interesting than before. You have also reached the *end* of your LinkedIn profile.

How do you feel? That insurmountable task is now behind you! Although your profile is optimized, there's still a little more to do. In the next chapter, I show you how to join the LinkedIn conversation through posts and articles. Meet you there!

- » Creating rapport with your network
- » Turning your profile into a portfolio
- » Using hashtags and tagging people
- » Marketing your blog post

Chapter **15**

Publishing on LinkedIn

Once upon a time, LinkedIn was more or less a Rolodex. It was a database of profiles and that was pretty much it. As LinkedIn grew and developed, it added more and more functionality such as the LinkedIn feed, which is an area where you can post comments and information for all of your network to see. Located on the home page, the LinkedIn feed is a compendium of the articles and posts people in your network create and share. Think of it as Twitter or Facebook for smart, professional people.

Sadly, few people posted in those early days, so LinkedIn filled this area with new connection updates, profile update notifications, and cross-posts from Twitter accounts. Talk about unfriendly and boring!

Eventually LinkedIn realized that the LinkedIn feed should be the lifeblood of the network. LinkedIn did away with all the noise and digital pollution and put in a place an algorithm that values personalized relevance. Suddenly, the LinkedIn home page was a place to go to engage with professionals, get good information, and be entertained along the way. With the ability to make an impact and add value, people began to pay more attention to their LinkedIn feeds.

Whenever you write an article, create a post, or like, comment, or share someone else's posts, this activity appears in the LinkedIn feed and on your profile.

In this chapter, I show you how you can interact and engage with others through the LinkedIn feed. I explain the difference between articles and posts. I also explain tagging people, hashtagging, and how to market yourself as a thought leader. Let's start there.

Showcasing Yourself as a Thought Leader

At one time, only academics were held to the paradigm of “publish or perish.” Now, in the world of rampant social media, professionals who wish to be seen as thought leaders must also publish or perish. By blogging and creating posts on LinkedIn, you establish yourself as an authority in your specialized field by sharing your expertise, insights, opinions, and professional background. With each share, like, comment, and view, your post is seen, shared, and promoted to your network and beyond.

It’s easy to say you are an expert; it’s much harder to prove it. Imagine you are on the shortlist for your dream job. The hiring manager visits your profile and the profiles of the other people being considered. Your profile showcases a number of articles you’ve written on your specialized field and posts that show engagement from other industry movers and shakers; the other candidates have no activity on their profile. Immediately you have differentiated yourself from the other candidates and have proven your knowledge and authority.

Keeping up with Articles and Activity

The Articles & Activity section of your LinkedIn profile broadcasts so much about your personal professional brand to your reader that it should not be ignored. If you look at your LinkedIn profile and do not see an Articles & Activity section, that means you haven’t posted, commented, liked, or shared anything. As soon as you like a few posts or create a post, this section will appear on your profile. Check out Figure 15-1 to see how posts and articles you write on LinkedIn’s Publishing Platform (which I discuss later in this chapter) are displayed on your profile.



WARNING

If you are missing this section, a person looking at your profile will wonder if you are inactive. It’s impossible to see the last time a person logged on, but you can tell how involved people are by the dates of their latest activity. No activity, no relevance.

If you only like posts, you appear to be more of an observer. You are engaged and you are active but you don’t have much to say. If you comment on posts, suddenly you begin to have more clout. This person is actively engaged and conversing. If you share other people’s posts, you are an educator, curator, and aggregator. This is a person who wants to add value and is actively helping her community.

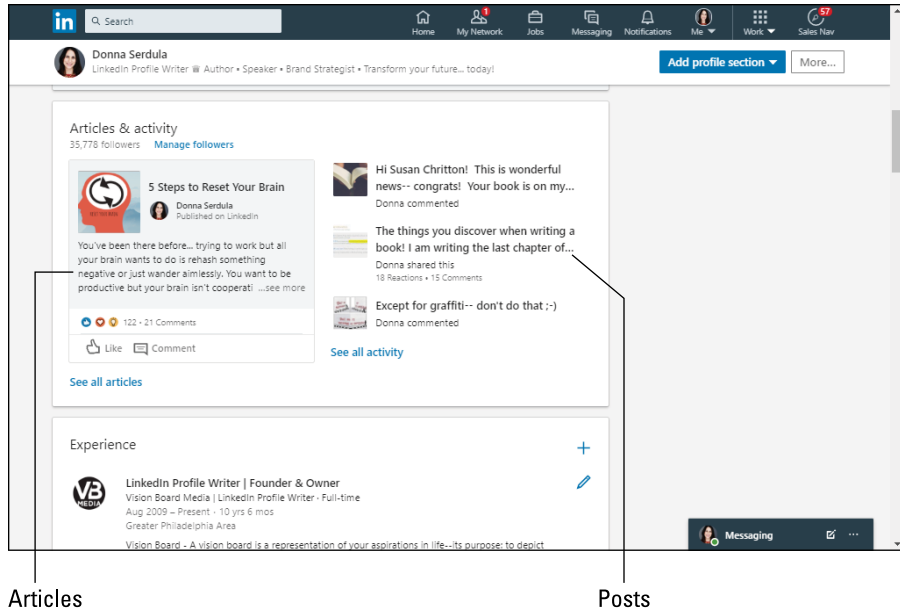


FIGURE 15-1:
The Articles & Activity section on your profile.

If you create posts, you are now seen as someone who truly has something to say. You appear to others as a thinker, an idea generator, perhaps even a rainmaker and change agent. If you create articles, you are now truly an expert. You are seen as someone who is deeply embedded in their expertise. So few people have the discipline, ability, the knowledge to write an article that you are truly differentiating yourself from the masses. You are focused, intent, prolific, and thoughtful.

Content Creation = Thought Leadership = Differentiation = Opportunity

Post and article creators are the influencers of the LinkedIn realm. These are the people supplying ideas, concepts, and trends the business world needs to keep advancing, innovating, and growing. These posts and articles don't just reside on your LinkedIn profile, they are broadcast through the LinkedIn feed.

Understanding the LinkedIn Feed

Whether you log in through the desktop experience or through LinkedIn's mobile app, the very first place you land is the LinkedIn feed. Think of your LinkedIn feed as a super-smart digital newspaper that only displays posts and articles that interest you. How does LinkedIn know what interests you? You tell it by following hashtags, influencers, companies, schools, and people. By liking, commenting, and sharing posts on your LinkedIn feed, this too alerts LinkedIn of what you find

engaging and interesting and determines what LinkedIn displays on your LinkedIn feed. LinkedIn brings all of these items together utilizing a complex algorithm to determine which posts pertain to your interests.

If you don't yet have a lot of activity on LinkedIn, you can still help shape what LinkedIn shows you on your feed. To “train” your LinkedIn feed to show you content you are interested in, follow these steps:

1. Go to LinkedIn .com.

If you are logged in to LinkedIn, your LinkedIn feed opens on the main screen. If you are not logged in, log in to LinkedIn to view your LinkedIn feed.

2. Click the three dots that appear in the upper-right corner of any post on your LinkedIn feed.

A drop-down menu appears, as shown in Figure 15-2.

3. Click Improve My Feed.

The Follow Fresh Perspectives page opens.

4. Scroll through and click Follow below any hashtag (#) or influencer you find interesting.

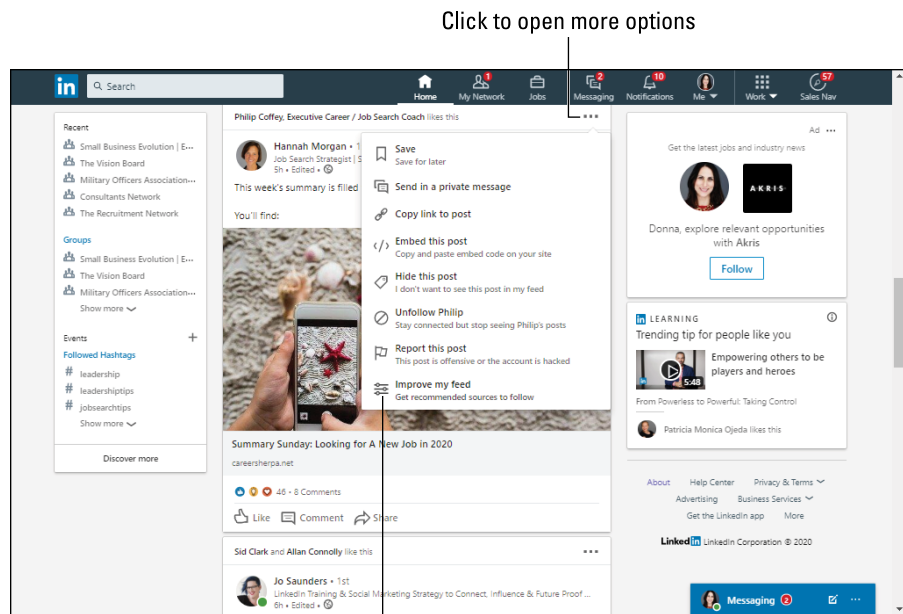


FIGURE 15-2:
Improving your
LinkedIn feed.

After following the hashtags and influencers that interest you, you will find your LinkedIn feed becoming more and more personalized to your interests.

LinkedIn's goal is to provide tailored and relevant content that interests the reader. When reading articles on your LinkedIn feed (on your mobile phone app or via LinkedIn's desktop experience), everything you see is customized specifically to you. LinkedIn wants to make sure that what you are reading is meaningful to you. If you were to log in as someone else, the information you see would be completely different.

The LinkedIn feed is comprised of *posts*. Posts can be all text. Posts can contain a link to an article either on or off LinkedIn. Posts can contain a video. Posts can contain an image. Posts can even contain a PDF document. Posts can celebrate a teammate with “kudos” or impart that you are hiring. Think of posts as an update on what you are doing, thinking, considering, recommending, and so on. Posts are meant to be short missives, but you have the ability to go as long as 1,300 characters (about 150 words). If you have more to say, writing an article and then creating a post with the link to that article is the answer.

The types of posts on your LinkedIn feed (but not necessarily on your profile) include:

- » **Comments by connections:** You may see a post from a person outside your network because a connection of yours commented on that post. This is LinkedIn bringing information outside of your network to you. LinkedIn's hope is that because a connection commented, you may find the post interesting and may want to jump in and add your two cents!
- » **Likes/reactions by connections:** If a connection reacts to a post by choosing like, celebrate, love, insightful, or curious, that post, even if the poster is outside your network, may appear on your LinkedIn feed. Again, this is LinkedIn trying to get you involved.
- » **Shares of posts from other people:** Connections will share posts written by other people. This too will be shared on your LinkedIn feed.
- » **Recommended content:** With labels reading Trending, Recommended For You, or Popular, this is content determined by LinkedIn's algorithms and editorial team that you will find interesting and fitting for who you are and what you do.
- » **Mentioned in the news or latest news:** LinkedIn has a beacon out, looking for when members and companies on LinkedIn appear in the news. These news articles are then shared with anyone who follows or knows that person or company.

» **Sponsored content:** Companies will pay for their posts to get distributed and seen on the LinkedIn feed. If you are following that company page, or fit the audience criteria of the advertiser, you will see this content. It's not organic, but it should be relevant.

Using hashtags

Hashtags were invented originally for Twitter as a way to group, contextualize, and filter tweets of similar content. LinkedIn adopted the hashtag and has infused it into the LinkedIn feed experience. As you scroll through your LinkedIn feed, you may find yourself thinking, “Whoa, that’s a whole lot of content. I just want to read about leadership or manufacturing or business development” or whatever other topic interests you.

When you want to read posts that are centered on a specific topic, that’s when you use a hashtag. In the previous example, you’d search for the hashtag #leadership or #manufacturing or #businessdevelopment in the Search box in the toolbar to see information about only those topics.

The hashtag search results will give you all the recent posts that contain the #hashtag. You can follow that hashtag so that it’s easy to filter your feed. Followed hashtags reside on the left sidebar of your homepage under the heading “Followed Hashtags.” As you read through posts, you may see other hashtags that are of interest to you like #leadershiptips or #jobsearch. Hashtags are hyperlinked within posts so it’s easy to click them and get taken to their page where you can follow and read posts that contain those hashtags.



TIP

Are you thinking, “But how will I know what’s a hashtag?” Here’s the thing: Anything can be a hashtag as long as there aren’t spaces, punctuation, special symbols, or emojis in the title. You can see a list of popular hashtags by clicking Discover More under Followed Hashtags in the left sidebar of your home page (see Figure 15-3). This is a great place to start following recommended hashtags.

Hashtags are a great way to locate interesting posts that you might never see because the authors are outside your network. Hashtags are also a great way to make sure your posts get seen by a greater, more targeted audience. By adding a few hashtags to your post, you are indexing your post for greater network visibility and leading more people to your post for more views and engagement.

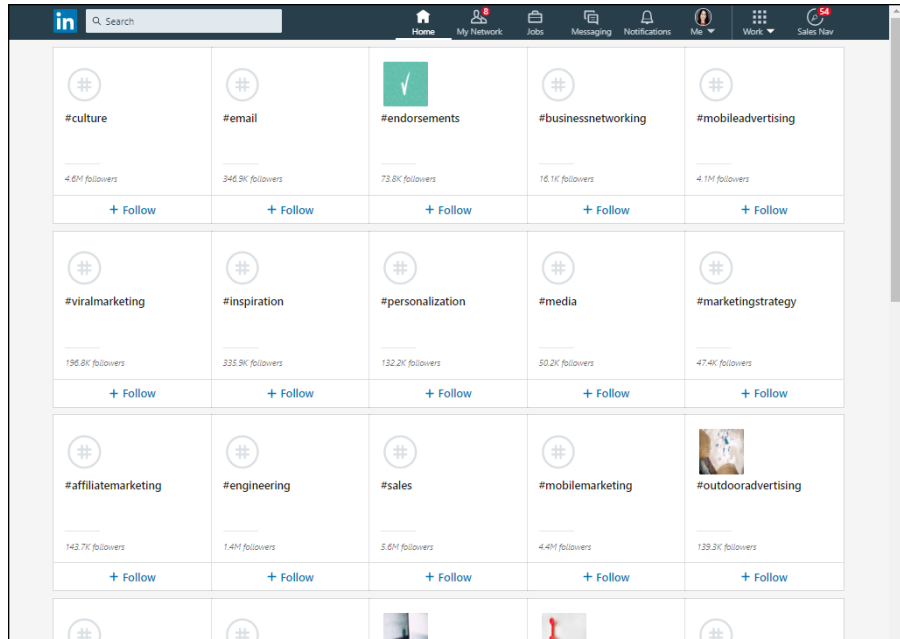


FIGURE 15-3:
Listing of
recommended
hashtags.

You can add hashtags directly into your content. Here's an example:

Check out this great #jobsearch article. It covers the importance of #interviewprep and #salarynegotiation.

Instead of embedding the hashtags into the content, you can also add the hashtags to the end of the post. For example:

Jobseekers, this article has so much great info! #jobsearch #interviewprep #salarynegotiation.



TIP

LinkedIn recommends using three hashtags per post. When you look at truly successful posts, you will see that more often than not, they use three hashtags, no more, no less. LinkedIn uses your chosen hashtags to create the URL of the post. By providing context to your link, it helps with search engine optimization (SEO) and getting people to click when sharing via email or messaging.

Tagging people

As you scroll through your LinkedIn feed, have you noticed that in addition to hashtags, you see people's names hyperlinked in posts? This is called *tagging* and it's a way of notifying a person about your post and encouraging engagement.

POPULAR HASHTAGS

Here is a list of some of the most followed and most used hashtags on LinkedIn. Although a hashtag can be created on the fly, it's best to use hashtags that are tried and true. We use hashtags to categorize our post so people can find it because of its relevance to them. If you use hashtags that people aren't following, you are missing out on the marketing potential. Go through this list and highlight or circle those hashtags that you feel reflect you. Think in terms of which hashtags you want to follow and which hashtags you will use in future posts. If you don't see any hashtags that resonate with you, come up with your own. Go back to Chapter 3 where I talk about skills and keywords. How you describe yourself is great starting point in determining the hashtags that will work for you. You can also click Discover More on your LinkedIn's home page to see the hashtags LinkedIn recommends you follow.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| #advertisingandmarketing | #management |
| #careers | #marketing |
| #digitalmarketing | #motivation |
| #entrepreneurship | #personaldevelopment |
| #future | #socialmedia |
| #humanresources | #startups |
| #innovation | #sustainability |
| #jobinterviews | #technology |

You tag a person by typing the @ (“at”) sign and then that person’s name without a space in the Start a Post text box (see Figure 15-4). As you type the person’s name, LinkedIn provides a drop-down list of people to choose from, as shown in Figure 15-5. Click the person you wish to tag. The @ sign disappears, and the person’s name is hyperlinked back to his or her LinkedIn profile. Once you click the post button to unleash your post, the person who is tagged within the post is notified that he or she was mentioned in your post. That person can click the notification to view your post and hopefully provide a comment.



REMEMBER

You do not have to be connected to people in order to tag them in your post. Perhaps you are sharing an article. Consider tagging the author of the article, even if you don't know him or her. That person will be grateful to see you sharing his or her work.

FIGURE 15-4:
The Start a Post
text box.

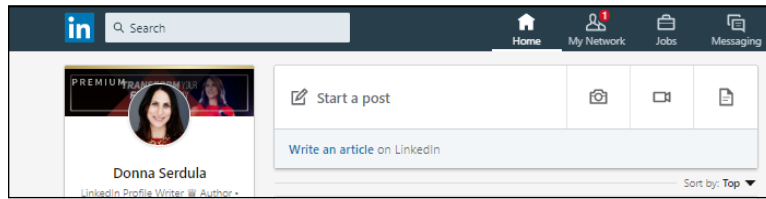
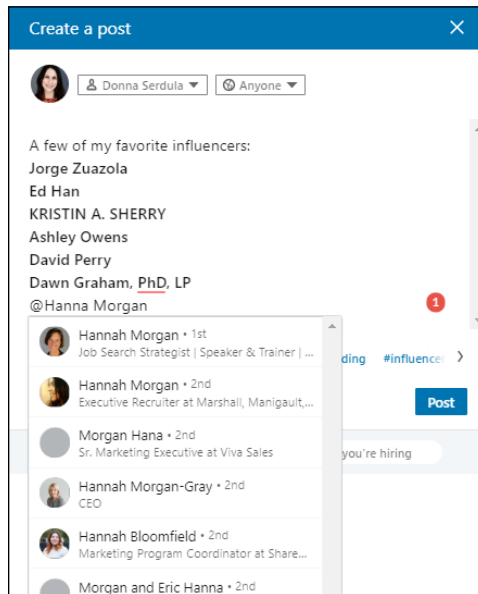


FIGURE 15-5:
Tagging a person
in a post.



Looking at the Difference between a Post and an Article

Posts are what populate your LinkedIn feed. Some posts seem like articles. They can be quite long, up to 1,300 characters (about 150 words). When you create a text post, a person can read everything without having to click a link to visit another page to read the actual content.

Unfortunately, posts age away. Each new post pushes the prior posts lower and lower until they are pretty much lost in the digital sea. Articles, however, have more staying power. There's a section on your profile where all your articles live and you can continue to create new posts and share links to those old evergreen articles. On the other hand, LinkedIn wants the LinkedIn feed to be sticky. It doesn't want people surfing away. Posts without links appear to perform better than posts with links to articles. This is the reason why you may see people writing in a post, "See first content for link."



