

Creating and Leveraging a LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is an online professional networking tool. As a matter of fact, it's the world's largest professional network with over 200,000,000 members in more than 200 countries and territories. Its global appeal is reflected in the fact that it's currently available in 19 different languages.

LinkedIn connects you to professional contacts, and through these contacts it helps you advance your career and contribute to the career advancement of others. Many people use LinkedIn to market themselves, develop and/or nurture business relationships, increase knowledge in their field, find jobs and much more.

LinkedIn is considered to be the premier business networking site, as evidenced by the following statistics:

- According to a recent survey of over 35,000 human resource recruiters (*Source: CommPRO.biz*):
 - 98% of recruiters use LinkedIn – compared to Twitter (42%) and Facebook (33%)
 - 48% of recruiters use LinkedIn exclusively
 - Recruiters are building their followings – the average recruiter has 616 connections on LinkedIn.
- All 500 of the Fortune 500 companies are represented on LinkedIn. In fact, 499 of them are represented by director-level and above employees (*Source: Guy Kawasaki*).
- LinkedIn members conducted 5.3 billion professionally-oriented searches in 2012 (*Source: Career Thought Leaders*).
- According to the *Society for Human Resource Management*, LinkedIn is the “suit and tie network” and Facebook is gaining interest for the more blue-collar jobs.

So, as a result, if you're serious about your career you need to be on LinkedIn – and if you're on LinkedIn make sure you actively tap into its potential. A number of individuals get started by accepting an invitation to connect with someone on LinkedIn, but then will spend very little time developing a profile, gathering connections and actually using this valuable tool to its fullest advantage. If you're going to have an online presence, make sure it's one that's dynamic, effective and active.

First Step: Create a Comprehensive and Engaging Profile

Your Resume Online? LinkedIn is Much More!

Your LinkedIn profile is your resume online ... but it's also much, much more. You are often advised to make your resume descriptive yet concise. Your LinkedIn profile, on the other hand, provides you with an opportunity to provide more comprehensive and detailed content – content that your resume could never accommodate. Take full advantage of the number of “characters” in each section to fill your profile with information that strategically markets you for your career.

Fill Your Profile with Keywords

Like your resume, your LinkedIn profile should contain the “keywords” often used in the position(s) you’re seeking, as well as in your industry or career field. All sections are an opportunity to insert appropriate keywords. You are more likely to be found when someone (including a recruiter) is conducting a search using these keywords.

Keywords can often be found in a number of places, including but not limited to:

- Relevant Job Postings
- Company Websites
- Professional Association Websites
- Professional/Trade Journals
- Career Profile Sites (such as O*NET OnLine - www.onetonline.org)
- Other LinkedIn Profiles (of professionals in your field)

What words are being used over and over to describe your career and industry? These are your keywords, and they need to be in your LinkedIn profile as many times as you can get them in there (in an appropriate way).

When you have relevant experience, incorporate appropriate keywords naturally into all sections of your LinkedIn profile. When you don't have that experience, find creative (yet honest and legitimate) ways to use the right keywords that will help you be found in a search for your target position, and to position yourself as knowledgeable about your field and/or industry.

Consider these examples from *Career Thought Leaders – Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark*:

EXAMPLE: Headline

Honors Graduate Seeking Professional Opportunity in **Retail Sales** & CRM

EXAMPLE: Summary

Honors Graduate from Loyola University with a BS Degree in **Business Administration**, Minor in **Marketing**, and 4.0 GPA. Completed more than 40 coursework hours in **Sales, Marketing, Retail Operations, Customer Service**, and **Product Management** in preparation for a professional career in **Retail Sales Management**.

Note: The Summary can then continue with more information about extracurricular activities, work experience, volunteerism, leadership – whatever is most relevant to your goal.

