Tips for students to build a professional LinkedIn profile

Your LinkedIn profile is a summary of your professional experience, interests, and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of important people who are searching for you online — recruiters, networking contacts, and admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market. Here’s how LinkedIn can help you kick-start your career.

1. **Craft an informative profile headline**

   Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as “Student, National University” or “Recent honors graduate seeking marketing position.” Check out the profiles of students and recent alumni you admire for ideas and inspiration.

2. **Display an appropriate photo**

   Choose a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Party photos, cartoon avatars, and cute pictures of your puppy don’t fit in the professional environment of LinkedIn.

3. **Show off your education**

   Be sure to include information about all schools you’ve attended. Include your major and minor, if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. It’s also appropriate to include study abroad programs and summer institutes. Don’t be shy — your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to show off your honors or awards you’ve won.

4. **Develop a professional summary statement**

   Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter — concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Remember to include relevant internships, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great, too.

5. **Include keywords in your profile**

   Sprinkle your profile with key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

6. **Update your status regularly**

   A great way to stay on other people’s radar screens and enhance your professional image is to update your status at least once a week. Tell people about events you’re attending, major projects you’ve completed, professional books you’re reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or on a quick catch-up call.
7. **Show your connectedness with LinkedIn Group badges**

Joining Groups and displaying the group badges on your profile are perfect ways to professionalize your profile and show your desire to connect to people with whom you have something in common. Most students start by joining their university's LinkedIn group as well as the larger industry groups related to the career they want to pursue.

8. **Collect diverse recommendations**

Nothing builds credibility like third-party endorsements. The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors.

9. **Claim your unique LinkedIn URL**

To elevate the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: www.linkedin.com/in/yourname). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism.

10. **Share your work**

A final way to enhance your LinkedIn profile is to add examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments by displaying URLs or adding LinkedIn Applications. By including URLs, you can direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed. Through Applications, you can share your digital portfolio, Google Docs and PowerPoint presentations.

**Links:**

[www.linkedin.com/college/alumni](http://www.linkedin.com/college/alumni)

[www.linkedin.com/studentjobs](http://www.linkedin.com/studentjobs)
Top tips for getting a job through LinkedIn

LinkedIn’s professional network allows both active seekers and passive candidates to promote their capabilities to an audience of international companies and recruiters. Connect with past and present colleagues to grow your network and optimize your chances of being hired through referrals. Executives from the world’s top companies are on LinkedIn, giving members an opportunity-rich environment.

1. Build your network before you need it

Having a strong network is essential. It represents those you know and trust, and you can utilize it for recommendations and to ask for introductions into a job or opportunity in which you are interested. No matter how the economy or your career is doing, having a strong network is a good form of job security. Don’t wait until times are tough to nurture your network.

There is a "magic" number of connections to have on LinkedIn, and that number is 50. By connecting to at least 50 trusted contacts (past co-workers, clients, classmates, professors, friends and family) you will increase your chances of getting in touch with people and companies that will help you get ahead in your job hunt.

2. Ensure your profile is complete and up-to-date

Your LinkedIn profile is your chance to showcase your skills and talents and help the right people and opportunities find their way to you. As your professional representation online, you can set it up to be discoverable through the millions of searches on leading search engines and on LinkedIn. Members with at least one past position listed on their profile are 12 times more likely to be viewed for potential opportunities through LinkedIn. People with at least one education listed are seven times more likely to be viewed in general and professionals with a photo on their profile are also seven times more likely to be viewed in general.

3. Get LinkedIn recommendations from your colleagues or previous managers

A strong recommendation from those who have worked with you highlights your strengths and shows that you were a valued employee. Actively reach out to your past managers and work colleagues to get recommendations from them. If you want a recommendation that will make you stand out from the pack, hint at why you’re asking for the recommendation (to get more clients, to find a new job, etc.) and also at what types of things the recommender can comment on. (“Brad, I’d really appreciate it if you could give me a recommendation in regards to the ABC project that I worked on which resulted in us increasing sales by 120%.”)

4. Get the word out

Tell your network that you’re looking for a new job. Use your LinkedIn Status Update to let those in your network know you are now looking for a new position.

5. Check whether a company is hiring

LinkedIn Company Pages enable you to “follow” companies in which you are interested. When you follow a company on LinkedIn you get updates on new hires, promotions/changes at the company and even job
opportunities. Follow companies that you would love to work for and you will start seeing these updates on your homepage when you login to LinkedIn.

6. **Get straight to the people that do the hiring**

Build relationships with recruiters and hiring managers in your area so you are top of mind when great job openings come across their desks. You can do this by doing an Advanced People Search (click on the hyperlink that says “Advanced” next to the search box in the top, right-hand corner of any LinkedIn page) for the title “recruiter” or “HR Manager,” or other related titles and narrow the search down to your zip code. Find people you have in common and if suitable, ask them to introduce you. Or, reach out directly using InMail or Openlink messages.

7. **Show off what you have to offer with LinkedIn Skills**

LinkedIn tracks thousands of hot up-and-coming professional skills on the LinkedIn Skills page. Add relevant LinkedIn Skills to your profile so that you come up in search results when other professionals need someone like you for a project, to get advice or for an open position that they have. LinkedIn Skills pages will also tell you what groups on LinkedIn you can join to learn more about that topic or skill, companies that are related to that skill, open jobs that require that skill and even more useful info.

8. **Personalize your job search using the LinkedIn Job Search Engine**

LinkedIn’s job search engine allows you to hone your search to jobs at specific companies, locations, experience level and job function. It also lets you see the individual doing the hiring, as well as anyone in your network who can refer you to the individual or who works at the company hiring. The “Jobs You May Be Interested In” feature recommends job postings for you based on your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn allows you to save your searches to keep a record of careers and people that interest you.

9. **Demonstrate your Expertise on LinkedIn Answers**

LinkedIn Answers is one of the best places on the web to share business knowledge. You can ask and answer questions on specific subject matter. By demonstrating your expertise on LinkedIn you earn recognition that helps you build your credibility and the more points of expertise you gain, the higher you appear on lists of experts.

10. **Look for the Apply with LinkedIn button**

The Apply with LinkedIn button makes it easy for you to submit your LinkedIn profile, and even a cover letter for any job application on the Web with one simple click. The button will also display your professional connections who work at the company, or who can introduce you to someone there, to increase your chances of getting hired through a referral. All “Apply with LinkedIn” submissions are recorded in the “Saved Jobs” tab (under the Jobs category on LinkedIn) so you have a record of all the jobs you have applied to around the Web, throughout your career.