



# LinkedIn Guide

Create Your Career Path

[www.createyourcareerpath.com](http://www.createyourcareerpath.com)

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# Basic Information and Tips

## What is LinkedIn?

- LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with over 1 billion members in over 200 countries and territories worldwide. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.

## Helpful Tips

- Make sure your profile is 100% complete.
- Work towards a minimum of 500 connections. However, focus on quality connections over quantity. While 500+ shows you're active, a strong, engaged network of relevant professionals is far more valuable. Connect thoughtfully and stay active through genuine interactions.
- Update your information frequently. Your profile should always be current. Your contacts are notified when you've made updates and recruiters are searching LinkedIn every day.
- When finished, look back at your completed profile and ask yourself, "Would I hire me?"
- Build your network by engaging in your feed. Comment on posts, share insights, and follow hashtags or company pages in your field. Aim for commenting on 3-5 posts per week. You can also join relevant groups, but recruiters notice professionals who participate in meaningful conversations, not just those who join groups.
- Check your LinkedIn messages often and choose the option (under Settings & Privacy) to receive email notifications of invitations to connect. You need to respond to messages in a timely manner.

- Use it! LinkedIn is not meant to be a static job search platform. Its primary function/reward is research and network development. Remember, 80% of jobs are obtained through networking. This is your source for informational interviews and alerting contacts to your next career move.
- If you feel comfortable doing so, post a brief notice on your profile (and group feeds) that lets your network know you're looking for a new job. This is one of the best ways to garner attention from connections who might know someone who can help with your search.
- LinkedIn etiquette: If you want to contact a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> level connection, first ask the shared 1<sup>st</sup> level connection if you may reach out to their contact. You may also want to ask for specific contact information and/or an introduction. When inviting someone to connect, customize your message! Don't just use the default.

## **Profile Updates / Best Practices**

### **Your Picture**

- Include one! It's one of the first things people notice. Choose an image that's professional, friendly, and consistent with your personal brand. Aim for a clear head-and-shoulders shot, facing the camera with good lighting and a neutral or softly blurred background. If you don't have one, ask a friend to take the photo using natural light (outdoors or near a window) and "Portrait" mode for a polished look. Dress as you would for a client meeting or interview in your industry; approachable and confident. Your photo doesn't need to be overly formal; it should reflect how you want to be perceived professionally — credible, genuine, and current. Connect with us on LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com/company/createyourcareerpath/](http://www.linkedin.com/company/createyourcareerpath/)) to view our photos.

### **Your Background Photo / Banner**

- While your profile picture should be professional, your banner is a way to show your brand and personality. You can use the standard LinkedIn banner

to start. Ideas to personalize your banner could be a photo that represents your field, a personal photo of your favorite nature scene, a picture of your workspace, or a favorite quote. You can search online for free stock images or LinkedIn banners on sites such as Pexels.com, Pixabay.com, or Unsplash.com. Free, appropriately sized templates are also available on Canva.com and Adobe.com.

- Sample Profiles:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/corriemichals/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/richardjacruz/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bree-knick-uva>

## Your Headline

- This is your brand and should not be your current job title unless you are seeking that type of position.
- Use all 220 characters in this section because this is where recruiters and hiring managers will look for keywords regarding your strengths. SEO (search engine optimization) your profile, inserting the highest priority keywords not only in your title but also in your About section.
- **What it should include:**
  - You can expand that section by combining **keywords that reflect your skills, industry, and goals** with a concise statement about what you do and the value you bring.
  - Who you are / your function.
  - What you do / value you provide.
  - Keywords / skills / specialty.

## Your Location

- This should be where you are currently or where you desire to work, not corporate headquarters.
- Make your geographic location your broader area so potential employers are

not concerned about your ability to commute there. In other words, if you live in a suburb of New York City, write “Greater New York City.”

## **Public Profile**

- Customize this URL.
  - Click on “Edit public profile & URL” (upper right corner of your profile).
  - First box in the right-side column – click on the pencil icon to edit.
  - Delete the random numbers and type in your name. You may need to add a middle initial if you have a common name (and someone else is already using it as their URL). Click “Save.”
- Include your customized link in the header of your resume and cover letter.

## **General Customization – Visibility and Communication**

- From the menu bar at the top of your home page, click on “Me” and choose “Settings and Privacy.”
  - Choose “Visibility.”
  - Make sure all content you want shown is noted.
  - You may also want to skim through the “Communication” section to determine which notifications you want to receive.

