LinkedIn: Tips to Power Up Your Profile
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LinkedIn is the world’s largest professional network. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.

By now you’ve filled out the basic information and you’re ready to take your profile to the next level. The may include polishing up you profile to create a personal brand, inserting the correct keywords for search engine optimization, or looking for new ways to connect with others.

The presentation that accompanies this guide may be found at: [http://bit.ly/VAPLDclasses](http://bit.ly/VAPLDclasses) in the LinkedIn folder.

In this handout we will focus on three areas:

- Part 1: Polish Your Profile
- Part 2: Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Part 3: Connecting with Others

**Part 1: Polish Your Profile**

1.1 Review your profile objectively or ask a trusted colleague.

It's nearly impossible to objectively review your profile. Just as you would invite a colleague to lend a critical eye to your resume – do the same with your LinkedIn profile.

1.2 Customize your LinkedIn URL.

Every LinkedIn page has a direct URL that you can customize. Customizing this URL makes it easier to share your LinkedIn URL in a resume or in the signature of your email. Your custom URL should only contain your name.

To customize your LinkedIn URL:

- Click the Cog symbol at the bottom of your profile’s header (Hint: It’s under your profile photo).
- In the right sidebar, click the Edit button.
- Type your desired URL.
- Click Save.

1.3 Add a strategic background image.

LinkedIn allows you to add a background image to your profile. This image is similar to a cover photo on your Facebook page. You can use this image to personalize your page or add some context to your work. Consider adding a pleasing image with colors that compliment your profile picture or a collage or “action shots” and photos related to your work.
To add a background image:

- Hover over your background image. This is grey by default.
- Click the Edit Background image button.
- Select an image from your computer.

Tip: To create a “designer” image, you can use Fotor.com and choose their LinkedIn cover photo option. Fotor.com allows you to easily create collages of action photos and add text. Picmonkey.com also has a simple collage tool that allows you to upload photos and set your image resolution to the necessary dimensions (1400 x 425 pixels).

1.4 Check out the competition to ensure your page is unique by researching people similar to you.

The best way to do this is to view the profile pages of connections that perform a job similar to your own. Use the “People also viewed” option along the right sidebar to view professionals that share similar skills.

Pay attention to the language others use to describe themselves and identify what makes you unique. Highlight these unique areas on your profile.

1.5 Turn off the competition on your profile.

Turn off “People also viewed” on your own profile. There is no reason to advertise your competition.

To turn off “People also viewed” on your profile:

- Click your profile picture in the upper right corner.
- From the drop down, choose Privacy & Settings.
- Click the Show/hide “Viewers of this profile also viewed” box option.
- Uncheck the box that says Display “Viewers of this profile also viewed” box on my Profile page.
- Click the Save changes button.

1.6 Write your summary statement in first person and explain how you can solve the problems and challenges of your clients. State three areas where you excel and express your professional values.

As our communications becoming increasing digital, people will search for you online before they ever meet you in person. A quick Google search of your name means that LinkedIn may be the first place someone goes to get a sense of who you are professionally. Your summary statement is like an online elevator speech that allows others to get a sense of who you are.

LinkedIn allows up to 2000 characters in your summary statement. As part of this space you may want to include two sections: Specialties and AKA/Common Misspellings. Specialties allows you to include keywords you want associated with you one more time and AKA/Common Misspellings helps people find you in a Google search even if they do not know how to spell you name.

1.7 Include social proof statements by soliciting a testimonial from a client or colleague.

When soliciting a testimonial you will want to send an individual request. Provide them with key areas they can focus on, or, better yet, write the testimonial for them and let them modify or approve it.
To request a recommendation:

- Move your cursor over your photo in the top right of your homepage and select Privacy & Settings. You may be prompted to sign in.
- Under the Helpful Links section, select Manage your recommendations.
- Click the Ask for recommendations tab at the top of the page.
- Follow the prompts to request the recommendation.
- Click Send.

OR

- Click Profile from the menu bar at the top of the page.
- From your LinkedIn profile page, click the black drop down arrow next to the View Profile As button.
- From the drop down options, click Ask to be recommended.

Tip: You can request a recommendation from up to 3 connections at once. There's no limit to the total number of recommendations you can request or receive.

1.7 Provide your email and phone number in the Contact Information pull down, Summary Area, and under Advice for Contacting.

There is no harm including your contact information in a variety of places on your page. This makes it easy to contact you.

1.8 Include links to appropriate websites with proper titles.

When adding a website, it is listed as “Company Website” by default. Be specific when you identify your website.

1.9 Use a Bitly link to track how often traffic moves from your LinkedIn profile to your websites.

Bitly is a URL shortener that allows the user to gather analytics on the web traffic associated with a particular link. Using a Bitly link, you can track how often people view your profile and subsequently click a link to view your resume or personal website.

To use a Bitly link:

- Visit bitly.com
- Create an account.
- Copy and Paste your website’s URL into the URL shortener field.
- Copy and Paste your Bitly link into the LinkedIn website field.
- Bitly will begin collecting analytics on your link. These analytics are viewable when you log in to your Bitly account.
Part 2: Search Engine Optimization

LinkedIn uses a proprietary algorithm to provide search results on its website. While there is no way to craft the perfect profile to beat this algorithm – there are certain steps you can take to be sure your profile floats to the top of a LinkedIn search query. SEO success has everything to do with understanding how each section of your LinkedIn profile is indexed.

2.1 Pay attention to your Professional Headline.

Next to your Name, your Professional Headline, the phrase that appears below your name, is the most highly rated field in the index. This means that keywords listed in the Headline field will have a greater impact, increasing your ranking among other users for the same terms. LinkedIn allows for 120 characters – be sure to use them all!

Now you know why using the default "current-job" Headline is not a good idea!

For example, consider swapping “Executive Coach” for “Master Certified Coach | Executive Coach | Career Coach | Leadership Development | Trainer | International Speaker”.

The second option offers a greater number of keywords.

2.2 Use more than your company titles or industry jargon for your job titles in the Experience section.

2.3 List 50 skills in your Skills and Endorsements section. Arrange these skills strategically so those that garner the most endorsements appear at the top.

2.4 Continue collecting endorsements.

One of the most misunderstood sections of LinkedIn is the Skills & Expertise area. It started out as a directly searchable group of keywords and has evolved into an SEO tool that can draw serious traffic, but only if it’s used correctly.

The terms you add to Skills & Expertise factor more heavily in your LinkedIn searchability when you are endorsed for them. Therefore, it makes sense to add keywords and obtain (and accept) Endorsements on them.

A caveat: ensure the terms you add in this section are really keywords. Given a choice between a "hard skill" (such as "Project Management") and a character trait (such as "Leadership"), employers may prefer to search for specific competencies.

2.5 Make a list of the keywords you want others to use to discover your profile. Be sure these keywords are in the best location for searchability.

You are a professional with a wide skill set. Be sure that you are findable under a variety of words.
Part 3: Connecting with Others

3.1 Ask for introductions.

Look to see who in your network already knows the people you want to meet on LinkedIn and ask them if they’d be kind enough to do an introduction or if you have their permission to mention them as a mutual connection in your connection request message. This only works with 2nd level connections.

3.2 Send free InMails to LinkedIn Group Members.

You can send free messages instead of expensive InMails to people that share the same LinkedIn Groups as you.

To send a free message to any LinkedIn Group member:

- Go to any LinkedIn group you are a member of.
- Click the Members tab.
- Look at your 2nd level connections inside the group’s member list and you’ll see an option that says “Send Message”.
- Select Send message. A message box will instantly open up that gives you a direct line to that individual’s inbox.