LinkedIn

Setting up your profile

10 EIGHTY
Delivering Success Through People

LinkedIn

Research shows that the majority of employers look at social network profiles before making hiring decisions. LinkedIn is the key site to build a network of connections. It's also useful to help become more productive in careers, search for jobs and stay up to date with industry and company information.

The Profile

- Firstly, ensure your CV is up to date and complete so that there is a basis to work from

- Some general advice is to write LinkedIn profiles in the first person. Use key words (i.e. words relevant to the next role the client is looking for) high up on the profile to maximise the chance of being found in any searches by potential employers or recruiters

- Use the **headline** effectively. Most people tend to use this as their most recent job title. It doesn't have to be. Think about what you want to do next and use that somehow in your headline. It could be a blatant "HR Director looking for a new position" or something more subtle like "HR Consultant specialising in mediation".   There are 120 characters available, so use them to full effect!

- Use the **summary** space on the profile effectively, unlike a CV which you can tailor for every role, your profile needs to be generic enough to appeal to a variety of roles, but specific enough to meet specific requirements if need be. For each role you want to apply for via LinkedIn, have a look at your summary area to see if there is something to be added in. Use the profile statement from the CV as a basis and then build on that. There are 2000 words available

- The **experience** area should be used to add an appropriate amount of detail about previous roles. It doesn't need to be as comprehensive as the CV, but enough to incorporate key words and add achievements that highlight the clients level of seniority. Add each employer name and normally their logo will appear on your page

- **Skills** - there is space for 50 skills on a LinkedIn profile. Once skills have been added to your profile, they are open for **endorsements** from connections. This can add some weight to the profile, and it's possible to ask people to endorse you for a specific skill, which can be useful again in terms of key words. Keep on top of these to ensure they are appropriate. When looking at jobs on LinkedIn, these skills are used to show you how much of a match you are to that role. It is worth therefore reviewing that list when you look at a job and add additional skills you may have neglected to show, to show you are a closer match

- A step up from endorsements is **recommendations**.   These are much more personal as they are written by connections. They can be requested by you, or if you write a recommendation for someone they will in turn be prompted to write one back. Once someone has written a recommendation you get the option to accept it, and therefore it appears on your profile, or not accept it and potentially ask the connection to reword it to better sum up your skills and experience.   A balance is required - not so many that it looks like you have been fishing for recommendations, but enough that show you are well connected and rated

- Use the **volunteer** area to show anything you do outside of work that can showcase any additional skills you have

- **Accomplishments** can be used to record awards, languages, courses, publications and so on

Privacy

- Use the **privacy settings** to control who can see what whilst you are creating your profile and beyond

- Go to **how others see your profile and network information** to personalise your **URL**. This is something you can then add to your CV so that recruiters can go straight to your profile. In this area, also set your profiles **public visibility**. Here you can specify which parts of your profile can be visible to people you are not connected to. You can also control who can see your connections

- In **how others see your LinkedIn activity**, a useful feature is to put yourself into **private mode** when viewing profiles. This means you can be looking at lots of peoples profiles without their knowledge which can be good in research activities. The trade off for this is that you can't see who has looked at your profile

Get Active!

- Add **contacts.** Start with people most recently worked with, and then take note of suggestions LinkedIn makes. Try to send a personal message to people you want to connect with. People are more likely to accept requests from someone who has made an effort rather than firing off generic invites. Consider your approach to accepting invites, if you don't know someone, look at their profile and decide if they are useful for you to connect with

- Join some **groups**. These can be things like alumnis, groups of people in similar professions, or just something you have an interest in. Participate in conversations to build your network and your knowledge

- Be as active as possible, **like** peoples posts, **share** them with comments as to what appeals to you about it. This will then make you appear in more peoples LinkedIn feed. **Post** your own updates, and keep an eye on your **post statistics** so you can see what kind of topics people are reading. Consider using **hashtags** when you are posting so that your posts are searchable outside of your network

- As well as adding contacts, **follow companies.** This way those companies will appear in your LinkedIn feed and you may well see jobs and updates they advertise quickly

- Use your network. Once you have a good number of contacts, **download** them into a spreadsheet and sort them by whatever criteria is useful. For example add a column of how you know them (friend, colleague, supplier, customer and so on), and how likely they are to be able to help you in your job search. To do this, go to **Settings and Privacy**, How LinkedIn uses your data, download your data, click on connections, and request archive. This list can then be used as a basis to target your connections (see our article on segmenting your contacts for more detail)

Job Search

- Once the profile is complete, jobs suggested will be more relevant. The more skills and experience, the more closely the roles will be linked

- Use the job search to search for specific job titles and location. Then click on **All Filters** to be choose working patterns, industry, level and so on. It is also possible to add a distance within option on the location to widen your search from a specific town/city

- When there is a job to apply for, it's worth trying to make yourself stand out. If there is a contact name, then try to phone them to ask some questions about the role before you apply. You could also in mail them if you upgrade your membership to premium*

- Some roles are applied via LinkedIn and will show you how many people have applied. Others will take you to the company website to apply via their own recruitment process, and some will be via a recruitment agency. Wherever possible go direct to the person you'd be working for to get the best chance of interview

Paid membership?

- * **Premium membership** is often free for a month. The main benefit is for job search being able to message people you are not connected to. The fee is currently £24.99 per month for the "career" membership. Other benefits are being a "featured applicant" to make you stand out to recruiters, access to online video courses, who has viewed your profile in the last 90 days, how you compare to other candidates and access to salary information.