Posts are more immediate and timely. Posts are intended to engage your audience and spur conversations. Articles are more thoughtful and evergreen. Once an article is written, you share the article in a post with a link back to the article.

Creating your first post

Do you have an idea for your first post? My advice is to not overthink it. Here are some suggestions:

- » **Post a link to a video or article that relates to your business or industry.** The video or article could be on LinkedIn or the web in general. For extra points, add context — why are you sharing the article and what is interesting about it?
- » **Post a quote that motivates you, either in text or image form.** Don't do this too often, as quotes can get boring and don't truly say much about your own knowledge, authority, or abilities, but as a starting point, it's an easy way to get in the game.
- » **Participate in a day-of-the-week meme.** Some examples include #mondaymindset, #tuesdaytips, #givingtuesday, #wednesdaywisdom, #throwbackthursday, #FollowFriday, #SaturdayShoutout, #SundayRead.
- » **Post an image.** This could be a picture of your team, your office building, your products, people at an event, and so on. You could post an image meme or an infographic. Read an interesting book? Take a picture of you holding the book and include a brief positive review.
- » **Upload a recent presentation or marketing literature.** Information you share in the real world is information you can share in the online world, too. Don't just give a presentation to the people in the room, share the presentation online so more people can see it. If you find yourself sharing marketing materials or valuable content with colleagues, prospects, or clients, scan it as a PDF file or take a picture of it and allow even more eyes to see it.
- » **Record a video and post it.** Video is a great way to get seen and capture attention. (LinkedIn recommends a length of 30 seconds to two minutes.) You could do a how-to video. You could interview someone. You could provide advice on a particular topic or answer frequently asked questions. Create an tutorial video or give a sneak peek or insider's view showing behind-the-scenes information. If you are at an industry event or conference, capture footage that others would love to see if they were in attendance.
- » **Post an interesting tidbit of information.** For example, stats, ideas, trivia, a story, company/industry news, or an announcement are great tidbits of information.

- » **Ask a question, request advice, or help in compiling knowledge or information.** LinkedIn is a great place to crowdsource information. Rather than keep your question or need for advice a secret, ask it on LinkedIn. You will be surprised at how people want to help and will pipe in with answers or information. Worried about looking stupid? It's okay to be vulnerable! In her book, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*, Brené Brown says, "Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability, and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path." So don't hold it in. Ask and learn!
- » **Let people know if you're attending an event.** Let them know it's happening and invite others to join you. Attended an event? Review the event (stay positive!) and post pictures.
- » **Use LinkedIn's Kudos feature to give a shout-out to a colleague.** Think of it as a short-lived mini recommendation. Think of it as LinkedIn Karma — when you send good stuff out, good stuff will come back at ya!



As of the writing of this book, LinkedIn is slowly rolling out a feature called LinkedIn Live, which is a live video stream. The way the live stream is different from its current video functionality is the immediateness of the video. Prior to LinkedIn Live, to post video you would record video onto your device and then upload the file. The video would then be viewable by your network. LinkedIn Live, on the other hand, will allow you to broadcast the video live to your network while you are recording. As the video broadcasts, you can interact with the people watching. This is a great way to engage with your audience and offer timely content delivered immediately.

Now that you have an idea for your first post, it's time to do it! Take a deep breath, let's go!

1. **Go to [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com).**
2. **On your home page, click Start a Post in the share box, as shown earlier in Figure 15-4.**

If you also have a company page, you can choose who you want to post as, you or your company.

3. **Set the viewing mode by clicking the button underneath your name and selecting who you want to view your post.**

You can choose between Anyone, Anyone + Twitter (if you have your Twitter account linked to your LinkedIn account), Connections only, or Group members. I highly recommend making your posts viewable to anyone. Go big or go home!

4. In the text field, type your content.

If you paste a URL, a thumbnail and preview pane appear.

You can include hashtags in the post or you can add hashtags to the bottom of the post. LinkedIn supplies hashtag suggestions that you can add to the bottom of your post. You can also tag people if you feel your post has direct relevance to them.

At the bottom of the post window, you can add an image, a video file, or a document by clicking on the corresponding icon.

You can also choose to provide kudos to someone by clicking the Celebrate a Teammate button or you can click the Share That You're Hiring button.

5. Click the Post button when you are ready to unleash your post to the world.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Your post doesn't immediately show up on everyone in your network's LinkedIn feed. It first goes through a content quality scoring check to make sure the content you posted is good or if the content might be inferior, spammy, vulgar, or just plain bad. If everything looks good, the content is then displayed to part of your network. As it is displayed, LinkedIn monitors how many likes, views, hides, and flags that content receives from viewers. This in turn either triggers a demotion if the content is worse than what it had earlier thought or if the content performs well, it will continue to display to others in your network and beyond.

Your takeaway should be to always post good, quality content. Consider including language in your post that engages people or summons them to like or comment on your post. You may even consider alerting a few people via email or LinkedIn messaging that you just created a post and would appreciate if they like, comment, or share it. You can find the link to your post by clicking the three dots in the upper-right corner of your post. Paste that link into an email or LinkedIn message to alert people and seek engagement that could hurl your post onto a much bigger pulpit.

How often should you post?

When consulting with clients or presenting to an audience, invariably I am asked, "How often should I post on LinkedIn?" The answer depends on how you want to use LinkedIn. Ideally, posting once a week would keep you in your network's radar, and shouldn't be an issue from a time standpoint. If you really want to be seen as an influencer, you might consider posting more often. Lately, the LinkedIn algorithm rewards people who post one to three times a week. If you post more than that, you may find that your posts don't get as many views and don't have the staying power.



TIP

Quality is by far more preferable to quantity in the LinkedIn world. Don't worry so much about how often you should post. Instead, make sure you have interesting items to post.

Also consider consistency. You are creating content to build relationships and establish ties. Provide value and write consistently. The more you write, the easier it becomes. Not only is it good for you, it builds an audience with your content. If you write every Tuesday, people will look forward to Tuesday, excited and eager to read your latest post. Create a habit for people; make them look forward to your content, establish ties, and forge a relationship.

Before you start posting regularly and consistently, most people think they have absolutely nothing to say. Once they force themselves to post, they start to realize that they have plenty of things to post about — they just hadn't thought about it. Once you start posting, you'll find that as you go about your day, you will start to notice things that are worth posting. Once you get that click, you'll find that posting gets easier.

Benchmarking success

You can see how well your posts are performing. Just looking at the post will tell you how many likes, reactions, and comments you received (see Figure 15-6). But you can go deeper by clicking the Analytics icon at the bottom of your published posts that displays the number of views your post has received so far. LinkedIn displays where your viewers work, their title, and location, as shown in Figure 15-7.

Reacting and responding to other people's posts

As you scroll through the LinkedIn feed, look for posts that move you. Once you find one that motivates you, you can choose to either like it, comment on it, or share it with your network as a post coming from you. Just hover our mouse over the Like option and select the reaction that best matches your feelings. At one time, when you liked a post, it was just a like. LinkedIn now provides additional reactions: Like, Celebrate, Love, Insightful, and Curious, as shown in Figure 15-8.

If you read a post that makes you go smile or laugh or somehow moves you, choose Like. If the post is an announcement of a promotion or a success, choose Celebrate. Use Love if a post is heartwarming, kind, exceptionally complimentary, or makes you happy. Insightful is useful when a person shares a post that provides commentary or unveils information that is surprising. Curious is great for a post that details something unusual and outside normal expectations, a debate that includes a number of options, or if the post only touches lightly upon a subject and you feel there is more to be shared or learned.

The reaction and comment count

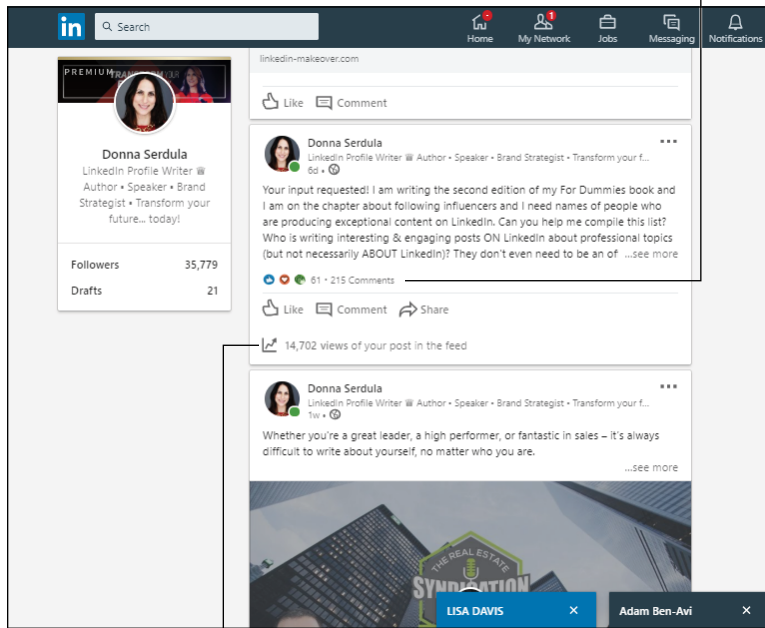


FIGURE 15-6: Comments and view information on the post.

Click this icon to get more information on views

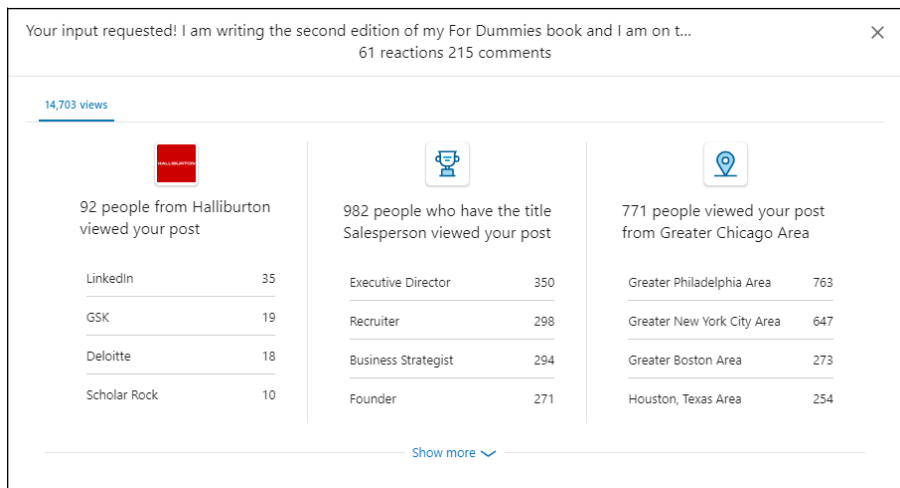


FIGURE 15-7: LinkedIn Analytics page with View information.

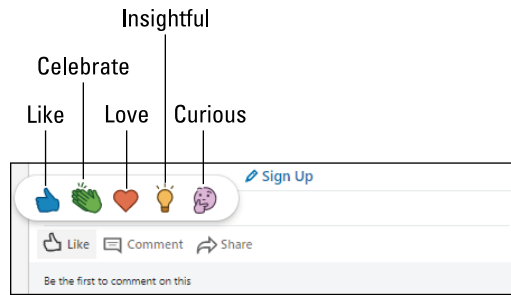


FIGURE 15-8:
Reacting
to a post.

Keep in mind that any engagement you perform on another person’s post — liking, commenting on, or sharing — also appears on your LinkedIn profile. I remember getting a phone call from a lovely gentleman who wanted to hire me to help him optimize his LinkedIn profile. He wasn’t getting any bites from recruiters or hiring managers, and he wasn’t sure what was turning people away from his LinkedIn profile. Looking at his profile, there was definitely room for improvement, but I quickly realized what was really turning people off. This gentleman was very active on his LinkedIn feed. Liking unprofessional, seedy posts and commenting unprofessionally on other posts. When I mentioned his LinkedIn activity, he was shocked! He had no idea that this area of his profile was public and that everyone could see his comments and likes.

Another client of mine was only liking religious posts. When we spoke, I told him that he has to be true to himself; if these posts are what moved him, then is perfectly fine to like and comment on them. However, because LinkedIn is a professional platform, I told him to also like and comment on professional posts within his industry to showcase the other aspects of who he is.

I don’t want to scare you or make you worry about what to react to on LinkedIn. Authentic, genuine, reactions are exactly what makes the LinkedIn feed fun and interesting. People do care what you have to say. Just stay positive. My mother used to tell me when I was a young girl, “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” This works equally well in the LinkedIn feed. If you don’t have anything nice to comment, don’t comment at all. And as you react and comment, know that the last three items you like and comment on are populating your LinkedIn profile.

You now know everything there is to know about posts on LinkedIn, now let’s turn to articles.

Creating your first article

Writing articles isn’t relegated to only influencers, reporters, journalists, or academics anymore. LinkedIn’s Publishing Platform gives everyone with a LinkedIn

profile the ability to publish long-form articles. When you publish a long-form article, the article is listed on your profile under the Articles & Activity section.

Articles are typically longer than posts and contain evergreen content. Evergreen means that it stays fresh longer. Text posts are typically shared once, whereas you can post a link to an article over and over again.

There's more value to writing an article than simply educating others and showing how much you know your stuff. When you sit down and write, you truly immerse yourself in the material. Even if you consider yourself an expert, taking the time to methodically and strategically plan, research, and then write and iterate the content makes you go so much deeper and creates a much more intense knowledge than just talking about a subject.

Before you create your first long-form article, let's consider your topic. You want to choose a topic that resonates with your target audience. Concentrate first and foremost on making the content high quality and meaningful to your audience. In the early days of the LinkedIn Publishing Platform, LinkedIn had created channels of content. Writing an article that fit in a particular channel was an easy way to get spotlighted and seen by more people than your normal reach. LinkedIn has since retired those channels and replaced them with hashtags, but it's still worth paying attention to the original content channels LinkedIn had originally stated were important. These channels were chosen because they are popular, and by creating content that fits within one of these topics, you are ensuring that you are intersecting with what people find interesting and engaging.

Following is a list of LinkedIn's original topic channels:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Accounting | Business Strategies |
| Africa | Business Travel |
| Airlines & Aviation | Careers: Getting Started |
| Apparel & Fashion | Careers: The Next Level |
| Asia Pacific | Cloud Computing |
| Australia & New Zealand | Company Culture |
| Automotive | Construction |
| Banking & Finance | Customer Experience |
| Best Advice | Daily Digest |
| Big Data | Design |
| Big Ideas & Innovation | Economy |

Editor's Picks
Entertainment
Entrepreneurship
Europe
Food & Beverages
Freelance and Self
Employment
Global Trade
Green Business
Healthcare
Hospitality
Human Resources
India
Information Privacy &
Security
Information Technology
Insurance
Latin America
Law & Government
Law Practice
Leadership & Management
LinkedIn Tips
Logistics & Supply Chain
Management Consulting
Manufacturing
Marketing & Advertising
Media
Middle East
Millennials
Mobile
Oil & Energy
Operations
Pharmaceutical
Product Management
Productivity
Professional Women
Public Relations
Public Speaking & Presenting
Pulse
Real Estate
Recruiting & Hiring
Retail & E-Commerce
Sales Strategies
Social Impact
Social Media
Software Engineering
Space
Student Voices
Technology
The Weekend Essay
Top Videos
Travel & Leisure
United Kingdom
US Politics
VC & Private Equity
What Inspires Me
Writing and Editing
Your Career

Now that you have a topic in mind, here are some ideas to get you started writing.

- »» What is the future of your industry?
- »» What is a response to a question you often field from clients, prospects, colleagues, employees, or employers?
- »» What are some trends you see unfolding in your industry/area of expertise?
- »» Provide a review of a recent learning experience like a keynote, class, podcast, book, or something else.
- »» Detail a case study on a successful project you worked on.
- »» Write a comparison between two products or services or ideas.
- »» Explain the solutions you see to your industry's biggest challenges.
- »» Share a learning experience born from a mistake or challenge.
- »» Unveil something surprising or provide a detailed look at statistics.



TIP

Articles on LinkedIn shouldn't be overwhelmingly long. Aim for 800 to 2,000 words. If you have a larger vision, break it into a series of articles. Keep yourself focused on your topic and write using a conversational tone. Rather than write for views, write for engagement. A successful post receives feedback in likes, comments, and shares.

Unlike your profile, LinkedIn supports formatting of long-form posts. Make sure your article is thoughtfully formatted. Use headings to outline your overarching points. Add interesting pictures that illustrate your thoughts. Call attention to your important points by using lists and formatting your text in bold and italics.

You can also include links to other websites, and you can embed videos as well as HTML. Here are some items you can embed into your blog post:

- »» Charts
- »» Images
- »» Podcasts
- »» Polls
- »» Presentations
- »» Tweets
- »» Videos

By adding multimedia to your article, you are making it visually appealing and providing concrete examples that support your opinion.



TIP

Publishing on LinkedIn isn't a once and done exercise. Publishing is a long-term commitment with no end date. The idea is to commit to a schedule and keep at it. Determine what works for you, and make it a habit whether it's once a week, once a month, or once every three months.

If you are wondering the best days to publish your post to achieve the most views, research points to Thursdays and Sundays. Some of the most successful posts I've written were posted on Fridays and Mondays, so even though research points to Thursday and Sunday, the real differentiator is simply good content and quick engagement from the original set of viewers.

Now that you have an idea of topic, tone, length, and frequency, follow these steps to create your very first article on LinkedIn:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **At the top of your home page, click the Write an Article link in the share text box (see Figure 15-4).**

A page opens where you write your long-form post, as shown in Figure 15-9. At the top of the page is an area to add a hero image. This image also acts as a thumbnail and proceeds your long-form post on your profile and on status updates and on Pulse, if you are featured.

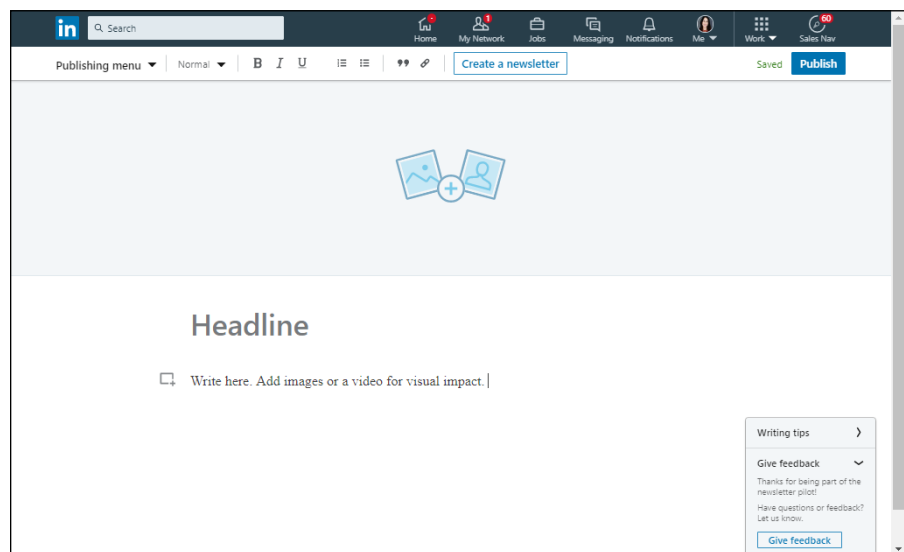


FIGURE 15-9:
Publishing a
long-form post.

3. Click anywhere within the image area to add an image.

An Open dialog box appears.

4. Select your image on your hard drive and click Open.

The image opens and you can preview how it looks. Hovering your mouse pointer over the image, click at the top to credit the person who made the image.