## **About Section**

- Work with your coach to customize your About section. Keep it short and brand yourself effectively. Avoid repeating the professional summary from your resume word-for-word. Consider utilizing an artificial intelligence (AI) program, such as ChatGPT, Resume Worded, or LinkedIn's built-in program to help you write your About section. Always remember to write in your own voice!
- Make the first few lines of your About section count—they're what people and the algorithm see first. Use clear industry-keywords early, and ensure you list 5-10 of your most relevant skills (with endorsements if possible) so your profile matches the kinds of searches recruiters and hiring managers

use.

- Your writing choice should mirror your field. For example, if you are in a human service profession (like coaching), we recommend a narrative summary. If you are in a more analytical or numbers-based field such as accounting, you may favor a more objective, third-person description first, then add a narrative sentence at the end.
- Additional options include your branding statement or career mission statement. Whichever style you choose, you want to demonstrate your authentic voice.
- Don't forget to leverage the top skills option. Listing your Top Skills helps recruiters and hiring managers quickly see your areas of expertise and boosts your profile's discoverability in searches.
- Sample Profiles:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/mike-milewski/>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bree-knick-uva/>  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/melissamcclain/>

## Featured

- Showcase your most important content or achievements visually in this section like posts, articles, links, documents, or media. It's the perfect place for materials you want recruiters or potential clients to see first. For example:
  - Create a one sheet that outlines your leadership style and philosophy.
  - Include a presentation that demonstrates your knowledge of the new industry you want to break into.
  - Add a short video introduction of yourself.
- You can add or reorder items anytime by clicking the pencil icon in this section.

## Experience

- This section defaults to chronological order based on the most recent start

date and cannot be changed. However, in an effort to deter ageism, you'll notice that LinkedIn pushes older work experience (beyond 15 years) to a secondary page. While some recruiters do take the time to go through all of your previous work experience, many won't click on the "See all # experiences" link at the bottom of the Experience section.

- Do not simply copy and paste from your resume. LinkedIn is a much more dynamic platform in which you do not need to abide by traditionally confining resume writing rules (for example, 1-2 pages max). You may describe your experience first in narrative and then list skills or highlight tasks and select accomplishments. You should choose a professional format but be generous and creative with selling your value and demonstrating transferable skills.
- Where resume rules still apply:
  - Limit past experience to 10-15 years unless highly relevant.
  - Be consistent—use active voice and present/past tense action verbs.
- You can include testimonials from your work. We suggest sprinkling recommendation phrases in your experience section to make sure they are highly visible. Put quotes around them and "..." if they are excerpts.
- Showcase your work by adding artifacts such as articles, blog posts, graphics, reports, data visualizations, or presentation decks.
- If you have a gap in your work history, LinkedIn now lets you add a "Career Break" section to your profile. You can explain the reason for your break, selecting from options such as caregiving, professional development, full-time parenting, career transition, personal projects, entrepreneurship, travel, layoff, or bereavement. This helps provide context, show how you used your time productively, and highlight transferable skills gained during your break.

## **Education**

- Including dates is optional. If you received your degree 20 or more years ago, consider that posting dates indicating when your degrees were received

could lead to ageism.

- LinkedIn primarily uses this information to suggest former classmate connections. If you don't want to be hounded by people you attended grade school with, only include higher education.

## **Recommendations**

- As you examine and build your connections, seek recommendations. They can be brief testimonials from supervisors, colleagues, subordinates, clients, volunteer members—anyone who can say what it is like to work with you.
- Give recommendations as well. Show that you give back.

## **Skills Section**

- Include specific, industry-aligned skills rather than generic ones to improve search matching.
- Request endorsements for your skills. They do matter! Recruiters search for candidates using specific keywords which often appear in the Skills section. Endorsements add further evidence that you are highly skilled in certain areas.
- Reorder your top two skills to be the skills you want people to see first. When in Edit mode, click on the three dots in the top right corner of your Skills section and choose "Reorder."
- LinkedIn now allows you to add up to 100 skills to this section. This allows for a more comprehensive view of your abilities. Skill keywords are frequently used by recruiters and hiring managers to narrow their searches for highly qualified candidates. We recommend a minimum of 40 skills to increase the likelihood that the right employer will find you! Not sure you have 40 skills to list in this section? A good strategy is to go through your resume line by line, reviewing past work experience, volunteer experience, and education. You're likely to find a wealth of hard and soft skills, as well as technical skills, that

you can add to your LinkedIn profile.

### **Additional Information / Volunteer Work / Etc.**

- You can include as much as is relevant here. It should be professional; include only items that would be appropriate to discuss in an interview.
- This could be a good place to detail your credentials or ongoing education/professional development.

