



LinkedIn Profile Guide

LinkedIn is the **largest online professional network**. You can use LinkedIn to search for jobs and internships, connect with professionals, and learn skills for succeeding in your career. A LinkedIn profile is one way to share your professional background, including education, skills, work experience and recommendations, with your professional network.

Creating Your LinkedIn Profile

Start with a professional headshot!

- LinkedIn users with a profile photo receive up to 9 times more connection requests.
- Adding a profile photo can lead to up to 21 times more profile views.
- Your professional headshot should be up-to-date and high quality with good lighting and a neutral background. Do not use a picture where you have cropped someone out, you are holding your pet, or you were on summer vacation. Show your professional self!



List your professional experience.

- Your experience section is where you showcase your accomplishments, so think carefully about how you want to describe your work. Certainly describe your daily tasks and responsibilities, but more important is highlighting the accomplishments you added, the change you brought about, or the results you achieved.
- LinkedIn recommends that you write in the first-person narrative and use short, concise paragraphs in a story format. Only use bullet points to emphasize key results, metrics or impact. This advice is definitely different from what you hear about writing a resume, but remember that your LinkedIn profile should complement and not take the place of your resume. Your LinkedIn profile should share the story of your career journey.

Include a background picture.

Try your best to add a horizontal-oriented picture that provides some insight into your professional interests or passions. Like your headshot, it should not be too personal, but it is better to have a professional picture than to leave this the default LinkedIn blue background.

List your education, as well as any certifications, licenses or credentials.

Make sure your visibility settings are to your liking.

Click on the pencil graphic to edit your profile. You can choose whether your profile is visible to only your LinkedIn connections, your network (LinkedIn members connected up to three degrees away from you), or all LinkedIn members.

Connect with people you already know as you start building your network. The staff members of the Compass Center invite you to include us as some of your first contacts. Plus, when we are connected with you, it is easier for us to connect you with others.



The Value of LinkedIn

90% of companies use **LinkedIn** for their recruiting.

Getting Started

LOOK FOR EXAMPLES

Take a moment to search LinkedIn and find a couple profiles that you really like. Then ask yourself three things: First, what do you really like about these profiles? Second, why do they stand out to you? And finally, are there elements that you could use in your profile?

Maximizing Your LinkedIn Profile

Create an attention-grabbing headline.

- Your headline is the one-line statement directly under your name. It also shows in the home feed beside your photo every time you post content on LinkedIn. If you do not create a personalized headline, it automatically defaults to the most recent position listed in your Experience section.
- LinkedIn advises college students to use their headline to “tell people what you’re excited about now and the cool things you want to do in the future.” (Example: “Social Work Major and Aspiring Behavioral Therapist”)
- Consider adding:
 - o Industry keywords (i.e. financial analyst, program manager, software engineer, marketing intern)
 - o Your role (i.e. investor, strategy leader, coach)
 - o Unique skills or passions

Write a profile summary that showcases your accomplishments and aspirations.

- Your profile summary shows up under the “About” section of your profile. It is essentially your elevator pitch – just written instead of spoken. LinkedIn advises that it should be a “true introduction to you that’s concise and speaks to your mission, motivation, key skills and experience. It should also feature any words that are relevant to your industry or the work you do.”
- Consider asking yourself
 - o Who am I?
 - o What do I do?
 - o Why does my work matter?
 - o What’s the contribution or impact I’m making?

Add rich media. Even better than telling people you have great experience, show them the great products you have created or the projects in which you have been involved.

- Videos or Photographs
- Presentations or projects
- Websites
- Articles
- Portfolios, especially for education or art majors
- If you choose to include a link to your resume, remove your address and telephone number.

Include volunteer experience.

- LinkedIn claims that 40% of all hiring managers view volunteer experience as equivalent to work experience.
- Volunteer experience shows that you are a well-rounded person who is not only focused on your career but committed to serving the people around you.
- Volunteer work also gives people a glimpse into what you are passionate about. If you have not been able to gain entry-level work experience in your desired field yet—but you have volunteered in the field, gaining experience—this is the perfect place to highlight that.

