



# A Quick Guide to: LinkedIn Personal Profiles



Using LinkedIn effectively for any purpose starts with an effective personal LinkedIn profile. Whether for personal networking, developing a business network, or seeking a new career, the most important parts of your profile are your *Heading Box* and your *Summary*.

*The importance of setting up your LinkedIn profile correctly is to ensure the right people can find you.*

## Preparing for Success: Vision, Goals, and a Plan...

And so, the first challenge you face—before the login screen, before the formatting—is the fundamental step of defining your vision. From that, you will develop your goals. This step leads you into the first point of having to develop a formal document...well, at least a draft of one—your resume or curriculum vita (CV). These documents will help you populate your LinkedIn profile and provide some of the material for populating your Facebook professional page.



### Your Vision

Your vision is perhaps the most important decision you will make concerning your future. You see the word “Vision” associated with companies and organizations on their websites all the time, but rarely do you hear it discussed in terms of personal life. The reality is that the most successful people establish their vision and maintain a focus on that vision as they plan what they are going to do, whether it is investing, education and training, searching for a new career, buying a car or home, or many other things. *And so, the first questions to ask yourself are simply these: Where do I see my life in 3 years? 5 years? 10 years?*

### Your Goals

The next step in mapping your future is to define strategic goals that support your vision. What is most important in this step of the process is that each of your *long-term* goals must focus on your vision—if it does not support your vision, you should be giving careful consideration as to whether it warrants your time and resources. Take a few moments and review your overall vision statement on the following page. Then, refer back to your 3-, 5-, and 10-year visions. As you *pull the thread* back from your overall vision, through each of these more specific visions, you can see how specific goals may contribute to attaining your vision.

## Personal Branding

Simply put, your “brand” is how people perceive you—when your name is heard, when they see you, when they see that you did a job, and so forth.

**Logo.** Your logo is your professional photograph. What does your photograph say about who you are?

**Layout.** This factor refers to how you choose to arrange various entries on your LinkedIn profile. This may be an expression of what comprises your strongest or most valuable qualities.

**Imagery.** You may enhance your personal brand by including imagery or media directly pertaining to your accomplishments.

**Use of Space.** This is very important in LinkedIn and starts with your *Summary* section. The keys to optimizing the use of space include blank lines between sections to enhance readability, standard formatting for all your *Experience* and *Volunteer Experience* entries, and judicious use of important images, media, and links.

**Brand Personality.** Yes, LinkedIn is a professional networking platform, but there is no reason why you cannot inject some of your personality into the profile. Sections like *Interests* and *Volunteer Experience* lend themselves to defining some of your personality traits.

**Type/Quality of Products and Services.** When deciding what information may best describe accomplishments, using examples of products and services can help.

**Customer Service Philosophy.** This area may not be directly applicable to every career field, but what it can show is that you are not “all about you.”

**Associated Brands.** Pretty much every career field counts on professionals being multi-faceted in terms of the positions and tasks they are able to achieve.

**Communication Channels.** Your professional profile opens the lines of communication to literally *millions* of prospective connections, including potential business associates, partners, leads, clients, and customers.

**Business and Social Networking.** Of course, LinkedIn is *the premier* professional networking site on the Internet, used by nearly 400 million professionals worldwide...and that is important...worldwide.

**Values.** Throughout your profile, whether on LinkedIn or Facebook, your core values should be the basis for your entries.



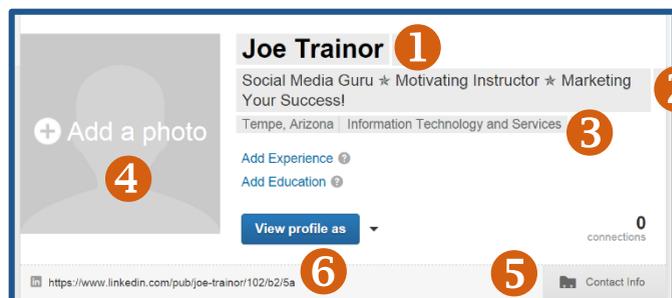
*Your brand is your trademark—the way people will view you and your work. It is as important as the iconic brands like Coke, Pepsi, Nike, Adidas, and others. In a world where success is based not just on who you know—but in who knows you—the more recognizable and respected your brand is, the more likely you are to be successful.*

## Putting it all together: The critical sections of your personal LinkedIn profile

### THE HEADING BOX

1. Your *REAL* name
2. Your *Headline*
3. Location (Metro Area) & Industry
4. Your *Professional* photograph
5. Contact Info
6. Custom LinkedIn URL

For details, see the *Six Essentials to Achieve All-Star Status...*



## SIX ESSENTIALS TO ACHIEVE ALL-STAR STATUS

### Headline, Industry, & Location

This section will appear as a default even if you turn all the other options off for public viewing. As simple as it seems, you need to put some time and thought into it. The headline should be 10-12 words comprised of keywords describing your most important traits preceded by strong adjectives.

