

Maximize Your LinkedIn Profile

Today we're going to talk about LinkedIn.

So, why do you need a LinkedIn profile? Well, LinkedIn is used by over 80 million professionals to network. It's used by recruiters to find candidates for clients who are not advertising on other sites. It's a way of branding yourself as a professional. It's how you can highlight your best qualities as a potential candidate. It's able to help you in your job search. It's also how employers take a sneak peek at you when considering you for employment.

Getting started is easy. You log on to linkedin.com and create your account. It's free. I suggest you use your non-college email so you can access it after graduation. If your non-college email is not professional or perhaps doesn't include your name I would suggest opening a more professional email. You can always start out with your college email and then transfer it over to a non-college email later. Just make sure it's an email that you check regularly.

When you're creating a new account, it may ask for access to your contact list. This will help you find connections, but it will also send them invitations to join LinkedIn. LinkedIn guides you with the basic fill-in-the-blank process. It will take you through building your profile page and all you have to do is follow the directions and fill in the different sections.

Use your resume to fill in your work history section. Under the description section you can copy and paste the bullet points from your resume directly into the LinkedIn profile. This makes it quick and easy and is the best way to bring bullets over. Later you can add sections such as awards and volunteer experience.

So, what are the basic steps?

First things first, you need a professional-looking headshot. It doesn't have to be a professional headshot, but it should be you looking like a professional. You want to smile. You'll want your head to fill most of the circle. You want to look approachable, well-kept, and above all, like I've said before, professional.

You'll also, number two, want to find a banner picture that aligns with your professional goal. This is the picture that shows up behind your headshot. When I say align it with your professional goals, you can do something, like, if you want to work in a city have a city

skyline. If you want to work in IT Code Development, maybe you want a picture of some code or people learning on computers.

If you want to be a teacher maybe you want a picture of a classroom or something teaching-related. If you want to be a presenter maybe you want a picture of an auditorium. Try to relate it to who you are professionally or who you want to be.

Number three, your headline. Your headline defaults to your most recent job title, and honestly you may want to change this or add to it, especially if it doesn't reflect what you want or are aspiring to become. For example, if you're a college student and your most recent job was a Subway Sandwich Artist, but you really want to be an accountant, that's what you're studying in college, that's the job you're looking for, you would replace Subway Sandwich Artist with, perhaps, Aspiring Accountant specializing in corporate accounts if that's what you're really specializing in.

You may also put some other qualities in there that make you a good worker or a strong candidate as an employee. I'll show you an example of this later.

Number four. Maximize your summary. Your summary is in the about section and if you've worked with me before on developing a summary as part of your resume you can start out quickly by copying and pasting this directly from your resume into the about section. But as you evolve your about section should evolve too. So, feel free to adjust it, add to it. They give you a lot of room in that section and you want to make sure that you are capturing the attention of recruiters. So, you'll want to put in the words that are going to align with the job descriptions that you're finding. But we will talk a little bit more about that later, too. I'll give you examples.

So, what are the not-so-basic steps?

You're going to want to shorten and personalize your URL. The URL is that link that you press that takes you directly to your profile page. You can go to the upper right-hand corner and it'll say 'Edit Public Profile and URL'. It defaults to your name and then some numbers off of the back. You're going to try to take the numbers off and see if it will accept the link with just your name in it. If you have a very common name, that's probably already been taken, so you need to come up with a variation, but try to keep your name as part of that. Once you save that you can use that address link on your application materials or in the signature line in your emails.

Number two. Skills section. Add your skills to help match recruiter searches. So, one of the first things I do with students, and I will show you how to do this later, is look for jobs that are similar to the ones that you want to apply for. And in the headings of those job descriptions you will see skills and it will show you how many skills your profile section has

that match the ones they're looking for. I always talk about this as sort of the same rules as search engine optimization. You want to be found and that means you need to use the words that the recruiters are looking for, so that they can find you, they know that you've got the skills they're looking for and they tell you what those skills are in the job descriptions, most of the time. So, you just look for the skills section, scroll down, and find out what are the skills you have, and what are the skills you don't have, that you could add to that skills section. If there are consistently skills that you don't have that are popping up in the job searches for the job that you want maybe you should consider going out and getting those skills because, obviously, those are things that the job you want they're looking for.