List skills and let others endorse your skills.

- Add skills that can help you be a strong match for the careers you are seeking.
- LinkedIn members with five or more skills listed are discovered 27 more times in searches and receive 17 times more profile views.
- You can always add skills, change the order, and remove them. The default is to show the three skills for which you have received the most endorsements from your first-degree connections; but you can edit them to reflect the top three skills you most want to highlight.

Other Ways to Enhance Your Profile

Enroll in LinkedIn Learning courses.

- Learn in-demand skills with online courses taught by real-world professionals.
- Add a certificate to your profile when you complete and pass a course, thereby boosting your profile and highlighting hard and soft skills.

Seek recommendations.

- Let others validate the experience you claim to have and provide specific comments about your work.
- When considering whom to reach out to for a LinkedIn recommendation, approach people in your professional community, including past supervisors, faculty members and co-workers. Pick people who can best speak to your strengths, skills and experience.
- Always customize your recommendation request. Send a friendly but brief message, and be clear about what you want them to highlight when writing your recommendation. Here is an example:

*"Hi, Luis. I am making an effort to build up my recommendations on LinkedIn. Given that you were my supervisor and know my work style and contributions well, I hope you would be willing to write a recommendation for me. Specifically, would you address my experience conducting research and writing reports? Thank you, Luis, for considering this request. I'm grateful.
Nora Northwestern."*

Join affinity groups. These show up under the heading of "Interests" as the companies, groups and schools you follow. By following these entities, you are more likely to connect with people who share your interests and, therefore, learn about job opportunities of interest to you.

Create a custom URL. Rather than having your LinkedIn URL be [linkedin.com/in/8675309](https://www.linkedin.com/in/8675309), make it something easy for others to link to, like [linkedin.com/in/NoraNorthwestern](https://www.linkedin.com/in/NoraNorthwestern). Steps to do this can be found in the LinkedIn Help Topics.

Keep your industry and location current.

- If you click on the pencil icon at the top of your profile, you can edit your location and industry.
- Over 300,000 people search by industry each week on LinkedIn, and members with industry information receive nine times more views. You will be more likely to show up in a recruiter's search if you fit the location and industry for which they are looking.

Make an appointment via Handshake for a Compass Center staff member to review your LinkedIn profile and offer suggestions for ways to make it even stronger.

Connecting with Others for Job Opportunities

COMPANIES

Make a list of 5 companies where you might like to be employed. Then follow these companies so you can stay up-to-date on what they are doing and available jobs they are posting.

INDIVIDUALS

Make a list of 5 people who have a position similar to your desired role or who work at a company where you may like to work.

- Follow them on LinkedIn.
- Consider commenting on articles they post.
- Ask a mutual contact to introduce you.
- Eventually request to connect with them on LinkedIn with a personalized message. Do not ask for a job at this point!
- When you find out about a job opening at the company, ask if your contact there would be willing to forward your resume to the hiring manager.

How to Search and Apply for Jobs on LinkedIn

- 1 Turn on the “I’m interested” feature at the top of your profile.**
 - This shows up immediately under your name, headline and location as a link to **“Show recruiters you’re open** to job opportunities—you control who sees this.”
 - This privacy setting allows you to let recruiters know that you are open to new opportunities without showing up on your public profile.
- 2 Keyword optimize your headline.**
 - If you have created an attention-grabbing headline as outlined previously, then you probably have exactly what you need to grab a recruiter’s attention. However, it is worth asking: Are you using **keywords specific to your field and industry as creatively as possible** in your headline?
 - The more relevant keywords you add to your profile, the greater likelihood that you will show up in recruiters’ search results. Apparently the keywords in your headline count even more.
- 3 Check the jobs posted in your LinkedIn groups.**
- 4 Apply to jobs on LinkedIn that interest you.**
 - Remember, you can customize your search to fit your interests.



*This LinkedIn Profile Guide is based largely upon LinkedIn’s **“Rock Your LinkedIn Profile”** course.