5. Click in the area where it says, “Headline,” and type in a headline.

The headline is the title of your article. Make sure it is intriguing and compelling. This field may only contain 150 characters or fewer.

6. The next area is the body of the post. Click where it says, “Write here. Add images or a video for visual impact.”

This is where you write your article.

7. Highlight the text you want formatted, and then in the format bar at the top of the screen above the image area, click the Normal drop-down list to expand the text formatting options:

H1: This is the main heading and produces the largest font size.

H2: This is a subheading and produces the second largest font size.

Normal: This is unformatted body text.

There are other options as well. Click the matching icon to apply the following formatting:

B: This sets the text in bold.

I: This sets the text in italics.

U: This underlines the text. Use this sparingly as most people associate underlined text with hyperlinks.

Numbered list: This creates a numbered list.

Bulleted list: This creates an unnumbered list.

Block quote: This is for a direct quotation. The text is center justified and the font is italics and slightly larger than the normal body text.

Link: This creates a hyperlink to another page on the web.

8. Once you have finished writing your article, proofread to make sure it’s ready to be published.

ADDING AN ENGAGING HERO IMAGE

Sitting atop your long-form post is a hero image that brings visual zest to your article. Make sure you add an image that is interesting and compelling. This image becomes the thumbnail image that follows your article on your profile and throughout the web as it is shared. When chosen well, an image can bring more views than even a great headline.

The dimensions for a long-form post hero image is 744 pixels wide by 400 pixels tall. In Chapter 8, I offer a bunch of ideas for choosing background images for your profile. Use the same strategy to find images for your LinkedIn articles. Also check out Flickr's Creative Commons images (www.flickr.com/creativecommons) where the images are free to use as long as you attribute the work to the image author.

9. Click the Publish button in the upper-right corner of the page to publish your article.

A pop-up window appears.

10. In the open text field, provide context around your article so your network knows what it is about, and then click the Publish button.

Tell your network what your article is about. Use #tags (hashtags) to help others find it.



TIP

To create a hashtag, all you do is take a word or phrase, remove any spaces, special characters, or punctuation and begin it with a hash mark (#). For example, #LinkedIn #B2B #Leadership #ProfessionalDevelopment. See the section "Using hashtags" earlier in this chapter for more information.

What Happens After You Publish?

Take a deep breath (repeat after me: I am good enough, strong enough, and gosh darn it, people like me!) and hit the Publish button. What happens now? Your post is published to your LinkedIn profile under the Articles & Activity section in the top part of your profile. Your profile shows the most recent article you've written. Anyone who views your profile can click to see all the articles you've written on LinkedIn's publishing platform.



REMEMBER

LinkedIn runs your post through a spam and low-quality filter. If your post passes as quality content, LinkedIn may individually notify your network. Rather than alert every single connection you have, LinkedIn may alert only the strongest connections that you interact with regularly. This alert appears in the Notifications section of LinkedIn.

A post also goes out to the LinkedIn feed, alerting your network of the article. People will see the post and click the link to read your article. If they are so inspired, they may scroll to the bottom of your article and leave a comment.

Articles that you write are searchable on LinkedIn and outside of LinkedIn via any search engine. This means that people outside of LinkedIn may find and read your article. You can consider your LinkedIn profile your personal website and the articles you write as your blog.

Marketing Your Blog Post

Although LinkedIn does a fair amount of marketing for you, you should also market your post yourself. Use social media as well as email to alert your audience.

Once your article is published, share the link on Facebook, Twitter, and/or Pinterest. Don't just send it out once; send it out a bunch of times on each network. Either schedule a reminder in your calendar to resend the link or use a tool like Hootsuite that allows you to create multiple updates that are scheduled out into the future.



TIP

Don't just post a link — provide some context and include hashtags in the status as well.

Bad:

Read my article: www.linkedin.com/today/author/todonna

Good:

Just posted a new article all about influencer's influencers on LinkedIn. Find out who the heavy weights follow and study. Read it here: www.linkedin.com/today/author/todonna [#influencer](#) [#linkedin](#) [#digitalmarketing](#)

Email is another great way to get views to your long-form post. If you are a marketer with a double opt-in email list numbering in the thousands, you'll have no difficulty getting word out. But even without a marketing email list you can still send an email out to your friends and colleagues, letting them know you posted an article and providing a link so that they can read it.

When sending email to more than a few people, don't use the To or CC address fields of your email header; instead use BCC. BCC stands for *Blind Carbon Copy*. When you add email addresses to the To or CC fields, everyone can see those email addresses and reply to them. When you use the BCC field, those email addresses aren't visible to others. This is helpful because often people reply not just to you, the person writing the email, but to everyone included as recipients. When this happens, the person replying is unknowingly spamming all the email recipients. By using BCC, you are stopping people from seeing the other email addresses and mistakenly "replying all."

In the next chapter, it's time for you to review your profile and get ready for the final reveal!

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Adding the finishing touches to your profile
- » Making sure your profile is optimized and complete
- » Upgrading to a premium LinkedIn account
- » Improving your profile's chances of success

Chapter **16**

Unveiling and Marketing Your Powerful Profile

Your LinkedIn profile is nearly finished! You added a professional headshot and your headline is compelling. The About section is no longer a copy-and-paste of your resume. Instead, it's a digital introduction and an impressive first impression. Your career trajectory is clearly defined in the Experience section of your profile. Your experiences don't dwell on job description, but instead host impactful accomplishments that differentiate you from others in your industry. You also learned how to position yourself as a thought leader through carefully curated posts and lovingly crafted articles.

You might have thought you were finished, but now it's time to put the final touches on your profile. In this chapter, I review the profile sections with you to make sure everything is optimized, clear, and aligns with your brand and goals. I also show you how to market your profile so others see the work you put into it. Additionally, I give you tips and tricks to increase views to your profile so you are more apt to collide with opportunity. Lastly, I walk you through the differences between the free and paid versions of LinkedIn.

Viewing Your Profile from the Mobile App

You just spent a lot of time working on your profile. Most people do the bulk of their editing on their desktop or laptop computers. It's easy and far more comfortable than swiping with your finger on a smartphone. Once your profile is finished, make sure you check it out on the mobile app, though. Unicode symbols and emojis don't always display the same way on different devices. I remember a client of mine who insisted he wanted check marks in his headline but balked when he saw that they displayed in red and rather cartoon-like on his iPhone.

Here's how to check out your profile using the mobile app:

1. Install LinkedIn's mobile app if you don't already have it.

You can download and install the app from your respective device's app store. Make sure you add an icon to your phone's home screen. This is an app that can help you in your career. Maybe replace the Instagram or Facebook icon with LinkedIn?

2. Open the LinkedIn app and sign in to your LinkedIn account.

3. Click the View Profile icon.

4. Click View Profile.

Your profile displays.

5. Scroll through your profile, making sure everything translated from the desktop version to the mobile app.

Specifically, you are looking for any text formatting like symbols or Unicode or lines you added to separate text. Also, keep your eye out for grammar mistakes and typos. Often these errors slip past your eyes until you look at the same content in a different environment, and then they pop right out!

Viewing Your Profile as an Outsider

When you log in to LinkedIn and click to view your profile, you are always in edit mode. The profile you see is not what other LinkedIn members see when they view your profile when they are logged in to LinkedIn. The good news is that it doesn't look too much different. To see your profile as others do, just imagine that the profile pencil icons are gone and the Dashboard is missing.

But what does it look like to people not logged in to LinkedIn? View your public profile to see your profile as the world outside of LinkedIn sees you. It's important you perform this step because you get to decide what people outside LinkedIn see as well as what the Googlebot will index and show in Google results. You can choose to show everything or just a slim outline. It's up to you. By now, you should know that I am a proponent of showing everything! But it's really up to you and determined by your goal for LinkedIn.

To view the public version of your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

1. **Open your LinkedIn profile.**
2. **Click "Edit public profile & URL" located in the right sidebar, as shown in Figure 16-1.**

You see a preview of your profile as a person not logged in to LinkedIn would see it, as shown in Figure 16-2.
3. **In the Edit Visibility section on the right, scroll down and make sure your visibility settings are aligned to your LinkedIn goals.**
4. **Toggle the sections on or off depending on what you want people to see.**
5. **Click the Back to LinkedIn.com link that appears in the top-right corner of your screen to return to edit mode.**

Click to view your public profile

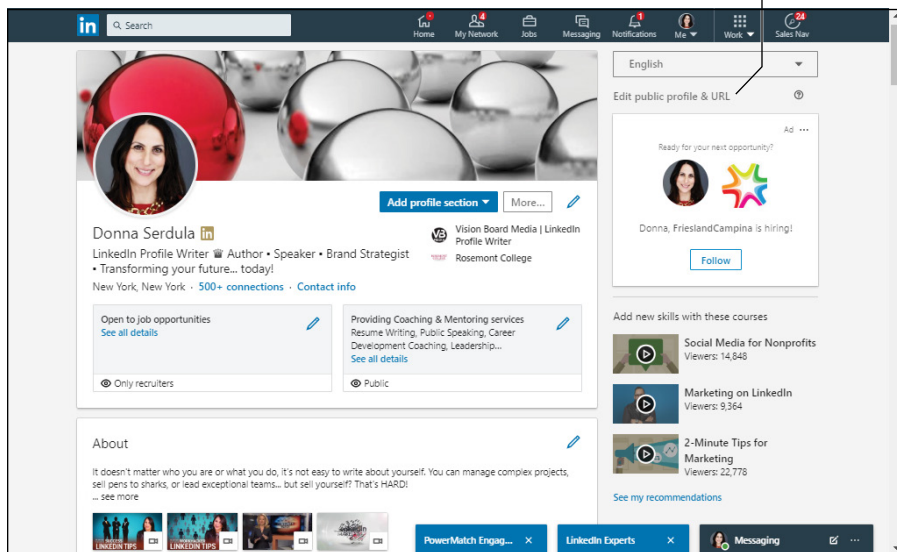


FIGURE 16-1:
Viewing the public version of your profile.

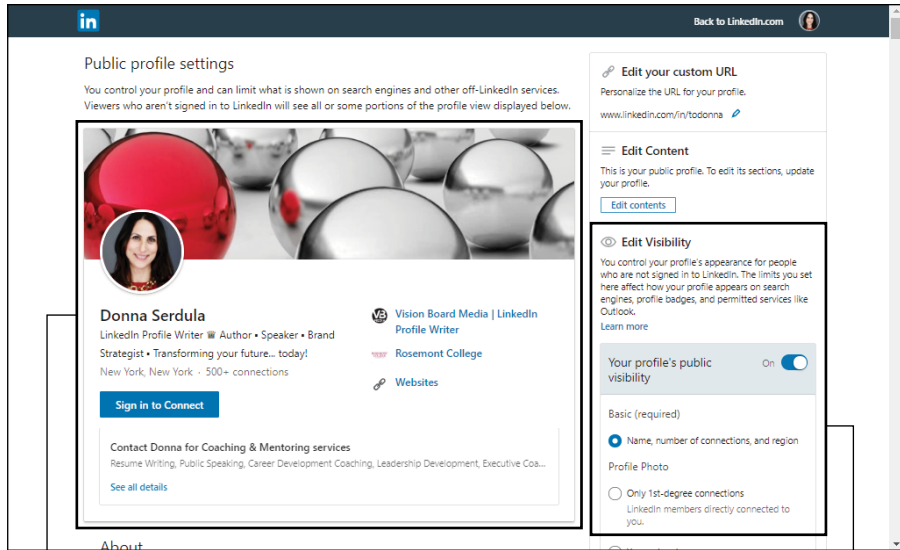


FIGURE 16-2: How people not logged in to LinkedIn see your profile.

This is how people not logged-in to LinkedIn see your profile

Change visibility settings in this area



TIP

If you really want to experience how people outside of LinkedIn see your profile, log out of LinkedIn and visit your profile from your profile URL. Check out Chapter 4 for more information.

Getting Google to Index Your Profile

I often hear from clients who went through our service and had their LinkedIn profile totally transformed. Then they use Google to search for their names and the search results Google produces for their LinkedIn profiles look like their old profiles. Clicking it and visiting the profile produces the new profile, but the search result listing is still reading the old one. Patience you must have, my young Padawan! The Googlebot is constantly indexing and reindexing; it just takes time. LinkedIn states: “We can’t control how quickly search engines make updates after you make changes to your public profile. Some search engines can take several weeks to remove old profiles or show new information” (www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer).

ADD A PROFILE BADGE TO YOUR WEBSITE

While you are on the Edit Public Profile page in LinkedIn, scroll down to the end of the right column. There's a section called Public Profile Badge. Click Create a Badge. LinkedIn provides you with HTML code that you can embed into your website to produce a gorgeous website widget that displays your profile picture, your headline, and a button that links back to your profile.

Don't want to wait the several weeks it might take? How do you speed up this process? First, make sure you have enabled a public profile. No public profile, no Google search result listing. If you have a website, add a link to your LinkedIn profile. (Check out the sidebar, "Add a profile badge to your website" to find out how.) If you have a Twitter account or another social media account that Google indexes, try posting a link to your LinkedIn profile URL. Ultimately you want to find an online property that gets indexed regularly and feed it a link to your profile so that your profile is indexed sooner rather than later.

Your LinkedIn Profile Checklist

Now that you can view your profile as your target audience, let's make sure you didn't miss any sections or make any mistakes. Your public profile is your online reputation and digital face to the world. Your profile must be perfect, as this is how people see and judge you. Make sure all the sections are customized completely. As you go through, check off each completed section.

Profile picture

Does your profile picture cast you as a professional? Do you look warm, friendly, and well-adjusted? Is the background neutral and not distracting?

Background photo

Did you upload a background photo that illustrates your brand, subtly suggesting who you are and what you do to your profile reader?

Name

Is your name spelled correctly? Is it consistent with your business card, resume, other social media channels, and letterhead? Remember: There shouldn't be any symbols or characters other than letters in this field; don't be obnoxious! Review Chapter 5 for more tips.

Headline

Is your headline intriguing? Does it contain your top keywords? Will the people reading it see a benefit to them? Does it compel a person to open your profile to learn more about you? Not sure, go back to Chapter 7 to revisit my LinkedIn Headline Generator.

Location and industry

Is your location correct? Is your industry accurate?

Customized public profile URL

Did you customize the link to your public URL? Does the customized URL contain your name? We handle this together in Chapter 4 and I talk about marketing your URL later in this chapter.

Contact information

Did you include your phone number, email, and IM? Did you add links to your websites and Twitter? Remember, opportunity can't knock if it doesn't know which door to knock on! Check out Chapter 5 for a refresher.

About section

Is your About section engaging and easy to read? Does it introduce you to your reader? Does it provide a clear call to action? When you read it, do you feel a sense of pride? Accomplishment? Is it an authentic professional manifesto? Chapter 12 is where I cover the finer points of creating an optimized About section. I also provide a slew of examples.

One current (hopefully) and at least two past experiences

Are your experience titles packed with keywords? Do the descriptions explain what you accomplished along with your performance highlights? Check out Chapters 10 and 11 to refresh yourself on what makes a glowing trajectory.

Education

Did you list your education? I cover this in Chapter 13.

Licenses & Certifications

LinkedIn gave licenses and certifications its own section. If you got 'em, list 'em!

Volunteer Experience

You hear how Millennials are a mission-driven generation? Well, they are our future. It's not just about taking, it's about giving back. Here's where you detail how you give back. Not giving back just yet? It's never too late to get started.

Skills & Endorsements

Did you add your core competencies, strengths, skill sets, and abilities? I cover the Skills & Endorsements section in Chapter 3. Remember, when people are searching for someone like you, they are using keywords as their search query. Make sure those keywords are in your profile, and adding them as skills is the easiest way to get them into your profile.

Recommendations

Do you have glowing recommendations on your profile from people in high places? Have you given recommendations to other professionals? I talk about this in Chapter 3.

Accomplishments

Did you add your honors and awards, organizations, languages, projects, publications, patents, test scores, and/or courses? Are you showcasing yourself as a well-rounded professional? I delve down deep in Chapter 13 to ferret out your accomplishments.

Connections

Do you have at least 50 first-degree connections? If you need help, I go into detail later in this chapter on how to grow your network. I discuss the structure of your network in Chapter 2.

Following influencers, companies, groups, and schools

Are you following at least five influencers, companies, and schools that interest you? Did you join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups that contain not only your target audience but also large amounts of members? In Chapter 14, I cover following influencers and schools and companies to beef up your Interests section.

If you are proud of what you lovingly crafted, do me a favor — send me a link to your LinkedIn profile and let me know you used this book to assist you. You can message me on LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com/in/todonna). I have an Open Profile so anyone can reach out to me despite not being directly connected. You can also email me at donna@linkedin-makeover.com. I can't wait to see it!

Now that your profile looks amazing and impressive, the next thing I want to show you is how to benchmark the success of your profile and some marketing tips to make sure your profile really performs well.

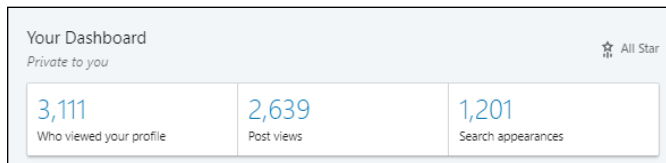
Benchmarking Your Profile's Success

You've put a lot of time into improving your profile. Now you want to see if the effort was worthwhile and is bringing enhanced results. The thing is, to determine success, you need to know where you started. Fortunately, LinkedIn provides some statistics that show you how well your profile is performing.

Sitting directly under your About section is your profile's Dashboard, as shown in Figure 16-3. This dashboard provides three important stats:

- » Number of people who have viewed your profile within a 90-day period
- » Number of views your latest post has received
- » Number of appearances in weekly search

FIGURE 16-3:
The Dashboard is where you see your profile's stats.



Clicking the number of people who have viewed your profile takes you to the Who Viewed Your Profile screen. This screen is different depending upon whether you pay for LinkedIn or use the freemium version, as shown in Figure 16-4.

The free version only provides the number of people who have viewed your profile in the past 90 days and the percentage change since the previous week. The premium version provides a chart that spans 90 days and allows you to see the ebbs and flows of views to your profile over time.

The free version allows you to see the last five people who viewed your profile. The premium version allows you to see all viewers from the past 90 days.

Clicking the Search Appearances link on your Dashboard gives you greater insight into your weekly search stats. The free and premium page is almost the same and allows you to see where your searchers work, what your searchers do (their job titles), and for premium users, the keywords searchers used to find your profile. Unfortunately, the weekly search stats aren't saved, so it's not possible to track how well you do over the long haul directly on LinkedIn.