Recommendations. In the recommendation section you can request recommendations from those you've worked with by using a button in that section. But those people must also have LinkedIn accounts and be connected to you. Endorsements are not as meaningful as recommendations. Endorsements are when you have the skills that you listed in the other section and your connections get to sort of vote on whether or not you have those skills. So, you can see how many people say yes, you do demonstrate that skill, but a recommendation is somebody who's worked with you and they'll give a short quote of what that experience was like or why you were an amazing employee. You want a large network of people connected to you. This is networking 101, but now it's online.

So, you should definitely find people you know and have worked with and connect with them. Another easy way to get professional connections is to go to your college site, look up their alumni, and find the ones who are working where you want to work or the ones who majored in the same thing you majored in.

Now, when you're reaching out to somebody you don't know, instead of just pushing that connect button, you'll want to include a little note and the message could be really short. It could be something as simple as, "I noticed we graduated from the same college. Mind if we connect?" It doesn't have to be complicated. Or, "I see you're working for a company that I'm interested in learning more about. Mind if we connect?" That lets them know what your intention is with connecting with them and there are people who screen their connections very thoroughly. I'm somebody who connects with a lot of different people because I work with a lot of different people. But there are people who want to narrow down their connections to just the people in their field.

So, after you have everything looking beautiful on your profile, you'll want to open yourself up to recruiter searches. There's a place on your dashboard that offers that option. It will ask you what job title you want to be sought out for, where you want to work, and what kind of employment you want to have, full-time, part-time, contract, or remote.

If you want to cultivate a following and be a little bit more well known on LinkedIn. You can post selective professional information to the news feed. I say that's optional because you might not be in the position to share original content, or you might want to be very selective in the things that you do share. Make it professional. It's not Facebook. If I were you, I would spend some time on the news feed finding out what other people post to see if you've got something meaningful that you want to add.

Okay, we are going to switch over to my own personal LinkedIn page and I will show you some of the things that I've talked about. Here we are. This is what you start with. You've got the professional headshot facing out showing your face so people will recognize you if you show up for an interview. You want to smile, look approachable. You want your head to take up most of the circle and not have any extraneous or distracting backgrounds behind you. Keep it neutral. My banner is from the college campus. It's a little bit neutral but people who go to school there might recognize it.

If you want to change things in this section you go over and press this little pencil right there, see how this is the current position so you're not losing your current position by changing your headline, but this is a really good way of catching the attention of recruiters. Don't put in what you are currently, unless that relates to what you want to become. You can be a little creative in this section. What I'm going to suggest is maybe putting in 'aspiring', 'aspiring accountant', 'aspiring software developer', 'aspiring fifth grade teacher', and then you can use these little dividers and put in more things about yourself, things about who you are, how you work. If you're going for software development you might want to put in the codes that you know, the languages, but it does give you a limit for how much you can put in, so, you've got to adjust it to fit within that limit.

There's some other information that it'll ask you for down here but it's all pretty self-explanatory.

This is the recruiter section, but I'm going to go back to that later. They're doing skill assessments. I actually opened this up to take a quiz and it was a lot of, I'll show you, a lot of things that I don't necessarily do right now. I help a lot of tech students, so I think that sometimes it confuses me with a tech student. Now, speaking of tech students, if you have a github or if you have something you've created, maybe you're a marketing student or marketing professional and you have examples of your work, you have links to online portfolios and you want to feature those to show recruiters what you can do, this is the place to put them, in the featured category. So, you can see I have workshops that I've built in Youtube in here. But I also have content that I thought was really well-done and pertinent to my current position. You always want to keep professionalism in mind and you can add

to this or subtract or edit. It will also ask you to give a title and a description of the content, which will be displayed down here.

Here's the dashboard. As you fill out your profile it will give you different designations. It kind of gamifies it to reward you for filling out more and more sections. When you reach the maximum you are an all-star and it will show you that. It will also ping and let you know when you've reached the next level, which is kind of fun.

I could click on this and see who's viewed my profile, my post views. I don't post very often but apparently 623 people have seen my posts and I've appeared in 24 searches.

So, when you are putting in your work history and you're using your resume, if you wanted to add a new job you would just press the plus, but I'm just going to take you into my current position and you can put those copy and pasted bullets right here in the description. This is the easiest and best way to transfer bullets over to your LinkedIn profile.

