

SOCIAL MEDIA SMART USING LINKEDIN

OVERVIEW AND CHECKLIST FOR LINKEDIN PROFILES “YOU DON’T EXIST IF YOU ARE NOT ON LINKEDIN.”

Most people using and participating on LinkedIn are not actively looking for a new job. LinkedIn is a social platform focused on professional careers. Many people will look you up if they have met you, heard of you – or yes, if they are considering hiring you.

Your LinkedIn Profile is not a resume – it is a social platform, so you can (and should) allow for more “personality” to be present.

It is okay to tell stories, speak in first person, and repeat yourself (since sections create that opportunity). But, it is designed to be focused on career topics, organizational news, best practices, and recognition. You can make a name for yourself in how you participate on the platform. (That name can be positive or negative.)

You can write articles to demonstrate knowledge. You can make and post videos. This is one way to be viewed as an expert in your field.

Tips:

- You cannot add bullets directly in LinkedIn, but if you create text in Word with bullets, you can paste the bullets/content in.
- Write in small chunks. Break it up and put in logical groupings.
- What not to include: Information that is very personal or controversial. Be careful about including company information that your management may not want public.
- Typos and errors are, well, *bad!*

Checklist for creating/updating your profile:

- Name you want to be known as/how you are likely to be searched.
- Include a professional photo. Do not have other people in the photo.
- Professional Headline (120 characters) – use of key words – individuals can search by Headline and Name only. Usually choose one focus such as: hard-skills, soft skills, titles, branding statement.
- Custom URL: (30 characters) – Change this to your name.
- Summary Section (2000 characters) – Capture what you want people to know about you. If you do not capture the reader here, they may not go any further. Use first person. This is an introduction to your professional self.

- Experience Section (2000 characters per description) – you can use your resume content and make it more personal (make complete sentences, using the word “I”) or take a completely different approach. If they won’t know anything about the company, include a description of it. You can tell “stories” and highlight accomplishments in more detail.
- Education Section (1000 characters) – for new grads, include activities that you were engaged in in college. Include academic honors (here and in the Honors and Awards section).
- Project Description (2000 characters) – you can highlight current or past special projects you have been a part of, including class projects if a student.
- Organizations – professional or college organizations. Include any positions. Can include a description of your accomplishments or contributions.
- Publications – if you have been published, you can list them here. Can also include an URL.
- Skills and Expertise – you pick the areas you want to be known for AND truly are skills. Spend some time looking through available lists and you can add others. People will endorse you for skills. You will want to endorse others to encourage them to endorse you. HOWEVER, your credibility is on the line, so only endorse when you can attest to their skill.
- Honors and Awards – these can be academic or other content that you consider to be an accomplishment.
- Courses – can only list the course, but beneficial to show areas of study. For descriptions of what you achieved, consider using Project Section.
- Languages – indicate level of proficiency.
- Certifications – if you have any relevant or impressive certifications, list here.
- Test Scores – have something impressive to share? You can do it here.
- Patents – in case you have any!
- Recommendations – the best way to get recommendations is to write them for others. It is also okay to ask people for recommendations. Goal: get at least one for each job. People cannot write a recommendation for you unless the job they know you from is listed.
- Groups – avoid job search groups. Instead, join professional groups in the industries and disciplines that you want to work in/do work in. Then, like posts, respond to posts, and add content yourself (ask an intelligent question; share an article). Do this frequently, but without blasting yourself. Get known by your thoughtful and intelligent contributions. You can begin to connect with people in the groups.
- Following – follow organizations that you care about or represent the type of company you would like to work for in the future.
- Invite people to connect with you. Begin with known network. Then begin to ask people from the Groups you belong to or industries/fields you are interested in. Personalize your invitations! Tell them how you know them or why you would like to connect with them.