



Write a LinkedIn profile that gets you hired

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LinkedIn has become an important tool to find a job. Many companies use LinkedIn searches to look for candidates. Recruitment agencies do searches on LinkedIn when they are asked by companies to find applicants for jobs. They even do LinkedIn searches to build up their databases of suitable candidates for various jobs to have on hand for when they get requests. If you are looking for a job, then you want to use LinkedIn. Try and not see this as another social media site, which lots of people tell me they don't like. It is a business site, and it is a place where businesses find people to connect with, to buy from and sell to, and to employ.

If you are looking for a job, then you want a LinkedIn profile. Below I will take you through some steps to help you create a profile that will help you get noticed. The points reflect the order in which you will be required to add information to your profile. Because job hunting is so competitive right now, given the high unemployment rate, and hundreds of people are applying for each job opening, you need to stand out. So, make sure you keep to the truth, but also stand out in a good way.

1. Profile picture and background photo.

You do want a profile picture, preferably in colour, that is head and shoulders and is suitable for your occupation. Don't post pictures of yourself in a swimming costume unless you are applying for a modelling job. You can leave such pictures for Facebook or Instagram. It is your choice to add a background photo. If you are applying for a job in a creative industry such as marketing or advertising, then it is good to have one. Have good quality photos.

2. The headline

Most people give their job title here. You get up to 200 characters so use them. When people search on keywords, this is the first place that gets noticed. You want to give information in your headline that is likely to be searched on. Job title is good, but use all your characters. You can give all the different job titles you may be open for. Often they are written like this: job1|job2|job 3. Etc. You can also use the space to give other information which will get you noticed. You could mention a significant achievement related to the job title. If you are looking for a certain job, then make sure the headline includes the job title you are looking for. And think of other ways in which this job title may be written. Your headline is the first thing prospective hiring managers will see. Make sure it gets them interested in your profile. So, use the full 200 characters to get them interested in you so they will read further.

3. The about section or summary section

Essentially this is like the front page of your CV. This must sell you. You don't have to list everything you have done, and you cannot, as you are restricted to 2000 characters. Before you even start writing it, go and read some of the job adverts available for the jobs you want to apply for. Make a list of what these ads want you to have in terms of qualifications, skills, and experience. Look at what you will be doing in the job. When you write your "about" section you are going to make sure to include these because recruiters and hiring managers will be reading this part of your profile to see if you do meet the job requirements.

As with your CV try and avoid a lengthy essay format. People don't have time to read so they scan your profile. The important information must stand out. Use bullets and spacing well. Also make sure you use keywords in your text that you expect recruiters and hiring managers to use when searching for job candidates on LinkedIn.

Your opening lines are very important. The top few lines will either get the interest of the recruiter or not. If you can make the first few lines about what they want in the job ad and include an achievement that is excellent. For example, you may open your "about" section with the following. "An operations manager with 10 years' experience who has reduced response time to customers by 30% and reworked processes to reduce errors by 15%. You are not going to fit everything in your first few lines. But you want to get the attention of the person reading it. The purpose of the opening few lines is to get them to want to read more. A significant achievement is a good way to get them to read more.

Generally, in the about/summary section you want to use most of your 2000 characters, and you want to include:

- Years experience in different fields and roles.
- Key accomplishments. Rather avoid a list of your responsibilities and talk about what you did, how you did it, and the results you achieved from doing it.
- Skills – LinkedIn provides another place to list skills, however skills are often search terms used, so repeating them is good. You are more likely to show up in searches.
- Relevant qualifications and courses completed.
- Achievements.

This is not the order you have to put them in. As long as your first few lines are interesting the reader will continue to read the whole "about" section. If you can turn this into a story that is even better.

If you spend almost all of your time on getting the above – the photos, headline, and summary section – to look great, you are doing well. Unless the early information interests the reader, they will not read further.

4. Further information for your profile.

You do want to add this because a complete profile also makes it more likely you will show up in a job search. So, although the recruiters and hiring manager most likely will not read this, you want your profile as complete as possible, because then you are more likely to show up in searches. LinkedIn usually allows you to see how complete your profile is with a graphic.

- Experience. It is probably best if you do a copy and paste from your CV. Unless your previous information has interested the recruiter this will not be read. And most often it

is not read. People just are too busy to spend time reading lots of information. However, do it to have a complete profile and in case the recruiter does want to read it.

- Education. Start with the most relevant qualifications.
 - Put in licenses and certifications.
 - Volunteering. If you have volunteered include it. It almost always counts in your favour.
 - Put in all your skills and try and get as many endorsements for your skills as you can. Often the easiest way to do this is to endorse other people who will then return the favour.
 - Getting people to write recommendations will add greatly to your CV. If other people sing your praises, then the recruiters and hiring managers will have more confidence in you. Hiring is about reducing risk – the risk that someone is wrong for the job. Commendations and references from others will help reduce that risk. The assumption is that if you worked well in other companies, you will work well in their company.
 - Add in honours and awards if you have them. These help give you the edge over other applicants.
5. **Activity:** Some people recommend you need to comment on other posts and post your own material, and it does look good if you are active on LinkedIn. However, it is not critical for getting another job. Recruiters don't necessarily require it. It can help you make more contacts though.
6. **Connections:** The more connections you have the more likely your profile is to show up in searches.

Search engines like new and updated content. This applies if you are talking about a website, if you are talking about having your CV on a career portal such as PNET, and if you have a LinkedIn profile. If you want to be found in searches, then you cannot just post your profile or CV and leave it. As time goes on and you do nothing to update it, so you move to the back of the list when it comes to appearing in searches. Make sure you regularly go on to your profile and update it and make a few changes, get some more recommendations or endorsements. That way you will help to ensure you do show up in the many searches that hiring managers and recruiters perform.