

Your LinkedIn Profile

By Evelyn Gwynn

The Importance of Your Profile

Your business LinkedIn profile is critical in these days of virtual connectivity.

Two of the most important parts of your profile are a *great headline* and a *great summary area*.

Your headline needs to be straight-forward and catchy, if possible! Keep it to 1-2 sentences. It is the 1st thing that others will read so make sure they understand what you do.

Next, your LinkedIn Summary area should be "client-facing," meaning it's all about what you can do for your customer rather than reading like a virtual résumé.

Note that it helps to use ALL CAPS for sections like "WHAT I DO" and "WHO I WORK WITH" to help those headers stand out on LinkedIn, which (as of this writing) doesn't allow you to use bold or italic text on your profile page. If you don't have information for a section, not a problem, just leave it out.

Here is the script:

WHAT I DO: I help [my target audience] achieve [their top goal] by providing [my product or service].

WHO I WORK WITH: I partner with [target audience or industry type] including:

[Insert bulleted list of job titles, industry names, etc.]

WHY IT WORKS: When you partner with [my company name] you get the most efficient, effective and affordable [product or service] that [target audience] is looking for right now.

WHAT MAKES [ME or US] DIFFERENT: [Answer that question! What makes you unique/different/better than similar vendors or competitors? XYZ years of experience? Certifications/Patents/etc.? Personal, 1-on-1 attention and Customer Service/Support?]

WHAT OTHERS SAY: [Copy and paste in 2-3 testimonials in this area. Use a real person, full name, company name, etc. and explain specific value/benefit person received from you or your business.]

HOW IT WORKS: [Explain Your process - we start with a free evaluation, we first meet via phone to discuss your needs, etc., or we perform XYZ services for you, etc.]

READY TO TALK? Reach out to me directly here on LinkedIn, email me at [email address], visit us online at [website url] or call me direct at [phone number].

LinkedIn Profile Tips (courtesy of Time.com/money)

1. Know what to include (and leave off)

There are a few things that belong on every profile, according to LinkedIn career expert [Blair Decembrele](#).

Users who list their education appear in searches up to 17 times more often than those who don't. Location is another important detail: filling out this field with where you want to work will make you appear in up to 23 times more searches, she says.

A professional-looking picture is another must-have. Profiles with a photo get up to 21 times more views and up to 36 times more messages, according to Decembrele. And a summary statement, an "elevator pitch" with at least 40 words that speak to your skills, motivation, and interests, will also help grab a recruiter's eye.

Your LinkedIn headline also deserves some attention. If you're actively looking for a new gig, think about how you can use this space to grab a recruiter's attention. There are a million "Marketing Director" profiles; something like "Master of Digital Pharmaceutical Marketing" will get way more eyeballs.

2. It's a social network. So be social

LinkedIn can be a powerful networking tool — if you let it.

Instead of just saving the connections you've met throughout your professional life, actively engage with contacts by liking, sharing, and commenting on their activity.

It's fine to connect with someone you've never met, Serdula says. But make sure you send a customized message in your invitation. She suggests something along the lines of: "Hey, Steve! We don't know each other, but we both work in sales, and I'm really impressed with what you're doing. I'd love to connect."

If it's hard to engage with LinkedIn during the work day, so Serdula suggests downloading the site's mobile app and scrolling through it in your downtime.

"A lot of my clients say, 'I wasn't using LinkedIn until it was on my phone,'" she says. "Now they network in their pajamas."

3. Nail the voice

Your LinkedIn profile is a chance to add some personality to your professional story, so don't make the mistake of copying your resume verbatim.

Serdula says the best profiles are usually written in first person (“I’m a PR whiz, trusted by the biggest names in Silicon Valley”), but other styles can work too. If you’re in sales or marketing, second person (“If you want to know how we can affect change, visit my brand website,”) can help engage potential clients. And executive-level professionals, or anyone with a long list of accomplishments, may feel more comfortable to writing about their success in the third person (“John Smith is an award-winning author”).

Take a minute to think about your target audience. Is it a potential employer? New clients? Tailor your voice accordingly, and try not to be too dry.

“Write it as if there’s a real person behind it, not ‘a dynamic professional with 30 years of upward experience’,” Serdula says.

Make sure the work experience you’re highlighting is up to date, and pertinent to your career. It’s cool to include volunteer work where you flexed skills that would be attractive to an employer, but the summer you spent as your kid’s soccer coach, or the string of restaurant jobs you held in college, won’t do you much good.

“Relevance is key,” Decembrele says. “Add the experience that relates to your future professional goals.”

4. Keep your profile alive

If you want your profile to stand out, you’ll need to update it often with examples of your work output. Papers you’ve written, projects you’ve completed, and presentations you’ve nailed are all good options.

You don’t have to have a traditional desk job, or a creative portfolio, to make this work. Just find something you’re proud of and make it visual, like pictures of an event you planned, or a video of a panel discussion you took part in.

The driving idea, Serdula says, is to get your audience to engage with you in real life.

“A really successful profile makes a person want to do something — pick up the phone and call you, click a link to a website, download a white paper,” she says.

5. Hack the LinkedIn job search

There are more than 11 million active job listings on LinkedIn, according to Decembrele. Spend some time scrolling through the gigs you're interested in, and jot down the specific skills they ask for.

Often, recruiters will search LinkedIn for keywords of the job description they're trying to fill. Peppering some of these words into your skills section, summary, and work experience will make them come to you.

“Including at least five relevant skills will help you connect with the right opportunities,” Decembrele says.