



LinkedIn Optimization Checklist

Resource

Version 2.0

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It's quite easy to find all kinds of suggestions for how you can best optimize your LinkedIn profile. But here's the problem—folks tend to disagree about some key points. For example, should you write in first person or third person? Should you focus more on engaging a potential employer or adhering to bullet points? Should you use Search Engine Optimization (SEO) enhanced language or key phrases that will move you through the dreaded Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software?

Don't get stuck in this place, the Land of Conflicting Guidance. People who visit here can find themselves suffering from analysis paralysis, too overwhelmed by information to actually take action. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Any steps you take to optimize and improve your LinkedIn profile increases your chance of having it viewed by the right set of eyes for your next great opportunity.

Your LinkedIn profile is "you" in a nutshell. Maybe not the "you" who likes sipping wine and kicking back over the weekend. Maybe not "karaoke you." But here is a unique and impactful opportunity for you to brand yourself as the professional you are and/or want to be. Don't waste that chance.

We've taken prevailing wisdom from the experts in employment, social media, and branding to compile this LinkedIn Optimization Checklist. Use it to help you highlight your best self on LinkedIn.

PROFILE PICTURE & BACKGROUND IMAGE

- Do you have a high-quality profile headshot?
- Do you look "warm and approachable" instead of like you take yourself too seriously? (Bonus points if you're smiling in your profile photo.)
- Is your photo 400 x 400 pixels (the ideal profile picture size for LinkedIn)?
- Are you shown against a neutral, solid-colored background?
- Are you the only person in your profile picture?
- Have you leveraged the opportunity to create a background image? (This is 1584 x 396 pixels' worth of free real estate to further "brand" yourself and create a great visual first impression!)

CONTACT INFO

- Is your contact information completely filled out?
- Are the links to your website, email, and social media sites all working and current?
- Is your email address appropriate? (You may be a HotMarineMama, but a potential employer doesn't need to know that.)

- Does your email address age you? (Hint, if you're using Yahoo or AOL, the answer is "yes.")
- Have you listed your location and industry?
- If your industry/profession of choice is different from where you call home, have you listed the place where you want to garner attention? (Where is your target market?)
- Are you using your custom LinkedIn URL (preferably your name)?

HEADLINE

- Do you describe the job you want?
- Do you highlight your key skills and strengths?
- Do you use the words a recruiter would use to find his/her "ideal" candidate?
- Does someone want to find out more about you after reading your headline?

SUMMARY

- Do you expand on what you identified in your headline here?
- Do you use this real estate to talk about your professional background, areas of expertise (relevant to what you're going after), and brag points (what you're especially proud of in your professional life)?
- Do you utilize bullet points to break up the text and focus on key information?
- Do you account for any gaps in work history? (Have you been volunteering? In school? Doing freelance work?)
- Have you emphasized what distinguishes you/sets you apart from others?
- Have you talked about the kinds of results you can produce without sounding "sales-y"?
- Have you used plenty of relevant keywords in your industry?
- Is your summary interesting to read?
- Have you used this place to tell your story? (Be creative. You want to pull your reader in so they want to know more and, ultimately, so they want your resume.)
- Have you included a contact number in your summary?
- Have you taken advantage of the opportunity to add media to this section?

EXPERIENCE

- If possible, have you included at least three of your most recent jobs?
- Have you outlined key duties and major accomplishments at each job?
- Have you “quantified” your accomplishments? (Did you bring in five bazillion dollars in revenue? Start a new sweaters for puppies campaign that kept 300 puppies warm?)
- Have you checked for jargon and/or acronyms and made sure to spell out/explain them?
- Have you researched and used keywords in your industry to describe your work experience?
- Have you taken advantage of the opportunity to add media to this section?

ENDORSEMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Do you have at least five skills with endorsements listed on your profile?
- Have you prioritized those endorsements to bring to the forefront those skills you want to be known for? (You can reorder endorsements however you'd like!)
- Do you have at least one recommendation in LinkedIn for each position you include under “Experience”?
- Do you routinely ask others you work with to recommend and/or endorse you?

EDUCATION

- Is all your education listed?
- Have you included any special courses/certifications that are relevant to your industry?

HONORS & AWARDS

- Have you included any special awards, honors, or recognition that you've received?

PUBLICATIONS

- Have you listed any articles, books, or papers you've written (particularly if they're in your field of interest)?

INTERESTS

- Do you run marathons? Volunteer at soup kitchens? Read to baby geese?

WAIT! YOU'RE NOT DONE YET.

- Have you checked for spelling, poor spacing, grammatical errors, and typos?
- Do you regularly check, edit, and supplement your profile with any changes to your status (job changes, new recognition, new projects, etc.)?
- Is it clear from looking at your profile what you're looking for in terms of jobs and/or opportunities?

BEYOND THE PROFILE

- Have you joined LinkedIn groups that match your interests and industry?
- Are you sharing conversation/content within those groups?
- Are you sharing, liking, and commenting on other folks' publications and updates?
- Are you viewing other profiles? (People notice you've looked and are likely to "look back" at your profile.)
- Are you following up any professional conversations with a request to connect on LinkedIn?
- Are you endorsing and/or recommending your connections? (Be authentic about this.)
- Do you ask for introductions to other professionals in your field?
- Do you connect with new people regularly?
- Do you personalize connection requests? (Tell the person why you want to connect. Keep it short and to the point but personal. For instance, "I found your article helpful in my job search.")
- Are you thoughtful about connections? (Who are the experts in your industry? Are there people whom you can provide value to?)
- Do you follow companies you may want to work for?
- Do you update your status regularly? (Share/post content relevant to your industry.)
- Are you taking advantage of the opportunity to publish original content via posts and articles?