

Spruce Up Your LinkedIn Profile



LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 1 billion users worldwide. *Their mission is simple:* to connect professionals to make them more productive and successful. It's the "go to" platform for recruiters and hiring managers to look for potential candidates.

But with so many people using the platform, how do you stand out to make any kind of an impact?

Think of LinkedIn as an extension of your personal brand. No one likes to talk about themselves, but this is one place where you should take the time to do it. Creating your profile in an effective and engaging way sets the tone for how you present yourself to the world. Your profile is your digital brand and taking the time now can mean huge opportunities in the future from a personal or career perspective.

Here are 6 ways to help you stand out:

Use a Professional Photo

It may seem obvious but don't use a vacation photo of yourself. This is the time to showcase your accomplishments so go for a professional high quality headshot. Make sure the photo is current and be sure it represents your character as well. You want to be authentic but professional as well! Choose clothing that represents what you are most likely to wear at work. Be sure the photo is well lit and offers a clear view of your face. Remember – first impressions are real and you want to convince the viewer to take the time to learn more about you.

Add a Custom Background Photo

A visually engaging background photo grabs people's attention and sets the tone for your profile. Over and above your photo, it offers a chance for you to tell people who you are in an interesting way. A well thought out photo can help you stand out and keep you top of mind. While not mandatory, this is a great opportunity to expand on your personal brand. The image should be consistent with your personality and reflect the tone of your profile.

Be Sure Your Headline Tells a Story

Your headline is more than just a job title – it's about what makes you tick. It's your opening statement and gives the viewer insight into your skills and personality. Be sure your headline explains why you're really unique. It's kind of a summary of your USP (Unique Selling Proposition). Rather than say "I gather data and submit reports" try "I provide strategic input and empower companies to be more profitable."

Tell a Story About Yourself

The summary (About) section is the perfect opportunity to sell yourself and highlight your unique value. Go beyond your work experience. Why do your skills matter – and how have they made a difference to the world around you?

Authenticity is key here. What are you 100% passionate about? While crafting your summary, it's important to be brief and to the point. Aim for no more than two paragraphs. Look at the profiles of people who have done it successfully for sources of inspiration.

Ask for Recommendations

Recommendations are a great way to add to your credibility. Don't be afraid to reach out to trusted sources who can put in a good word for you. Reach out to potential contacts directly (try to avoid any default tools) and personalize your note. Let them know which areas you would like them to focus on. If for any reason you don't like the response, ask for a revision. If time is a factor, offer to write the recommendation yourself then have them approve it.

Participate in the Conversation

LinkedIn is a community and you have the option to join groups with similar interests. Don't be afraid to share your thoughts on other people's content. This is a great way to raise awareness and increase credibility in your field or in a field of interest.

Expressing your opinion in a diplomatic tone is a great way to establish yourself as a thought leader. Create some content yourself by posting regularly. However you choose to participate, the key is to stay active. This shows recruiters and industry colleagues that you're looking for ways to grow your professional network as well as boost your skills. It shows you're engaged and looking to advance your career.

Crafting a compelling LinkedIn profile is a great way to showcase yourself to the world. Take the time to do it right and don't underestimate the power of marketing yourself. *Remember* – your profile is your digital brand and you owe it to yourself to present yourself in the most effective and compelling way possible.