Add a Professional Photo

Consider adding an appropriate photo to your profile; it makes your profile more personal and engaging. A headshot is recommended, or upload a larger photo and edit it. When you add a photo, make sure that it is clear, crisp and professional in nature. Avoid personal or casual photos (save those for Facebook). This is a business networking site and should reflect a professional presence.

Strategically Craft Your Headline

Create a professional “headline” that’s eye-catching and markets you best, based on your career status. This is the section that appears directly under your name. You have 120 characters to work with here, so take full advantage of each and every character.

When someone conducts searches and your name comes up in the search, your headline appears with your name. What do you want them to see? You will find some examples below, courtesy of *Career Thought Leaders – Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark*:

Hard Skill Keywords

Technology Sales Professional | 14 Years Selling Enterprise Systems, Telecommunications, Networks, Software, New Media (**118 CHARACTERS**)

Soft Skill Keywords

Graphic Artist whose strengths include details, verbal & written communications, organization, and optimism!
(**108 CHARACTERS**)

Job Titles

Communication Professional | Writer-Editor | Creative Writing Instructor | Reading Specialist (**93 CHARACTERS**)

Job Titles – Positioned for Promotion

COO – ready with strong portfolio of qualifications in multi-site operations management, HR, supply chain, and finance (**117 CHARACTERS**)

College/University

Harvard University Graduate with BS in Mechanical Engineering. Minor in Systems Technology. Top 5% of Class. 3.9 GPA. **(118 CHARACTERS)**

Location

Tokyo-based Marketing Director: 15 years' experience building new markets & new clients in China, Japan, Korea, Thailand **(120 CHARACTERS)**

Branding Statement

Strategic global CEO/COO who turns around operations to deliver improvements in process, cost, quality & productivity **(117 CHARACTERS)**

Key Accomplishment

Top-performing key account/sales professional with a record of ALWAYS exceeding sales, profit, and market- share goals **(117 CHARACTERS)**

Tell A Story/Create A Vision

Family Nurse Practitioner – Contributing to a positive, optimistic, and holistic health care environment **(104 CHARACTERS)**

Claim a Unique LinkedIn URL

Claim a unique LinkedIn URL for your public profile (e.g. www.linkedin.com/in/firstnamelastname/), one that identifies and distinguishes you from others. This also helps others find you when they're conducting searches. In addition, consider putting this URL on your resume so employers can easily access more information about you, including more detailed information that would never fit on your resume.

Add Websites That Help Promote You

Add websites to your profile. Your LinkedIn profile allows you to publicize up to three websites. You can link to your personal website or blog, or another website that may feature some aspect of your work. Click on "Edit Contact Info," right underneath where your number of connections are displayed, to add websites, your Twitter account and relevant contact information.

"Tell Your Story" in Your Summary Section

Develop a summary statement (2,000 characters available) that is dynamic, eye-catching and reflective of your career brand. If you get someone's interest and attention here, they're more likely to read the rest of your profile. Use "I" statements to tell your career story. Look at the summary statements of other people on LinkedIn, those who are serious and active, to get some ideas of how it's done. See the last three pages of this handout for some sample summary statements. There's no one way to do this – make it your way, based on your career brand.

Promote Your Work Accomplishments/Achievements

Don't just list your work experience with company names, titles and dates – and then just stop. Use the description section for each job (2000 characters), to bullet key responsibilities, accomplishments and achievements. Like your resume, the more results-based you make your statements – the better.

Remember, employers predict future success through past performance – so make this section a performance summary. To transform your LinkedIn Profile from a passive job description to an active performance document, consider the following:

Job Description		Performance Summary
I did this _____	and	the outcome was _____
I did this _____	and	it resulted in _____
I did this _____	and	the difference it made was _____
I did this _____	and	the value it brought was _____

Consider the following examples in regard to results-based statements:

Sample Statement – “Setting Yourself Apart” – “Ranked first out of five company interns for the 2012-2013 school year, based on performance indicators in annual performance reviews.”

