

LAND YOUR DREAM JOB

BY OPTIMIZING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE



Eddins Counseling Group
ADULT, CHILD, COUPLE & FAMILY COUNSELING



LinkedIn Has Been Called “Facebook for Professionals”

LinkedIn is a professional social media platform designed to cultivate relationships and community in a digital setting. It is widely used for networking, job searching, maintaining professional relationships, and discovering new skills that can help you succeed in your career.

LinkedIn has become the standard in professional networking, job search, and exploring the world of professional connections.

Andrew Tessmer, our career and individual counselor, recently gave a presentation as part of our Focus on Wellness Speaker Series on how to maximize your LinkedIn profile. You can watch the entire presentation [HERE](#) — or, keep diving into this ebook for a detailed summary.



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Getting Started with Your LinkedIn Profile

When building your LinkedIn profile, there are pillars that can be followed to make sure you stand out in the crowd and make a great first impression. Your profile should highlight all your experience, skills, and education relevant to the positions you are currently trying to pursue. Here are 5 key places to get started – each of which we will dive into further in this ebook.

Professional Headshot

As you build your profile, we recommend you add a professional headshot that clearly shows you. Be sure not to use an image that has needed editing to be acceptable. We don't recommend using a photo you had to crop someone out of or one where you dressed for an event unrelated to your industry.

Professional Summary

Your professional summary is the first section other LinkedIn users will see once they have clicked on your profile. It's similar to a resume summary and should be treated as such. Your summary should be composed of five to six sentences about you, what you are looking for, and why you are using LinkedIn.

About Me

Your "about me" section is precisely that, about you. Keep it to the point. It's a good place to note the amount of general professional experience you have and then expand on that.

Keep it Relevant

You might have a lot of varying experience or skills – but, relevance rules on LinkedIn. If something does not relate to the professional path you are trying to go (or to the positions you are looking to fill), it might be wise to leave it out.

Use Bullet Points

Along with relevance, a good way to format your profile is with bullet points. They are bold, short, and to the point. Also, they counter the use of paragraphs in your professional summary.



What are the Benefits of Using LinkedIn?

Whether you are actively looking for a job, promoting your company, or simply getting yourself “out there,” an effective LinkedIn profile is the best way to make a good first impression. Additionally, LinkedIn is a great resource for:

- **Networking** on a platform designed for the professional world.
- **Peer learning** through networking.
- **Joining groups** and connecting with others in your profession.
- **Sharing relevant articles, training opportunities, and even available positions**, which makes your feed an incredible resource in itself.
- **Strengthening and maintaining professional relationships**, especially with old colleagues you want to keep in contact with.
- **Highlighting your qualifications** with hiring managers and recruiters.



What is Networking and How Do You Do It?

Have you ever heard of the expression, “it’s who you know”? Networking is the term for getting to know the very people you need to know in your professional life for success and expansion.

If you have ever gone to a dinner, a conference, or any sort of event where you met other professionals in your industry or related disciplines? That is networking. You get to know people, what they do, and what their specialty is.

While the act of “networking” can seem intimidating, it can be an incredible tool. No matter where you are in your career, being able to meet other professionals and create lasting, valuable relationships will always be helpful. It is a long-term investment that can help you build your own business, further yourself up the ladder, and will translate into lifelong friendships.

LinkedIn has all sorts of features that can assist you in networking. For example, if you list a school or university in your profile, the site will show you others alumni that work at the company you are considering.

Moreover, you’ll have access to the hidden job market, which holds a staggering 80% of available jobs. It’s standard when a position becomes available that the person leaving that seat reaches out to friends or colleagues on LinkedIn, advising that their role may be available soon and they should apply.



How to Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile

Like any application process, you are generally required to list and explain your skill set. You should craft your profile similar to a resume. You have a few moments of their attention, and they need to know what you are good at.

Ask yourself, “what is my career story – and what other passions and life experiences make me more desirable to a potential employer?” Then, figure out which LinkedIn section to put everything in.

POWER TIP

When you start, the only section that is available is your “about me.”
To access the rest, simply scroll back up and click
“Add Different Profile Sections”.



Keep Your Profile Relevant to the Job or Career You Want

You want to make a big impact in the little bit of time that you have a prospective employer's attention. Don't write down all the jobs and experiences you have ever had. Highlight only what fits best. What is most relevant to your current career goals and objectives?

