

BUILD A GREAT LINKEDIN PROFILE AND BUILD YOUR PROFESSIONAL BRAND

10 tips to building a strong profile

1 **DON'T** cut & paste your CV

LinkedIn hooks you into a network, not just a human resources department. You wouldn't hand out your CV before introducing yourself, so don't do it here. Instead, describe your experience and abilities as you would to someone you just met. And write for the screen, in short blocks of copy with visual or textual signposts.

2 **Borrow** from the best marketers

Light up your profile with your voice. Use specific adjectives, colorful verbs, and active construction - for example - "managed project team" NOT "responsible for project team management". Act naturally: don't write in the third person unless it formality suits your brand. Picture yourself at a conference or client meeting. How do you introduce yourself? That's your authentic voice, so use it.

3 **Write a personal** tagline

That line of text under your name? It's the first thing people see in your profile. It follows your name in search hit lists. It's your brand. (Note: your e-mail address is not a brand!) Your company's brand might be so strong that it and your title are sufficient. Or you might need to distill your professional personality into a more eye-catching phrase, something that at a glance describes who you are.

4 **Put the elevator** pitch to work

Go back to your conference introduction. That 30-second description, the essence of who you are and what you do, is a personal elevator pitch. Use it in the Summary section to engage readers. You've got 5-10 seconds to capture their attention. The more meaningful your summary is, the more time you'll get from readers.

5 **Explain your** experience

Help the reader grasp the key points: briefly say what the company does and what you did or do for them. Picture yourself at that conference, again. After you've introduced yourself, how do you describe what you do, what your company does? Use those clear, succinct phrases here—and break them into visually digestible chunks.

6 **Point out your SKILLS** and get endorsed for them

Think of the skills field as your personal search engine optimiser, a way to refine the ways people find and remember you. The optimal number is unique to each person. Include a mix of high level and niche skills and be specific. Get Endorsements -Add skills that your connections can endorse you for and recognise those you've worked with on their professional skills. There are over 3 billion endorsements given to date on LinkedIn.

7 **Ask and answer** questions

Thoughtful questions and useful answers build your credibility. The best ones give people a reason to look at your profile. Make a point of answering questions in your field, to establish your expertise, raise your visibility, and most important, to build social capital with people in your network—you may need answers to a question of your own down the road.

8 **Distinguish yourself** from the crowd

Use the Additional Information section to round out your profile with a few key interests. Add websites that showcase your abilities or passions. Then edit the default "My Website" label to encourage click-throughs - you get Google page rankings for those which raises your visibility. Maybe you belong to a trade association or an interest group; help other members find you by naming those groups. If you're an award winner, recognised by peers, customers, or employers, add prestige without bragging by listing them here.

9 Improve your Google Page Rank

Pat your own back and others'. Get recommendations from colleagues, clients, and employers who can speak credibly about your abilities or performance - think quality, not quantity. Ask them to focus on a specific skill or personality trait that drives their opinion of you. Make meaningful comments when you recommend others. And mix it up-variety makes your recommendations feel authentic.

10 BUILD your connections

Connections are one of the most important aspects of your brand: the company you keep reflects the quality of your brand. What happens when you scan a profile and see that you know someone in common? That profile's stock with you soars. The value of that commonality works both ways. So identify connections that will add to your credibility and pursue those.

NOTE: As you add connections and recommendations, your profile develops into a peer-reviewed picture of you, of your personal brand. Make sure it's in focus, well composed—and easy to find. Remember that permalink? Edit your public profile's URL to reflect your name or tagline, then put it to work: add it to your blog, link to it from your website, include it in your e-mail signature. Then go start a conversation.

BUILD YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Your profile is the first thing a member sees when they click to see who sent them an InMail or who posted a job, so it should be engaging and tell them more about you and your company. When people see your profile, you want them to think, "yes, tell me more."

Use a picture that represents you, professionally.

Customise your URL for your business cards and email signature

Make your profile more engaging with rich media.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Jane Jones. The profile includes a profile picture, a name, a headline, a current and previous company, a connection count, a URL, a background banner, a summary section, and two rich media posts. Annotations with blue lines point to various parts of the profile:

- A line from the text "Use a picture that represents you, professionally." points to the profile picture.
- A line from "Customise your URL for your business cards and email signature" points to the URL "uk.linkedin.com/in/janejones".
- A line from "Use your real name" points to the name "Jane Jones".
- A line from "Creatively explain what you do." points to the headline "Innovating and creating at Acme London, United Kingdom | Internet".
- A line from "Add up to 3 websites." points to the "Contact Info" button.
- A line from "Describe who you are and the company you represent." points to the "SUMMARY" section.
- A line from "Make your profile more engaging with rich media." points to the rich media post "Why is Acme so cool?".

Use your real name

Creatively explain what you do.

Add up to 3 websites.

Describe who you are and the company you represent.

Experience

LinkedIn is not a job board, so your profile doesn't have to read like a CV. Use the Experience section to tell your story. Write 2-3 concise sentences on your major wins or projects for each position, and how you brought value to your team.