



LinkedIn Checklist: *Don't Just Park There: Drive It!*[®]

Use this 11-point checklist to revamp your LinkedIn profile. This only scratches the surface on what LinkedIn can do for you, but it will give you a good start. Be competitive: be visible on LinkedIn!

Name and photo

Your name goes here. Use the name that you use in business. If your given name is Leland but you call yourself Jay, use "Jay". Your photo should be professional, collarbone on up, big smile. Selfies are OK *if* they are done well.

Title/Tagline

Whether or not you're in a job right now, you are still a Marketing Manager or Business Analyst or whatever your title. So make sure what you write here focuses on YOU, not your current or former company, and that it is searchable. By "searchable" we mean two or three titles that apply to you; avoid using "in transition", "student", or "unemployed". Those terms will *not* help you get found. "Future Project Manager" or "CIO-Ready" will also work if that's your goal *and* you are qualified.

Industry

Be sure to use something current for your field. For example, use "wireless" or "VoIP" instead of "telecommunications", because these are more searchable today. LinkedIn's categories aren't the best so get as close as you can here.

Connections

The more your connections, the better your search results will be. Plus, it's increasingly important today that you connect with employed people, whether you are in a job or between jobs. Why? Because LinkedIn is making available to companies the ability to source new employees from their *current* employees' connections. As Joanne says, "Hang out with the employed!"

Background/Summary

This is like your resume's Professional Summary: broad-brush info about you, with mention of success stories. But do not just *duplicate* what's on your resume, instead, add it in and then include more material. This Summary section is the longest in the profile, so use the space. Use lots of keywords. Also: LinkedIn lets you upload documents and links so here you can add addenda, short PowerPoints (SlideShare), links to a blog, and other helpful items that let you emphasize your expertise.

Skills & Endorsements

Point out your professional skills here. Get endorsements from former and current managers, coworkers, colleagues, internship supervisors, faculty, and even those who have reported to you. Put your best AND favorite five or six skills FIRST, regardless of how many endorsements you have for them so far, so that your connections see what *you* have prioritized. It's important to "work" this – endorse others and they will endorse you. This section had little credibility when it was first introduced but over time it has acquired importance: it's hard to ignore, say, 80 people think you are great at several things.

Experience

Put the bullets that are on your resume here for each job. And you want numerous keywords here, so that you *get found* by hiring managers, recruiters, and HR who use tools that find candidates. In this section as well, you can upload materials just like you can in the Summary, but under each job. Be sure to use key words here and *throughout* your profile, so that recruiters, HR, and hiring managers can find you! Don't just describe what you've done, point out *achievements* that have had impact.

Education

Insert relevant education. LinkedIn insists on dates, but you can ignore their prompts: HR really doesn't want to see them.

Additional Sections

- Groups: Join 20-25 (50 is the limit), *professional* groups: it reinforces your career dedication and interests. Then explore them for potential networking contacts. This is how you expand your network! Think *profession, industry, and geography* as you network. Recruiters and hiring managers lurk here! And be sure to *participate* in the groups, e.g., offering ideas to others.
- Interests: Be sure to insert your *career* interests here, between commas, with only a *few* personal ones. Insert keywords here, even if you've put them elsewhere in your profile; repetition is vital in LinkedIn. Think of it as a *database*, not a term paper.

Contact info:

Be sure you're easy to reach! Nothing spoils a great profile more than the reader not being able to reach you easily, especially if they have a job they want to talk with you about. Insert your email address at the very least, and phone number if possible. You can add these in the Contact section *and* in the Summary section.

You should "work" LinkedIn at least once a week for at least 10-15 minutes. Experience shows that those who keep their profile active ("driving it", as I like to say) show up higher in employer and recruiter searches than those who do a profile and seldom or never go back to update it ("parking there").