Something else is, you do want to make sure that your information on your LinkedIn profile matches your resume or exceeds what's on your resume. A lot of times you will want to put something on your resume that is very specific to the job that you're applying for and that is strategic, but you don't want it to somehow disagree with what you have on your LinkedIn profile. So, a lot of times I keep my LinkedIn profile a little bit bigger in scope than my resume and I pare my resume down to fit the job, to keep it short and sweet and very focused on what an employer is looking for so that they don't have to read through things that are not relevant to the job that I'm applying for. But if they come to my LinkedIn profile they will see a lot more that I can offer.

There was also a place, I'm going to go back in here, where you can put in media that relates directly to a job that you have. So, say you're working in marketing or software development, and you worked on a particular project and it's okay with your employer if you put that project down on your LinkedIn for other employers to see or just it's an example of your work. You can also post links to video content that relates to what you're doing or links to other videos or articles that align with who you are as a professional and how you might do this job. You can put a lot more down in education sections than what I have here, but I'm keeping it kind of short and sweet. Licenses and certifications, volunteer experience, you have the option of adding profile sections and you can go through and see what else you might want to add by just scrolling through this section. And if you want to add something like projects you can put a plus there and it will add that section and guide you through how to put information in there.

Here's the skills and endorsements area. So, they give you a maximum number of skills and you want to load this up. If you want to adjust it, you can. Right now, I am at the maximum

so if I want to add something new, I need to get rid of something first. So, if I push 'Add New Skill' it gives you some generated ideas about what it thinks you might want to add based on the information you've already provided in your work history but, I can't add any because I've reached my limit, so I would need to go and erase a few in order to add a few. But you can add 50 if you're starting out from nothing.

You can see the endorsements and how many people have endorsed me for different things, if you wanted to know that. But remember what I said. Endorsements do not hold the same weight as recommendations. So, I have a few recommendations down here. You can see the 'Ask for Recommendation' button right there, but it has to be asking somebody who you're already connected with. And you can see that these are very nice things other people have said about me.

Accomplishments. Interests. You want to follow companies that relate to jobs that you want to have but you also want to load up interests that relate directly to who you are as a professional.

Speaking of the skills, I'm going to show you how that works. You can't see it on this, but on the banner above your profile you have a button that says 'Home', 'My Network', 'Jobs', 'Messaging', and 'Notifications'. You can also see I've got messaging in the corner here so if any of my connections want to message me, just like text, they can do that. But I am going to go where you can't see it up here to jobs and click that.

Now, I really confused LinkedIn because I do a lot of a work with students who are not me, so a lot of times I find myself looking for things like software engineer jobs even though I have very little in the way of skills for software engineering. So, looking at software engineer jobs nationally I'm looking at this section in their header to find out if I can find a listing with skills in it. There's one. So, this one is telling me that I have three of the ten skills that match what they're looking for and if I scroll down, I can find out what those are. All right, so here are the skills they are looking for: problem solving, leadership, design, cloud computing, written communication. I'm surprised I don't have that, but you'll want to go through here if this is what you're going for and find out what skills you're missing and whether or not you can add them to your skill set.

We're going to go find different ones and see if we can find another list of skills. This is reverse engineering. This is just like search engine optimization and as you can see not everybody puts the skills down.

Here we go. I went a little faster on that. I have none of the skills that match this position. That does not surprise me. All right, because a lot of these are very technical a lot of these have to do with programs and programming languages, but you see how this works.

All right. John Deere. Well, there's one that's familiar. Again, I have nothing they are looking for. There are those things if you have them and you're looking for this job, which pays very well, you'll want to make sure that you put those down. Something else you'll want to do is follow the company.

The way you get to the company's LinkedIn site profile site is by clicking on their logo, and there we are. And you will be able to see what jobs they have available by clicking on jobs and this right here you can click on to follow them.

We recently had an alumni panel with employers on it and a recruiter and they mentioned that one of the things they look at when they're looking at the LinkedIn profile is not just the skills and the work experience but whether or not you actually follow the company that you say you're interested in working for. You should. All right. This also helps with your connections because maybe there's somebody in here who's a recruiter you want to connect with.

Now you can see that some of these don't give me the option to connect. That's because I do not have any shared connections with them and you have to have at least one shared connection to be able to just press the connect button.

