

# HOW TO GET HIRED

## LinkedIn Walk-Through

Close to 90% of all recruiters and hiring managers use LinkedIn as part of their hiring process. Essentially your profile is influencing their decision, which can make or break you getting invited for the interview. By making the right edits to your profile, you can make LinkedIn work for you.

Our goal with your LinkedIn profile is to:

- Help recruiters and hiring managers see exactly what they want to see.
- Optimize your profile so opportunities come to you.
- Outreach strategically to existing and new relationships

But, before we get started...

### **Privacy First**

Before you begin, turn off the automatic notices about edits to your LinkedIn page.

From your profile page, open the drop-down menu under “Me” in the upper right.

Choose “Settings & Privacy”

Choose the “Privacy” tab in the center of the page

Choose “Sharing Profile Edits”

Switch the toggle button to “No”

Once this is done, return to your primary profile page. Now, you can edit at will without your entire network being notified of every change.

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## Step 1: The First Impression

The recruiter's perception of you is determined within seconds. The three most important parts of your LinkedIn profile are right at the top of your page: your photograph, your name and your headline. Not only will these be the first things someone sees when they arrive to your page, but also these will be the only things seen when you show up in a recruiter's search results of potential candidates. Your goal is to get them to click to learn more about you, so it's essential to create a good first impression with these three parts.

### Photograph

You know how executives always seem to have that "executive" looking profile photo. Whether you're an executive or not yet, we want you to project that look. For your attire, you'll want to wear something like what you would for the job interview, avoiding flashy colors, jewelry or bright makeup. It's best to err on the side of conservative and traditional over trendy.

If you are taking your own profile photo with a tripod or a friend's help, be sure to use a blank or neutral background. A professional camera is ideal but the camera on your phone will do just fine; a great photo is really all about the lighting. Make sure that your face is evenly lit, avoid overhead lighting as that casts unflattering shadows down on your face. A simple trick is to place your light source(s) behind or slightly to the side of the camera with the goal of achieving soft light across your face.

**Pro Tip:**

A professional photographer is well worth the investment.

Advantages of a professional photo shoot include:

- Dozens if not hundreds of shots for you to choose from
- Your face will be properly lit
- They will make you look your best
- The final will have blemish removal
- Photos you can be proud to use for the next several years

**Name**

You want to ensure you have consistency with the branding of your name; so include your name exactly as it reads from your resume.

**What's in a Name?**

In "First Names and First Impressions: A Fragile Relationship" Kenneth M. Steele and Laura E. Smithwick explained that the first impression created by one's name whether negative or positive is neutralized once the name is associated with a photograph. In your LinkedIn profile your name and photograph strengthen each other.

**Headline**

Think of the headline of your LinkedIn profile as your short branding statement. You want to broadly capture what you do in as few of words as possible. Also, this section holds some of the most important SEO terms on your page. SEO terms will help you show up in search results if your headline has similarities to the titles you are seeking. There are two ways that you can write your headline:

One way is by simply looking at the job titles of a positions that you are interested in. For example, if you are interested in "VP of Business Development" roles then you can simply use the headline "Business Development Executive." Here are some potential headline ideas:

- [Title]     Professional
- [Title]     Executive
- [Title]     Leader
- [Title]     Expert

The second way is the LinkedIn default. You can simply use your current title and company, for example: “Marketing Manager at The Marketing Group.” In most scenarios, I only recommend this for people who are currently working at a Fortune 500 company or a company that has strong brand recognition within your industry.

**Pro Tip:**

The key with your headline is we want to make sure you are branding yourself and you’re your profile towards where you are going, not where you’ve been.

## Step 2: Pitch Your Next Job

When writing your summary for your LinkedIn profile you want to consider the jobs that you are applying for. Think of this as your elevator pitch for your next role. If you have an existing summary on your resume, great you’ll want to simply copy/paste that over. If you don’t yet have a summary on your resume then you’ll want to make sure you highlight specific experiences that sound almost identical to those listed in the job descriptions that interest you.

When writing a summary from scratch, the three main points to remember are: 1) start with your current title; 2) go in-depth regarding your longest experiences or those experiences most relevant to the jobs you are applying to attain; 3) end with how your passion applies to your goals.

[Positive adjective] [Top/Current Job Title] with more than [“# of years”, or “decade”] of [adjective taken from job description] experience in [top responsibility], [second most important responsibility] and [favorite responsibility]. [What did you do? Action verb] with [Whom? Clients, level-of employee, or key experience] that resulted in [specific result]. Adept at [list one to three specialized skills] with [person or thing]. [Additional supportive details in one or two sentences.] Passionate about [Close with how your personal passion aligns with the job].

Example: Seasoned Account Manager with 12 years of diverse experience in marketing, branding, and operations. Worked with over 100 accounts that produce more than \$100,000 each in annual sales. Top salesperson achieving highest-grossing sales among 50 account managers for three years in a row. Progressed from excited Junior Account executive to VP of Client Services with a professional network numbering in the thousands. Passionate about inspiring sales and account executives to exceed their goals.

