

Linked

Your handy guide



“Hi, I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.”

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Signing up

Head to www.linkedin.com and follow the steps – crafting a solid LinkedIn profile is a far bigger investment of time than getting started on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, so allow yourself enough to do it properly. This also goes for refreshing an existing profile.

Your profile

The profile is god when it comes to LinkedIn, and you should aim to get yours to ‘all-star’ status, which means your profile includes industry and location, an up-to-date current position, two previous positions, education, a minimum of three skills and at least 50 connections. With a little bit of effort, you can transform your profile from an online CV to a fantastic portfolio of your work and achievements.

Make sure you upload a relevant, recent, professional photo – profiles with a photo are 14 times more likely to be viewed, so you’d be shooting yourself in the foot if you leave it blank. You can also add a cover photo to give your page extra punch and show the world a bit more about you. And make sure you use the same name you use for work – I’m set up as Dave Musson, not David Musson, Dave M or Dave ‘riff lord’ Mussman.

Before you start tinkering with your profile, toggle the ‘notify your network’ switch to no, otherwise all of your connections will be told about every little change you make to your profile.

Your first step should be your headline. Please note that this is NOT your job title, it is a headline. A whopping 50% of your SEO comes from your headline, so use it to sell yourself and get some keywords in there too. You can change your headline as often as you like, so make sure you keep it relevant to now (as you should aim to do with your entire profile). You should also claim your custom URL – it looks better and it’s easier to share with people.

Use the ‘summary’ to sell yourself in a few sentences, with a few relevant keywords thrown in if you can – this doesn’t need to be the ins and outs of what you do at the moment, think of this more as the landing page of your own website.

Make sure your work experience sections are relevant to what you’re up to now – not only does that mean you don’t have to include EVERYTHING you do in your current role, but you should also trim back the descriptions of old roles (or even delete irrelevant ones). Also, make use of the fact that you can build portfolios for each of your roles – include links to articles you’ve written, videos you’re in, photos you’ve shot or presentation slide decks and you’ll really stand out. It’s also a far better way of showing your creativity than using the word creativity, one of the most over-used terms on LinkedIn.

Don’t ignore the skills and endorsements section – those who use this section get 13 times more profile views. Make sure the skills listed on your page are relevant and be generous in endorsing your contacts. The same goes for recommendations, write some for your connections and don’t be shy in asking for some back.

Finally, don’t forget to add personal interests, volunteer work, awards and other bits to round off your profile, as well as rejigging the order to make your profile the best it can be.

LinkedIn Profile checklist

Profile photo	Check
My profile photo is recent – i.e. no more than 2-3 years old	
I've used a profile photo is professional/the most appropriate style for my industry	
I look approachable and professional in my photo	
It definitely looks like me!	
Cover image	Check
I've uploaded a cover image that is either relevant to me, my job or continues my branding	
I've created something at 1400 x 425 pixels, using a programme such as Canva.com	
I've also remembered that the top 25 & bottom 175 pixels will be cut off	
Name, headline, contact info and custom URL	Check
I've used the same name I use for work	
I've included my full surname	
I've left out any nicknames or special characters	
My headline is tailored to my current role & those I'm most interested in networking with, as well as standing out as being about me	
My headline also includes some carefully researched keywords, relevant to my job	
I've included my location and industry	
I've included as much contact information as I can – including Twitter, telephone + blog	
I've claimed my custom URL for my profile	
Privacy and settings	Check
I've made sure people can see my profile, using the 'manage public profile settings' tab	
I've turned off my activity feed	
Summary and experience	Check
I've crafted a summary that explains who I am and what I do	
My summary contains some keywords and a slice of personality	
I've tailored the descriptions in my current job to be as relevant as possible	
There are videos/links/photos/presentations embedded in my profile to show off my work	
Where I've embedded media, I've either included 2 or 5 to satisfy my slight OCD	
I've trimmed or deleted descriptions from old jobs so I don't turn up in the wrong search results	
Skills and endorsements	Check
I've reviewed my skills and removed any irrelevant ones	
I've said that, yes, I do want to be encouraged to endorse my connections	
I've said that, yes, I want my connections to be encouraged to endorse me	
I've turned off email notifications for endorsements, for my own sanity	
And finally	Check
I've added personal interests, volunteer experience and other bits to round my profile off	
I've re-ordered my profile accordingly	

Making connections

Connecting with people on LinkedIn is really easy – just a couple of clicks. However, please take the time to tailor your connection request rather than using the default, it makes a far more positive first impression.

Tag your contacts

You can add your own custom tags to your contacts to make it easier to find people later on – just go to a contact's profile and add the tag.

Recommendations

These are really useful – give them to your connections and don't be afraid to ask for one in return! You can give out and ask for recommendations by heading to a contact's profile and following the link.

Status updates

Post regular, interesting updates, but bear in mind LinkedIn is a professional network, so there are things that might be brilliant on Facebook but not so hot for LinkedIn. More than any other network, think before you post.

Groups

There are tonnes of groups of LinkedIn, so use the search bar to find things you're interested in, or look at what groups your connections are members of and see if there are any you'd like to join too.

Once you're part of a group, don't be afraid to contribute to it. Like good posts, reply every so often (but not to everything) and maybe even share your own content too.

Don't forget to regularly clean up your groups, for example every six months, and leave any that are dead or that you're not getting value from.

Jobs

Looking for a new job? Simple, have a search on LinkedIn (or use the jobs app). Just make sure your job activity is set to private if you don't want your colleagues knowing that you're looking!

Pulse

Pulse is LinkedIn's blogging platform and it is really great – start using it! Not only do you get good viewing figures, but you get your posts seen by relevant people. Also, the posts sit on your profile, so they allow you to build a reputation as a thought leader. However, make sure they are blog posts...don't just copy and paste a company press release!

When posting something on Pulse, you'll need to add an image – the minimum dimensions are 700 x 400 pixels, which you can create in Canva.

Choose up to three relevant tags at the end of your post to help with its searchability, and don't be afraid to throw in hashtags if they're relevant.

Pulse is also a great source of learning – use the search bar to browse through blog posts and find interesting people to follow. Note, you can follow people's Pulse posts without connecting with them, which is a great way to stay up to speed with key influencers such as Richard Branson or Hootsuite's Ryan Holmes.

Apps

LinkedIn has a main app, as well as specialised ones for Pulse, Jobs and Groups – they all make the experience smoother and have some neat functionality. They're free, so give them a go!

Contacts download

You can download your network of LinkedIn contacts to a spreadsheet so you stay on top of changing contact details. To do this, go to My Network – Connections – click the cog – export LinkedIn contacts and then select your file format. A useful exercise to do every six months or so!

Regular LinkedIn tasks

Here are a few things you can do every time you visit LinkedIn

- Endorse a few of your connections
- Review your recent profile views
- Post a solid status update or, even better, write something on Pulse
- See what else is happening on Pulse, give a few likes or comments
- Check in on your groups and maybe leave a comment or two

Persist

More than any other network, the best way to get value from LinkedIn is to put more effort into it. It will frustrate you, it will take a little time to get your profile, but it's becoming increasingly hard to ignore.

Say hi!

Want to connect with me? Great! I'm at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/davemusson85>