Free stats (no chart or graph)

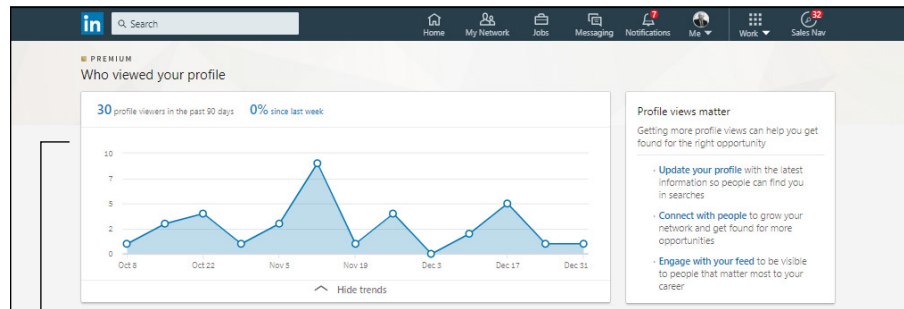
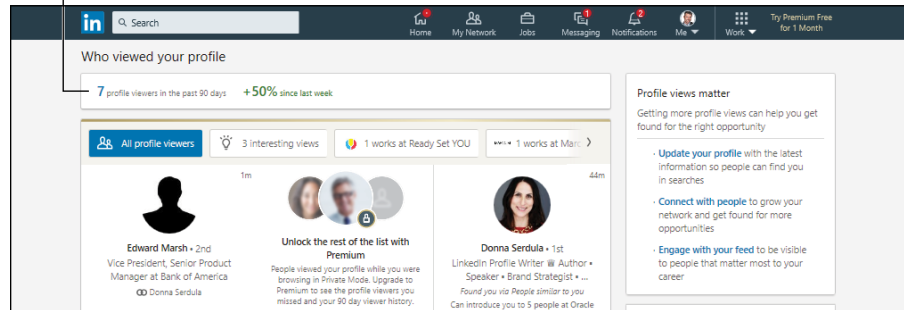


FIGURE 16-4:
Free and
premium stats.

Paid stats

Missing from both the free and paid versions is the ability to track the growth of your network. To truly benchmark your success, you must look past the week and 90 days. For that reason, I suggest going old school — yes, track your progress with a good ol' pen and paper.

Here's how to track your progress with a benchmarking worksheet:

- 1. Create a benchmarking worksheet on a blank sheet of paper or download a printable PDF version from my website at www.LinkedIn-Makeover.com/tools/benchmark_workbook.**

If you are creating your own, divide your paper into a grid that has seven columns and several rows.

- 2. Label each column with the following:**

- Date
- Profile Views
- Percentage Change
- Search Appearances

- Network Total
- Followers
- Following

Your homemade benchmarking worksheet should look similar to the worksheet shown in Figure 16-5.

3. On your Profile, scroll to the Dashboard and click Who’s Viewed My Profile.

This page displays your profile stats. Record the number of viewers over 90 days.

4. Write down the number of people who have viewed your profile and the percentage change in column 2.

5. Go back to your dashboard and record the number of Search Appearances in column 4.

6. Now go back to LinkedIn and visit My Network on LinkedIn’s main navigation bar and click Connections.

At the top of this page is the total number of first-degree connections.

7. Write the number of first-degree connections in the First-Degree Network column of your worksheet.

8. Click “People I Follow” to get the number of people following you and the number of people you follow, and record these numbers in the last two columns of your spreadsheet.

9. Record these stats weekly or with as much regularity as you can into your benchmarking worksheet for the next 180 days.

| LinkedIn Benchmark Worksheet | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Date | Profile Views | Percentage Change | Search Appearances | First-Degree Network | Followers | Following |
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FIGURE 16-5: Benchmarking worksheet.



TIP

If you are one of those big data people and you really want to track your usage of LinkedIn, I found a great app that I use and recommend. It's called Shield (<https://shieldapp.ai>). There are a couple of different levels, but pricing is between \$10 and \$30 per month. It allows you to track how your posts perform, the number of profile visits, your network growth, and more. If you are really serious about LinkedIn and not just dabbling, this app is a must.

The more you use LinkedIn, the better your profile performs. You should see the number of views grow as your network and activity level grow.

Marketing Your Profile

Your profile is a gleaming example of your brand and professionalism. You want your entire network and the whole wide world to look at this amazing profile of you. Now it's time to start marketing it!

I am often reminded of that iconic line from the movie, *Field of Dreams*: "If you build it, they will come!" Unfortunately, that's not always true in the world of social media. Yes, you optimized your profile with keywords so your profile will be easier to find, but there is no promise that people are searching for a person like you every day of the week. To consistently get views to your profile, you need to consistently market your profile.

Alerting your connections of your updated profile

"The squeaky wheel gets the oil." That's an old saying I heard often growing up. This adage holds true in the social media realm as well. If you want people to check out your new and improved profile, you need to speak up and direct them to it. In the following sections, I outline how to alert your network and drive traffic to your profile.

Notify your network

Remember when you toggled off "Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile" so that LinkedIn would not alert your network? It's time to turn on the notification. Once it's back on and you make a job change, LinkedIn notifies people to check out your profile. This is perfect if you are adding a new position you want people to know about. If not, skip to the next section.

Follow these steps to issue a broadcast update:

1. Click the Me icon in the upper-right corner of LinkedIn.com.
2. Click Settings & Privacy.
3. Click the Privacy tab.
4. Scroll to “Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile” and click Change.
5. Toggle the switch from No to Yes, as shown in Figure 16-6.
6. Click the Back to LinkedIn.com link that appears in the upper-right corner to return to your profile.

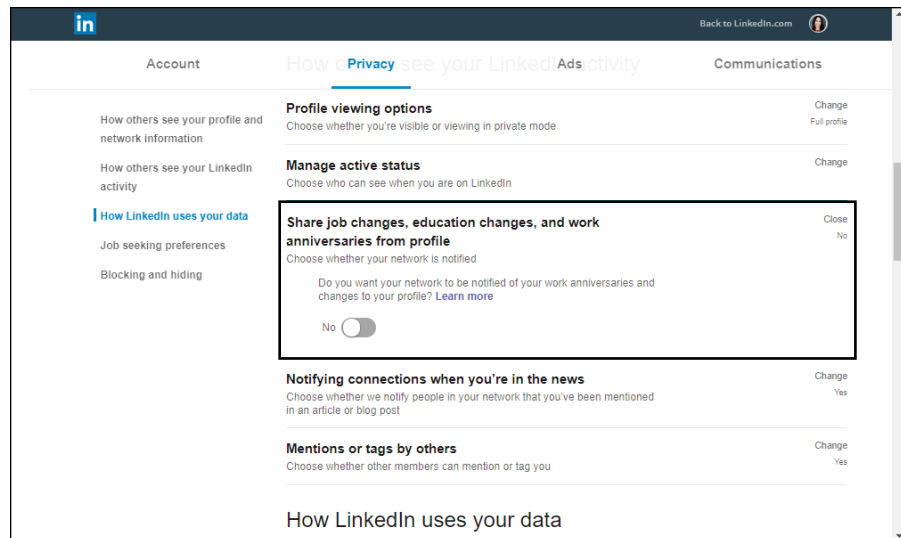


FIGURE 16-6:
Toggle to Yes to share profile changes.

What you post depends on what’s happening in your life. You can end your current experience and add a new experience. You can add a graduation date to your education. With “Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile” turned on in Settings & Privacy, you can enable the notification for broadcast. When you do so, LinkedIn generates a notification that is shared with your connections.



WARNING

It may take up to 48 hours for notifications to process. Be patient! If after 48 hours, it appears as if nothing has happened, contact LinkedIn Tech Support.

By adding a new current job position, for example, an update goes out to your connections announcing the new position and providing a way to “Say Congrats” to you in a LinkedIn message.

You may find yourself *swimming* in congratulation messages. Be ready to respond to every single one of them! Create a thoughtful message in Notepad or Word or some other word-processing program. Then copy and paste it, over and over again, tweaking it to customize it for each person.

Every September, LinkedIn likes to remind everyone of my birthday. I am inundated with “Happy Birthday” notices. When my connections first started doing this, I didn’t take it very seriously and ignored most of the messages. But one year it hit me that I was missing an important opening for communication and engagement. So, I created a page on my website that contained a bunch of free LinkedIn resources and apps. I then recorded a video message responding to the “Happy Birthday” message: “Thank you so much for wishing me a happy birthday! Because you took time out of your day to be nice and thoughtful, I compiled a bunch of LinkedIn resources to say thank you!” Then I shared the link to the page on my website with all the people who wished me a happy birthday and the response was amazing! People were touched and thankful for the guides and apps. A few converted to customers, others became fans, and some became friends.

Send out a post on the LinkedIn feed

If you don’t have a job or education change to spark a notification from LinkedIn, you can create a post to alert people of the big changes you made to your LinkedIn profile.

Here’s how to send out a post. Lather, rinse, and repeat as often as you like!

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Highlight your LinkedIn profile URL that appears in browser address bar and copy it by pressing Ctrl+C (Windows) or Cmd+C (Mac).**
- 3. Click Home on LinkedIn’s navigation menu to go to the LinkedIn home page.**
- 4. At the top of LinkedIn’s home page, click Start a Post text box.**
- 5. Type your post in the text field and then paste your LinkedIn profile URL by clicking Ctrl+V (Windows) or Cmd+V (Mac), as shown in Figure 16-7.**

You may want to use something like this:

I just updated my LinkedIn profile, check it out: <http://www.Linkedin.com/in/todonna> #LinkedInMakeover #PersonalBranding #ImageMatters

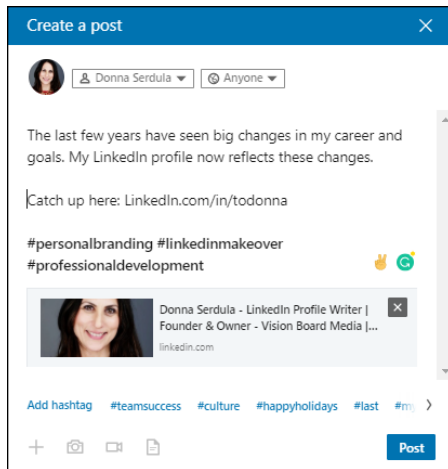


FIGURE 16-7:
Creating a status update.

Or

I used LinkedIn Profile Optimization For Dummies by @DonnaSerdula to update my LinkedIn profile, check it out! #ForDummies #ProfessionalBranding #LinkedInTips

Or

The last few years have seen big changes in my career and goals. My LinkedIn profile now reflects these changes. Catch up here: LinkedIn.com/in/todonna #personalbranding #linkedinmakeover #professionaldevelopment

Check out Chapter 15 for a refresher on hashtags and tips for creating posts.

- 6. Click the drop-down list beside you name and profile picture to choose your audience: Anyone, Anyone + Twitter, Connections Only, Group Members, or Advanced Settings where you can turn off comments.**
- 7. Click the Post button.**



TIP

I know you may feel tempted to ask others for their input on your newly optimized LinkedIn profile but I caution you to resist! In the immortal lyrics of Taylor Swift, “People throw rocks at things that shine.” I see it all the time. When you ask people for their feedback, they feel a need to tell you something critical. Don’t open that door. Just let people know that you updated your profile and let them respond with “Congrats!” (Oh, and remember, people who say, “It looks like you are trying too hard!” are the type who don’t try at all.)

Message people individually

Are there people within your network who would love to see your updated profile? Why not reach out to them directly? Messaging people individually takes time, but it’s a great way to reconnect and get a real response.



REMEMBER

Free LinkedIn members can only message people who are direct connections.

Here's how to message people individually on LinkedIn:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **In the search bar at the top of the page, type the name of the first-degree connection you want to message.**

LinkedIn suggests people.

3. **Click the person's name to open his or her profile.**
4. **Click the Message button at the top of that person's profile.**

LinkedIn's messaging pane opens, as shown in Figure 16-8. You can add additional recipients by typing their names in the top field.

5. **Type your message in the text field.**

Some message examples:

Hey Howard! It's been months since we last chatted, but I wanted to let you know I took your advice and optimized my profile. Check it out when you have a minute.

Or:

Hi Howard! I've always loved your LinkedIn profile. I finally got off my duff and optimized my own. I'd love for you to take a look at it. Hope we can grab coffee soon!

6. **Depending on your messaging settings, you either press Enter/Return on your keyboard, or press the Send button to dispatch your message.**

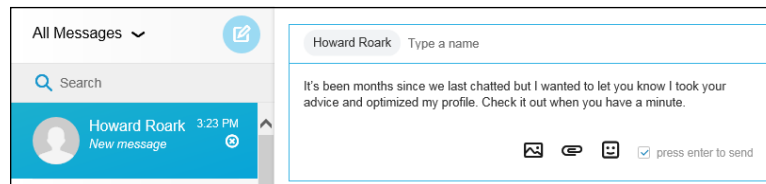


FIGURE 16-8:
Messaging connections.

Adding your profile to other social media sites

Most people don't have a personal website, and so LinkedIn becomes their online outpost. If this is true for you, use the other social media websites you frequent as a way to get the word out on your LinkedIn profile.

Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, and other sites all have a website field within the bio section where you can add your LinkedIn profile URL. Check out Figure 16-9 to see how I have my LinkedIn profile URL listed on my Twitter bio.

FIGURE 16-9:
Add your
LinkedIn profile
URL to other
social media
channels.



You can also send out a Facebook status update or tweet the link to your LinkedIn profile so followers on other channels are alerted and can check it out.

LinkedIn profile plagiarism

Oh no! You spent time and effort on your LinkedIn profile. You dove deep inside of yourself and crafted something that truly reflects your core operating principles. Your profile is your mission and reflects your passions. It's your heart and soul. *And someone copied it directly from your profile and pasted it into theirs!* It happens and it sucks. There's something about writing found online that makes people think it's ripe for the picking.

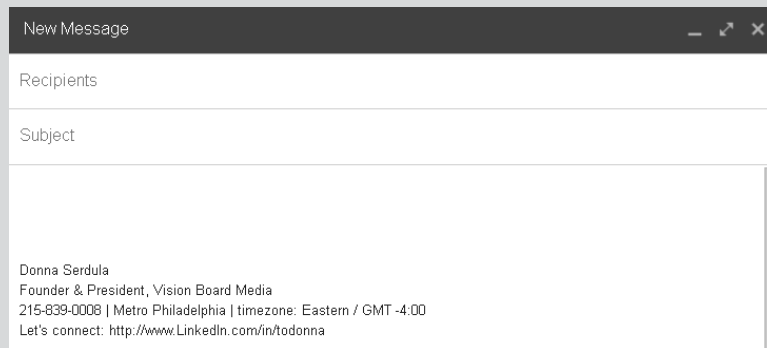
So what do you do if someone plagiarizes your LinkedIn profile? The best course of action is to reach out to the person who did it. I am a proponent of direct confrontation. Pick up the phone and call them. I find that a phone call is the most successful and provides an immediate result. Be calm, be nice, be firm. "Hey, I just checked out your LinkedIn profile, it looked very familiar to me." Let that person respond. You may find that he or she thought it was the most awesome thing in the world and imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. "Look, I put a lot of time into my profile and I really would appreciate if you don't copy it, *capiche?*" I know this is hard for most people, so if a direct conversation is repellant, send an email or LinkedIn message.

MAKING IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO CONNECT TO YOU

You interact with people every day. Each interaction is a chance to further your brand and direct traffic to your LinkedIn profile. Make sure your LinkedIn profile URL is added to your resume. If you often send out mailed correspondence, place your LinkedIn profile URL on your letterhead.

Do you have a personal website? If so, add a link to your LinkedIn profile. If you have a bio listed on your company's website, check with the webmaster to see if he or she can add a link to your LinkedIn profile.

Emails are such a normal part of business life. It's been stated that the average number of sent and received emails is 121 per day. Make sure that these interactions help further your brand and engage your network by using an email signature. An *email signature* is an automatic line added to the very bottom of the email messages you send that provides your name, contact information, and any other information you wish to include (see the following figure). I highly suggest including your LinkedIn URL at the bottom of your email signature. This way, after reading your emails, people can easily connect with you and stay in touch.



Business cards are another way people trade contact information and stay in touch. If your LinkedIn profile URL isn't on your business card, add it! Some companies simply provide canned cards to employees, and it's not possible to customize the information on the card. If your company won't allow you to add your LinkedIn profile URL to your business card, consider printing a personal business card that you give out. Check out Chapter 5 where I show you how to ditch your business card by using LinkedIn's QR Code to connect with people in person.

Remember, there is power to your network. You must make a concerted effort to build and nurture your network. By making it easy to connect with you, you are helping to grow your network in a very passive manner.

Here's what I write to people I find plagiarizing profiles we write for clients (tweaked so it is coming from you). Feel free to plagiarize it:

Dear So and So,

I visited your profile and have some advice for your LinkedIn strategy.

Your LinkedIn narrative should be a chronicle of YOUR journey and YOUR development. The pieces that you lifted verbatim from my profile are stolen properties that reflect my work.

If you want to stand apart, you should be real and authentic and put some time and focus into your profile.

Please remove my summary and replace with your own writing.

Hugs and Kisses!

Give them a few days to absorb your words. If the person doesn't comply, then it's time to sic the LinkedIn police on them. Visit that person's profile, click More, and choose Report/Block. Hey, you played nice; it's a shame they weren't raised better.

Getting views to your LinkedIn profile

LinkedIn is one of the few social networking sites where you can remain quite passive and still experience amazing success. Imagine getting on Facebook or Twitter and doing absolutely nothing — nothing would happen. But on LinkedIn, simply by having an optimized profile infused with your keywords, people find you. Your profile's content shapes how people perceive you and compels them to reach out. This is one of the great benefits to LinkedIn, but for some people, they want more.



REMEMBER

There are over 500 million users on LinkedIn. It's a veritable ocean of people. In order to drive traffic to your profile, get noticed, and find opportunity, you have to splash around. Your LinkedIn activity is a direct contributor to profile traffic and LinkedIn success. In the following sections, I outline a bunch of LinkedIn activities to perform that will increase traffic to your LinkedIn profile page.

View other profiles

LinkedIn is one of the few networks that enables you to see who has checked out your profile. Most people on LinkedIn love looking at the Who's Viewed Your Profile page. Not only do they love looking at who checked out their profile, they also want to learn more about the people with such awesome taste who checked them out! And so, in turn, they click to read their visitor's profile. If you want to drive

traffic to your page, view other people's profiles! After you visit a person's profile, more often than not, that person will visit your profile to check you out, too.

However, in order for this to work, you must have your profile set to Visible and not to Anonymous.

Here's how to make sure your profile is visible:

1. **Go to LinkedIn.com.**
2. **Hover your mouse pointer over your profile picture in the upper-right corner of your screen and Settings & Privacy.**
3. **Click Privacy from the top portion of the screen that appears.**
4. **Click Profile Viewing Options.**

This is where you choose whether you're visible to other LinkedIn users or viewing in private mode.

5. **Click the top option that shows your name and headline (see Figure 16-10).**
6. **Click the Close link in the upper-right corner of the option to save your setting.**

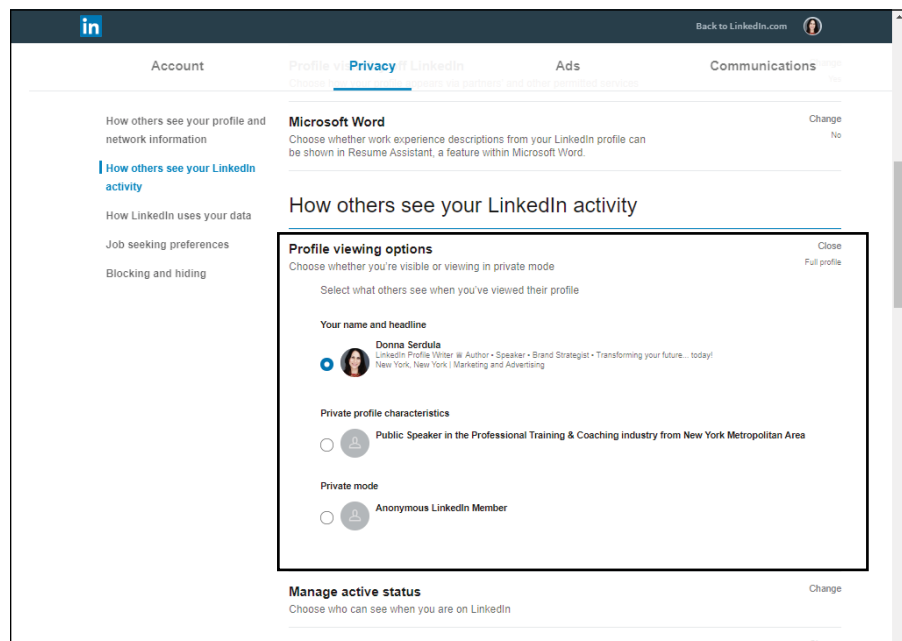


FIGURE 16-10:
Choose to be visible on LinkedIn!



