

10 Tips for a Professional LinkedIn Profile

If you're searching for a new job, these tips for a professional LinkedIn profile will help you stand out from the competition. It is a good idea to constantly tweak your profile to make it sound better and take advantage of new features. While it may seem like a daunting task, incorporating these tips will take you from the average user to someone who gets found easily by the right people. In most cases, it'll only take you 10-15 minutes to take care of all of these.

1. Make the Most of Your Headline

One of the easiest tips for a professional LinkedIn profile is to use a strong headline. List your specialties, positions, titles or professional associations. Think of it as the ultimate one line summary of who you are professionally. To make it look even better, use a vertical bar between each title you list. For example, you might use "Copywriter | Web Copy Specialist | Editor" for your headline.

2. Use a Recent, Professional Headshot

Have you ever looked at some of the photos on LinkedIn? I have to wonder what some of these people were thinking. Always use a recent photo so any connections you meet in person will automatically recognize you. Also, ensure that you're the central focus of the photo, instead of an object. For best results, dress professionally in the photo to show the best side of yourself. Smile, relax and put your best face on your profile.

3. Re-Read Your Profile

Nothing hurts your profile more than grammatical errors. We all make them, but on LinkedIn, we need to prove we can catch our mistakes. Read over your profile after editing it. It may help to have a friend or relative read it as well. Another tip is to copy the text to Word to check for spelling errors.

4. List How You Helped Others

While it's important to detail your expertise, clients and employers also want to know what real value you bring to the table. Go beyond a basic summary and provide details on past projects, how you helped previous clients and additional accomplishments. It may seem fairly small, but it helps set you apart from other users. Don't go overboard, a few examples are enough to prove you are an expert in your field.

5. Fill out Everything Possible

The more complete your profile, the more professional it looks. Incomplete sections make others wonder what you're hiding. While every profile section may not apply to you, fill out every one that does. LinkedIn profile fields are designed to provide the best overview possible of users. Make the most of them and show off who you really are.

6. Add in LinkedIn Applications

Go beyond the basics and incorporate LinkedIn apps in your profile. For instance, if you have a blog, you might want to use the WordPress app, which lists recent posts directly on your profile. Take a moment to browse through the apps and find a few relevant to your industry. It showcases you better and helps keep visitors on your profile longer. It also keeps them coming back.

7. Get Media Rich

In the past, LinkedIn didn't give you much besides text and a photo to work with. Now, you can add slideshows, videos, additional photos, resumes, comments and more to your profile. These features are more engaging for visitors and give you a chance to show other aspects of yourself or business. Update them on a regular basis to keep your profile fresh and encourage new connections.

8. Use Longer Summaries

Many users enter a quick summary for their profile and move on. LinkedIn recommends using summaries longer than 40 words to increase your chances of showing up in search results. If you're not sure what to write, look through job listings for your profession. Notice the keywords and phrases that are used most often. Try to incorporate some of these in your summary.

9. Be Honest

It's easy to want to embellish your profile details to stand out more. Keep in mind that lies will catch up to you. It's better to be honest now than to be embarrassed later. Plus, the more you try to pad your profile, the faker it tends to appear to others. Keep your profile simple and honest and you'll come off as the consummate professional every time.

10. Add Your Resume

You've completed your summary, added a great photo and you've even made a few connections. What could be missing? Many users forget about adding an updated resume to their profile. This is your chance to add even more details for potential employers to view. Create a detailed resume that highlights your skills and work experience. This is extremely important if you're a job seeker.

LinkedIn can be your best friend for making professional connections and finding your dream job. Don't let your profile ruin your chances. Every month, take a moment to update your profile and let it start working for you.