

30 Point LinkedIn Profile Inspection

Adapted from muse.com

When you're not looking for a job, it can be easy to ignore your LinkedIn profile. Sure, you add people you meet at networking events as contacts and accept requests as they come in, but everything else? Eh, you'll get to it when you need to.

While we definitely don't recommend this approach (hey, the recruiter from your dream company finding you and offering you a job? It could happen), we get that there are times you need a total LinkedIn profile overhaul. And for those times? This inspection tool has you covered!

Here, we've compiled everything you need to know about tricking out your LinkedIn profile—from crafting a stunning summary to selling your accomplishments, projects, and skills—in one place. Read on for expert-backed ways to make your profile seriously shine—and start getting noticed by recruiters.

1. Put in the time to make your profile awesome

Simply put, the more complete your profile, the better the odds that recruiters will find you in the first place. So, completeness is important from that standpoint. It's also important after a recruiter has found you and decided to click on your profile: He or she wants to know what your skills are, where you've worked, and what people think of you. So, don't get lazy—fill out every single section of your profile. The good news? LinkedIn will actually measure the “completeness” of your profile as you work and offer suggestions on how to make it stronger.

2. Create a custom URL

It's much easier to publicize your profile with a customized URL (ideally [linkedin.com/yourname](https://www.linkedin.com/yourname)), rather than the clunky combination of numbers that LinkedIn automatically assigns when you sign up. How to get one? On the Edit Profile screen, at the bottom of the gray window that shows your basic information, you'll see a Public Profile URL. Click “Edit” next to the URL, and specify what you'd like your address to be. When you're finished, click “Set Custom URL.”

3. Choose a great photo

Choose a clear, friendly, and appropriately professional image. Not sure what “appropriately professional” means? Take a look around at what the people in your target company, industry sector, or business level are wearing. Match that. A photo can go a long way to convey passion, energy, charisma, empathy, and other soft skills that are hard to write about.

4. Write a headline that rocks

Your headline doesn't have to be your job title and company—in fact, especially if you're looking for jobs, it shouldn't be. Instead, use that space to succinctly showcase your specialty, value proposition, or your “so what?” The more specific you can be about what sets you apart from the competition, the better.

5. Use your target job descriptions to your advantage

Take a look at the job descriptions of the positions you're after, and dump them into a word cloud tool like [Wordle](#) (we also use this strategy when saturating a resume with keywords—see our 40 point technical resume inspection tool). See those words that stand out? They're likely what recruiters are searching for when they're looking for people like you. Make sure those words and phrases are sprinkled throughout your summary and experience.

6. Don't waste the summary space

Ideally, your summary should be around 3–5 short paragraphs long, preferably with a bulleted section in the middle. It should walk the reader through your work passions, key skills, unique qualifications, and a list of the various industries you've had exposure to over the years. LinkedIn's profile checklist for students states the summary should describe 1) what motivates you, 2) what you're skilled at, and 3) what's next. This is a good template to base your summary off of. Writing in the first person is perfectly acceptable and may convey personality and passion more effectively than third person.

7. Use numbers right up front

Much like the rest of your resume, you'll want to highlight past results in your summary. When possible, include numbers and case studies that prove success. Social media consultant and speaker Wayne Breitbarth, for example, quickly establishes credibility with his audience by stating in his summary's second sentence: "I have helped more than 40,000 businesspeople—from entry level to CEO—understand how to effectively use LinkedIn." Never underestimate the power of a few key stats to impress a reader.

8. Be warm and welcoming

The summary section is your primo opportunity to showcase the good stuff about you, with your target audience in mind. Give 'em a little chance to get to know you. So what do you think the first impression is going to be if you craft your summary like some long, pompous speech? Or worse, craft it in the third person? They're going to think you're pretentious. And it's going to be hard for that reviewer to get a feel for your personality and style. Be you here. Keep the brand message in line with all of your other professional marketing materials, but realize that LinkedIn is a platform designed for interaction.