WARNING

By choosing Private mode, not only are you choosing to remain anonymous, but also you are disabling your profile stats so you can't see who has viewed your profile. And when you switch to Private mode, your viewer history is deleted. Premium members can choose Private mode and still see the list of people who viewed their profiles (with the exception of viewers in Private mode). LinkedIn's good when you pay!

It feels weird to let people see that you browsed their profile. Believe me, I know! When I first joined LinkedIn, I kept my profile in Private mode. Eventually, the desire to see who was checking out my profile became so great that I begrudgingly turned my profile from anonymous to full visibility. As I watched my visitor list grow and views to my profile increase, I realized there was nothing to feel weird about. Viewing a profile shows that you are interested in the other person; it doesn't mean you are a stalker. People appreciate that you are doing your due diligence and research to learn more about them.



TIP

I always check out people's profiles prior to calling them. I want them to see my visit on their profile views page and know that I care enough to learn more about them. I want them to know that I dig deep, I do my research, and I am coming into the call prepared.

It also provides the person with a link to learn more about you. Try it out after the initial feeling of discomfort passes; you'll be glad you did it.

Post status updates

Keep in touch with your network by sharing posts. As these status updates go out, people will click on your profile to check up and see what you are doing.

Here are some ideas of items to share as a status update:

- »» Did you read an interesting article?
- »» Did you finish an amazing project?
- »» Are you attending a unique event?
- »» Did you hear a great piece of advice?
- »» Are you reading a life-changing book?

These are all things to share on LinkedIn!

One of my favorite tools is the LinkedIn Bookmarklet icon. The Bookmarklet is a little button you drag onto your browser's bookmark tool bar. As you surf the web

and find an interesting website or article, simply click the Bookmarklet icon to easily share the information on LinkedIn.

Follow these steps to install LinkedIn's Bookmarklet icon:

1. Go to <https://www.linkedin-makeover.com/tools/linkedin-bookmarklet>.

2. Drag the Share on LinkedIn button to your browser's bookmark bar.

If your browser doesn't have a bookmark bar, go to your browser's settings and turn it on.

3. While on an interesting website or reading an article that you would like to share on LinkedIn, click the Share on LinkedIn Bookmarklet button on your browser's bookmark bar.

A LinkedIn window pops up. This window contains the link to the item you want to share along with a brief description and thumbnail image.

Choose to share this as a status update on your LinkedIn newsfeed, post it to specific LinkedIn Groups, or send it via LinkedIn InMail to specific first-degree connections.

4. To post the link as an update, click to place a check mark next to Share an Update.

5. In the text field, type your opinion, input, or reason for sharing.

Although it's easy not to add your own spin, I highly recommend taking a few moments to share your thoughts.

6. Click the Share With drop-down menu and select whether you want to share this update with the public or with just your connections.

If you have a Twitter account connected to your LinkedIn profile, click the Twitter icon to also share this update on your Twitter feed.

7. Click the Share button.

In addition to using the Bookmarklet icon to share web pages and online articles as posts, you can also share as group discussions or direct messages with connections. Placing the check mark by clicking in the Post to Groups box enables you to then choose which group or groups you want to post to. Conversely, click in the Send to Individuals box to send the link via LinkedIn's messaging. It's important when posting to a group or to an individual connection to provide context. If you were posting to a group, you might state, "Do you agree?" "What do you think?" or something that helps the reader respond and create conversation. When sending the link as a message, let the person know why you are sending the link and what result he or she can expect.



TIP

In her book, *The Perpetual Paycheck: 5 Secrets to Getting a Job, Keeping a Job, and Earning Income for Life in the Loyalty-Free Workplace*, author Lori Rassas wrote that she likes to send little gifts she calls TOYs to her connections as a way of strengthening the professional relationship. TOY is short for *thinking of you*. Sharing an article is totally free, but it's a great way to show you were thinking of someone.

Posting status updates is a great way to stay in front of your connections. Make it a part of your professional life. Rather than decide to post an update once a month, once a week, or once a day, resolve to stay connected by sharing the items, events, and happenings that move you. When you read a great article, share it. When you sign up for an event, share it. When you have that Aha! moment, share it. Once you decide that you are on LinkedIn to educate, add value, and inspire people, that's when you start having fun and when opportunities start hurtling toward you.

Blog with the LinkedIn Publishing Platform

Publishing long-form posts gets you in front of large numbers of people quickly as LinkedIn notifies your network of your blog. When you create noteworthy content, it is shared way beyond just your network of connections. As the post catches on, people read it and want to learn more about you, the author. Profile views go up and opportunities appear. Get step-by-step directions on creating a long-form post in Chapter 15 of this book.

Participate in LinkedIn Groups

Believe me, I know it's not easy to find the time to participate in LinkedIn Groups, but when you consider the results of group participation, you may decide it's worth the time investment. Not only do you expand your network by joining groups, but also you meet people, engage in healthy discourse, develop professionally, and drive views to your LinkedIn profile.

By commenting on discussions and creating engaging discussions that compel people to comment, you are showcasing yourself as an interesting individual and expert. I am not suggesting that you market yourself low and wide in a slimy manner. Instead, use the discussions to help and inspire people. When you give your time, advice, and expertise, people take notice of you, which then makes them open your profile to learn more about you. Chapter 14 is where I discuss Group participation in detail.

Recommend people

When you recommend people on LinkedIn, those recommendations display on their profiles as a link back to your profile, right next to your profile picture. The more recommendations you give, the more links you have on LinkedIn pointing back to your profile.

Those profiles attract readers, and many times those readers look at the recommendations received. It's not unusual for people to click the profile link to learn more about the recommender. I cover recommendations in Chapter 3.



REMEMBER

Always recommend people out of the goodness of your heart. Recommend people you know and who have impressed you. It's important to use recommendations and endorsements genuinely and authentically.

Endorse people

Endorsements also provide links back to your profile from other profiles. Go out and endorse people for their real skill sets. Not only will they be touched by your generosity, but also your name is now listed next to their Skills & Endorsements section on their profiles. With each link, there's a better than good chance other people will see the endorsement and click to read more about you.

Believe it or not, we are almost finished with this book! I have one more thing to share with you and that is the advantages of becoming a premium member.

To Pay or Not Pay for LinkedIn

Whenever I speak to groups about the importance of LinkedIn and having a LinkedIn profile, the number one question I get is, "Should I pay for LinkedIn, or is the free version good enough?"



TIP

LinkedIn's free version works well for most people; however, if you plan to use LinkedIn for more than just casual networking, upgrading makes sense.

LinkedIn has restrictions in place on the free account to limit heavy recruiting and prospecting. The commercial use limit is based upon the number of searches you do during a month's time. When you exceed what LinkedIn considers typical usage, you are no longer able to search nor will LinkedIn suggest profiles for you to view until the counter resets the next month.

Unfortunately, LinkedIn hasn't publicly stated the number of searches it considers commercial use versus typical. The number 100 has been bandied around by super users as the maximum search limit for typical use. Here's the thing: If you are a heavy LinkedIn user, you very well may hit the maximum search limit. When this happens, decide if it makes sense to wait for the month to roll over and the search counter resets, or upgrade.

I remember when I hit the commercial use limit — it was only one week into the month. I realized it would be impossible for me to wait three weeks to search again and so that afternoon, I upgraded to Sales Navigator. Ultimately, if you are using LinkedIn to make money, LinkedIn would like you to pay to use its service; it's only fair.

Features of paid accounts

LinkedIn has four types of premium accounts:

- » Premium Career
- » Premium Business
- » Sales Navigator
- » Recruiter

All four types of premium accounts have features in common. In the following sections, I outline the features that exist within all premium accounts.

Open Profile

Free members can only message people they are directly connected to (a.k.a. first-degree connections). This is a pretty big limitation. Premium members can turn on Open Profile to allow anyone on LinkedIn to contact them directly for free, even if they are not connected.

Premium badge

Premium account holders can add a premium badge to their profiles and search result listings so people can see that they are paying members and take LinkedIn and networking seriously. The premium badge appears in the upper-right corner of the person's profile, to the right of his or her name. The badge looks like a gold "In" square. The premium badge is shown in Figure 16-11.

Who's viewed your profile

LinkedIn is one of the few social media sites that enables you to see who has viewed your profile. Free members only see the last five profile visitors, whereas premium members get to see everyone who's viewed their profiles within the past 90 days. Premium members also see additional insights such as the keywords searched that brought them to their profiles and any patterns that may be evident.

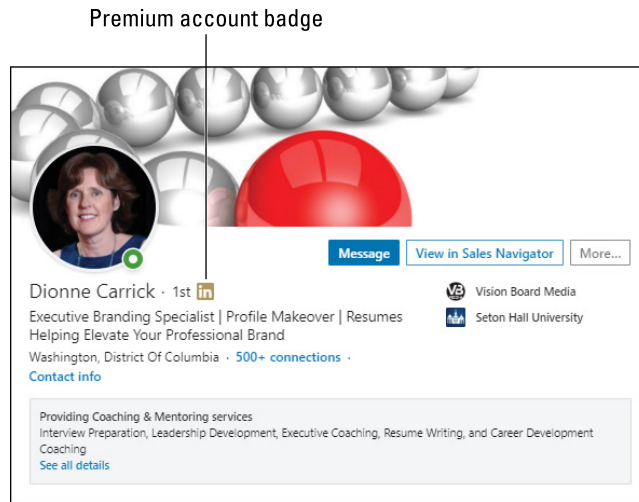


FIGURE 16-11:
How the premium badge displays.



REMEMBER

If you are a free member and your profile is set to anonymous, you are unable to see who viewed your profile. Basically, LinkedIn goes by the “If you show me yours, I’ll show you mine” rule. When you are a paying member, you can be anonymous and still see who viewed your profile unless the viewer is set to anonymous. Anonymous is always anonymous.

InMail

Free members can only communicate directly with first-degree connections. As a paying member, you can use InMail to send a message to LinkedIn users you are not directly connected to. The number of InMails per month differs based on the premium account you have.

Search alerts

Free members have the opportunity to save three searches. Paying members get more saved searches, each plan providing its own number. Great for prospecting, recruiting, or even job search, LinkedIn automatically performs your saved search weekly or monthly and sends you all new search results.

Unique features of premium accounts

In addition to the features all premium accounts offer, LinkedIn provides even more features unique to each type of premium account. In the following sections, I provide a rundown of the added features per subscription type.

Premium Career

A great selling point for subscribing to the Premium Career account is the Featured Applicant and Applicant Insights functionality. As a Featured Applicant, your search results listing puts you at the top of recruiters' applicant lists. Applicant Insights shows you how well you measure up to other current applicants on job postings. You get to see how many other people have applied to the job posting; the other applicants' experience, education levels, and top skills; and how well your profile ranks with other applicants.

Premium Business

The Premium Business account provides unlimited profile search so you never hit the commercial use search limit. You also get company page insights that point to the overall health of the organization you are interested in by showing you employee count, employee distribution by function, new hires, notable alumni, and total job openings.

On the advanced search page, Premium Business account owners see additional filters marked with the gold LinkedIn premium badge that are only available to paying members. These filters enable you to further drill down to your perfect target by searching within group members, years of experience, job functions, seniority levels, company size, and more.

Sales Navigator

When you subscribe to the Sales Navigator premium account you get a totally different LinkedIn interface that is focused entirely on sales, lead generation, prospecting, and account management. You can see how this different interface looks in Figure 16-12.

Sales Navigator allows you to save your leads' profiles, which LinkedIn uses to extrapolate and recommend other potential leads for you. You can also build lead lists using premium search filters. Sales Navigator also allows you to drill deep into your target accounts via Account Details Pages that keep you updated on the latest news and information LinkedIn has on those accounts. In addition, Sales Navigator enables you to filter through the noise of your network to see just what's going on with your leads, prospects, and customers via their status updates and news.

This premium account also provides unlimited profile search so you don't hit the commercial use search limit.

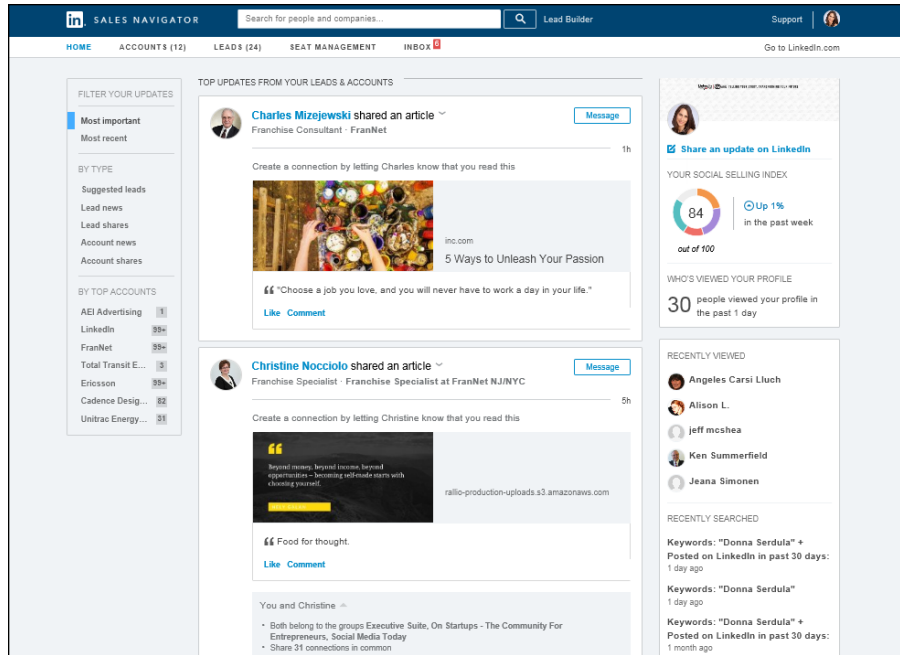


FIGURE 16-12: Sales Navigator has a different look than LinkedIn.com.



If you plan on upgrading to Sales Navigator, check out *Sales Navigator For Dummies* (Wiley) by Perry Van Beek. I can vouch for this book because I was the Technical Editor!

Recruiter Lite

LinkedIn has a number of recruiter packages available, but the most popular is Recruiter Lite. Just like Sales Navigator, the Recruiter Lite premium account has a different LinkedIn interface. Recruiter Lite offers unique functionality such as the ability to organize candidates in folders with an area on each profile to take notes and set follow-up reminders.

The Recruiter Lite premium account also allows for unlimited profile searches of your extended network. Recruiter Lite also provides smart search capability that provided additional premium filters and search suggestions to help you find the perfect candidates.

Choosing the best plan for you

By segmenting its plans based upon goal, LinkedIn makes it easy to identify the premium account that works best for you. My recommendation is to use the free version of LinkedIn until you begin to feel constrained. You will know that it's

time to upgrade when you start hitting the commercial search limit, or you long to view more than just five of your last profile visitors. Once you realize it's time to pay for LinkedIn, all you need to do is click the Try Premium Free for 1 Month button in the upper-right corner of any LinkedIn page. I often hear from clients who tell me that once they started paying for LinkedIn, they began to take it more seriously. Sometimes you need to get some skin in the game to truly commit.

Ultimately, you may find that it feels good to support a company that lets you network in your pajamas!

And that concludes this guide for LinkedIn profile optimization! It's been a fun ride, and although it's the end of the guide, you still have the Part of Tens where I give you even more tips and tricks for better leveraging LinkedIn. Also, be sure to reach out to me with a link to your newly optimized LinkedIn profile. I love when *For Dummies* readers reach out with success stories. Also, check out my website's Free Resources section. I have several tools and guides I developed that I provide totally free. Just click Free Resources on www.linkedin-makeover.com.

5

The Part of Tens

IN THIS PART . . .

Learn the do's and don'ts to create a professionally impressive profile and create a relatable and likable digital identity.

See what you need to do to take a professional profile picture that portrays you in the best light, including how to photograph your good side, use Photoshop to improve — but not distort — your image, and what you should wear.

Learn the best tips for expanding your network, including improving your contact information, creating an attractive headline, joining groups, and creating great multimedia content.

Discover how you can get the most out of LinkedIn by connecting with as many people as possible.

Get the scoop on some powerful online tools to help you create an impressive profile.

- » Making your profile eye-catching
- » Creating social proof of your accomplishments
- » Making changes to your profile quietly
- » Creating a brand that is relatable and likeable

Chapter **17**

Ten Profile Do's and Don'ts

Your LinkedIn profile is your digital identity. Of all the social media profiles out there, LinkedIn's profile is the most in-depth and provides a comprehensive overview of you as a professional person. When people search your name in a search engine, your LinkedIn profile is often returned high in the search results. When it comes to creating a professionally impressive profile that helps you collide with opportunity, here are ten Do's and Don'ts to keep in mind.

Do Use a Professional Profile Picture

The picture on your LinkedIn profile is your public face to your network and the world. It's imperative that it presents you in the absolutely best light. If your budget allows, get a professional photo taken in a photographer's studio. If your budget doesn't allow for it, enlist a friend to take a photo. Make sure you are dressed professionally and the background isn't messy, busy, or distinct. Position yourself near a window to ensure a well-lit image. The camera should be at eye level — not at too high of an angle nor too low of an angle. Look directly into the camera lens and smile. Have the photographer take numerous shots. Usually the winning image is snapped toward the end of the photo session, right when you start to feel comfortable in front of the camera.

Don't Use LinkedIn's Default Headline

LinkedIn automatically populates your headline with your current job title and company name. You couldn't pick a worse headline if you tried! Ditch LinkedIn's default and create a compelling headline — infused with your keywords — that gets your target audience to open your profile and read more. Read Chapter 7 to learn how to build one on your own, or visit my online app to have one generated for you instantly (www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-headline-generator).

Do Use Eye-Catching Symbols Sparingly

LinkedIn doesn't allow any formatting within your profile. This means you can't bold or italicize text, create links, or even have a bulleted list. However, you can copy and paste ASCII symbols into your profile to create visual flair. Choose one or two symbols and use them where you want to attract attention to your profile. This might be around your call to action and contact information, or before an accomplishment.



TIP

Less is more when it comes to symbols. Whatever you do, don't go overboard, splashing tons of different symbols throughout your profile. Regardless of how great the content might be, too many symbols may cheapen your profile and may make people not take you seriously.



WARNING

Some online tools allow you to generate bold, italics, and underlined text that you can copy and paste into your profile. Although it looks like your text is formatted, it isn't really. This text just appears to be formatted, but it is actually made up of Unicode symbols that look like text. You can certainly use this text but understand that it's not searchable. If a person is searching for those words you copied and pasted from one of these Unicode text generators, your profile will not be returned in the search results. Another thing to note is screen readers don't see the formatting, just the actual Unicode.

If you want to format text, here's my Text Formatter app:

www.linkedin-makeover.com/linkedin-text-formatter

If you want to infuse your profile with pretty icons, here's my collection of symbols:

www.linkedin-makeover.com/tools/symbols

My advice is less is more and use this “flair” sparingly, if at all.