An example would be Jonathan. His last position was in retail, and he is looking to get another job in retail. Yet, his LinkedIn profile lists his history in graphic design, social media managing, and fashion styling ... along with operations and inventory management experience.

This leaves the hiring manager asking, "what is the focus? What positions is he trying to fill? Why does he have all of those specializations?"

Though Jonathan may be more than qualified for the retail position, his profile's lack of relevance will confuse his prospective employer and have them look elsewhere. Make sure you don't make this same mistake.

POWER TIP

While making your profile, be sure to correctly note the dates that each job, training, or program ended. If you left university, note the date you departed.



Use Bullet Points to Break Up Walls of Text

Bullet points help get your history conveyed quickly. They also create balance when read after the paragraphs of your professional summary. As a rule, keep each bullet point as short as possible and list them reverse-chronologically. Here are 3 key elements to consider for each accomplishment:

- **Action verb** – you are marketing, organizing, campaigning, partnering, etc.
- **Core content** – what you are doing and what is happening.
- **Result, purpose, or impact** – ie.g., increased profit or reduced time spent on higher-quality research.

Always try to quantify something you have done in your bullet points - even if it involves a rough estimate. For example, it is much better to say, “I raised \$30,000 for a development campaign” than “I have raised money for a development campaign.” One is a bit vague, and the other gives onlookers insight into the kind of effect you’ve had on projects you have been a part of.

POWER TIP

If you want employers to focus on something from the past, decrease the number of bullet points before the ones you wish have seen.



Choose a Professional Photo

If a picture says 1,000 words, what does your LinkedIn profile photo say about you? Make sure whatever you choose is professional and reflects the industry or job you are in/applying for. Here are a few suggestions:

- Clearly show your face.
- You should be making eye contact – looking right into the camera.
- Be dressed in an outfit appropriate for your profession.
- Use an image of you working or presenting at an industry event.
- Avoid photos where it's obvious that other people have been cropped out.
- Show a background that suggests the job you are applying for. For example, if you work at a university, you can have a classroom or a school exterior in the background.



Craft an Effective, Short Professional Summary

Your professional summary is the first thing recruiters see on your profile. Think of it as your elevator pitch. It should be easy to read, somewhat broad, and to the point.

A well-established professional summary on a LinkedIn profile looks should be five to six sentences about you, what you are looking for, and why you are using LinkedIn (this last one is significant during a job search or job transition).

POWER TIP

Some companies keep track of their current employees' LinkedIn profiles.

If your employer doesn't know that you are searching for a new position, you might want to keep your summary more vague.



Optimize Your About Me Section

What you say about yourself is crucial for how you plan to use LinkedIn. If you are actively searching for a job, you would use this section to highlight your experience in different industries, explain what you are hoping to do, and what you are interested in. What positions are you looking to fill, and in what fields?

The first line could refer to what you are looking to do rather than your personal mission statement. It's helpful to put the amount of professional experience you have in general and then expand on it. Talk about your key accomplishments and the specialization you may have developed.

POWER TIP

Your "About Me" section won't be more than a paragraph long based on your profession.

The first two lines will need to be the most substantial as they are the foundation of the first impression you are working to create.



Use Bullet Points for Relevant Experience

After drawing them in with a captivating summary section, a hiring manager will next want to understand your work experience. Be sure to include only the most relevant experience – and use bullet points to make it more visually appealing. Here is an example:

- **ABC Corp.**
 - o Position or role
 - o Years and experience
- **Another Company**
 - o Position or role
 - o Years and relevant experience

Even professional development courses, projects you managed, lectures you gave, volunteering you did can go on your profile along with skills and endorsements.

Be careful when communicating volunteering experience, if it is at all political or religious in affiliation. Keep it as broad as possible. Employers will screen who you volunteered for, and it can be left out if it's not relevant to your career story.



Highlight All Your Education, Courses, and Trainings

This is another section where relevance rules. List your education in reverse chronological order based on the end date, the day you completed the program, or the day you stopped attending. You should note any courses you attended, even if you didn't finish your degree.

Any education experiences you note can help you network because the platform will associate you with any other alumni of that school or program.

The same goes for licenses. For specific fields, like nursing or counseling, you need to account for any state licenses you have earned.