Now, training coordinator, well that sounds good, I'm going to press connect and see how it says 'Message (optional)'. I don't know this person, so if I did want to connect with them, I would type in something short telling them why I want to connect with them. "I'm interested in knowing more about John Deere, would you mind if we connect?" Then I would send the invitation and wait to see if she accepts.

I'm going to show you another way of getting your network a little bit larger when you're first starting out because large networks lead to opportunities. I'm going to go back to my profile. So, if I scroll down and click on this leaf, clicking on the leaf took me to Thomas College's LinkedIn page, and if you are a college student going to Thomas, the alumni section is a really great place to look for professional connections.

There are 4190 alumni on LinkedIn and if you want to know more about where they live, where they work, what they do, or what they studied or even more sections you can see who did what and this helps narrow down who you want to reach out to. So, say you want to connect with somebody in the world of psychology. Let's find the 157 folks who graduated Thomas in psychology.

Here they are. This is one of these where if you wanted to connect with them and you already knew them you could just press connect, but if you don't know them you send them a little message. You say something to the effect of, "I see you graduated from Thomas College, too. Would you mind if we connect?" "I see we study the same thing at Thomas

College. Do you mind if we connect?" Something that you need to know about this filter is everything you add here narrows the number of results you're going to get, so if you want to widen it you have to get rid of things up here.

Maybe, instead of their major you want to find out what they do. We have 358 alumni in information technology. All right, if I want to go into that field, I would want to find out who I might be connected with that I might not already know. When you connect with somebody you expand your network. And if you go up to the top of the ribbon and click on my network it will show you not only who you're already connected with but who it's going to suggest you connect with based on the connections you already have. 34 mutual connections. Perhaps I should know this person.

You can continually go through and see are there people that you know from other jobs that you've had, people you've gone to school with, people you've worked with, people that you might know in other ways through volunteering in the community or through other circles. You might have. You want to make sure that you have a lot of connections because it will help other people see you. It will help recruiters know who you are and if you have mutual connections, it will strengthen your chance of being seen and for them to know who you are. And if you have somebody in common, they might be able to ask that person about you, so again, this is all networking.

Going back to the profile because I wanted to show you where the edit public and profile and URL section is. Right up here if you click on that you'll see this part and this right now is my LinkedIn URL. When I originally set up the page it had a long number at the end of it, but I clicked on that pencil, that editing tool, and I got rid of the long number and shortened it down to just my name. If you have a very common name it might take you a little bit more work than just erasing the number, and you might have to find another another version of your name that works but try to keep it to your name. Then you would save that and be able to copy and paste this into, again, your application materials or maybe the signature line of your emails.

I'm going to go ahead and open the recruiter section so you can see what that looks like. Okay, so, you can have up to five job titles listed that you want to be considered for and sometimes there's different variations of the same thing. So, whatever you're looking for you would just add the title start typing in there. Software Engineer, whoops, I knew that would happen. I already have five so, I can't add a sixth, so I'm going to have to get rid of one of them and I'm afraid it's software engineer. Going to job locations, you can keep it really general, Maine. You could put the United States. For fun I added Victoria, British Columbia.

You can also get more specific and add city names, job types, and what kind of job are you open to. I love how they have remote down here, because that would actually open up your opportunities beyond whatever you put up here as far as job location. So, this makes you a little bit more nationally visible if, of course, you might enjoy remote work. Down here you get to determine if it's only recruiters who see that you're open to jobs or all LinkedIn members. If you don't want your current business to know that you're looking you might just want to keep it at only recruiters, but if you aren't employed right now and you want to let all of your LinkedIn connections know that you're looking, you could press that.

When you found your job and you are no longer looking for another job you can also press "I'm no longer open" and this will get rid of this section. You can always revive it later, but it's an option to take it down if you are not looking. This also keeps people from reaching out to you with opportunities.

That covers pretty much everything I wanted to cover in this section. So, if you are a Thomas college student and you are taking this workshop for Guaranteed Job Program credit, you need to connect through LinkedIn with your career advisor. The list is here. It's by major and they need to review your profile for you to get the credit. If you would like to have us review your profile anyway and give you suggestions for improving it, even if you don't need the credit, please feel free to do that, we love to help out. We are at your service.

If you are an alumnus, we are a life-long service, so you can reach out to us anytime with help on how to maximize your job search,

All right, I think that's everything. Thank you very much for joining us. Again, if you have questions reach out, we are here to serve. Thank you. Bye.