Do Include Your Contact Information

The Contact Information section of your LinkedIn profile is by default only visible to your first-degree network of connections. If a second-degree connection, third-degree connection, group connection, someone outside of your network, or someone not on LinkedIn views your profile, they will *not* see your contact information.



TIP

LinkedIn is all about business networking and opportunity development. In order for people to reach out to you, they need to have your contact information. Make sure it's easy for people to reach out by including your contact information not just within the Contact Information section, but throughout your profile.

At the end of your LinkedIn About section and at the end of your current experience, add your phone number and/or email address. Let people know you are serious by allowing them to contact you off LinkedIn.

Do Add Media Samples

Add work examples to your profile to further showcase who you are and what you do. Upload presentations, images, documents, videos, and more to your LinkedIn profile so readers of your profile can get a more robust view of you as a professional. Decide what your target audience would like to see from you and add it. Rich media can be linked to or uploaded to the About, Experience, and Education sections.

Don't Stuff Keywords

Strategically placing keywords into your LinkedIn profile is a great way to increase the likelihood of your profile turning up in searches. Although you might be tempted, don't stuff your profile with keywords. Instead, work the keywords into your profile naturally and organically. Profiles that are stuffed with keywords might rank well initially, but they quickly get deleted by LinkedIn. Keyword-stuffed profiles impress no one, and when it's clear you are gaming the system, people click away.

Don't Go Back 30 Years

You don't need to detail your complete work trajectory. Business has changed drastically over the last 30 years. Highlighting your IT accomplishments from 1990 doesn't prepare you for anything today. Your LinkedIn profile should align you with your career future. If you want to showcase your deep history, go right ahead, but you need not spend a lot of time on the details and job descriptions. Your history is important, but what really moves mountains is what you did lately.

Do Get Recommendations

Recommendations listed on your LinkedIn profile provide social proof around your accomplishments and background. To get recommendations, you need to ask people to give you recommendations. In fact, if you want to truly make sure that those recommendations are posted to your profile, write the recommendation for the person.



REMEMBER

There is no such thing as too many LinkedIn recommendations, although you should make sure that the recommendations posted to your profile are current, align with your objectives, and are authentically given.

Do Tell a Story

It's hard to write about yourself. And it's so easy to copy and paste an old bio or resume into the fields of your LinkedIn profile. It's also easy to list a slew of keywords in your About and Experience sections. I say, stop and have mercy on the readers of your LinkedIn profile. They are on your profile and reading about you; give them something amazing to read.

Take the moment and tell them *your* story. Write conversationally — no need to mimic a staid resume. Take the time to really think about who you are, what you do, and how you help others. Think about why you do what you do and what you stand for. What makes you different from other people? Why should people trust you? What do you love to do? Do you have a philosophy or motto? What are your guiding principles? What is your passion? What is your mission? Cast your thoughts to the future! Who do you want to become? What do you want to do? What does your life look like in 5, 15, 20 years from now?

Your LinkedIn profile is the perfect excuse to figure out who you are! Most go to work and only think about getting the ball to the other end of the court. They go home, eat, watch TV, and go to sleep. Rarely do they think about where their lives are headed. Their careers simply happen to them.



TIP

By spending the time and really thinking about who you are, what you love, and where you want to go, you can actually change the trajectory of your life. You can make sure you are living an empowered existence. You can be the captain of your ship. Some people do this naturally. Others get a coach or therapist who helps them work through it. But now, you are getting that wake-up call because it's time to optimize your LinkedIn profile and your life can start now if you want it to.

Figure out your story and write it in your LinkedIn profile. Most people don't know what to think unless you tell them. Give them your story. You will be astonished at what happens when you put it out there for the world to see. You become the person who never has to look for a job; jobs and opportunities find you!

Do Download Your Data

You spent time building your LinkedIn profile into something impressive and branded uniquely to you. Although the odds are in your favor that everything will be fine, take the time to download your profile and your LinkedIn data *just in case*. You never know if you may get locked out of your account or something more nefarious may take place. Having your profile and your LinkedIn activity allows you to get back into the game quickly.

You can either download just your profile or you can download your profile and all of your LinkedIn data.

To download just your LinkedIn profile, follow these steps:

- 1. Go to www.linkedin.com and open your profile.**
- 2. Click the More button in your intro card of your profile.**
- 3. Select Save to PDF.**

The Save As window appears.

- 4. Select where on your hard drive you want to save your profile and click Save.**

Your LinkedIn profile is saved as a PDF file.



WARNING

Although this PDF document is nicely formatted and looks a bit like a CV/Resume, it's still your profile. You can certainly send this to people, but don't use it as a replacement of your resume or CV. Your resume and profile are two different documents. They should complement each other but also build upon each other. The worst thing in the world is for a recruiter who found your profile and loves it, requests your resume and finds exactly the same information. Instead, keep providing information, and make that recruiter call you to find out even more.

To download everything, follow these steps:

- 1. Click the Me icon at top of your LinkedIn home page.**
- 2. Select Settings & Privacy from the drop-down menu that appears.**
- 3. Click the Privacy tab at the top of the page.**
- 4. Scroll down to How LinkedIn Uses Your Data and click "Getting a copy of your data" to expand the section.**
- 5. Choose "Download larger data archive, including connections, contacts, and your account history."**
- 6. Click Request archive.**



TIP

It takes about 24 hours for this information to be compiled and readied for you to download. LinkedIn will send you an email with a link to download the data.

- » Taking a good professional picture
- » Modeling to catch your good side
- » Using Photoshop to improve the image

Chapter **18**

Ten Tips for a Perfect Profile Picture

Say “Cheese!” Your profile picture is your face to the world. Don’t settle for an “in the car” selfie. Every reader of your profile inspects your image. Make sure what they see aligns with your brand and portrays you in the best light. Here are ten tips that will help take your so-so profile picture to amazing heights.

Hire a Professional Photographer

So many people tell me that using a professional photographer is outside their budget. I don’t buy it! They probably never shopped around. There are zillions of photographers out there offering affordable options.

Do an Internet search for: *Photography [Your Town], [Your State]*

For example: *Photography Delran, NJ*

This produces a listing of all photographers in your local area. Review the list, visit their websites, and check out their portfolios. Call those photographers who feel right to you. Ask for pricing. You’ll find that most photographers want your business and will work with you to make your session affordable to you.

In case your Internet search fails you, here are a few online photographer directories to help you search for photographers by location:

- » American Society of Media Photographers (www.asmp.org/find-a-photographer)
- » Peter Hurley's Headshot Crew (<https://headshotcrew.com>)
- » Photographers Index (www.photographersindex.com)
- » Photoshelter (www.photoshelter.com/explore/photographers)
- » Professional Photographers of America (www.ppa.com/findaphotographer)

Use Lots of Light

Whether or not you utilize a professional photographer, there should be lots of light where the picture is being taken. Good lighting is what takes a profile picture from mediocre to great. When lighting is adjusted and applied properly, almost everyone looks better.



TIP

Photographs shot in a professional studio often look better than shots taken in a person's office or outside in nature. The reason for this is a professional studio has professional lighting that can be manipulated. When given the option of having your photo taken in a studio or at your home or office, go with the studio. The end result will look much better.

Use a Nondescript Background

The background in your profile picture should be nondescript and plain. You are the focus of the photograph. The background image should never detract from you or provoke questions or judgment in the viewer's mind.

"Is she standing in front of a shed?"

"Gosh that room is messy."

"Is that a bookshelf filled with romance novels?"

“Why is he standing in front of bamboo trees?”

“I think I see the edge of a toilet!”

If you have a friend taking a picture of you, find a bare wall. If working with a professional photographer, find a backdrop that is plain. Pass by the bamboo trees, clouds, and laser-light shows.

Dress to Impress

Choose a professional outfit — clothes that you would wear to a job interview or to a business meeting. Make sure the clothes fit you well in your shoulder and neck area. The image is cropped, so the top area of the outfit matters the most.

I often tell my male clients to wear a suit and to pair it with a tie that complements the color of their eyes. In the beginning of the session, I tell them to have pictures taken with the full suit. After they are sure there is at least one usable image, I tell them to take off their ties and open the top button of their shirts. Then, once another usable image is taken, I have them remove their jackets and take pictures in just the dress shirt. By simply removing the tie and jacket, you are getting three different types of looks: formal, semi-formal, and informal.

When working with my female clients, I tell them to bring a few wardrobe changes to the photography session. Often a dress that looks great in person simply doesn't photograph well. Bringing along two or three different outfits allows them to change clothes and salvage the session if one outfit isn't working out.



TIP

Choosing the right color for your clothing is important. Whatever you do, don't choose a color that is close to the color of your skin. If your clothes too closely match the color of your skin, they can overpower the face and wash you out. Dark colors are usually a safe choice: Dark gray, black, navy blue, green, burgundy, rust, and brown typically work well.

In addition, when choosing your outfit, stay away from bold prints with stripes, plaids, checks, or polka dots. Remember, it's not your clothes but your face that is the focus of the photograph. Choose understated clothes to keep your face the focus of the picture.

Adjust Yourself

Before the photographer starts clicking, look in the mirror. Is your collar straight? Is your necklace clasp behind your neck? Are the backs of your earrings on tight? Is everything smooth and nice?

A client once told me that she was interviewed on television, and unbeknownst to her, her bra strap was clearly visible. As much as she loved the clip, she never used the recording on her website because she was mortified that her bra had a guest-starring role!

And so, in the immortal words of my mother prior to almost every photograph and major event, “Adjust yourself!”

Keep the Camera Close to Eye Level

When working with a photographer, he or she might get on a chair or stoop down a bit to get the right angle. In many situations, this is absolutely fine. However, having worked with thousands of professionals from all over the world, I see too many photos taken at too much of an angle.

The camera should be close to eye level. An image captured at too high of a level makes you look submissive and small. Too low of an angle and you’ll look looming and overly dominant. Meet your viewer on equal ground by keeping the level of the image steady.

If the photographer appears to be using too much of an angle, ask to see the pictures on the camera’s back screen. If it appears that the angle is too great, tell the photographer that you would like to take a few images with him or her at ground level. Remember, you are the boss.

Say No to the Mug Shot

With the camera close to eye level, position yourself at a slight angle from the camera lens. You don’t want your body to be perfectly square with the camera because the resulting images will have the quality of a mug shot, driver’s license photo, or passport picture.

The best thing to do is turn your shoulders so that they are at an angle to the camera.

Crinkle, Smile, and Jut

A genuine smile engages the full face and causes the eyes to wrinkle at the edges. To look genuine, give a big smile that crinkles your eyes. Don't worry about crow's feet — it's more important the image looks authentic and real.

As you smile, push your face out, jutting your jaw forward. This might feel weird, but it accentuates your jawline, tightening it and reducing any double chin.



TIP

Two videos by the famous photographer Peter Hurley reveal his secrets and offer advice on how to look more photogenic in portraits. They are found on his website at:

<https://peterhurley.com/news/2013/who-knew-it-really-all-about-squinch>

Use Photoshop Lightly

You've selected your favorite picture and now the photographer will go to work using Photoshop to make you look like an alien. Sadly, most images are over-Photoshopped. The eye crinkles are erased and all lines and definition deleted. You look at the image and it kinda looks like you, but not really.

Instead, use Photoshop to freshen you, smooth hair flyaways, and remove any temporary blemishes. When Photoshop is used too heavily, the resulting image doesn't look authentic or real.

I have asked photographers to remove their Photoshop edits from my images more times than I care to admit. Yes, I have bags under my eyes, but without those bags, I am not me. Accept yourself as you are and don't erase your features — people gravitate to authenticity and the genuine.

Crop Your Image

The headshot is called a headshot for a reason — it should only contain your head. Your profile picture should present your full face and a sliver of your shoulders.

Crop out your ankles, knees, torso, elbows, and chest. The image should span from the top of your head to the bottom of your tie knot or clavicle.

The reason we zoom in is that it brings you closer to your viewer. Plus, that's a nice professional picture you just took — let's show it off!

- » Using your email address book to find even more connections
- » Joining groups or starting your own
- » Adding an extension to your browser

Chapter **19**

Ten Tips to Expand Your Network

LinkedIn search is a little peculiar. When you search by a person's name in the LinkedIn search bar, it doesn't matter if the person is in your network or not; his or her profile (provided there is one) appears in search results. But as you know, people don't always search by name. When typical users search by keyword, the results that appear are from profiles that are in their LinkedIn networks — not the entire LinkedIn user database.

This means that the profiles that are returned are either first-, second-, or third-degree connections, or members of common LinkedIn Groups. It is true that occasionally you'll see an Out of Network profile appear in your search results, but when that happens, the full name is not provided and the profile isn't completely visible.

You just put a lot of work into optimizing your LinkedIn network. To make sure you get a lot of profile views, you must be able to be found, and to make that happen, you need to make sure you have a strong LinkedIn network.

I am not advocating aiming low and wide, spraying and praying and connecting with people for sheer quantity. Instead, I want you to make your online network reflect your offline network. The people you know, the people you knew, and the people you meet every day should be added to your profile.

When you have a strong network, your profile appears in search results more often, and you get more views to your profile. Here's how to get started.

Import Your Address Book

It's hard to connect one by one, remembering the people you met through your life. Rather than rack your brain, LinkedIn allows you to import your online address book. Scanning your email address book shows you who's on LinkedIn already, and LinkedIn allows you to automatically connect with them. I know it seems a little scary to give LinkedIn your email password, but I promise, nothing bad will happen as long as you go slow and read through each screen!

Here are the steps:

- 1. On LinkedIn's main toolbar, click My Network.**
- 2. In the left navigation pane, add your email to the Add Personal Contacts section (some users might see Invite Contacts instead), as shown in Figure 19-1.**

Because the wording and how to access this page is different for different LinkedIn members, here is the direct link to the Add Contacts page: www.linkedin.com/mynetwork/import-contacts. The Add Contacts page with a list of email providers appears.

- 3. Enter your email address and click Continue, or click the button for the email provider you use.**

An authentication window appears.

- 4. Enter your email credentials and accept any permission requests.**

LinkedIn scans your email address book looking for profile matches and presents you with a list of people you know who are already on LinkedIn, but not connected to you (see Figure 19-2).



WARNING

LinkedIn automatically selects all contacts. Do not click Add Connections! It's important to first go through this list one by one and select or deselect who you want to invite to connect with you on LinkedIn.

- 5. Remove the check marks by clicking in the circle to deselect the individuals you do not want to send a connection request.**

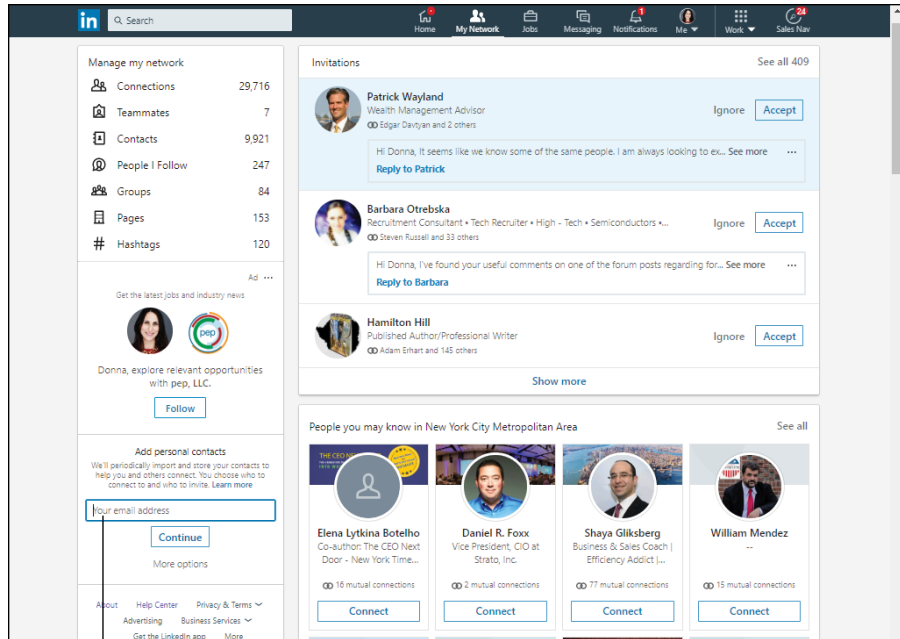


FIGURE 19-1: Import your address book to add additional contacts.

Enter your email address to add personal contacts

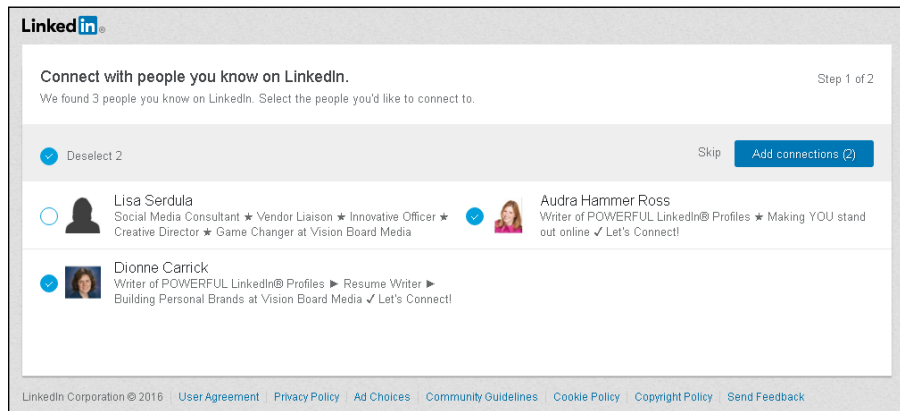


FIGURE 19-2: LinkedIn displays the profile matches based on email addresses in your email address book.

6. Click the Add Connections button.

An invitation request is sent, and then LinkedIn displays a list of people from your email address book who are not on LinkedIn that you can invite to join, as shown in Figure 19-3.

7. Deselect the people on the list you do not want to invite to join LinkedIn and click the Add to Network button, or click Skip to skip this step.

Invites are sent to those people you selected and you are back at the People You May Know screen.

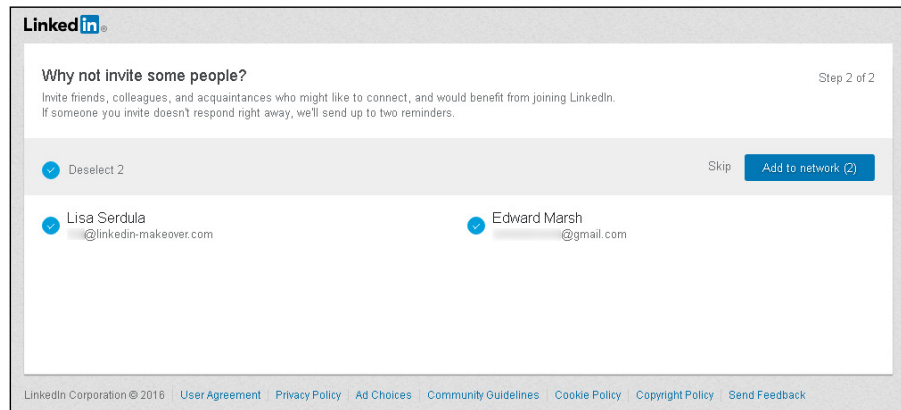


FIGURE 19-3: LinkedIn displays the people who are not on LinkedIn that you can invite.



TIP

It's absolutely acceptable to skip sending invitations. LinkedIn has over 500 million users. Most times, those people who show up as not on LinkedIn are on LinkedIn but with a different email address. Rather than bombard people with LinkedIn invitations, skip this step and concentrate on connecting with people who are definitely on LinkedIn already.