## Step 3: Important Information for Employers & Recruiters

Recruiters will compare your resume and the information you provided on your application to your LinkedIn profile. All key information should match as closely as possible. The specific wording of your resume should be tweaked to sound the same as the job that you are applying to, so don't worry about minor differences like "Directed" versus "Managed" versus "Led". However, you should not have discrepancies in your employer information, dates of employment or skills when comparing your profile to your resume.

Areas that must match verbatim between your resume and your LinkedIn profile, include: your work history, your education and certifications, and your top skills.

## Step 4: The Devil is in the Details

When you buy a new car, you may have noticed that the salesman won't offer up certain information without being asked. For example, if the automobile you are considering has lower mileage per gallon than similar models, you'll have to ask for that information. The salesman sells you on the aspects of the car you want, whether it is the color and the stereo or the interior leg room and trunk space. The salesperson will also entice you buy the auto on the same day, versus thinking about it or special ordering a model that has 100% of everything you want.

Similarly, you only want to mention experiences and interests that sell yourself for your ideal position. You don't want to distract the recruiter or hiring manager with superfluous information. You want to sound almost too good to be true, so that they will call you in for an interview today and not wait. Too many additional items listed in your LinkedIn profile distract and may even derail your chances to be interviewed and hired. Listing all of your achievements, your volunteer commitments and by following groups unrelated to your professional goal will distract the hiring manager. In some cases, additional information may even harm your opportunity.

### **Companies:**

Follow all the companies on your "Hit List" or those where you believe you could fulfill your professional passion. This will help with LinkedIn algorithm better understand you. You'll get general notices about those companies. If a job is posted on LinkedIn that matches your passion from a company you follow, it's likely you will be notified.

**Find Companies:**

In the “Search” bar at the upper left of your profile and homepage, type in the name of a company that interests you. Unless you typed the name of the company exactly correct, a “top results” page will open. On this results page, select “Companies” in the upper bar of options and you will be shown a list of similar companies you may follow on LinkedIn. This is especially helpful for large corporations with many divisions. Search “Disney” for example and you will be given a lengthy list of more than 100 options to follow. Some are official company profiles and others are employee or fan or vendor generated. Follow only those companies that you would apply to work at.

**Groups:**

Join the LinkedIn groups that are directly related to your industry. Delete the rest. Pursue your personal interests on other social media.

**Edit and Find Groups:**

To find “Groups” follow the same steps as in “Find Companies” except choose the “Groups” option from the bar that appears on top of the search results. Search for related professional organizations and groups affiliated with the university you attended.

To edit your groups, go to the square nine-dot grid labeled “Work” in the upper right of your profile or homepage. From the drop-down menu select “Groups”.

Select the “cog” symbol on the far right but within the Groups header (the one above it opens your profile options). Click on this cog and your groups will appear in a list form. Move the most important groups to the top of the list by selecting the up arrow to the left of the group name. Delete the groups not related to your profession by selecting “Member Settings” to the right of the group name. This will open a page of options, select “Leave Group” in the lower right corner of this page.

If you cannot bring yourself to leave a favorite group, there is an option to prevent the group’s logo from appearing on your profile

page. You will find this option on the same “Member Settings” page.

### **Skills:**

LinkedIn allows you to list up to 50 skills. When you created your profile, LinkedIn automatically added “default” skills based on keywords from your page.

Take control of these skills. Delete any that are not relevant to your current job search. Be sure to delete skills from experiences that are not related to your current search. Then organize your skills by moving the most important ones to the top of the list. The ones appearing at the top are the skills that LinkedIn will automatically forward to others for endorsements.

#### **How-to: Add and Manage Skills**

From your profile page, scroll down to the “Featured Skills & Endorsements” section. To the right of this header there are two selections: “Add a new skill” and a “pencil.” First, add any skill that is directly related to your passion. Once you have added up to 50, select the pencil to delete unrelated skills and to move the most important three skills to the top of the list.

Recruiters, including human resource representatives at top corporations, are able to search based on these skills. Potential candidates whose skills have the highest number of endorsements bounce to the top of the recruiter’s search results.

### **Additional Considerations:**

**Achievements** - Any awards or achievements listed on linked in should be well-known within your field or universally acknowledged as significant.

**Volunteer** – You’ll only want to include your volunteer experience if it is tied to a specific role that you’ve held with the group. Or ideally if the group is specific to your industry. For example, a Senior Publicist may want to list that they are a board member serving on the Los Angeles Chapter of the Entertainment Publicists Professional Society.

LinkedIn will prompt you to continue to add more information. Stay focused and only add information that directly supports your goal.

## Step 5: Your Top-Secret Network

### **Make Direct Contact**

From your Homepage or Profile Page choose “My Network” in the top bar.

On the “My Network” page, choose “See All” under the number of your connections in the top of the left column.

Click on the name of the contact you wish to email.