## **Using LinkedIn as a Job Search Tool**

### **Branding Yourself**

- Your profile headline can contain an aspirational title, not necessarily the one you currently have now. For example, if you are a Director but are searching for a Senior Director position, state that in your headline. And, if you want to relocate, list your target location, but be sure to list your current title and location under the experience section.
  - **Remember**—LinkedIn recruiters use keywords just like your resume. Be strategic and put in keywords for titles you are targeting as well. Look at other people's profiles whose careers you like and paths you want to follow. See how they are branding themselves for inspiration.

### **Job Collections**

- Use this tool to discover curated groups of job listings tailored to themes like industry, company culture, remote work, or skill requirements.
  - Click on Jobs on the navigation bar on the top.
  - Look for the "Explore jobs with collections" or "Job Collections" section near the top of the Jobs page.
  - Click on a collection that matches your interests or target roles.
  - Use filters like location, experience level, company, or date posted to refine the results.

## Job Alerts

- Set up job alerts to be emailed directly to you.
  - Click on Jobs on the navigation bar on the top.
  - Click My Jobs on the top left—if you have saved any jobs, they will be shown on this page.
  - Click Job Alerts to view and edit your current job alerts.
  - Click Search Jobs.
  - To set a new job alert, click on the search bar at the top of the screen (be sure to do this when you're in the Jobs tab) and enter a job title and location. A list of posted jobs will appear on the left side of the page, along with a toggle to turn "Alert on" or off in the upper right-hand corner.

## Getting Attention from Recruiters

- Let recruiters know that you are looking.
  - Go to your Profile ("Me" dropdown on the menu bar at the top of the page).
  - Click on View Profile.
  - Click the "Open to" button and click on "Finding a new job" to select your preferences.
  - Many business pages on LinkedIn now include an option to let recruiters know you're interested in their company. Visit a company's business page and click on the About tab. Then scroll down to the "Interested in working with us in the future? section and click "I'm interested."
  - If you have targeted a company, be sure to follow the company page. You may also want to message company recruiters to express your interest.
  - Update skills, add activity, or comment weekly — these actions keep you higher in recruiter search results. The more visible you can be, the easier it is for them to find you.

## Finding Hiring Managers

- Search for hiring managers by typing “I’m hiring” in the search box, then click on People for names and profiles.
  - Use additional filters to narrow your search, such as connection level (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>), location, and current company.
  - If your skills and criteria match the ones listed in a job posting, use the Message Job Poster feature (if available) to directly connect with the job poster.
  
- You can narrow your search for hiring managers/recruiters with specific companies who are posting job announcements by following these instructions:
  - Search for: “your target job title” and hiring.
  - Filter for “Posts” (vs. Jobs or People, etc.) – box on the left side of the screen and “Date posted” in the last 24 hours.
  - Go to All Filters and at the top, click on the dropdown next to “Filter only.” Select “Posts.”
  - Scroll down to Author Company and add your target companies; click Show Results.

**NOTE:** Your best chance of reaching a hiring manager is through a direct and personalized message. If the job posting lists a recruiter or hiring manager, use the Message Job Poster option or, if you have LinkedIn Premium, send an InMail introducing yourself and expressing interest in the role. Send them a side-by-side list of the job requirements and your relevant qualifications to help you get that first interview (and even to secure a second interview).

- The Who's Viewed Your Profile feature (available with LinkedIn Premium subscription) is a valuable tool for facilitating a connection. Use the search function to identify contacts in companies of interest.
  - Go to the search bar and type in a company name. View that company’s page.
  - Click on People and then enter a keyword (such as “recruiter”) in the search bar.
  - View the contacts of interest to you and your search.
  - If that contact views your profile after you have viewed theirs, ask to connect.

- Be proactive at reaching out but use common sense and be professional with your request.

## Learn About the Company

- The most common interview mistake is not knowing about the company! Use LinkedIn as a resource to learn about the company before scheduling an interview.
  - Check out the interviewer's profile and the company page. Look for commonalities with the interviewer based on preferences, follows, posts, etc.
  - Look for content creators working for your dream companies:
    - Do a general search on LinkedIn for job-related terms such as project manager or career coaching.
    - Filter for "Posts."
    - Go to All Filters and then add target companies to the Author Company section. Show Results.