Share Your Skills to Show Your Versatility

The skills you post on your LinkedIn profile are an essential part of the career story you are attempting to tell to prospective employers, and you can list as many as you like. But as with the rest of your profile, relevance is critical. Also, consider that LinkedIn breaks up your skills section into three categories:

- **Industry Knowledge** – technical knowledge and training
- **Interpersonal Skills** – habits and traits that relate to how you work, on your own and with others
- **Other** – anything that doesn't fall into the other two categories – regardless of how relevant it is to your profession or resume.

You can play with how you describe your skills and determine what category they end up in. Additionally, you can free text skills, but they will always end up in “other,” which can be disappointing depending on how relevant they are to your profession.

POWER TIP

On a mobile device, there will only be three skills visible, each of which you can choose, and they can come from any of the three sections.



Highlight Your Accomplishments and Organizations

As we said before, what goes on this profile is all about relevance. If you did volunteer work for an organization like the American Red Cross, but you are trying to get into investment banking, then that might not be necessary to note.

It will depend on both the timeframe and relevance of your time with the organization.

That being said, if there are people you follow and groups you are in that would help broaden your horizons, add it. This is a good section of your profile for things you don't want on full display since these tend to dwell towards the bottom of the page.

POWER TIP

Groups you frequent will be a point of interest for employers.



Ask Coworkers or Former Bosses for Recommendations

On this platform, the recommendations that you receive will be just as important as the ones you give. It's a sort of give-and-take relationship. You should offer giving one if you have or will be receiving one for your colleagues.

As you collect recommendations, try to create a 360-degree view of you and your position using other members of that company or organization. This would look like hearing from someone underneath you (such as an intern), someone to the side of you (this could be a coworker or a colleague), and then someone above you (a boss or supervisor).

Having all of these perspectives on your performance would be an incredible insight for employers and hiring managers.



TECHNICAL TIP:

Check Your Privacy Settings

If you are not actively looking for a job, consider setting your profile on “private.”

Your profile’s default privacy settings will be “public.” This is helpful if you are actively searching for jobs and want recruiters to notice you, as the setting allows others to see who you are when you look at their profile.

But, if you are not actively searching or just beginning to build your profile, we suggest you change that setting to private. That way, you can search and see other people’s profiles without being noticed before you are ready. For example, if you look at John Doe’s profile and you have your privacy settings on “default”, then John Doe will get a notification letting him know that you recently viewed his profile.

Again, this is perfect if you are actively searching for jobs, but it’s rather unnecessary if not. The private setting will allow you to look at other individuals’ profiles and gather ideas without the attention.



TECHNICAL TIP:

Update the “Share Job Changes” Setting

Like any social media platform, LinkedIn wants everyone in your network to know when you update your profile. Under normal circumstances, this is an excellent way to keep those connected to you updated on the things you're adding — and the kinds of transitions you are making.

However, If you are actively updating your profile, it means your contacts will be bombarded with notifications about every little change, update, or tweak you make. To avoid this, go into your settings and set the "share job changes" option to "no."

You might also want to make your profile completely private while making big changes - in case you get distracted or need to take a break for a few days while updating. Then, once your profile is ready for prime time, go back in and set it to "yes" and "public."

POWER TIP

You can mute specific followers so they can't see your activity.

This feature is best used on your boss while you search for other positions.

LinkedIn will not notify them of your activity.



TECHNICAL TIP:

Avoid Controversial Posting: Everything You Do is Public

LinkedIn will display everything you post, like, and comment on. As parallel as LinkedIn is to Facebook, it is not a social or personal platform. It's not unheard of for users to post religious or political content, but we don't recommend it.

For some industries, those kinds of content may be best if avoided completely. You never know where a hiring manager's preferences lie, and you don't want that to be the reason you get blocked from that position.



A succulent plant with green leaves and red edges is potted in a metal can. The can sits on a wooden desk. To the left, a laptop keyboard is visible. To the right, a glass of coffee is partially seen. The background is a soft-focus wooden surface.

Get Help From a Career Counselor

If you need help creating the most effective and persuasive LinkedIn profile or guidance regarding your career choices, career counseling is for you.

eddinscounseling.com/career-counseling

Call or visit us online to schedule a free consultation and find out how we can help.

Career counseling and online therapy services are available in multiple states throughout the US.

In person therapy services are available in Houston, TX.

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