

Optimising your LinkedIn profile

Seven point checklist

Find a better job faster.

Will you be found on LinkedIn or be missed out entirely? What will people viewing your profile think of you: good, average or poor?

When making senior-level and specialist hires, most headhunters and internal recruiters will invest considerable time looking to identify people on LinkedIn.

- The question is will they find you?

However, in many cases, people's LinkedIn profiles don't include the information that they're searching for.

They'll search for people with specific qualities, such as industry, occupational and often niche, particular skills.

To optimise your LinkedIn profile for job search success, you need to showcase relevant content and keywords.

This specialist knowledge is likely to be in three areas:

1. industry knowledge
2. occupational experience
3. niche skills

You don't want to miss out, do you?

This 7-point checklist will help you to optimise your presence.

10-15 minute read.

CHECKLIST ITEM 1:

Does your photo compliment or compromise you?



The expression "first impressions count" applies.

The first thing people will notice when they view your LinkedIn profile is your photo.

Consciously or subconsciously, many people will form opinions about you based on your photo. People viewing your profile will be thinking... Can they see themselves working with you? What does your photo say about you?

- Take a look at the montage of photos on the following page.

What thoughts do you have about the different people? If you were sat in a hiring seat, who would you be most and least confident about inviting in for interview? And what pre-conceived opinions or reservations might you have about them?

Is your profile one that showcases your professional or personal interests? Is it too formal or too casual? Does your photo align with the values that you need to represent? Probably determined by your level of seniority, industry and occupational type.

You need a photo that reflects your level of seniority!

One that aligns with the nature of your job and or industry type, you may need to project an image of someone who is responsible, accountable and structured conversely for others a more contemporary, perhaps cool one may be best.

If you're not looking at the camera, you're not going to connect as well with the person viewing your profile.

The best photos are ones in which you'd be facing the camera, smiling, and presenting a professional, positive, and neutral image.

If you operate in a leadership role or high-impact ones such as in sales, consulting, marketing or project management, then it's critical that your photo projects you in a positive and appropriate manner.



CHECKLIST ITEM 1: Does your photo compliment or compromise you?



CHECKLIST ITEM 2:

Your industry skills

Will someone applying keywords to source candidates with specific industry skills be able to identify you?

They'll most likely apply one of three types of searches to find this:

1. Industry searches – using LinkedIn features to be able to search for people employed in particular industry sectors
2. Employer company name searches – searching for people working at or who have worked for specific companies they believe are relevant backgrounds to their hiring needs.
3. Keywords/descriptive words - typically relating to industry sector names/niches/definitions, products or service types.

They may not look for people working at your specific present or past employer company/companies, so you need to understand that you may not appear on their radar.

Will they be familiar with your company's line of business?

If not, your profile will lack context and relevance to the reader. So include a two or three line description of your employers' lines of business.

As per point 3 to the left, consider how you can best build into your profile keywords/descriptives words that people may search on .

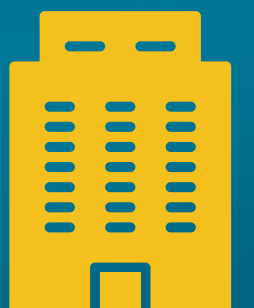
Include appropriate industry sector, product or service type terminologies.

Logic says your best interests are to incorporate “definitions” that represent industry sectors, products or service types that you are interested to work in/with and broadly qualified for.

It's possible to widen your reach by being creative about how you describe your employer/industry experience.

Here are three examples, with a limited description first, and a wider one second:

- ABC is an automotive manufacturer.
- ABC is an automotive manufacturer, and provides leasing and fleet maintenance services.
- DEF is a cosmetics producer
- DEF is a cosmetics producer, a leading name in the health and beauty sector - it's a global CPG brand.



CHECKLIST ITEM 2: CONT'D

Your occupational skills...

Continuing from the previous page, here's a further example with a limited description first, and a wider one second:

- XYZ is a Business Process Outsourcing company
- XYZ is a Business Process Outsourcing company delivering contact centre, customer service, HR, accounts payable and IT support services

When describing the nature of your job and what you do, it presents you with another opportunity to increase your chances of be found for the appropriate openings...

You need to think about, what types of industry definitions, product or services, niche sectors, specialist job focus areas that someone might be searching for role types that you'd like to be considered for.

And determine, how you can build in such definitions into your employment experience when describing the nature of your job.



Similarly you can stretch your search visibility by being creative in what you say about yourself in your About information.

Once again, think about the types of industry definitions, product or services, niche sectors, specialist job focus areas that someone might be searching for role types that you'd like to be considered for.