## Leveraging Your LinkedIn Network

- For a list of people on LinkedIn who went from your current industry to your target industry (for career changers), follow these steps:
  - Click on the Jobs tab at the top of any LinkedIn page and search for your target job title.
  - On the filter bar, click on the green button that says "Jobs." Select "People."
  - Under All Filters, add 10 (or more) target companies or organizations that you're interested in to the "Current Companies" section.
  - Under All Filters, add 10 (or more) companies *in your current industry* to the "Past Companies" section. Click on Show Results.
- To access a comprehensive list of people on LinkedIn (including second level connections) who you might want to conduct informational interviews with, follow these steps:
  - Click on the My Network tab at the top of any LinkedIn page and then open the drop down for Manage My Network (left side of the page).

- Click on "Connections" and then "Search with filters."
  - On the filter bar, click on "Second" and make sure both the "First" and "Second" buttons are now green. Your results should increase dramatically. Example: from 733 results (1st level connections only) to About 606,000 results (1st and 2nd level connections combined).
  - Click on the All Filters button and add any filters you'd like to narrow your results, such as "Current Company," "Past Company," "Industry," or "Title." Review your results and consider reaching out directly to 1st level connections. For 2nd level connections you'd like to speak with, look for a mutual connection you can ask to introduce you first.
  - For more information on how informational interviews can help you make career decisions, download our PDF: [5 Ways to Conduct Successful Informational Interviews](#).
- 75% of workers who voluntarily left their job did so because of their boss or manager. To get a balanced evaluation of the company culture, leadership or management style, speak to a former employee of the company. To search for former employees on LinkedIn:
    - Click on My Network and Connections.
    - Choose "Search with Filters" and "All filters."
    - Enter the name of the company of interest in the "Past company" box.
    - Use additional filters to narrow your search as needed.
- DO NOT LIMIT YOUR NETWORK. The broader your network, the more opportunities you will have. To expand your network:
    - Go to My Network at the top of the homepage.
    - Click Contacts under Manage My Contacts.
    - Click +Add more contacts on the right side of the page.
    - When you import address books, you only get the contact information for people with whom you've had an active exchange (i.e., an email between you and the individual).

**NOTE:** When you are networking on LinkedIn, check the activity feed. If someone has a lot of recent activity in their activity feed, that means they are more likely to respond to you. Someone who has an empty or old activity feed is less likely to be on LinkedIn frequently. Connect with people who are actively on LinkedIn

as much as possible.

- Subscribe to the LinkedIn blog (<https://blog.linkedin.com>) for the latest updates and helpful job-related articles.
- Create meaningful, engaging, and useful content to post in your Activity section. Post accomplishments, awards, pose questions, and provide advice. Aim for posting content once a week.

### **LinkedIn's Collaborative Articles**

- They are AI-assisted posts that invite professionals to share short insights on trending industry topics. When you add your perspective, your contribution appears on both the article and your profile, helping you gain visibility and demonstrate expertise.
  - Look for the "Add your perspective" button on relevant articles and share practical, thoughtful input — it's an easy, authentic way to grow your reputation and attract recruiter attention.

### **LinkedIn Newsletters or LinkedIn Live**

- If relevant to your industry, (e.g., marketing, product management, operations) use this to showcase your expertise. (**NOTE:** you may not know your industry yet and that is okay!) Newsletters let you share regular insights and thought leadership with your network, while LinkedIn Live helps you engage your audience in real time with Q&As, updates, or discussions. Both tools boost visibility, highlight your knowledge, and help you build a stronger professional presence.

## **LinkedIn Premium**

Consider upgrading to a LinkedIn Premium account for unlimited messaging, applicant and company insights, LinkedIn Learning, InMail, and Who's Viewed Your Profile. We recommend this for active job seekers. Click on the link provided under the "Additional Resources" section to sign up. Your first month is free.

Below are additional details on the benefits of this paid service:

## AI Programming

- LinkedIn provides artificial intelligence (AI) programming to help you develop your headline, About section, and Experience section. You can always use an outside program, such as ChatGPT, if you prefer, but we recommend trying LinkedIn's AI service since it's already built into the platform. One example includes the "Am I a good fit for this job?" feature that appears above the Apply button on most job postings. When you click on this, LinkedIn's AI runs a comparison of your qualifications and skills vs. the requirements of the job, and provides you with an overview of your relative fit for that job. Another example can be found on your home page feed. Some posts now include AI-generated questions below the post image. Click on the question for information on that topic, references, and other related questions to explore. To learn more about LinkedIn's AI resources, click on "See your Premium features" (in the box on the left side of your Home screen).
- LinkedIn Premium includes a new **AI-powered job search** allows you to describe your ideal role in plain language — for example, “remote marketing manager jobs at mission-driven companies.” The tool interprets your intent and recommends roles that align with your skills, interests, and past searches. To get the best results, make sure your profile and skills are updated so the AI can match you accurately with relevant opportunities.