Sample Statement – “Taking Initiative” – “Helped meet pressing production deadlines within the advertising department; worked over 30 hours in voluntary overtime to meet deadlines.”

Sample Statement – “Promotion” – “Promoted from Financial Analyst to Lead Financial Analyst as a result of a record of outstanding performance and consistent team leadership.”

Sample Statement – “Adding Tangible Value” – “Introduced a more efficient system of conducting monthly inventories, decreasing required time from five hours to two hours per month.”

Sample Statement – “Awards/Honors” – “Chosen as sales associate of the month for achieving the highest percentage of sales over company-established goals.”

Sample Statement – “Pride Moments” – “Played a key role in helping to raise over \$30,000 for cancer research; exceeded the fundraising goal by \$10,000+.”

Sample Statement – “Performance Review Results” – “Exceeded expectations in seven out of eight categories in my initial performance evaluation; met expectations in the eighth category.”

Sample Statement – “Commendations” – “Acknowledged by my internship supervisor for exhibiting a strong work ethic in completing the marketing research project.”

Sample Statement – “Tangible Evidence of Accomplishments” – “Exceeded store sales goals 100% of the time, during my first year of employment, through a sharp focus on quality customer service.”

Sample Statement – “Contributing to Profitability” – “Collaborated with other team members in writing and obtaining a \$10,000 grant to establish a recycling program within the company.”

Sample Statement – “Increasing Efficiency” – “Completed the budget analysis report one week ahead of schedule, saving time and money; commended by the Budget Manager for quality and timely work.”

Sample Statement – “Successful Projects” – “Developed, as part of a team, a new social media marketing plan designed to increase the customer base by 26% over the next two years.”

Sample Statement – “Building Client Relationships” – “Attained the highest rating in customer satisfaction through a company-sponsored customer review and feedback program.”

Sample Statement – “Contributing to the Mission” – “Commended for exceeding customer expectations in all facets of customer service, consistent with the goals and mission of the organization.”

Sample Statement – “Solving a Problem” – “Converted manual records to computerized records, significantly reducing the time needed to complete the annual inventory.”

Sample Statement – “Recognized for Expertise” – “Chosen, based on demonstrated performance, to work directly with the Finance Officer to help analyze company expenses over the past year.”

Use Your LinkedIn Profile as Your Online Portfolio

Request recommendations of your work for your LinkedIn profile. Seek out recommendations from those who know you well (you need to be “connected” to them), and can comment on you in a positive manner. Employers take notice of these when searching for candidates, as they help provide evidence of your skills, abilities, qualities and characteristics. In turn, make sure to “pay it forward” and recommend others on LinkedIn.

Use can also use the “skills and expertise” section to showcase the specific areas where you excel. If employers are searching for someone with those skills (also, a great source of keywords), you are more likely to be found if you have them on your profile. Ask your connections to “endorse” appropriate skills on your profile, and remember to endorse the skills of others (based on your knowledge of their background).

Strive for a Complete Profile

The more complete your LinkedIn profile, the better the chances you will be found and contacted by people you may know (as well as those you don’t know, including recruiters!). When editing your profile, LinkedIn will actually tell you how complete your profile is and will prompt you regarding areas to consider in making your profile more complete.

Off to the right of your photo and headline, you will notice a section that's entitled "Recommended for you." These are categories you should consider adding to your profile, if they're relevant. Or simply click on "Improve Your Profile" (bottom of photo – right) for suggestions.