In the About you section, the norm is to outline your industry experience, what you could do, is rather than saying:

- I have experience in the ABC industry.

Is to state instead:

- I have experience, familiarity and interests in the ABC industry, and areas of DEF, EFG, HIJ, KLM and XYZ

The DEF, EFG, HIJ, KLM and XYZ areas to represent areas in which you'd have an interest to work in, and to which you can genuinely bring some cross-transferable skills.

CHECKLIST ITEM 3:

Your occupational skills...

You need to think about how people interpret your job title and job information content.

Will it be clear to the reader what you do and what you have done?

Often employers give people obscure titles, which whilst having meaning in their company, may lack broader recognition and understanding. If this applies to you, it may not be apparent to the reader what you do.

Invariably your best interests will be to clearly outline the nature of your job. This not only gives you an opportunity to state very clearly what you do and how you add value to your employer/s but also to once again to build into your profile keywords that people might search on.

Would you happen to know if your level of seniority will be visible to the reader?

Again, job titles can be ambiguous. Will it be clear to the reader if you are a Manager of Managers, a first-line manager or an individual contributor?



CHECKLIST ITEM 4:

Keywords and specialist credentials

A keyword is simply something of great significance.

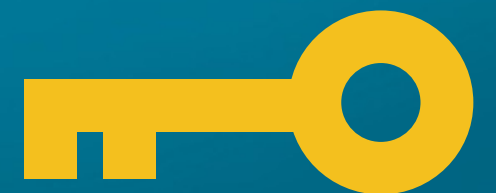
Have you included details of niche, specialist or in-demand skills people may be interested in? Such as a process, a product, or an initiative/activity for example:

- Agile, ISO 45001, ISO 6000, Prince, Salesforce, SAP, Scope 3, Six Sigma...
- Activities such as change management, project management, mergers & acquisitions, new business sales, employee engagement or elevating customer service.
- For recognisable industry or occupational qualifications such as ACCA/Chartered Accountant, CIM, CIPD or MBA.

Include keywords that apply to your ideal job type choices.

You must consider what skills, experience or qualifications someone may be searching for to find candidates for the specific job type/s you wish to take up.

And embed appropriate keywords into your profile so that people looking to hire into types of openings you'd like to assume, find you!



CHECKLIST ITEM 5:

Performer/high achiever.

In your employment details you can state what you have done or are doing, this suggests you're competent and capable of doing it again.

Whatever your job, you're expected to accomplish things this could be beating sales targets, revenue/invoice collection, customer service and problem resolution, optimising stock levels and supply chain logistics.

Employers want to hire people who get things done.

Consider how you can best make mention of positive achievements of significance.

The scope and scale of these should be commensurate with a good level of performance, that you'd associate with your industry, job type and level of seniority i.e. they need to be significant and with the balance on the positive.



CHECKLIST ITEM 6:

Opening up new possibilities...

Are you making the best use of your About section?

If you are interested in an area but don't have skills in it, you can still get on the radar of headhunters and pro-active internal recruitment professionals.

Here's how. In your profile, you could state, "you have experience (the name of the area you have experience in) and familiarity with (the name of the area/s you may wish to get into)."

For example, I have experience in the automotive industry and familiarity with supercars.

- Similarly, you can say that I have experience in accounting and familiarity with project accounting.
- Or you could say you have experience in XYZ area and interests in xyz2, xyz3 and xyz4 areas.

NB The recommendation here is to get noticed for things you can do. The suggestion is not intended for you to apply to do things you're incapable of.

Your best chance is to say enough to solicit interest but not too much to avoid creating a too lengthy profile.

CHECKLIST ITEM 7:

Be a magnet for the best jobs

In the About section of your profile, you have an opportunity to say something positive about what you bring in your occupational type to the world of work, for example, a keenness to personally deliver on what's required, to contribute to a team effort, and do so with transparency and authenticity.

The norm in the About section is for people to state their industry, occupational and product/process experiences. However, as stated previously, you can broaden your reach by being creative with your choice of words!

If you state that you have “experience, familiarity and knowledge,” you can proceed to include not only areas in which you have experience but also ones that you may wish to work in for which your skill set is highly transferable.

Get noticed for the right reasons. “Likes” on postings and making “Comments” will give you potential visibility to prospective hiring managers.

It will also keep you on the radar of those people who may not have been recruiting when you first made contact in the past however may be recruiting later... right now perhaps.

Any comments need to be constructive, relevant and complement vs compromise you. And be cognizant not to overdo it.