9. Avoid buzzwords like the plague

What do the words "responsible," "creative," "effective," "analytical," "strategic," "patient," "expert," "organizational," "driven," and "innovative" have in common? They're the most overused buzzwords on all of LinkedIn (<https://www.themuse.com/advice/the-10-most-overused-linkedin-buzzwords-of-the-year>). Come on—we know you can be more creative!

10. Treat your profile like your resume

Your resume isn't just a list of job duties (or, at least, it shouldn't be)—it's a place to highlight your best accomplishments. Same goes for your LinkedIn profile: Make sure your experience section is fleshed out with bullet points that describe 1) what you did, 2) how well you did it, and 3) who it impacted.

11. But use the first person

You shouldn't use the first person on your resume, but it's actually fine to do so on LinkedIn (think, "I'm a passionate fundraiser who raised \$400,000 for cancer charities last year," not ("Alan Carter is a passionate fundraiser...").

12. Get personal, but within reason

Your profile is not a resume or a CV. Write as if you are having a conversation with someone. Inject your personality. Let people know your values and passions. It's even okay to discuss what you do outside of work in the hobbies or interests sections.

13. Showcase your achievements

Recruiters spend countless hours scouring LinkedIn in search of the high performers. And when they find them, they contact said high performers. Knowing this, you'll serve yourself well to market yourself as a high

performer in your summary and experience section (think action words, accomplishments, talking about times you've been promoted or hand-picked for projects).

14. Include a current job entry, even when a student or unemployed

If you've only listed the past positions you've held in the experience section but show nothing current, you'll probably get missed in most searches. Why? Because most recruiting professionals exclusively use the current title box to search for candidates; otherwise they'd have to sort through thousands of candidates who held a certain role (for example, graphic designer) as far back as 20 or more years ago. The simple workaround, if you're unemployed, is to create a dummy job listing in the current section that includes the job title(s) you're targeting—"Full-Time Student/Financial Analyst in Training"—followed by a phrase like "In Transition" or "Seeking New Opportunity" in the Company Name box.

15. Add multimedia to your summary

A picture truly is worth a 1,000 words, especially when it comes to showcasing your work. LinkedIn lets you add photos, videos, and slideshow presentations to your profile summary. So instead of just talking about your work, you can show examples. Or show yourself in action. Or share a presentation. Click "Edit profile," scroll down to your summary, then click on the box symbol, then "add file."

16. Add your work experience

You can do the same thing for each of your work experiences. So, use this to your advantage: Add your company websites, projects you've worked on, articles you've drafted, or anything else that can provide a more multimedia look at your work.

17. Add projects, volunteer experience, and languages

Do you speak Spanish? Russian? Mandarin? Have a project management or other certification? Volunteer as an IT Bachelor's Student Ambassador at Green River? Adding these additional profile features is a great way to showcase your unique skills and experiences and stand out from the crowd. Don't forget to add projects completed in class on route to completion of your IT Bachelor's degree.

18. Request LinkedIn recommendations where appropriate

When someone says, "You did a great job on that project!" or "You gave a stellar presentation on the app you developed!" ask him or her to take a snapshot of that success by writing a recommendation on LinkedIn. And don't be afraid to specify what you'd like the recommender to focus on. Getting generic recommendations that say, "Sarah was great to work with" aren't very helpful—specificity is king.

19. Don't be afraid to cut a recommendation

Ever get a recommendation you didn't ask for? Or one that isn't something you'd want to showcase on your LinkedIn profile? If you get a recommendation that's poorly written or is unsolicited and don't feel comfortable reaching out to the writer and asking for some revisions, no biggie. You can easily hide the recommendation instead. Select Profile > Edit Profile and go to the position with which the recommendation is associated. Click "Manage." Uncheck the box next to the recommendation that you want to hide, and click "Save Changes."