Some other categories you can potentially add include:

- **Courses Taken** – The names of course can be a strategic way to get those valuable keywords on your resume.
- **Test Scores** – Add test scores to show content knowledge, academic achievement, dedication and a strong work ethic.
- **Certifications** – If you have certifications in your field, add them here. Certifications add to your credentials and boost your qualifications.
- **Projects** – Do you want to show that you can work with others as part of a successful team? Do you want to show that you can manage/complete projects that add value? This is the place to showcase that work.
- **Honors and Awards** – Recognitions, commendations, acknowledgements and selections are "qualitative" accomplishments. If you have honors and award, add them here.
- **Professional Organizations/Affiliations** – Involvement in professional organizations/affiliations show an interest in keeping current in your field, and a desire to advance your career through professional trainings and events.
- **Publications** – If you've been published (articles, books, etc.), note it here.
- **Patents** – If you've been successful for securing a patent for something, note it here.
- **Volunteer Experience and Causes** – Involvement in the community in which you live and work is highly valued by employers. So note your experiences and causes you believe in here.
- **Languages** – We live in a global society where diversity and the ability to speak multiple languages is valued. So if you're fluent, or even conversational, in other languages note it here.

Interests

You have 1,000 characters here, so type away. This is another great place to incorporate keywords, as well as display interests that express your unique personality. Although this is your professional profile, take the opportunity to show your personal side. A recruiter just may find something that sparks their interest in you.

Advice for Contacting

You have 2,000 characters here, double the amount for Interests. Be creative and use this section once again to incorporate keywords. Look at every section as an opportunity to market yourself.

Prioritize Your Categories – Customize Your Profile

Move sections around and arrange your profile like you would information on your resume – from most to least important, and in a way that best markets you. In “edit mode”, LinkedIn provides you with an opportunity to “drag and drop” sections. Look for the “up and down arrow” to the far right of your section heading. Put your cursor over that and drag to rearrange profile sections. It’s that easy!

Proofread, Proofread, Proofread

Like your resume, you should proofread your profile for spelling, grammar, typos, flow and visual appeal. Have others look at it as well; it provides you with the value of fresh eyes.

Second Step: Build, Grow and Nurture Your Network

Connect with Professionals You Know

Connect with people you know, trust and have a professional relationship with. That includes present/former classmates and professors, alumni from the colleges you’ve attended, present/former colleagues/supervisors, and fellow members of professional associations and community organizations. Also consider connecting with professionals you meet through networking events, career fairs, conferences, informational interviews and any other meeting/event that puts you in touch with business professionals.

Grow Your Network

The more connections you have, the better your chances of establishing a connection with someone who can help you with your job search or career advancement. *According to Guy Kawasaki*, a LinkedIn expert, people with more than 20 connections are 34 times more likely to be approached with a job opportunity than people who have less than five connections.

Add a Personal Touch to Your Invitation

Personalize your invitations to connect. When requesting connections, customize the standard message provided to something more friendly and personal. People will take notice and appreciate your personal touch. Who knows, it may influence whether someone decides to connect with you or not.

Nurture Your Network

Nurture your network by being in touch with your connections to say hello, pass along an update, offer congratulations on a promotion or new job, or to just “check in” with them. You don’t want your first contact with them to be when you need something.

Third Step: Tap Into the Power of LinkedIn

Post an Update

Keep all of your connections in touch, on a regular basis, with what you're doing on a professional level. Your updates are automatically transmitted to all of your connections. This will keep you in their "line of sight" and increase your visibility and marketability.

Join Relevant Groups and/or Create Your Own

Find groups that relate to your career field and areas of professional interest. Join those groups and be part of discussions among members. You can start a conversation, participate in a conversation, ask a question and answer a question. Once again, this keeps you in the "line of sight" of people who share similar professional interests. Many of these groups also have their own job boards.

In addition, you can start, create and manage a group. This will increase your visibility and it shows leadership in your field.