Import a Contact List

To make connecting as easy as possible, LinkedIn lets you upload a .csv, .txt, or .vcf file of email addresses. This is perfect if you have a spreadsheet of email addresses. Simply go to Add Connections under My Network (www.linkedin.com/mynetwork/import-contacts) and choose Import File. Select your file and go! If you want explicit directions, simply follow the directions under "Import Your Address Book" starting with Step 5.

Let LinkedIn Help You Connect

Under My Network on LinkedIn's navigation bar is People You May Know. This is a great page that most people overlook.

LinkedIn shows you connection recommendations of people you may possibly know and may like to connect with on LinkedIn. These recommendations are based on similar profile information. You may have gone to school with the person LinkedIn is recommending, or maybe you worked at the same company, or maybe you have similar experiences or work in the same industry.

LinkedIn also extrapolates people you may know from your email and mobile address books. Don't worry: LinkedIn never reads your messages; it just looks for email address matches.

To use People You May Know to make more connections, follow these steps:

1. Click My Network on LinkedIn's main toolbar.

A list of People You May Know appears.

2. Scan through the list of profiles that appear, and click the Connect button when you see a person you want to invite into your first-degree network.

By clicking Connect, you are sending a non-personalized invitation. If you want to personalize your invitation, go to Step 3.

3. Click the profile picture of the suggested person.

His or her LinkedIn profile opens.

4. Click the Connect button that appears next to that person's profile picture, as shown in Figure 19-4.

LinkedIn prompts you to add a personalized note.

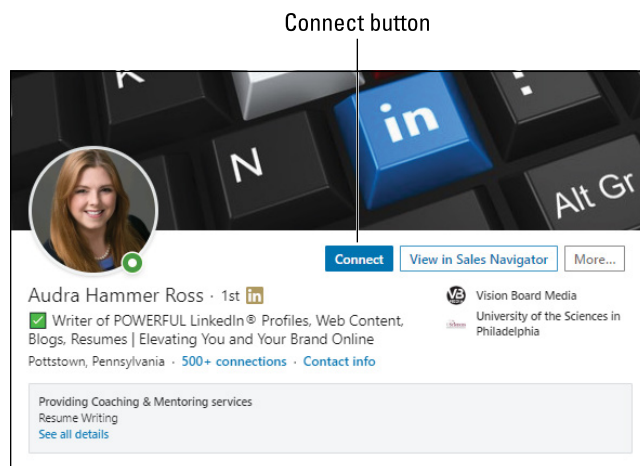


FIGURE 19-4: Click Connect to send a personalized connection request.

5. Click **Add a Note**.
6. Add a personalized note in the text field.
7. Click the **Send Invitation** button.

A personalized invitation is sent.

Join One Hundred Groups

Group members are part of your LinkedIn network. LinkedIn allows you to join up to 100 LinkedIn Groups. If you want to get found and find more people via LinkedIn search, my recommendation is to join the maximum 100 LinkedIn Groups.



REMEMBER

By joining groups, those members are added to your LinkedIn network. This means that when they search for someone like you, the odds of you appearing in their search results are much greater because you are “connected” through the group. You learn a lot more about groups in Chapter 14.

Start a LinkedIn Group

Depending upon your need to grow your network, starting a LinkedIn Group to grow your network might be akin to killing a fly with an anvil. Starting a LinkedIn Group is a huge undertaking, but it can be a worthwhile investment depending on your goals. As the LinkedIn Group administrator, you sit in a unique leadership position, and people within the group get to know you. Who would reject a connection request from the Group administrator?

My only caveat here is there is a lot of work required to create and build a LinkedIn Group. If you are absolutely not interested in creating a group, become very active in an already established group. As you interact with people via group discussions, send them a connection request. It’s on a slightly smaller scale than being a LinkedIn Group administrator, but it does allow you to meet people and connect.

Make Connecting a Process

To grow your network, you must make it a systematic process. Don’t just focus on connecting with people from your past. Each time you schedule a meeting, make sure the invitees are in your LinkedIn network. Don’t just collect business cards at

industry events, enter the names into LinkedIn and connect with them. The idea is that you connect with the people you meet along the way.



TIP

Connecting must be part of your professional process, and it's something that you should never stop doing.

Link to Your Profile

Expanding your network is not just about sending connection requests to other people. It's equally important that you make it easy for other people to connect to you. The best way to do that is to provide a link to your LinkedIn profile wherever you are . . . online or off.

Here are a few places you can add a link to your profile:

- » Business card
- » Email signature
- » Letterhead
- » Marketing literature
- » Spray paint it across the local bridge (just teasing)
- » Resume
- » Social media networks
- » Website bio
- » Website social media section

Brand Yourself a LION or Just Connect to Them

Surely you've noticed people on LinkedIn with the moniker "LION" next to their names or have it listed in their summaries. No, these people are not actual cat lovers. LION is short for LinkedIn Open Networker. A LION is a person who is willing to connect with anyone on LinkedIn, regardless of whether they know you or trust you.

Back in the wild heyday of early LinkedIn, being a LION was a renegade thing to do. This was back in the day before LinkedIn had a Follow button. Heck, this was back in the day when most people had networks with far fewer than 500 connections. Yes, this was back in the day before smartphones and the LinkedIn app made connecting in person possible. Back then you had to walk up a hill barefoot to connect with a person (not true). Being a LION isn't quite what it was, but there is still value in the mindset of openness and inclusion.

The one rule LIONS follow is never mark any incoming invitation as SPAM or I Don't Know. When a person marks an invite as SPAM or I Don't Know, that's a black mark against the user. If too many people mark you as SPAM or I Don't Know, LinkedIn restricts your account and you will only be able to add people if you enter in their email addresses.

It's easy to become a LION. All you need to do is add LION or LinkedIn Open Networker to your profile and never choose SPAM or I Don't Know on an incoming invitation to connect.

However, there are pros and cons to becoming a LION. It's something that you need to consider long and hard. If you are only looking to grow a strong network, not a ginormous one, becoming a LION may not be the best option for you.



TIP

Instead of labeling yourself a LION, you can choose to just connect to LIONS. By searching out LIONS and adding them to your network, you are expanding your second-degree network and growing your total LinkedIn network in the process.

Because it's easy to spot a LION, it's easy to find them on LinkedIn. By doing a simple keyword search for "LinkedIn Open Networker," you'll find a slew. Send them a connection request and a short, personalized note and they'll be happy to add you to their enormous network.

Don't Join Open Networking Lists and Groups

A number of websites allow you to download a list of email addresses of LinkedIn members who want to expand their network. By uploading that list of email addresses to LinkedIn, you can expand your own network very quickly.

These websites all work in a similar manner. It's free to download the list, but it costs money to get your name on the list. The idea is that you want people adding you as a connection rather than having to download the list yourself. By having other people add you, you are able to determine who you want to add, but also, you aren't using up your 5,000-invitation limit.



WARNING

The problem is, most of the people on these lists are either inactive accounts, spammers, nefarious MLMers (multi-level marketers), or Nigerian princes with large sums of money they want you to help them deposit. Just stay away from these lists. No good can come from them. You want to connect with real people who are using LinkedIn in an authentic and genuine manner. LinkedIn isn't about spraying and praying.

Use an App

What makes connecting so gosh darn hard is that it's outside your everyday process. Wouldn't it be great if instead of having to visit `LinkedIn.com`, you could connect directly with people within your email application? As you receive and read email, you get to see a link to the person's profile and a Connect button? Guess what, there is! It's called Sales Navigator for Gmail, and it's a browser extension that comes in two flavors: Lite for "freemium" users and Premium for LinkedIn Sales Navigator users.

This extension displays profile information on the right side of opened email messages. Not only do you see the sender's headline, location, and current position, but also it displays links to the sender's LinkedIn profile. If you are not currently connected to the sender, this extension shows you a Connect button that you can click to send an invitation to connect on LinkedIn.

You can visit this link to learn more:

<https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions/compare-plans/sales-navigator-for-gmail>

Or go the Chrome store and search for *Sales Navigator*.

- » Growing a strong network
- » Gaining social proof and credibility of your skills
- » Promoting yourself as a thought leader
- » Finding assistance

Chapter **20**

Ten Tips to Leverage LinkedIn

Your profile is optimized and your network is growing . . . *now what?* Most people optimize their profile and then disappear off LinkedIn. They forget that LinkedIn is more than just a place to house their profile and accomplishments.

LinkedIn is a social network and a business tool. To truly see results and find that elusive opportunity that people claim is “in them thar LinkedIn hills,” you must get on LinkedIn and use it.

Here are ten tips to help you leverage LinkedIn like a successful goldminer.

A-B-C . . . Always Be Connecting

In the movie *Glengarry Glen Ross*, Alec Baldwin’s character shouts, “A-B-C . . . always be closing!” I like to think of it a little differently in this brave new social media world. Rather than closing, let’s say, “A-B-C . . . always be connecting!”

By connecting with people on LinkedIn, you are able to keep in touch with them. I like to call it *drip-feed marketing*. When connected, that person is subscribed to your LinkedIn activity and posts. Each time you post or write an article, respond to someone else's post (like, comment, or share), celebrate a work anniversary, or appear in the news, that person has the potential to see it and be reminded of you.

There's so much going on in the world today. We are bombarded by messages every second of every day. Just because you met someone doesn't mean she'll remember you when she needs you. But by connecting on LinkedIn, you improve those chances because that person is often reminded of you through notifications, posts, and search results.



REMEMBER

When you connect with someone on LinkedIn, you aren't just connecting to solely him — you are connecting to his network and his network's network. If either that person or someone within his network searches LinkedIn for someone like you, your profile has a higher likelihood of appearing in the search results because of the network you share.

Connect and Stay in Touch

When starting out on LinkedIn, most people don't put enough focus on connecting and growing a strong network. LinkedIn's People You May Know page is a great way to get connection recommendations.

Here's how to get to LinkedIn's People You May Know page:

- 1. Go to www.linkedin.com and open your profile.**
- 2. Click the My Network icon in LinkedIn's main toolbar at the top of the page.**
- 3. Scroll down past the invitations section.**

As you scroll down the page, you will see suggestions for people you may possibly know divided by location, industry, and skills.

By extrapolating relationships through email matches and shared information on LinkedIn profiles, LinkedIn often provides eerily correct recommendations. Often, the people in the People You May Know page are actually people you had forgotten about, but with LinkedIn's prompting, you can reconnect and reestablish a fruitful relationship.

Another way to reconnect and reestablish professional friendships is through LinkedIn's Notifications page. This page shows notifications received about yourself, your activity, and your first-degree connections. Not only will you see alerts that people engaged with a post or tagged you in one of their posts, but also you'll see who is starting a new position or celebrating a work anniversary. This area is the hub of all things happening and helps you find reasons to stay in touch.

Here's how to get there:

- 1. Open your LinkedIn profile.**
- 2. Click the Notifications icon in LinkedIn's main toolbar at the top of the page.**

LinkedIn shows you a list of notifications:

- Birthdays
- Work anniversaries
- New positions
- Education updates
- Posts that are trending
- Connections who have published articles
- Reactions and engagement with your posts
- Connections activity
- Live video starting

To make it even easier for you, LinkedIn provides a one-click button to wish the person a happy birthday or say congrats.

Now you have no excuses not to stay in touch with people in your network.

Gather Business Intelligence

LinkedIn is a treasure trove of information on people and companies. This is information that you can easily access with just a few simple searches.



TIP

Interviewing at a company and want to learn more about it? Check it out on LinkedIn. Its LinkedIn Company page not only summarizes who it is and what it, but also you get to see a listing of current employees.

One of the key benefits of LinkedIn is that it turns invisible relationships visible. Looking at the list of employees on a LinkedIn company page, you can see how you are connected to them: first-degree, second-degree, third-degree, or through a group. If you find an employee who's a second-degree connection, visit that person's profile to see the mutual connection you have in common. If it's someone you are on familiar terms, reach out and ask for an introduction. If the employee has provided contact information, use your shared connection's name as an ice breaker.

LinkedIn does not just offer company research. Profiles are brimming with great information, too, even if the person hasn't optimized his or her profile. Back when I was in technology sales, I researched my top 15 prospects on LinkedIn. I checked their LinkedIn Groups and Organizations to see where they belonged online and offline. I then joined those groups and organizations so I could rub elbows with them. Many of those offline organizations afforded me a chance to forge relationships with my prospects that resulted in more clients and sales.

Are you looking to move up within an organization? Look at the profiles of the people in your target positions. What do they have in common? Do they have certain courses, certifications, or degrees to their name that you need? Use their profiles to determine what you need to do professionally to reach their career heights.

Ultimately, do your due diligence. Check out companies and people on LinkedIn so you get a deeper understanding as to who they are and what they do. You'll be surprised at what you find.

Get the News

The newsfeed on LinkedIn's home page is a veritable newspaper, filled with articles and items that have been cultivated and curated by your network. These people with whom you are connected have handpicked the articles, written the posts, and shared news that moves them. This stream of information is brimming with possibilities and opportunities. Scroll through your newsfeed, not just looking at the information being shared, but also at who's sharing it.



TIP

Think of your LinkedIn's home page newsfeed as an online networking party where that tiny little status update is the virtual embodiment of a person standing in the middle of the room, looking for someone to talk to. How do you want to respond to this person? If you simply want to smile and nod, click the Like button. If you want to engage and start a conversation, click the Comment button and type something pithy. If you want to trumpet this person and give her a bigger audience, click the Share button.

Are you ready to do more than just respond to others? Share your own status updates and experience what I like to call *drip-feed marketing*. By sharing links to articles, information on upcoming events, providing advice, quotes, infographics, and more, you provide value to your target audience. Each time you share valuable information, your audience is reminded that you exist. You never know when people might need someone like you. By staying on top on their mind, you are ensuring they reach out to you first!

When you are the one beginning the conversation, people respond to you. Each time a person likes, comments, or shares your update, your potential audience gets bigger and bigger. The more eyes on your update, the more people who may click your profile looking to learn more about you.

Get Social Proof and Credibility

LinkedIn offers something that resumes and recommendation letters can't: social proof. The LinkedIn profile is totally public and visible for all to see. The public nature of the LinkedIn profile acts as an honesty incentive. Who's going to lie when their teammates and colleagues are able to click and see what they are touting?

In addition, recommendations and endorsements add balance to your accomplishments and successes. It's not just you saying you're great; other people can chime in and say it, too. And remember, those people endorsing and recommending you — it's done upfront with their names and faces right next to the endorsement and recommendation. They, too, are incentivized to tell the truth with their public images on the line.

Get Past the Gatekeeper

If you have ever been in sales and had to cold-call potential customers, you know about the Gatekeeper. That's the person hired to keep salespeople and other annoyances away from decision-makers. You call and call but never can get through to the person because the Gatekeeper is keeping you at bay.

Back when I was in sales, I found that LinkedIn offered a great way to get past the Gatekeeper. InMails, OpenLink messages, and group messaging allowed me to directly communicate with the person I couldn't get through to over the phone. LinkedIn allowed me to sidestep the Gatekeeper and get my epistle directly onto

the decision-maker's lap. Even if you aren't in sales, you still will face gatekeepers whose job it is to keep you away from the person you need to reach. LinkedIn is the tool that can get you past that guard. However, it's important to have a compelling message that gets the decision-maker to take notice. Otherwise, even though you got through the door, you still won't make an impact.

You don't even need to rely on a direct message to their inboxes. By following your targets on LinkedIn, you can stay abreast of their posts and articles. Once they do post, jump in and engage! Like, leave a comment, and share their post with your network. It won't take long for them to notice you and your good taste!

Rub Elbows in Groups

LinkedIn Groups are subject-focused forums where like-minded individuals join for discussion and networking purposes. Join groups within your business niche to rub elbows with your target audience. When you join a strong, focused group with serious members, it's a place to learn, develop, inspire, and help others.

If you don't have time to join a group for discussion and interaction, join LinkedIn Groups because they extend your network. By joining a group, those members are added to your network. By having these members in your network, they are able to find you if they are doing a keyword-based search and your search results are enhanced for keyword searches you perform. Joining groups is the easiest way to grow your network and see a real impact in search results.

Find Assistance

When you need a handyman to help fix something in your home, what's the first thing you do? You ask around! You call up the people close to you to see if they know someone. Everybody feels more comfortable working with someone their friends and family have used in the past.

LinkedIn works on this exact same principle!

Are you looking for a marketing consultant to help grow your business? Perhaps you need a financial advisor or an insurance agent? Maybe you need to hire an office manager? Whatever you are looking for, LinkedIn is a searchable database of professionals who are connected to you.

When you use a search engine on the web, the results are all over the board. You'll find websites, blogs, videos, and more. The people you find on a search engine could be located anywhere and without any connection to you.

But search LinkedIn, and the search result listings that are returned are real people within your network. The number after their names tells you how closely connected you are to the people who fit your search criteria. First-degree connections are people directly connected to you. Second-degree connections are people who share with you a mutual connection. Third-degree connections are people who know a mutual connection you share or belong to a LinkedIn Group in common with you.

Clicking the result gives you a profile that provides everything you need to decide if you want to reach out to learn more.

Showcase Thought Leadership

The problem with blogging is not just coming up with content, it's also finding an audience to read your articles. You can go to WordPress.com and easily create your own website and start blogging, but it takes time to develop an audience.

The beautiful part of using LinkedIn's Publishing Platform is that when you begin to write long-form articles, you already have a built-in audience — your LinkedIn network! All those people you've connected to over the years are potential readers of your work. Because you have a built-in audience, you can really concentrate on coming up with good topics and content. Your posts are housed on your profile for readers of your profile to see.

Profiles that contain long-form articles showcase thought leadership. Expertise is rare, and by taking the time to create a long-form post, you are differentiating yourself and your profile. Remember:

Blogging = Thought Leadership = Differentiation = Opportunity



TIP

When you do write an article, make sure you continue to send out posts, linking to your article. Add context to the post so a person is more apt to click the link and read your article. Tagging people in the post is a great way to ensure people see your post. Add hashtags to allow other people interested in that topic to discover your post.

Network in Your Pajamas

You always hear about the importance of networking, yet the thought of networking is intimidating. There's this vision of old men in dark suits convening in a club, drinking whiskey and making deals. Do you even want to be a part of that?

Networking is not nearly as complicated or nefarious as it seems. Networking at its most basic level is two things: being friendly and being helpful. That's why so many people fail. They start networking only when they need something. By then, it's often too late. Dig your well before you are thirsty.

Networking used to take place in person or over the phone, one to one. LinkedIn changed the playing field, giving you the ability to network at 3 a.m. in your pajamas.



TIP

Log on to LinkedIn and scroll through your newsfeed. Like, comment, and share your connections' status updates that move you. Follow hashtags of topics and interests that are relevant to you to find and engage with content produced by people outside your network.

As you surf the web and find an interesting and pertinent article, send it out as a post to everyone. Or, tag people within the post to make sure they are notified and see your post. Rather than do it publicly, you can send the post or article via LinkedIn messaging. Just select a person from your contacts and message the post to him or her specifically with a note, letting this person know you are thinking about him or her.

Join LinkedIn Groups to be part of a larger conversation. Ask for advice. Provide help. Introduce and connect with people with synergy. Share ideas. Add value.

All you need to do is log into LinkedIn. Stop thinking of LinkedIn as a chore or a site that simply houses your profile. LinkedIn is a conduit of information, news, people, branding, and opportunity. LinkedIn is a place to engage and interact. Forge a presence and a reputation on LinkedIn as a giver, and opportunity will begin to flow. Show up and immediately expect quick results, and opportunity will retract.

