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10 Tips for Enhancing Your LinkedIn Profile

Your LinkedIn profile page is your personal home page to the business world. To enhance your profile, log in to your LinkedIn account, hover your mouse over Profile on the top menu bar, and then select Edit Profile from the drop-down menu.

- Add a professional-looking head shot photo to your profile (something classy).
- Add your past employers so as many former co-workers as possible can find you.
- Make sure your professional headline emphasizes any keywords you want to use to promote yourself.
- Make your profile public and set it to Full View so your LinkedIn profile shows up in web search results.
- Add links from your LinkedIn profile to websites you are trying to promote, like your blog, e-commerce store, social media accounts, or company website.
- For website links that you add to your profile, select Other and rename each link to include meaningful keywords. For example, instead of calling it "My Blog," call it "Joel's E-Commerce Product Blog."
- Include all of your main email addresses in your profile so people can connect with you. LinkedIn does not display your email addresses to the public; it simply keeps your email addresses on file when someone tries to connect with you.
- Make sure the Summary field of your profile contains your critical skills and important career-related keywords in a way that makes the Summary readable (not a spammy list of keywords).
- Upload examples of your work to your profile by attaching video, pictures, documents, or slide presentations.

General LinkedIn Tips

- Start leaving recommendations for first-degree network connections that you feel have earned a great one.
- Invest a good amount of time upfront to create a great, detailed profile.
- Spend a small but productive amount of time, on a consistent basis, updating and maintaining your LinkedIn network and profile.
- Use lots of search terms in an advanced search to find the right person. If you get no results, remove one or two words and try again.
- Research someone on LinkedIn before meeting him in a job interview or business meeting.
- Use LinkedIn's platform to write long-form posts and demonstrate your knowledge to the community.
- Interact with your network through news feed updates by liking and commenting on other people's posts and articles that are published.

Using LinkedIn to Search for a Job

LinkedIn is a great way to help you use professional networking to job search. Here are some helpful hints when using LinkedIn to look for employment:

- Make sure your profile is up-to-date, accurate, and matches whatever you provide to a hiring manager or recruiter.
- Stay on top of your network updates so you know if someone in your network has been promoted or switched jobs to a company where you would like to work.
- Connect with everyone you have worked with, because these people know your professional capabilities well and could potentially recommend you on LinkedIn.
- Make sure your profile highlights measurable accomplishments you achieved at your jobs. For example, instead of saying "I managed the sales force," say "I managed a 37% growth in revenue in the last four quarters."
- Do a search and connect with as many recruiters as you can find who look for candidates in your target industry or job focus.
- Use LinkedIn Company pages to see which of your network connections works at a particular company, if anyone you know has recently been promoted at that company, and specific information about the company that you need for your cover letter and interview.
- Don't forget to use LinkedIn's job board. There are millions of postings available when you search the web on LinkedIn's job board.
- If you find and apply for a job using LinkedIn's job board, see if the job poster is someone in your extended network. If so, ask for a referral or introduction to that person (or, if necessary, use LinkedIn's InMail system) so you can connect with her and make a great impression!

How to Use LinkedIn Effectively

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking platform. It's also one of the most influential social media networks, with more than 700 million members. That's a lot of potential contacts! A basic LinkedIn account is free of charge.

1. Complete Your LinkedIn Profile

Your profile can be a powerful part of your personal brand. All registered LinkedIn users will be able to view it (unless you set it to private mode). You can also have a public profile that can be found by external search engines, so that even people who are not registered with LinkedIn can see it.

LinkedIn's internal search algorithm only finds profiles that rank as "complete," and these can get more than 20 times as many views as incomplete profiles. It's important, therefore, to complete yours. Here are the essential things to remember:

- Add a good-quality photo of yourself, preferably one taken by a professional photographer. Look smart, smile, and don't have any distractions in shot.
- Make your profile sparkle by adding a background image (sometimes called a "banner" or "cover" image) that reflects your personality and your profession.
- Mention your industry and location in your headline. You have up to 120 characters for this.
- Include a concise summary of who you are, what you do, and what you have to offer. You have 2,000 characters to play with, but you don't have to use them all. You can also link to, or upload, six examples of your work to make your profile sparkle.
- Add your current position and describe what it involves. Be specific. Don't say, for example, that you're a "great communicator" - even if you are one! Instead, give details of your communication skills, and examples of how you've used them. Again, you have 2,000 characters.
- Add your previous work history, education details, and at least four skills or areas of expertise.
- As you add more details to your profile, you can track your progress from "Beginner" to "Intermediate" to "All-Star" using the Profile Strength bar.

