

# Maximizing LinkedIn for Professional & Career Success

An Easy-to-Use Checklist

Provided by the



LinkedIn Company Page: The Sales Zone

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## Why LinkedIn?

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In the age of social media, who you are online defines you—both personally and professionally. Data and information that are readily available about you on the Internet create your brand identity. It is, therefore, important that you are in the driver's seat when it comes to controlling the message.

LinkedIn is a networking juggernaut. With more than 400 million members globally, it is the largest professional registry in the history of the working world and it is not going away any time soon. **65% of LinkedIn profiles carry the title of director level or above, many of whom represent potential employers, clients or referral sources.**

LinkedIn is the cornerstone of social media as it relates to the professional world. According to Hugh Briss of SocialIdentities.com, "the power of social media is not in selling directly, but in inspiring and motivating others." As a result, LinkedIn is the perfect vehicle for professionals to use in order to create an online presence that communicates your knowledge, skills, abilities, and value without specifically soliciting a new job or overtly soliciting new business.

**LinkedIn is not an online resume.** While your LinkedIn profile should align with your background and accurately reflect what you would include on a resume, it is much more than a resume. It is a significant piece of the social media puzzle that allows you to:

- Get found
- Control messaging about your personal brand
- Position yourself as an expert
- Research existing or potential clients to better understand their business issues
- Share relevant content via Updates or self-published posts using the LinkedIn Pulse feature
- Create a Company Page for your organization
- Build a network of relevant connections more quickly and effectively than ever before
- Ask for introductions
- Follow companies, individuals, industry associations, join relevant groups and participate in discussions
- Grow your career
- Grow your business

## Two Important Areas to Understand on LinkedIn

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1. Personal Profile
2. Company Page

## Your LinkedIn Personal Profile – A Checklist

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- Profile Picture.** Your profile picture can be a formal headshot or simply a good snapshot of you (even if it's a cropped photo). Important: No pictures of you with your family/friends. LinkedIn is not Facebook or Instagram.
- Your Name.** What name do you use to answer your phone? That's the one you should use on LinkedIn. Hint: While LinkedIn is a professional networking site, it's still a *social* media site—emphasis on *social*.
- Your Professional Headline.** Your headline goes right underneath your name. Important: This is NOT your job title (that comes later), but rather it is a statement about who you are, what you do, and the value you bring.
- Location.** Your location is the principal city where you are professionally relevant (maybe you live in Hershey, PA, but your professional market is Philadelphia; or maybe you live in Fredericksburg, VA but your professional market is Washington, DC—you get the idea). It is zip code-driven.
- Industry.** Your industry will vary. Example: one of our clients is the head of a major association, but considered his industry to be media production. Make sure the industry you select accurately reflects your background, skills, experience and current professional relevancy.
- Current & Previous Experience.** These fields will be auto-populated when you fill in the Experience section which comes later.
- Public Profile URL.** In the Edit function, add a customized Public Profile URL using your name, plus some other personalized data. Once created, your Public Profile URL should also reside in your e-mail signature line, at the top of your resume, and in any online collateral that you may create that relates to your profession.
- Volunteering Opportunities.** Add any volunteering opportunities in which you are interested (pro bono skills volunteering and/or joining non-profit boards).
- Honors & Awards.** Add any recent Honors and Awards that you have received. Click on “View More” and you'll find an opportunities to present **Patents you may hold, Causes you care about, Supported Organizations, Projects, Publications, and Certifications.**
- Summary.** The Summary Statement is the single-most important part of your LinkedIn Profile. It is your opportunity to authentically engage your audience. It is, therefore, important to write it in the first person. Tell your story in a professional, yet engaging way. Like the rest of the online world, LinkedIn is key word-driven so make sure that you use specific words that are highly descriptive. It's your summary, own it.
- LinkedIn Pulse** – A “Pulse” piece can be a well-informed opinion, or research brief. Before writing your first piece, study what others have written or, better yet, join the LinkedIn Writing group where you will find a wide array of tips about creating a post that will help you launch your Pulse writing career and ultimately obtain great exposure.
- Experience.** The Experience section is where you chronologically list your professional experience—leveraging duties, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Ensure that you properly list your company's name so that the logo auto-populates. NOTE: If you are an entrepreneur or work in a small company that does not have a LinkedIn Company Page, you will need to

establish a Company Page WITH A LOGO in order to have a logo auto-populate within the Experience section of LinkedIn.

- ❑ **Education.** List all of your education, from most recent to least recent. Also, you want to ensure that you properly list the schools you attended so that the school's logo auto-populates. Taking things a step further, you can list relevant courses if you feel they reflect positively on your current expertise.
- ❑ **Skills & Endorsements.** When building or editing your profile, list any and all skills that you have. Examples include: Leadership, Sales, Account Management, Programming, Project Management, Strategy, etc. Indicate that you will accept endorsements, but delete any endorsements that you feel are not an accurate representation of your skills and experience.
  - **Why do you want to be endorsed?** Endorsements improve your chances of getting found because you improve your keyword searchability rankings/SEO rankings.
- ❑ **Additional Information.** This area is an excellent one for adding both personal and professional interests, which are always great for networking purposes.
- ❑ **Personal Details.** It's up to you whether or not you want to provide personal details. There are reasons both for and against having personal information listed. In general, we do not advocate publishing your birthday.
- ❑ **Contact Advice.** List both your professional and personal e-mails. Your LinkedIn Company Page, Twitter handle, and work phone number/cell phone are also appropriate to add here.
- ❑ **Groups.** Joining and participating in groups is another way to get noticed and to engage your audience. Join groups that will be useful to you professionally and where you can add value. Starting or contributing to discussions = getting noticed and potential referrals. Also, join groups where your clients and prospects might be lurking. You can join up to 50 groups.
- ❑ **Influencers.** Following Influencers is a great way to stay up-to-date on thought leadership, current events, trends and opinions.
- ❑ **Companies.** Follow your clients' companies because you'll get information about them in your newsfeed. Follow companies you have are interested in having as clients, or potential employers (or that you may want to watch for a number of strategic reasons).

## LinkedIn Company Page

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If you are with well-established company it probably already has a LinkedIn Company Page. If you are an entrepreneur, a solo practitioner or are with a smaller company, establishing a LinkedIn Company Page is a vital part of marketing and branding your organization; having a logo resident on your LinkedIn Profile next to each position is very important to the overall look and feel of your profile. If your company does not have a Company Page, you can easily create one.

Create your Company Page in 3 Easy Steps:

1. In the main navigation bar click on Interests and then Companies
2. On the right-hand side of the screen you will see a yellow button that says, "Create"
3. Creating a company page is similar to creating your LinkedIn profile or a Facebook page
  - a. Add a description of your company.
  - b. Tip: It is best to establish a company page only when you have a logo.
  - c. Tip: If you are establishing a company page, your personal profile needs to be registered under an e-mail containing your firm's URL.