**TIP:** *On searches, keywords in the headline are weighted three times heavier than in the rest of the profile.*

### A Professional Photograph

Having a professional photograph provides insight to recruiters and hiring managers before they meet you. A professional photograph does not have to be expensive—organizations such as *Career Connectors* in the Phoenix metro area provide it as a free service to career seekers at their events.

**TIP:** *Wear attire appropriate to the industry and position in which you plan on working.*

### A Well-Written Summary

This is the most important part of your LinkedIn profile! The Summary section provide you with 30-45 seconds to convince the reader to continue reading your profile—that's it. It should include 4 distinct components: a secondary headline, your 30-second "elevator pitch," a listing of your primary specialties, and your e-mail address. **TIP:** Having the e-mail address at the end of the Summary makes it easy to contact you.

### Current Experience + at least Two Prior Experience Entries

This is experience that comes right off your resume or CV. Use standard conventions for position labels and descriptions, 1-2 lines about what your company does/did (if it is not on LinkedIn), 1-2 lines describing your responsibilities, and 2-4 results/performance-based bullets highlighting your accomplishments in that position.

**TIP:** *If your company has a LinkedIn page, you don't have to describe it—a link to their profile page appears.*

**TIP:** *For your current experience, be sure to click "I currently work here" as the end date.*

### Education and Skills

Often neglected, but simple to complete. Simply add your education here. **Do not include dates for education that was over 20 years ago.** If you have been to any post-secondary education, do not include high school.

**TIP:** *GPA is only for current students. If you graduated with honors, use that block (it will take letters, too).*

**NOTE:** *You also need to select at least 5 skills for your profile.*

### Connections

You need to build to at least 50 connections to be in the top search category--\*All Star\* status. Start with people you already know, select professional contacts in your field, and connect with people who influence your field.

**TIP:** *Work toward 500!*

## THE SUMMARY

**\*\*WHO YOU ARE PROFESSIONALLY** [overall professional tag line, such as "providing superior client services"] in \_\_\_\_\_ (industry) in the \_\_\_\_\_ (geographic) area.\*\*

[blank line]

Insert your 30-second "elevator talk" here...

[blank line]

Specialties: \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; \_\_\_\_\_; etc... (Should be no more than 12. Each should be no more than 2 words long.)

[blank line]

e-mail:

Twitter: *(if you do not have Twitter, simply do not include this line)*

## EXPERIENCE

The key to an effective *Experience* section is to standardize the entries so that they are easily readable. If each position has a standard format, your credentials and accomplishments are far more likely to be read.

**POSITION:** Try to use generally understood terms (CEO, COO, Senior VP, VP, Director, Sr. Manager, Manager, etc...)

Spell out position and then include abbreviation, for example: Chief Operating Officer (COO)

**COMPANY:** *If your company is already on LinkedIn, you do not need to describe the company. A link will appear to the company's LinkedIn presence. If it is not on LinkedIn, put 1-2 lines describing the company (in general, strategic terms)*

You need to put 1-2 lines describing your position/responsibilities.

Then you need 2-4 bullets highlighting your accomplishments in that position.

+ The accomplishments need to be results-based.

+ For example: - Did "x" resulting in "y"

+ If you can quantify with *numbers* (%), growth, savings, magnitude, etc.) it draws people to the facts.

## ADDITIONAL TIPS & TRICKS

**Experience** is the only section that requires dates. In other sections, do not put anything over 20 years ago (over 10 years for IT professionals).

**Experience.** Not currently working? Use your current volunteer work as the current *Experience* entry. Be sure to include it in your *Volunteer Experience* section so your are being truthful. Include at least the last 10 years.

**Certifications.** If you are working on a certification, go ahead and put it in your profile, with "Projected completion [year]" in the License field.

**Education.** Include significant activities, such as student government, service organizations, and so forth in your *Education* section. Leadership sells! Graduate degree holders should include their project, thesis, or dissertation title in the description area, including the abstract from the study.

**Recommendations.** You should strive to gain at least two recommendations for each position you held in the last 10 years.

**Connections.** Never send a connect request using a mobile platform. Use an actual computer so you can write a personalized note in the connect request.

**Publications.** Not a best-selling author? If you have written guides or manuals for a job, op-ed pieces for newspapers, or have your own Blog, use them here!

**Personal Details.** **NEVER USE THIS SECTION!** Birthdays are appropriate for social media, but not here. For over 99% of positions, it is illegal or unethical for HR or hiring managers to ask marital status, so do not volunteer it.

**Groups.** Don't just join as many as possible—join ones that match your vision and goals...and then be active in them. Expect to give before you receive.

**Shares/Media/Posts.** One of the keys to LinkedIn effectiveness is to keep your name in front of others. You need to be share/post at least once each week to keep from becoming *invisible* on LinkedIn...

**Security.** If you get a connection request that seems odd or out of place, write a message to the requestor to see if it is legitimate or spam/scam/phishing.

Compliments of:



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