

# BUILD YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive résumé. It 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 graduate school admissions officers. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market.

## 1. COMPLETE = MORE LIKELY TO GET NOTICED

Users with complete profiles are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn. Think broadly about all the experience you have, including summer jobs, unpaid internships, volunteer work, and student organizations. You never know what might catch someone's eye.

## 2. DISPLAY AN APPROPRIATE PHOTO

Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook. If you choose to post a photograph—and we recommend you do—select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Party photos, cartoon avatars, and cute pictures of your puppy do not fit in the professional environment of LinkedIn.

## 3. DEVELOP A PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter—concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Present it in short blocks of text, or bullet points, for easy reading.

## 4. CRAFT AN INFORMATIVE HEADLINE

Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Examples include “Student, National University” or “Recent honors grad seeking marketing position.”

## 5. SHOW OFF YOUR EDUCATION

Be sure to include information about all institutions you have 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 strong GPA and any honors or awards you have won.

## 6. FILL YOUR “SPECIALTIES” SECTION WITH KEYWORDS

“Specialties” is the place to include 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 in the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

## 7. FILL IN YOUR EXPERIENCE

Keep your network informed about your past positions and professional accomplishments. Take the time to fill in bullet descriptions of what you did in each of your positions as well.

FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES VISIT:  
[STUDENTS.LINKEDIN.COM](https://students.linkedin.com)

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## LINKEDIN QUICK TIPS

### 1. SHOW YOUR CONNECTEDNESS

Joining LinkedIn Groups and displaying the group badges on your profile are the perfect ways to fill out the professionalism of your profile, and show that you have the desire to connect to people with common interests. Start with the Hope College Alumni Association—alums love to connect with students. Then find volunteer organizations or professional associations you already belong to. As a member, you can comment on discussions, find exclusive job listings, and meet new people!

### 2. USE YOUR INBOX

Contrary to popular belief, networking doesn't mean reaching out to strangers. The best networks begin with those you know and trust, and then grow based on personal referrals. Start building your LinkedIn network by connecting to friends, relatives, internship colleagues, and professionals you know in the "real world." Connect to people who can speak to your professional work abilities, and people whom you feel confident endorsing their professional work abilities.

### 3. SHARE YOUR WORK

Another 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 professional website, blog, or online portfolio. Through Applications, you can share a PowerPoint presentation or store a downloadable version of your résumé.

### 4. CLAIM YOUR UNIQUE URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name in a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to "public" and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: [www.linkedin.com/in/yourname](http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname)). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature.

### 5. DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before an informational interview, a job interview, or a networking get-together, use LinkedIn to learn about the background of interests of the people you are scheduled to meet. Access Company Pages to research organizations and their employees, and use Advanced Search to find people you are meeting or identify potential employers.

### 6. LEND A (VIRTUAL) HAND

As you build connections and group memberships, think about what you can do to support other people. Comment on a classmate's status update, forward a job listing that fits the criteria of a friend, or write a recommendation for a summer job colleague.

### 7. COLLECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Nothing builds credibility like third-party endorsements. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers, and professional mentors. Often a good way to receive them is to give them!

### 8. UPDATE YOUR STATUS REGULARLY

Update your status to stay on other people's radars and enhance your professional image. 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.

### 9. STEP AWAY FROM THE COMPUTER...

There's a perception that young people are only comfortable communicating online, so be sure to support your online networking with real human contact. Set up phone calls, attend live events, and send snail mail notes to people you interact with on LinkedIn. Remember that online methods should supplement (not replace) in-person relationship building.