Search Away

- **Search for jobs.** You can search for jobs on LinkedIn by keyword, country and postal code. Use the advanced search option to refine your search by location, miles from a location, experience level, company, job title, job function, industry and date posted. The jobs you search are from employers who post on LinkedIn, as well as from SimplyHired.com (a meta job search engine).
- **Search for companies.** Do you have a list of target companies you're interested in knowing more about, or perhaps would even want to work for? Use LinkedIn to find out more about who you're connected to at the company, new hires, promotions, jobs posted, related companies and company statistics.
- **Search for key company decision-makers.** Once you have found a job you might be interested in, search for the key decision-makers from this company that may influence hiring decisions. Contact, converse and interact with them about what you have learned about their company from research you've conducted. This is a good way to gain a positive image and familiarity prior to actually applying for the position.
- **Search for information about the recruiter and/or hiring supervisor.** Companies will typically check your references before hiring you (perhaps even on LinkedIn). With LinkedIn you can check your interviewer's references. This is another level of research that adds insight to the job search and interview process.

Ask For and Provide Introductions

The beauty of LinkedIn is that when you search for people, companies and jobs you will see who you are connected to. You can then ask for introductions as a way of "opening a door" to a new opportunity. Once again, just like with recommendations, pay it forward – be willing to provide introductions for others.

Other Key Tips

Set Your Privacy Settings

Like any other social media site, LinkedIn has privacy settings. It's extremely important to set your settings to your personal preferences before actively using LinkedIn. You need to be sure your transmitting and getting information in the way that you intend.

In the upper right hand corner of your profile, you'll find a "mini" photo of yourself (the one that's on your profile). Put your cursor over that photo to produce a "drop-down box." Then scroll down and click on privacy settings. Examine each setting and determine what's best for you.

Use the Help Center

If you need more information about any features, or how to do something specific on LinkedIn, use the "Help Center." In the Help Center you simply pose your question and LinkedIn will provide the answers.

Once again, in the upper right hand corner of your profile, you'll find a "mini" photo of yourself (the one that's on your profile). Put your cursor over that photo to produce a "drop-down box." Then scroll down and click on the Help Center.

LinkedIn Resources

Learn much more about LinkedIn through the following resources:

- The New Networking: Ultimate LinkedIn Guide for 2012 Grads
www.onlinecolleges.net/2012/05/07/the-new-networking-ultimate-linkedin-guide-for-2012-grads/
- 100 Smart Ways to Use LinkedIn – LinkedIn Intelligence
www.linkedinintelligence.com/smart-ways-to-use-linkedin/
- 20 Ways to Use LinkedIn Productively - WebWorkerDaily
<http://webworkerdaily.com/2007/06/15/20-ways-to-use-linkedin-productively/>

Final Thoughts

In closing, although changing technology allows us to connect with more people faster than ever before, face-to-face networking is still the best way to build, grow and deepen professional relationships that will help you advance your career. Use LinkedIn actively, but not in lieu of the always valued "personal touch."

Ed Hallenbeck's Summary Statement (www.linkedin.com/in/edhallenbeck/)

WHO I AM

I'm an experienced consultant with expertise in onsite and distance career consulting and coaching, human resources, and workforce development. I have an M.A. in Community Psychology, and hold certifications as a Master Career Development Professional, Job/Career Development Coach, and Job/Career Transition Coach.

WHAT I DO

I provide a full complement of customized career services, including but not limited to:

- Self-Assessment, Career Exploration and Career Decision-Making
- Career Branding - Resume Writing, Cover Letter Development, and more
- Job Search Strategies
- Interview Preparation and Techniques
- Salary Research and Negotiations
- Career Management – Surviving and Thriving in the Workplace
- Career Transition and Redesign

WHY I DO IT

I have a sincere and genuine passion for helping others. If I look back at my career in the "rear-view mirror," I notice a thread that has run through everything I've done - from Teacher, to Employment Counselor, to United Way Executive Director, to Human Resource Manager, to Career Services Professional. That thread has been "helping others." It has been and continues to be my personal and professional mission. Allow me the honor to help you in your career development and advancement.