On your contact’s profile page, go to the right-hand column.

Open the drop-down menu under “Contact and Personal Info”.

Copy the direct email and add the person to your contacts in your professional email account.

Each LinkedIn member has access to the direct email for all 1<sup>st</sup> degree connections. Whenever you get a new smart phone or change service providers, you don’t have to worry about losing all of your professional contacts. LinkedIn provides this information.

### **Expanding your network through LinkedIn**

Developing a strong network takes time. LinkedIn has determined that 500 contacts is the tipping point for a significant network. If you look at various profiles, you’ll notice that there is a specific number assigned for “contacts” until one reaches 500. The person who reaches more than 500 contacts is noted as 500+. So, whether you have 501 or 10,000 contacts, LinkedIn only notes “500+”. Make exceeding 500 contacts a personal goal. Every employer prefers an employee with a strong professional network.

Face-to-face introductions is always the best way to expand your network. However, LinkedIn provides another method for meeting new contacts.

From your profile page or your homepage go to the top bar. There is a search function on the left. Search your industry using the keywords from your headline. On the search results page, choose the “People” tab from the horizontal list that appears beneath your search term.

All of the people who have something in common with your search term will be listed. You can choose to “Connect” with individuals who have the same interests and experience. While you may wish to connect with a top executive in your field, you’ll build a more successful network if you reach out to those who have a similar experience, title, and even age within the

organization where you wish to work. These LinkedIn connections can be invaluable resources when it becomes time to apply for a job within their organization.

When you click “Connect” in most cases you will be given the option to “Add a note” before sending your request. Take the time to learn about this person and add a note (up to 300 characters - just over twice the length of a Tweet) about common interests and experiences and why you wish to connect. The individual may or may not connect with you, but if they do you’ll have direct access to them through their email address as well as the ability to connect to their 1<sup>st</sup> degree contacts. So, if you connect with a new contact who has 500+ contacts it’s likely they will have other well-established connections. Potentially providing thousands of new 2<sup>nd</sup> degree contacts for you.

After a person has accepted your connection request, take the time to send them a personal email not through LinkedIn but direct to their personal email address. Your first message to this new, never-before-met contact should be basic and simple. The goal is to develop a relationship, not to sell to this person and not to appear like a scam. In a short email with no more than three or four paragraphs, introduce yourself, mention your respect for their personal accomplishments, share a common interest and finally thank them once more for the connection. Leave it at that.

If the person responds, develop a relationship through a natural back and forth based on common interests. This is the long-term approach to improving your network. It takes both time and effort. You may save your email conversations in a special folder like “LinkedIn Connections”. When it comes time for you to ask for help with your placement, you can pick up one of those conversations and make the ask for help by either continuing the conversation or referencing it in a new email.

## Final Note: Recommendations

When close to 90% of all recruiters trust LinkedIn for additional research, it’s important that your profile stands out as one that can be trusted. Getting recommendations from co-workers is a way to validate the information you are providing via your cover letter, resume and LinkedIn profile. I suggest getting at least two recommendations for your current job and one for each previous job.

When another person takes the time to praise your abilities, the recommendation promotes confidence in both recruiters and hiring managers.

On LinkedIn, any co-worker who worked for the same company at the same time as you can write a recommendation. Co-worker friends who have a positive outlook on your skills are the best people to write a recommendation. Their position at the time you were co-workers does not matter, it doesn’t have to be the CEO or your direct supervisor. Even the janitor, security

guard or other employee with whom you developed a close relationship can write a nice endorsement. Our purpose with this is to give a future hiring manager (who hasn't yet met you) a bit of extra confidence that people enjoy working with you.

#### **How-to: Ask for a Recommendation**

Go to your co-worker's profile page.

Click on the three dots to the right of their picture.

"Request a Recommendation" from the drop down menu.

You will be asked for your "Relationship" and "Position at the time", select the correct options.

Click "Next".

You will be given the opportunity to write a personal request to your contact.

If months have passed since you last connected, remind them who you are

"Dear friend,

Remember that \_\_\_ project that we worked on together"?

You said I did "a great job".

Would you mind writing a recommendation, like:

*"I worked with your name for # of years and remember his/her excellent skills including list top applicable skills. I enjoyed our time as co-workers and strongly recommend for any insert headline position. I am confident s/he will exceed your expectations."*

Thank you for giving me a recommendation.

Sincerely,

If none of your contacts are responding to your recommendation requests then you can simply follow up with them seven days later. Understandably we all get busy. Hopefully a gentle reminder will be the only push that is needed to get a recommendation done for you. Or another approach is that you could proactively write a recommendation on their page and then ask them for one in return.

Recommendations are one more competitive edge. While these are not required for a successful profile, the notes do show up in search results. Multiple strong recommendations give hiring managers and recruiters more confidence to proceed with your placement.

If you have done everything here in this guide, you've now optimized your LinkedIn account to support your professional goal and help give yourself a competitive advantage.