

LINKEDIN PROFILE GUIDELINES

LinkedIn can be an extremely effective tool for job seekers. LinkedIn allows you to engage with professionals to learn about particular industries, roles, and current trends while expanding your professional network. LinkedIn also allows you to highlight your experience, skills, and expertise to recruiters sourcing talent for open positions. The following information will help you build a LinkedIn Profile that portrays a strategic, effective professional image in a job search. We'll run from top to bottom.

Cover Image: This is often the first thing people see, so you want to make a good first impression. Choose an image that showcases your professional brand. It might include a current company's logo, an interest you may have, a feeling you want to convey, or school pride. LinkedIn has templates for use, or you can upload your own photo. Unsplash.com is a great tool for finding free, high-quality professional images.

Picture: Use a recent photo of yourself that gives a professional image, but doesn't have to have been taken by a professional photographer. Avoid a background or clothing that could be distracting. Likely keep the Hawaiian shirts and bridesmaid dresses for a different platform. Choose a photo that aligns with your desired role and industry.

Name: Select the name you are most comfortable with, even if it is not your full name. Ensure you use the same name on your resume and LinkedIn profile. If you've changed your name, you might want to include your maiden or previous name in parentheses so you are easily found by people who knew you before your name change.

Headline*: Writing a strong headline is critical if you are in a job search. It is the most visible part of your profile after your name. Try to include the job title you seek, to help increase the odds of being found by recruiters using Applicant Tracking Software (ATS). You could also include information like your current role, past name-brand companies (i.e., former Google), industry targets, key skills, etc. Peruse headlines of people you admire and try to position yourself similarly.

Location*: It's important to align with the location you want to work in, even if you don't live or work there yet. If you are not in a job search, this is not as critical, and you can identify the location where you currently work/live.

About: Create a tight or concise paragraph (3-4 sentences) that captures what you want to be known for and positions yourself for the role you desire. Then, list three significant highlights or accomplishments from your career underneath that paragraph.

This shows that you can get things done. Close by listing keywords or skills that show the scope of your expertise.

Experience: Your experience section must match what you write on your resume-- position title, employer name, and dates of employment. Recruiters will check this for alignment. It's a red flag if something doesn't align. If you've edited your resume for length, it's ok to list more positions on LinkedIn than on your Resume.

For each position, include one sentence highlighting the scope or most significant aspect of the role. Then, add a few bullet points that showcase accomplishments and outcomes. These bullets should mirror your resume descriptions, but don't have to be as detailed or extensive. Ensure your bullets start with strong action verbs. Finally, add skills to each role.

Education: Include undergraduate and graduate degrees, and graduate certificates. Include your high school if it has a strong network. You decide whether to include the dates of completion or not.

Volunteering: This is optional and encouraged if you do volunteer work.

Skills: Identify skills for both your Experience and Skills sections. These should align with the industry and positions you are seeking when possible. Avoid adding skills that you don't yet possess.

Recommendations: Recommendations can be important in a job search to help you stand out from other applicants. A great way to get recommendations is to write them for others first. They will often reciprocate and write one for you in return.

Interests: The Interests section allows you to follow Top Voices, Companies, Groups, Newsletters, and Schools to stay informed. It also helps direct LinkedIn's algorithm to the type of information you want to see in your feed. If you're in a job search, it's recommended to follow your target companies so they see you're a serious candidate.

Add to Profile: You can tailor your LinkedIn profile to include additional sections such as Publications, Honors & Awards, Languages, Causes, Courses, etc. Be thoughtful and strategic when adding these. Add sections that will be robust and showcase new information.

**Recruiters who use Applicant Tracking Software search first on Headline and Location to identify candidates for open roles. Keeping these up to date as your job search progresses is critical to being seen as a serious candidate.*