2. Contact and Connect With Other LinkedIn Users

LinkedIn enables you to network with people and professional organizations in your industry. This is a great way to stay up to date with the latest developments, and to share information with others in your field.

You can invite anyone to connect (and accept their invitations to connect with you), but they must have their own LinkedIn account to use the site.

LinkedIn saves the connections that you make to a list called My Network. When you make a new connection, you gain access not only to that person's profile, but to their publicly available connections, too. These become your "second-degree connections." This opens up even more networking opportunities, as you can then invite them to connect directly with you.

You can also introduce any two LinkedIn connections who haven't yet connected to one another, but who might benefit from doing so.

3. Start Talking!

Once you've made your connections on LinkedIn, the Messaging facility allows you to have real-time conversations with them. The Active Status feature tells you which of your connections are online - look out for the green dot beside their profile pictures.

And the Smart Replies function - short, automatically generated, contextual responses (such as "What time?" and "Great, thanks!") - can help to keep your conversations quick and productive.

4. Give and Receive Recommendations and Endorsements

Your connections can write "recommendations" for your profile, and offer "endorsements" of your skills, and you can do the same in return.

Recommendations are personal testimonials that emphasize your professional abilities. Aim to collect a handful of these (between five and 10 is a good "rule of thumb") by asking people you've worked with to write one for you.

Ask them to highlight the particular attributes or achievements that have impressed them, rather than making general comments such as, "Bella was fun to work with."

Endorsements are simple notifications confirming that you have a particular skill. They may lack the impact of custom-written recommendations, but if a connection endorses you for your leadership skills, for example, it can help you to stand out from the crowd.

5. Use LinkedIn Groups

All LinkedIn members can set up or join groups to discuss ideas and share industry news. This can be a great way to develop your professional network.

You can use the search bar at the top of your profile page to look for interesting groups to join, or you can find new groups via the ones you've already joined. Once you're a group member, you're able to join group conversations, ask questions, and send messages to other members.

LinkedIn groups can be a valuable source of information, ideas and support. Share your knowledge with people in your groups, and they'll likely respond in kind.

LinkedIn warns against self-promotion in groups. Showing your expertise is good; gratuitous plugging of your company's products isn't. You can be blocked or removed from a group if you break its rules or code of etiquette.

6. Create Engaging Content Especially for LinkedIn

Just as with other social networks, you can post simple text updates, images, and links to other sites, and you can share posts from other users. But make sure that your post is useful, informative and relevant to your professional connections.

You can also record or upload video directly to LinkedIn from your device. This allows you to share your insights and experiences, or to boost your organization's brand identity. Use the built-in filters and "stickers" to brighten up your video, and add captions for people who watch with the sound off.

LinkedIn also allows you to publish full articles, via its Publishing Platform. The articles that you write appear on your profile. They can be shared by other users, and may also appear in search engine results, but you retain the rights to any original content that you publish. This is a great way to showcase your industry expertise.

SlideShare is another option for delivering high-quality content. It's embedded into LinkedIn, and allows you to post presentations and infographics.

7. Find New Opportunities

According to LinkedIn's own figures, 20,000 businesses in the U.S. are using the site to recruit new staff.

You can use LinkedIn to look for jobs. As well as browsing the job advertisements, many people use it as a research tool. Suppose that you have two job offers on the table, for example. You can use LinkedIn to learn more about your potential new bosses and co-workers, and to get a feel for the organizations' corporate cultures.

8. Observe Professional Etiquette on LinkedIn

Success on LinkedIn depends on developing and maintaining a good reputation. This means that it's important to appear professional at all times. So, avoid posting the kind of personal material that you might put on other social medial platforms. And avoid spreading rumors or gossip - you never know who'll read them.

Be careful when you ask for, or make, an introduction, and do so only if you believe that both parties can benefit. Always be mindful of what you say about your organization. And finally, remember that honesty is the best policy - avoid overselling yourself, and don't embroider the facts when you discuss your achievements!