

JOB HUNTING ADVICE

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15 ways to pimp your LinkedIn profile

LinkedIn has fast become a necessity in any job hunt, whether you're using recruitment consultants or going it alone. It's the biggest and best social media networking tool for professionals and, love it or hate it, it's where any potential employer will go to check out your credentials. So, here are our top 15 tips on how to get the most out of your LinkedIn profile during a job hunt.

1. Add a photo

Having no photo creates suspicion. Everyone has at least one good photo of themselves – make sure it goes up, and make it a professional looking one – this isn't Facebook!

2. 100% completion

Completing your LinkedIn profile to 100% will increase your search ranking and will give employers a good impression. This is really simple but can be time consuming. Do use the experience

section to explain what each company you worked for did and what you did there.

Remember to include any board, advisory or voluntary positions. For the qualification section, do add in context to each qualification you quote, such as why you went there and what value it may or may not bring to your professional or business life.

HR people and recruiters use LinkedIn for candidate searching and they do it by key words so make sure you put buzz words in here. The location is very important as well, as recruiters look for potential candidates close to the client's site first.

3. No mistakes

Online first impressions count just as much as face-to-face first impressions. It's also even easier to make assumptions about someone when viewing their online persona rather than face-to-face.

Make sure that your profile, as well as being error-free, is succinct and articulate. Spend as much time working on your LinkedIn profile as you would your CV.

4. Who do you want to be seen as?

Every time you appear on LinkedIn your headline or personal tag line goes with you. Make sure you brand your headline as what you want to be seen as by the online community, and especially potential recruiters. It is better to brand yourself for the job you want rather than the job you have. The reason? Recruiters will often search for a specific job title when looking for potential candidates.

5. Write your elevator pitch

The summary box in your profile needs to be your personal elevator pitch but targeted at the people you want to see it – i.e. recruiters. Your elevator pitch needs to be why you are different and the value you can bring to an organisation.

Make sure you include some of the keywords which recruiters are likely to be searching for. Use the second paragraph – specialties, to list your specialties as this is a good opportunity to add in keywords as recruiters search on this section.

6. Be found

Search Engine Optimisation is very important on LinkedIn so make sure your profile is full of keywords that will attract a recruiter's attention. Look through job postings and LinkedIn profiles that appeal to you and incorporate some of the same words or phrases.

In addition to job and industry-specific words, include leadership terms (Director, Manager) and action words (managed, designed).

7. Make it consistent

Consistency just like integrity and reliability is very important in the online world. Make sure the messages on your website, Twitter biography, Facebook page and other online sites you maintain a profile on are all consistent. For example you should use the same avatar for each online profile.

Recruiters will do online searches for you BEFORE they decide whether to call you and yes, they will check out Facebook so make sure you either have your privacy settings locked down, or that there's nothing there that a potential employer wouldn't like!

8. Connect more

Make a habit out of asking to connect with people you deal with on a daily basis, as you never know when these contacts will come in handy. Try to connect with as many people as possible in order to create more awareness and to sell yourself.

Get involved in groups and discussions to help find more useful contacts and improve your profile. Ask questions, answer questions, link up news articles and other relevant information. If you add value to others, you will be noticed by people in your industry.

“RECRUITERS WILL CHECK YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE”

9. Get Recommendations

Having other professionals vouch for you is very powerful. Ask your counterparts (i.e. your customer or supplier), colleagues, your manager and even friends if it is relevant.

Getting people to do this for you is not difficult, it's all about timing – the time to ask is just when you have done somebody a favour.

10. Research people and companies

Use LinkedIn to your advantage and always check up on the recruiter you work with, hiring managers in the company and even potential future colleagues. When you see a job you like on another job board, use LinkedIn as a company research tool.

Check out the LinkedIn company page of any organisation where you'd like to work and click "Follow company." That organisation's activities (job postings, hires, announcements) will appear on your homepage and alert you to potential opportunities.

On the company pages you can find out what a company does, how many people they employ, how many connected employees etc. For instance, you can see if they have hired or fired recently as well as where these people came from/went to. If you see a wave of professionals jumping ship, you might want to reconsider that offer.

11. Personalise your LinkedIn URL

There is an option of having your name in the URL of your public profile. For instance, instead of www.linkedin.com/67w84rj32wef09 you can change it to www.linkedin.com/in/johnsmith. This will make it easier for you to be found both within LinkedIn and Google searches.

As well as your LinkedIn URL you need to think about other websites that you want your profile to display. Do take the time to put the actual title of the link in rather than leaving them as 'My company' or 'My website'. Do include links to any profiles you have on social media sites where you maintain a professional presence.

12. Visibility settings

Be aware of these. Every time you look at a profile, this person can see that you paid a visit. It is recommended you change this setting to invisible as checking out a potential interviewer 5 times in one day may look a bit odd.

“MAKE A HABIT OF CONNECTING”

13. Make sure you are open for business

If you are on LinkedIn and using it to look for a job you DO want to be found. Common sense really! Make sure your contact settings are set to include; career opportunities, consulting offers, new ventures, job inquiries and reference requests.

Make sure your profile is public and as suggested earlier, customise your public profile URL so that it contains your name.

14. Update your status regularly

To build your credibility and stay on people's radar during your job hunt, regularly update your status on LinkedIn and other social networks. Regularly tell potential employers and recruiters what you have achieved, or are doing in the course of your normal working life.

For example, tell people about great client wins, new recommendations, product/service launches or networking meetings you are attending. Recruiters are looking for evidence that you are keeping your LinkedIn profile active and up to date. LinkedIn can be your very own micro-PR machine. Do remember to update the content in your LinkedIn profile regularly. For example, you should refresh your profile at least once a quarter.

You are more likely to show up in the LinkedIn updates if you regularly update your status and general profile. If you are actively (and openly) looking for a new role, then sprinkle your updates with phrases such as this: "I'm looking for a new Senior Account Manager position in London. Who do you know who may be hiring?"

15. Persist (without pestering)

Sending follow-up messages through LinkedIn can help you stand out from other candidates. Every time you send someone a message through LinkedIn, the recruiter or hiring manager can easily click over to your profile and check out your credentials.

Good luck!



There are loads more helpful guides, hints and tips for your job search in the candidate area of our website, and our blog. You'll find it all at

www.stopgap.com.au