## InMail

- LinkedIn's Premium service includes InMail, which allows you to message anyone on LinkedIn, even if you are not currently connected with them. As opposed to the shorter, "texting style" of the "Message" function (which you can only do with your 1st level connections), InMail allows you to compose your thoughts and/or questions to read more like an actual email. LinkedIn's AI programming also produces message/InMail drafts based on who you're reaching out to and why.

## See Who's Viewed Your Profile

- With Premium access, you can see Who's Viewed Your Profile, an especially handy feature for those who are actively searching for a new job. From your home screen, click on "Profile viewers" in the box on the left. Review your viewers weekly to see who you might want to reach out to or connect with; this includes recruiters, hiring managers, or potential informational interviewees.

## Top Applicant

- When you subscribe to Premium, LinkedIn will start labeling you as a top applicant for jobs you are best suited for based on your experience, education, and skills. When you're a top applicant for a specific job, your application will rank higher than others who might not have been labeled as such.

## Comparing Yourself to Other Applicants

- This is easy when you have a Premium subscription. You can easily see how well you align with a job posting using the new "**Job Fit Score**" feature (formerly called Qualifications or How You Match). This tool appears beneath the pay range estimate on most job listings and compares your profile to the job requirements. You'll see a Job Fit Score based on how many of your skills, experiences, and qualifications match the posting. Review the list of missing or recommended skills—LinkedIn now provides one-click options to add them directly to your profile.
- The "**See how you compare**" section also offers valuable data, including the number of applicants and insights about their experience level and location. Pay attention to these details to strengthen your profile and improve your chances of ranking among top candidates in recruiter searches.

## LinkedIn Learning

- All LinkedIn Learning courses are provided free of charge with a Premium

subscription. Skill badges show up on your profile automatically. Course subjects are wide ranging (i.e., you can find a LinkedIn Learning course on just about anything!), and most courses require less than an hour to complete. LinkedIn recommends spending 30 minutes per week on LinkedIn Learning courses.

## **Company Insights**

- These are provided for each job posting (near the bottom of the posting) as well as on individual LinkedIn company pages. Learn more about a potential employer by following their business page or signing up for a newsletter.

## **Interview Prep**

- A standard LinkedIn subscription provides free Interview Prep resources, but you'll have access to interview questions and answers from LinkedIn members by signing up for a Premium subscription. The interview prep section (go to "Jobs" and click on "Interview prep" in the menu box on the left) provides a list of common questions and sample answers, as well as industry and career-specific questions and answers.

# **Utilizing AI to Improve Your Profile**

## **AI Overview**

- AI software has flooded the market over the past few years. While we don't recommend relying heavily on AI to produce content for your LinkedIn profile, there are definite advantages to using it in some cases.
- For instance, as we noted in the LinkedIn Premium section above, LinkedIn has added AI features to the platform designed to assist you in writing a catchy headline, compelling About section, and informative Experience section. While LinkedIn's AI programming is helpful, it doesn't give you as much freedom to customize your answers as other programs do.

- Some of the more popular (and free, or free versions) AI programs on the market today include:
  - ChatGPT
  - TealHQ
  - Wonsulting AI
  - Rezi
  - Symplified
  - Resume Worded
  - Enhancv

## Helpful AI Prompts

- Below are a handful of AI prompts you can use to improve your profile. These are just the tip of the iceberg of what you can do with AI, so get creative and use these tools to your advantage! Just remember to edit AI-generated copy for tone, accuracy, and authenticity.
- "Write an engaging and attractive "About" section for my LinkedIn profile with a limit of 2,600 characters. Include my expertise in these areas: X, Y, Z."
- "Write engaging copy for my LinkedIn post about (*topic*). Limit the post to 300 words."
- "Create a catchy headline of no more than X words for the post copy: *insert post text here.*"
- "Help me make my post more *engaging and consistent (swap out these two adjectives for others to see different results): insert post text here.*"
- "Write an attention-grabbing LinkedIn headline that includes key skills X, Y, and Z. Limit the headline to 220 characters."
- "Review and summarize job duties for the following position: *enter bullet points from your resume here.* The resulting summary should be *two* short paragraphs and must highlight skills A, B, and C."





## Additional Resources

LinkedIn Help

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin>

Visual set-up guide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVUDFiLtMM4>

Upgrading to a Premium account

<https://premium.linkedin.com/>

Connect with us on LinkedIn here

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/createyourcareerpath/>

*Remember to actively use LinkedIn to your advantage, even when you're not job searching!*