WHO I SERVE

My clients have included K-12 school districts, colleges and universities, government agencies, non-profit organizations, global career management firms, and individuals of all ages seeking career assistance. I presently provide career consulting to:

- Clarkson University Career Services
- University at Albany School of Business Career Services
- University at Albany School of Public Health Career Services
- Excelsior College Alumni Career Services
- OI Partners – Worldwide Career Management Firm
- Private Clients at Any Stage of Career Development

Jason Alba's Summary Statement (www.linkedin.com/in/jasonalba)

Want to get more out of LinkedIn? Check out my videos: www.jibberjobber.com/videos.php

Get updates: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=59081> (my Career Management LinkedIn Group)

Friday the 13th (January, 2006) was the last day of my job, after getting laid off. I had every intention of landing my next great job, but that didn't happen. I had a miserable, failed job search.

Little did I know a very bright future was around the corner. Since those depressing days I've accomplished a few things, and helped many people in their own job search.

My first accomplishment was to come up with the idea for JibberJobber.com, a website that helps you organize and manage a job search. It is a great complement to LinkedIn, other social tools, and face-to-face networking. Since JibberJobber launched we've been recognized by many as an outstanding resource for job seekers. Many of our clients continue to use JibberJobber after they land their job, or when they start a business.

My next major accomplishment was writing one of the first books on LinkedIn. I'm on LinkedIn – Now What??? is my publisher's best-selling title. This book launched my speaking career and has been called "The bible" on LinkedIn. Some career coaches have made my book required reading for their clients. This is the first in a series of books, both by me and by other authors.

Speaking was my next major accomplishment. I didn't plan on doing public or professional speaking, it just kind of happened. I didn't realize how being an author would lead to this. I've spoken across the U.S., from Seattle to Orlando, from Boston to San Diego. I was delighted to present for an entire day in Istanbul, Turkey. I've spoken at law firms, major company marketing departments, universities, and at many conferences. I've also done hundreds of hours of webinars.

If you are interested in career management, please join my LinkedIn Group (link at the top of this Summary).

Specialties: LinkedIn, social networking. Speaking and presentations. Communicating value proposition for professionals and companies. Job search and career expertise, from the job seeker's perspective. Coaching people on career management. Writing books.

Louise Kursmark's Summary Statement (www.linkedin.com/in/louisekursmark)

I wear a lot of "hats" in the resume/careers field, having honed my expertise during a long career as a resume writer, career consultant, speaker, author and trainer.

- ▶ **EXECUTIVE RESUME WRITING** – My expertise and my passion! I work with executive clients worldwide, creating highly strategic career-marketing documents that communicate credibility, expertise and value.
- ▶ **WORLD-CLASS RESUME TRAINING** – As founder and director of Resume Writing Academy, I have guided dozens of professionals through a rigorous training and testing program to sharpen their strategic thinking and writing skills. Our students truly EARN the prestigious ACRW designation!
- ▶ **SPEAKING AND WRITING** – I have written more than 20 books on resumes and career management and frequently deliver in-person and webcast presentations to industry professionals and job seekers. My strength is breaking down a complex subject into easily digestible "bites" that are immediately applicable to diverse audiences.
- ▶ **CAREER SERVICES MANAGEMENT** – One of my current roles is Director of BlueSteps Executive Career Services. We bring a wide array of exceptional career services to the thousands of global executives who are members of BlueSteps.
- ▶ **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** – As a Co-Director of the Career Thought Leaders Consortium, I am proud to team with colleagues to share "the now, the new and the next" - best practices, trends and resources in the ever-evolving field of career management.

What's next? Social media profiles taking the place of resumes? Virtual interviewing? Online networking sites becoming the mainstream recruiting tool? We are trending in these directions, but only time will tell. What hasn't changed: the need for all professionals to "tell their story" in a way that is compelling, meaningful, and relevant - no matter the medium. As a resume/career expert, that's exactly what I help them do.

Get in touch if I can help you!

781-944-2471

LK(at)yourbestimpression.com

Google me: <http://vizibility.com/louise>

Specialties: Resume writing, career coaching, outplacement services, career workshops, conference presentations, book authorship. Training aspiring resume writers.