

Building an Effective LinkedIn Profile

Completed profiles are 40x more likely to be seen on LinkedIn, and only a strong profile will appear in a Google search of your name.

STEPS:

1. Professional Looking Photos

First impressions matter. Your picture introduces you to your future colleagues. Dress as you would for an interview or an important day at work. Have someone else take the picture. No Selfies! Be the only one in the picture. Show your head and shoulders. Think about being professional, likable, and approachable. Eye contact and a smile have positive effects on how viewers will perceive you.

2. Custom Headline

Change this to market your skills as they apply to your desired (future) field. Use industry-specific key words so that you appear early in search results of those terms, e.g. "Public Health major, focus on Pre-Natal Health Care & Education and Community Advocacy."

3. Summary

As an extension of your Headline, this is the first thing people will read about you. Confidently introduce yourself, your skills, your achievements, and your goals, using compelling language and industry key words. Unlike a résumé, you can use first person tense here ("I am..."). If you are seeking a job, say so and name the industry. Use short blocks of easy-to-read text. Your summary must be dynamic and make recruiters want to read more.

4. Geographic Location & Industry

Use popular search terms to describe the industry to which you aspire. These are key filters for recruiters seeking candidates. You can list your location as an area to which you hope to move and work, or your present location. The LinkedIn index does not include small towns like Amherst, so if UMass Amherst is home, list "Springfield, MA Area" as the closest town.



5. Experience — Both Paid and Unpaid

Include jobs, internships, volunteer work, freelance work, participation in campus clubs, and class projects. Describe each in terms of the transferable skills that could apply to a new job in your field. Rather than just say it, display it, by uploading work samples, images, videos, and links to relevant websites. Let the reader feel you, not just read about you. See samples here: <http://goo.gl/FLzkJB>

6. Experience — Take Two

Don't paste your résumé into this space. Instead, think about the job future you want to have. Select and re-describe your past experience highlighting skills that apply to your future. If you are headed towards Hotel Management, your job as "bartender" might be described in terms that emphasize your abilities to provide friendly customer service and keep a commercial area clean, rather than your ability to mix a drink.

7. Skills & Endorsements

Google the name of your desired industry and "core competencies." Use the phrases you find to add, (truthfully), to your Skills section. Use the most popular terms, *already* used on LinkedIn, that someone recruiting for your industry might search. Stick to 20 skills max. Your connections can click their agreement to support (endorse) each of your claims. Endorse your connections, and they will likely return the favor. Remember to update your Skills section by moving your most endorsed skills to the top. Click a skill to see both people who have it and some jobs it is used in.

TIPS:

- **Add Student-Friendly Sections**

Click **Edit Profile**. Complete the Education section, stating your degree initials (BA, BS) and your major, followed by “Expected” and the year you expect to graduate. Add optional sections from the right side to highlight advanced coursework, projects, awards, languages, test scores, and volunteerism. If you have limited work experience, coursework and other such items matter a lot. Volunteerism is cited by 1 in 5 hiring managers as highly desirable.

- **Re-Order Sections and Proofread**

When editing, click the arrow symbols to drag sections into the order that best fits you. Always keep your Summary at the top, under your picture. Order your sections for Experience, Education, and Skills & Endorsements in the order you think best markets your strengths as they apply to your future profession. Until you have endorsements, your Skills section should probably be the last of these 3 sections. Strategically re-position any additional sections you have added. *Presentation matters*. Proofread for absolute perfection!

- **Custom Vanity URL & Contact Info**

Under your photo, click the wheel and change your profile’s randomly generated web address to something easy to remember and communicate. A URL such as www.linkedin.com/in/yourname can be added to your résumé, business cards, and professional looking email signature. Be sure to only include websites that demonstrate your professionalism or display your work. Under contact info, make it easy for recruiters to reach you but, for safety, do not list your street address.

- **Recommendations**

Ask people who know your work and your skills to write you short recommendations for your profile page. You can ask an internship supervisor or coordinator at your volunteer site. Ask others such as managers, professors, or classmates who have worked with you closely. This gives extra credibility to your strengths and skills. You don’t need many, so choose wisely to highlight your strengths.

- **Join Groups and Follow Companies**

At the top, click the symbol to the left of the search field. Select **Groups**, then type the name of your field or industry and ask to join 2 groups. Also search “**UMass Amherst**” and see what departmental or alumni groups you should be part of. Next, just above Groups, select **Companies**. Search for and follow a company at which you may someday work. When you log on to LinkedIn, your homepage will show a personalized newsfeed of content posted by the groups and companies you chose to follow.

- **Participate**

Don’t link to everybody you know. Look up those who have contributed to your professional success thus far: students, teachers, employers, internship supervisors, etc. Connect with this core group and build outward. Profiles with 50 or more connections become more visible in search results. Tactfully comment on an article posted in a Group you follow. Others will read it, and may click to see your profile as well. Be a good citizen of your group & encourage people to learn more about you.