- » Improving your contact information
- » Generating an attractive headline
- » Creating great graphics and multimedia content

Chapter **21**

Ten LinkedIn Profile Resources

To achieve a truly optimized LinkedIn profile, it takes more than just sheer writing and typing ability. I've compiled a list of ten resources to help you create the best profile out there. These resources are my secret gems to create an impressive profile. The resources span videos, online tools, and more. The best part? Almost all of them are free.

Get Inspired and Excited

I remember when I watched Simon Sinek's TED talk, "How Great Leaders Inspire Action" the first time. He verbalized something I knew in my heart: *If you want to move someone, don't tell them how, tell them why.* After watching this video, you'll begin to see the bigger picture the LinkedIn About section provides, and you will begin to realize your own *why*.

Simon Sinek's TED talk is found here:

www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek_how_great_leaders_inspire_action

Carla Harris's presentation, "How to Own Your Power," is one I watch over and over again because it's so inspiring. She provides three pearls of wisdom, and although she's not directly talking about a LinkedIn profile, her pearls absolutely reflect what is possible with your profile. She talks about confidence, risks, and (my favorite) perception.

Carla Harris's "How to Own Your Power" presentation is found here:

<https://youtu.be/0rWmtYzXkFg>

LinkedIn Headline Generator

I created an online application to help you generate your LinkedIn headline. All you do is check off the descriptive terms that apply to you and . . . bam! A LinkedIn headline is presented to you that you simply copy and paste into your LinkedIn profile.

It doesn't get any easier, folks! My headline generator app is found here:

www.Linkedin-Makeover.com/LinkedIn-Headline-Generator

Virtual Phone Numbers

Over and over again throughout this book, I tell you to add your phone number to your profile. LinkedIn brings opportunity, and often that opportunity is looking to talk to you right this very moment. By not providing your phone number, that hot, heaping spoonful of opportunity will go elsewhere.

However, if you are simply not comfortable providing your home number or mobile number, there are services out there to help.

Google Voice

Google Voice is a free service that provides you with a virtual phone number that you can forward to either voicemail or to your regular phone number. There are many more features as well. Check it out here:

www.google.com/voice

Skype

Most people think of Skype as a way to place video calls to friends and family, but Skype is much more than that. Through Skype, you can purchase your very own phone number. When a person dials that number, it can ring your computer or your mobile phone if you have the Skype app installed. Just like Google Voice, Skype provides even more features, too. Check it out here:

www.skype.com

Say No to AOL and Hotmail Addresses

Believe it or not, your email address says a lot about you. AOL and Hotmail email addresses portray you as an outmoded, tech dinosaur. Is it a fair assumption? Of course not, but there are zillions of articles out there with studies to prove that your email address is a status symbol. Sadly, AOL and Hotmail are equivalent to driving an old-fashioned Buick.

Your own domain

Want to drive a Rolls-Royce? Get an email address with your own domain. There's plenty of ways to do it, but the easiest is through Google Apps:

<https://domains.google.com>

Acceptable free domains

Not a Rolls-Royce type? That's okay; you can drive a Lexus with either a Gmail.com or iCloud.com email address:

Gmail (<https://mail.google.com>)

iCloud (www.icloud.com)



TIP

It's hard to change your email address, and it's something that you can't take lightly. Strategically decide if it makes sense to keep your old addresses, or if it's time to move on. It's a shame to cling to an old email address out of laziness when it's hurting you on the job front.

Symbol Variations

When you paste symbols into your profile, their look changes depending on the device used to view them. What might look like a black check mark to you might look like a bright red check to a person viewing it on a MacBook Pro or an Android smartphone. The reason for this is that some devices display the symbols in black and white Unicode, while others replace them with their emoji equivalent. Every device vendor uses its own emoji art, so what looks one way on Mac looks differently on a PC or Android smartphone.

Check out my website to see the different variations of the most popular business symbols:

www.linkedin-makeover.com/tools/symbols

Stop the Typos

Most word processors have a spelling and grammar checker built in, but if you are typing directly into LinkedIn's text fields, only the Chrome browser provides spellcheck through an extension. Grammarly (<https://app.grammarly.com>) is a Chrome extension that enables grammar check within your browser. When Grammarly is running, it catches any grammatical mistakes you type and helps make you look even more professional!

SlideShare

SlideShare is a slide hosting service owned by LinkedIn that allows users to upload slide presentations to share their knowledge. People often ask me for ideas of items to add to their LinkedIn profiles. Most people don't have videos or podcasts to upload, and they are left scratching their head, wondering what to add. I have one word for you: presentations.

Practically every professional has access to PowerPoint or Keynote. Go ahead, get in there and create a presentation! You can paste in report metrics or offer insights into a project you completed. Create a presentation that showcases who you are and what you do. The world is your oyster; get creative and let yourself shine!

Once it's created, share it on SlideShare and link it to your LinkedIn profile. Voila! Instant multimedia content. You can find SlideShare here:

www.slideshare.net



TIP

You can also access SlideShare from LinkedIn's main navigation bar under Interests.

Photographer Directory

Your profile picture is so important. When my clients are looking for a photographer, there is one directory I send them to: Peter Hurley's Headshot Crew. Peter Hurley is the premier headshot and portrait photographer in New York City. He's best known for producing authentic and genuine-looking executive business portraits and actors' headshots. Peter Hurley has an online school devoted to teaching headshot photography. The photographers who have gone through his course and training are then added to the Headshot Crew database. You can search by location and see what photographers are local to you who have trained with Peter Hurley. I can attest that these photographers are truly amazing.

Peter Hurley's Headshot Crew (<https://headshotcrew.com>)

Background Image Libraries

The LinkedIn background image is a great way to brand your profile and really stand out. The issue is finding the right background image. Yes, you can search around and steal an image off the web, but that brings bad mojo. Instead, peruse these online libraries of free images:

Freemages (www.freeimages.com)

Pexels (www.pexels.com)

Pixabay (<https://pixabay.com>)

Splitshire (www.splitshire.com)

Unsplash (<https://unsplash.com>)

Here are some libraries where you can purchase images:

GraphicRiver (<http://graphicriver.net>)

iStock (www.istockphoto.com)

Shutterstock (www.shutterstock.com)

Online Image Apps

Once you have a great background image, you might want to customize it with text. My favorite online image editor is Canva. Canva makes it so easy to create picture montages and place text over images.

Canva isn't the only company out there providing this type of service. PicMonkey and Adobe Spark also offer similar services. You can find them here:

Adobe Spark (<https://spark.adobe.com>)

Canva (www.canva.com)

PicMonkey (www.picmonkey.com)

RelayThat: (www.relaythat.com)

Of these apps, I use Canva and RelayThat. Try each service out to see which one is your favorite.

- » Getting noticed by recruiters
- » Making your profile stand out
- » Staying active to be seen by recruiters
- » Keeping your profile up to date

Chapter **22**

Ten Ways to Get Noticed by Recruiters on LinkedIn

They are almost synonymous: LinkedIn and job search. It's a shame, really. I think that connotation is what stops a lot of people from joining and interacting on this professional network. When you use LinkedIn for branding, reputation management, thought leadership, and business intelligence, a funny side effect happens. You don't have to look for a job because jobs find you. Nevertheless, many people get on LinkedIn for one reason only: to find their next opportunity.

The hope for many is to get on LinkedIn and find themselves besieged by recruiters offering awesome jobs. It doesn't always work like that. Chances are, you already experienced that disappointment: thus the purchase of this book.

Here are ten tips to help you utilize LinkedIn so you do intersect and collide with recruiters looking for someone like you.

Make It Easy to Connect the Dots Quickly

Harry Urschel, Managing Partner at Hansen Back, a Minneapolis-based retained recruiting and consulting firm, says it's important to make your profile easy to read and clear in what you do:

Any recruiter makes decisions very quickly when they are looking through LinkedIn profiles. Things that help in the process . . . The only way to get found is through appropriate search-terms/keywords. The headline has to be clear about what you do. The profile has to be easy to digest. Long paragraphs take too long to read. There are always more profiles to look at. Make yours easy for them to connect the dots quickly.

You can read Harry's easy-to-read profile here: www.linkedin.com/in/harryurschel.

Spend time perusing job descriptions of positions you are interested in. The keywords that are used to describe the position are the keywords that should populate your LinkedIn profile. Make sure your profile is clear regarding what you do and what you bring to the table. Take a few seconds to break up long paragraphs by hitting the Enter/Return key on your keyboard.

Exhibit Personality and Show a Cultural Fit

Kris Dunn, VP of HR for Kinetix, a recruitment process outsourcing firm (RPO) for growth companies, believes that a personality rich About section is what will get you noticed by recruiters and ensure the best cultural placement:

When positioning your LinkedIn profile, don't underestimate the deeper impact of spending quality time on your "About" section of your profile. I took the time to write something original that top-lined who I am as a professional and had fun with it, and I've been reaping the benefits for years. While showing your spirit and soul in the "About" section may be viewed by some as risky, I'm convinced you're more likely to find a cultural fit with your next company and boss by taking time in this important area of your LinkedIn Profile that most ignore.

Kris is also the author of *The 9 Faces of HR: A Disruptor's Guide to Mastering Innovation and Driving Real Change*. You can read Kris's powerful profile here: www.linkedin.com/in/krisdunn.



REMEMBER

Recruiters are pouring through hundreds of profiles. They read “dynamic, out of the box professional with progressive experience” over and over and over again. Take mercy on them! Rather than give them the same words they’ve already read a hundred times, make them smile. Give them a chuckle. By doing so, you are standing out and making them like you.

Turn On Open to Job Opportunities

Within the intro card of your LinkedIn profile is where you enable Open to Job Opportunities. I detail this section in Chapter 9. Fill out this section with as much information as you can. Be clear and concise.

Recruiter and job seeker ally, Ed Han, tells us:

On LinkedIn by far the best tool is to tell recruiters you’re on the market. This is accomplished by going to your profile. Right below the section known as your intro card (name, headline, profile picture, location, etc., there’s an option to tell the users of LinkedIn’s Recruiter product that you’re open to new opportunities.

You can identify 10+ desired job titles, 20+ communities in which you would like to be employed — particularly useful for those job seekers interested in improving their work/life balance due to a long commute — what type of employment (employee, contractor, part-time, remote), and 300 characters for any particular message you want to communicate, such as preferred organization sizes or types, or anything else you like.

If you are currently working, set this section to be visible to Recruiters Only. If you are displaced, you may decide to set it to be visible to everyone. People can’t help you if they don’t know you need help. Plus, not every recruiter is using the premium recruiting subscription. To be seen by all recruiters, you need to be seen by everyone on LinkedIn. This section does become part of your professional brand, so keep an eye on it and make sure it comes off when you come off the market.



WARNING

Keep in mind, this isn’t a silver bullet. Absolutely fill this section out, but don’t rely on it totally. Check out Chapter 9 to understand how not all recruiters see this section.

Say Cheese

Take a good, long look at your LinkedIn profile picture. This little tiny circular image transmits a ton of information. People form an impression about you from your profile picture, and they will also form one if one is missing.

I remember having a conversation with a recruiter and he said, “If a person doesn’t have a profile photo, I skip over them. If they don’t take LinkedIn seriously, I don’t take them seriously.”

The moral of this story? Get a profile picture and make sure you look professional and friendly in it.

Provide Your Contact Information

Recruiters reach out to a lot of people on LinkedIn. Some are using the free version of LinkedIn, which means they need to be connected to you in order to message you on LinkedIn. Even those who are paying for LinkedIn can only send so many InMail messages each month. What you can do to help them is provide your contact information throughout your profile. Add your phone number and email address in the About section of your profile and at the end of your current experience description. You can also make sure that within the settings of LinkedIn, you allow anyone on LinkedIn to see your email address. Check out: www.linkedin.com/psettings/privacy/email.

Connect to Them

Chances are, there are recruiters who specialize in your industry. Make sure you know who they are and that they know you. The easiest way to do this is to conduct a search on LinkedIn for recruiters who source talent for your industry. Conduct a people search by clicking into LinkedIn’s search box and typing **Recruiter AND [the name of your industry]**.

Scroll through the results and click on profiles that look interesting. When you find a match, send the recruiter a connection request. Include a note that states:

We don't know each other but I see you specialize in [insert your industry]. As a professional in this industry, I feel it would behoove us both to connect. I am open to new opportunities.

Keep it short and sweet! Recruiters don't have a lot of time for niceties.

Comment on Their Posts

Many recruiters post their open positions on their LinkedIn feeds. Use LinkedIn's search bar to conduct a content search using the name of your desired next position as the keyword. You can also include the words "now hiring" or "job posting."

When you find posts that are interesting to you, you can either comment on the post (but remember that comment is public and will show up on your LinkedIn profile) or connect with the recruiter who posted and send him or her a message that you are interested in learning more.

Post, Comment, and Hashtag

Recruiters are typically quite active on LinkedIn. Many of them aren't just conducting people searches using keywords. Some are monitoring hashtags and conducting content searches looking for the movers and shakers in the industry they are sourcing. By posting quality content and including appropriate industry-related hashtags, you are putting yourself out there as an expert, and you may get noticed and found in an entirely different way. Check out Chapter 15 to learn more about publishing on LinkedIn and using hashtags.

Keep Your Profile Up to Date and Fresh

LinkedIn rewards freshly updated profiles with higher placement in search results. Freshly updated profiles are more relevant than profiles that haven't been touched in months or years. Want to get found by recruiters? Make sure your profile isn't stale and doesn't get stale by updating it regularly.

Invest in Your Future

If you want to get noticed by recruiters, consider subscribing to LinkedIn's Premium Career product (<https://members.linkedin.com/premiumcareer>). When recruiters see you are a premium member, this indicates you are more serious about your job search.

Additionally, Premium Career subscribers get Featured Applicant Status on job applications so your profile sits above those members using the freemium version of LinkedIn.

You get what you pay for, so pay some money and get noticed faster! LinkedIn may surprise you with a free month of premium, so check it out.

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About the Author

A business owner, author, speaker, and Influencer, **Donna Serdula** thrives on empowering people to transform their lives and realize their most sought-after goals.

The pioneer of LinkedIn profile optimization, she built the successful website, LinkedIn-Makeover.com, more than a decade ago. In that time, she has worked with more than 6,000 executives, entrepreneurs, and professionals, utilizing a talented team of over 30 writers, coaches, and branding specialists to bring dynamic brand storytelling to the masses.

Donna and her team act as a board of futurists/creative thinkers/global brand advocates for their clients by designing success strategies that cross industries and change lives. When developing personal and corporate brands, Donna's vision is one of possibility. It is this foundation that inspired her to launch and establish Vision Board Media, the parent company of LinkedIn-Makeover.com, where she helps to infuse the global marketplace with diverse, brilliant people and products.

Donna is an in-demand speaker throughout the United States and has appeared on prominent media outlets such as *Business Insider*, *Money.com*, the *Wall Street Journal's* MarketWatch, the *Los Angeles Times*, NBC, and SiriusXM Radio's Wharton Business Radio. She has presented keynote speeches and workshops for Comcast NBCUniversal, Columbia University, Wharton Business School, Intuit, Texas State Bar Association, GSK, and hundreds more.

Donna earned her stripes in corporate America with more than ten years in sales, marketing, and business operations. Today, she lives in New Jersey with her husband and four children. As a daughter and wife of former military, Donna believes in giving back and provides her digital products free to active duty and veterans.

Visit Donna's website, www.Linkedin-Makeover.com, for more LinkedIn resources, or her website devoted to her public speaking, www.DonnaSerdula.com. You can contact Donna directly at Donna@LinkedIn-Makeover.com.

Dedication

To my mom, my very first first-degree connection.

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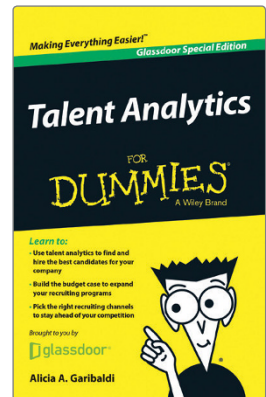
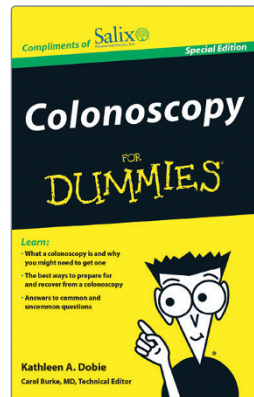
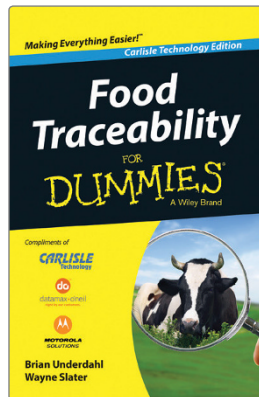
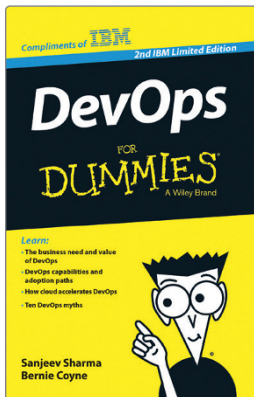
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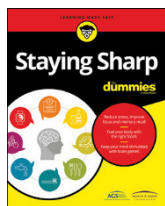
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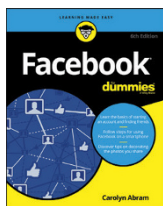
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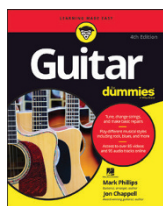
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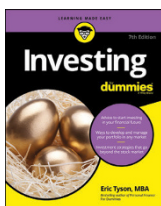
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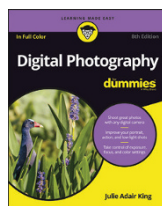
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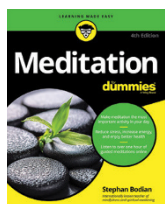
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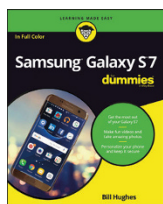
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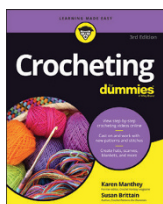
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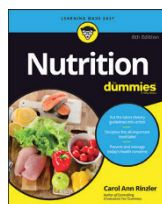
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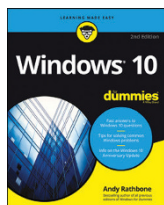


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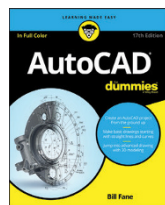


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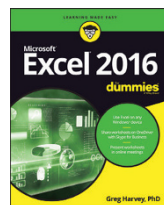
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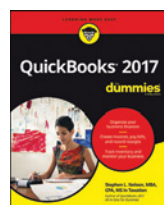
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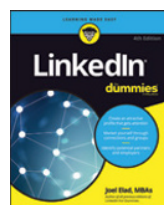
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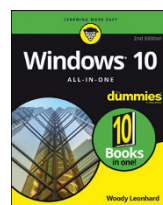
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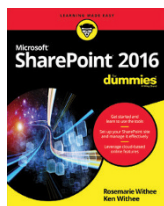
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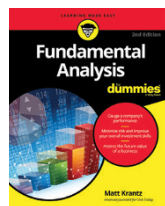
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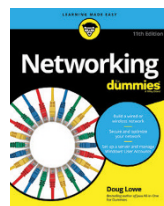
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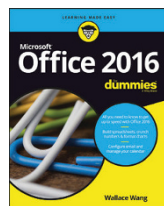
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