

LinkedIn for Managers and Job Seekers

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by: *Professor Robert Nadeau* -

There are many moving parts in social media; it can be challenging to keep up with it. My advice is to pick one thing, LinkedIn, and develop a good skill set with it. I've researched 2,000 profiles; the good news is it doesn't require a lot of heavy lifting to develop a profile that will serve you well. This article is in three parts. The first is a set of tips for your profile, and growing your network. The second is geared for job seekers, and the third for a managers' perspective.

Let's start with the premise that the networking game has changed. People are heavily influenced by social media, and care more about what others say about you, then what you say.

Approximately 75% of consumers are influenced by social media. Also realize that LinkedIn is so much more than social media, it is a dynamic **data-base**. Take advantage of that, and make it easier for opportunities to find you by having a fully developed profile to reflect the professional that you are.

Before making multiple changes to your profile, you might consider turning off the "*activity broadcasts*" located in your "*privacy and settings tab*" to avoid a flood of emails going to your contacts. Also you should use a word doc then copy-n-paste into your profile, LinkedIn doesn't have spell check.

Part I: 10 Profile Tips and Growing your Network

Profile

1. **Photo:** Have a great professional looking photo with a genuine smile. Networking is a relationship business.
2. **Headline:** located just below your name, it is 120 characters of premium space. Show how you add value. Imagine it's a billboard and people are viewing it for a brief moment...what will compel them to open your profile?

3. **Customize** your public profile URL for a cleaner look with just your name, and remove all those additional characters/numbers, etc. It also makes for a more professional look on your business card and part of your Email signature.
4. **Summary:** Be brief. Develop your brand, tell us who you are and how you add value. Choose your words wisely. Pick words that weave into your headline above, and work experience below, it may enhance your SEO.
5. **Experience:** List your work history. You might not put every single position you ever held, but do list your employers. Former colleagues will search for you where they remember working with you last. You should list just a few sentences of what you've done, keep it brief, this isn't a complete resume.
6. **Recommendations:** Get at least 1 or 2 recommendations from every position you worked. Let people see wherever you go to work; people have great things to write about you. For some of your former jobs, you may have to reach out to a prior manager or colleague.
7. **Endorsements:** List 5 to 7 skills that you have demonstrated expertise.
8. **Interests:** While LinkedIn is the buttoned-up version of Facebook, here is where you'd list things that make you interesting, and human. For example in my profile, I have woodworking and classical pianist. Give people a reason to find something that resonates.
9. **Honors, awards, and organizations:** These are great areas to demonstrate achievements, and other things you may have done like volunteer work in the community.
10. **Groups:** There are approximately 1.3MM groups. Find groups that represent the areas that you and your customers are most interested in. You can develop insights, expertise and contacts.

Grow your Network

Once your profile reflects the true professional that you are, start adding connections.

1. The fastest way to start is having LinkedIn synchronize your email accounts looking for contacts that have LinkedIn profiles. Just hover your mouse over "*Network*" and select "*Add Connections*" in the drop down menu. You have the option to select the email providers where you have accounts and you'll recognize dozens of LinkedIn members as potential 1st connections.
 - I would recommend that you deselect the "Select all" box. Carefully pick each person you connect with because they are a reflection of your brand.
 - When you select a contact, be sure to use a customized message in lieu of the generic default invitation message. Add context to your message, networking is a relationship business.
2. Another effective process, connect with alumni. Hover your mouse over "*Network*" and select "*Find Alumni*". You should have thousands of alumni with LinkedIn profiles. You can easily sort by where they: live, work, and do (by industry).
3. Making the first connection. You can either use a warm introduction as a first step or you can go direct, but be sure to customize your message.

4. Use the advanced search option and type in keywords to connect you to managers in the firms and industries where you have an interest. Type in the job title or the company, then type in your university name, and then type in your club/team/fraternity/sorority and look at the results. Ask those potential contacts to connect with you to set up an interview or informational interview. Also, before you go on an interview, used the LinkedIn profile of the managers you will talk to prepare some questions.

Part II Job Seekers

Get started now! Let the amateurs send their resumes to companies on-line with all the other applicants and “hope” their resume gets noticed.

1. Differentiate yourself and use your 1st connections to make introductions to the right people in the company and career you’re interested in. If you don’t have a 1st connection, leverage the 2nd connections in your network to make a warm introduction to help get you to the next step.
2. Use the “*Advanced Search*” feature to find people in companies you might connect to. Some of the advanced search fields are:
 - *School*: find an alum
 - *Company*: see who in your network works at, or may have connections at that company
 - *Title*: find the name of the potential hiring manager and see how you might be connected. If the position was a Sales Rep in greater Boston, do a search for sales manager in that location with company name. Most jobs don’t list the names of hiring managers. Show your initiative and skills to narrow down the field, make contact.
3. Prepare, prepare, prepare: Use LinkedIn to learn more about your interviewers, others in the company, and also the company’s LinkedIn page as well.
4. Use the “*Project*” section of LinkedIn to enhance your profile. Highlight projects you worked on in college, add video clips of you making a presentation in class, add links to your E-portfolio, and Blogs to demonstrate your critical thinking, communication and writing skills.
5. Earlier I mentioned joining groups where you can make contacts. These contacts may well develop into 1st connections that could provide opportunities to your ideal job and even mentor you.

Part III Managers

I understand we are from a different generation, and you might think you can let social media pass, but that is a mistake. Your new wave of hires and customers are digital natives. When they go check you out on-line what will they see? A dinosaur with a poorly set up LinkedIn profile, or an up-to-date leader with a well-developed profile that validates the true professional you are.

1. In your profile be certain to showcase the awards you’ve earned, demonstrate a proven success path.

- Ask colleagues at each place you've worked for a recommendation. Potential applicants and clients will formulate positive assumptions.
2. Put emphasis on how you've mentored and developed people in your career, won awards, and/or moved up the ranks with promotions.
 - Reflect on your career, and create a list of people that you've mentored and developed. Ask them for a recommendation about the things you did to help them.
 - This will resonate well with applicants.
 3. Look at your profile through the eyes of these young applicants, what might influence their perspective? Read a couple of recent business books like "The Challenger Sale" and "To Sell is Human" and list them in your interests, or books in your profile.
 4. Find quality employees by using the "*advanced search*" function. For example, you can look for sales students by entering the names of schools with recognized sales programs (reference the list of top schools on page X). Put words like sales, or sales program in keywords. View their profiles; pick out the students who have demonstrated work ethic and successes. Hire for attitude, you can train for more specific skills.
 - Look for students who've belonged to organizations on campus, and held leadership roles.
 - A resume will highlight work history like LinkedIn. But their profile will show numbers of 1st connections. Check how well developed their profile is, did they follow the 10 tips above?
 - Test them. Once you've viewed their profile, will they follow-up on their end to see who has viewed their profile, and will they reach out and connect by expressing an interest in your organization?
 - Before you connect with them, reach out to the "connections you have in common" to ask about this potential candidate? Are they solid with a good reputation or just fluff and good at packaging themselves?

Closing

You should spend about 5 to 10 minutes a day cultivating your network. Pay attention to the details. When you get a notice someone has changed jobs, reach out to them, reconnect. Realize that there are 2 additional future 1st connections just below the surface by asking them who they replaced, and who replaced them. You're developing a network that will last a lifetime. LinkedIn is also a lead generation tool, but that's for another article.

Water boils at 212 degrees; at 211 it's just hot. Add one more degree and you have steam that moves a locomotive. Ask yourself how many opportunities are you 1 degree from getting?