20. Manage your endorsements in skills section

LinkedIn's profile checklist for students recommends you add at least 5 key skills to your profile in the skills section. That way, your connections can endorse you for the things you're best at. Endorsements can be a great way to show off your skills—as long as your profile isn't overloaded with too many to really send the right message. The secret to making endorsements work for you is by keeping your skills updated: As you transition between careers, develop new skills, or take on new responsibilities, drop outdated skills from your profile and add the ones you really want to be known for. Now, when connections land on your page, they'll only see the most relevant skills.

21. Update your status

Just like on Facebook, you can update your LinkedIn status as often as you wish. So, do! Update it professionally and strategically (share the article you just wrote, the hackathon you attended, the website you developed, not what you ate for lunch today), ideally once a week. Your entire network will see your updates, both in their news feeds and in the weekly LinkedIn network updates emails they receive.

22. Become an author

One of LinkedIn's newer features? Allowing all users to write and publish their work on the platform. Share your perspective about what's going on in your field, weigh in on a recent industry development, or show off your skills as a writer. It's a great way to get noticed.

23. Be a groupie

LinkedIn Groups are an incredible resource—and they can do wonders for your job search. By joining groups relevant to your profession or industry, you'll show that you're engaged in your field. But more importantly, you'll instantly be connected to people and part of relevant discussions in your field—kind of like an ongoing, online networking event.

24. Have at least 50 connections

Having 50 or fewer connections on LinkedIn tells recruiters one of three things: 1) You are a recluse who knows very few people, 2) You're paranoid about connecting with others, or 3) technology and social media are scary to you. None of these are good. We're certainly not suggesting you need to be someone who accrues connections simply for the sake of accruing connections, but between classmates, instructors, employers, and mentors, you really should have at least 50-100 people with whom you're connected as a starting point. When you meet an employer, a recruiter, or an IT professional at an event, don't forget to request a business card, which you can use to send a follow-up connection request. Build that virtual rolodex!

25. Conduct some usability testing

With all the bells and whistles LinkedIn has to offer, and without being limited by the 8.5x11" confines of your resume, it can be tempting to, well, go nuts. And while details are good, there's certainly a thing as too much. Step back, take a look at your profile, and see how it looks to an outside person by conducting some basic usability testing, then edit accordingly.

26. Maintain privacy settings

Update your privacy settings by hovering over your profile picture in the upper right corner, then click “Privacy & Settings.” Also, when you’re looking for a new job, and are actively engaged in your current job, you may want to be discreet. A telltale sign to an employer that you’re leaving is that you overhaul your profile, connect with recruiters, and have an influx of new people (if your employer tracks such things). You can tailor your privacy settings so that your boss doesn’t see that you’re looking for opportunities.

27. Make sure people can find you

Don’t forget to add your email address, or blog, or Twitter handle, or any other account where you’d like to be found to the contact information section of your resume. You’d be surprised how many people leave this off!

28. Include courses taken

List courses that show off the skills you’re most excited about and are most relevant to the job you’re aiming for. A good practice is to include the course names for upper-division IT courses taken within your respective BAS program. Example for Software Development: “Systems Programming,” “Web Development Frameworks,” “Full Stack Web Development,” “Data Structures & Algorithm,” etc. For Network Administration & Security: “Routing and Switching in the Enterprise,” “Network Security Foundations and Policies,” “Network Security and Firewalls,” “Virtualization and Storage,” etc.

29. Be excited

At the end of the day, the most exciting people to hire are the people who are the most excited about what they do, so make sure your LinkedIn profile conveys your enthusiasm, your hustle. Join and participate in groups related to your field of expertise. Use your status line to announce stuff you’re doing related to your field. Share interesting articles or news. Connect with the leaders in your industry.

30. Update frequently

Your LinkedIn profile, like your resume, is an ever-evolving story that should be updated on a regular basis. As a good rule of thumb, update your profile along with your resume at the end of each quarter to reflect the coursework and any projects completed.