LinkedIn Profile Optimization Checklist
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Your LinkedIn profile is divided into these sections. Each section has additional information included.

Intro
About
Featured
Activity (this is created automatically by Linked In)
Background
Skills
Accomplishments
Additional Information
Supported Languages

1. Intro Section

- **Your profile picture**
LinkedIn says profiles with photos get 21x more views, and 9x more connection requests.

  - ☐ Headshot
  - ☐ Smiling
  - ☐ Professional
  - ☐ High resolution/quality
  - ☐ Should allow people to recognize you when they see you

Test your profile photo to see which one makes the best first impression
https://www.photofeeler.com/

- **Customize your public profile URL (Optional).** The address should look something like: *www.linkedin.com/in/yourname*. This will make it easier for you to include it on business cards, resumes and email signatures.

NOTE: If you change the URL, there is no automatic forwarding from the old URL to the new URL. The old URL no longer functions. So if you've linked to your current URL from a lot of places, and it would be a royal pain to try and update them all, then it isn't worth changing.

- **Your banner space** (background image) on your LinkedIn profile should:

  - ☐ Reinforce your personal brand (which may be tied strongly to a corporate brand).
  - ☐ Make you look more impressive than if you left the default blue in place.
  - ☐ Be easy to understand (if a casual visitor has to spend more than 2-3 seconds processing it, it's too complicated).
  - ☐ Use for branding or a call to action

- **Your title** (headline)

On Linked, many people don't look past your title.

If your title says what you do, and it happens to match the need of the person looking at your title, then you've made it much more likely they'll contact you.

- ☐ What do you do?
- ☐ Who do you do it for?
- ☐ Be specific
- ☐ What makes you different or unique?
- ☐ What outcome will I get (what's in it for me)?
- ☐ If you have the space, include keywords for search
- ☐ If you must use your official job title, tack it onto the end

- **Other Intro Section Info**

LinkedIn has what is essentially a form for the Intro section.

- ☐ Are all relevant sections filled out?
- ☐ Be sure and fill in the Contact Info section so people can reach you
- ☐ Check your contact info in settings to make sure it's up to date.
- ☐ Advanced Tip: In the Contact Info section, there is a place to enter information about up to 3 web sites. For each web site, you have the option to classify the website as Personal, Company, etc. and LinkedIn will automatically label it that way.

  If you select "Other", you have the ability to label the description yourself. So, in my profile, I have selected "Other" and labelled it as "Swartz Consulting, LLC company website" instead of "Company".
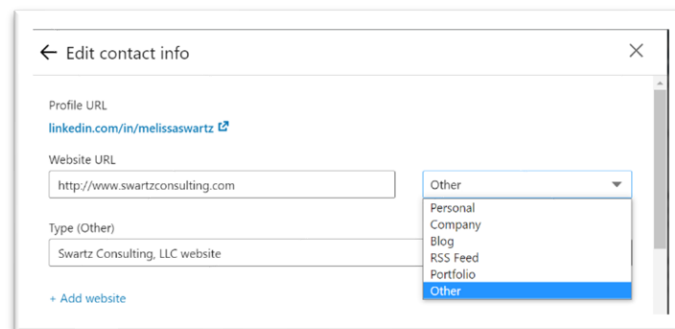
2. The About section

Make the first three lines count; that's all people see unless they click on "See More". What content (i.e. words, phrases, ideas, stories) will trigger interest and get your ideal audience to expand your bio to read the rest of it? Talk about how you will help your ideal customer reach their goals. Have a CTA (Call To Action).

- ☐ Do your first three lines capture attention and make the reader want to know more?
- ☐ Tell a story that paints the picture you want to convey to your prospects
- ☐ Call out your prospects and the pain points you solve early
- ☐ How will you help your ideal customer reach their goals?

- ☐ Highlight your differentiators
- ☐ Close with a call to action (Tell people what to do next--Call you? Go to your website?)
- ☐ Use a conversational tone
- ☐ Write in the first person
- ☐ Use short paragraphs (1-2 lines each)
- ☐ Help people find you (use keywords for search)

3. Featured

Use this section to demonstrate your expertise. This section allows you to pin content in a specific place to call it to the attention of people who see your profile. You can feature any of the following:

- Posts (content posted to LinkedIn)
- Articles (published on LinkedIn)
- Links to other web content
- Media (photos, documents, presentations, videos, podcasts)

Be aware that two featured items will fully display, while a third is only partially displayed without scrolling. Other featured items can only be seen if the viewer scrolls to see them.

Your featured content should:

- ☐ Be consistent with the image and messaging that your profile represents
- ☐ Provide valuable information to your viewer
- ☐ Demonstrate your expertise, experience or thought leadership.
- ☐ Help the right people find you (use keywords for search)

4. Activity

Your activity is visible. If you haven't published any articles on LinkedIn, this box shows your last four activities, which may be sharing or liking other people's content. Your brand doesn't get the same exposure if you've only published posts and not articles. In fact, other people's brands may get the attention.

You can gain some control over this space by publishing an article on LinkedIn. The last article you wrote (whether recently or years ago) will take up half of the box. This prominent placement highlights content that's central to you and your brand. Here's an example:
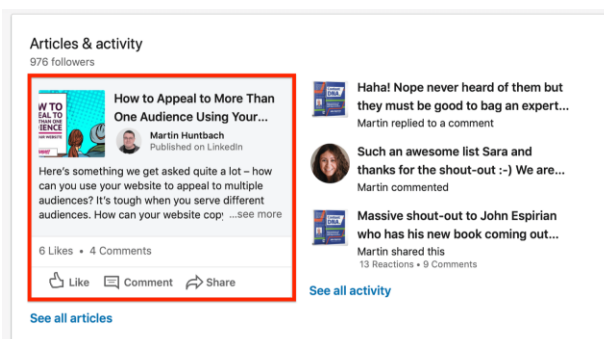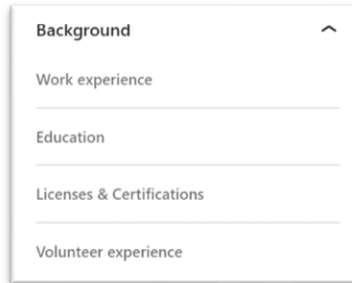
To gain some control over what shows up in your Activity section:

☐ Write an article on a topic that is important to your audience
☐ Help people find you (use keywords for search both within LinkedIn and outside of it)

5. Background Section

This section includes 4 parts:

- Work experience
- Education
- Licenses and Certifications
- Volunteer Experience

The two most important sections are Work Experience and Education.

- Work experience

Most people list the jobs they have held in reverse chronological order. They typically include the name of the company, the position they held, and a short description of what they did.

You can up your game by making this section relate to your current business. Add stories to make your profile stand out. Include things such as:

☐ What a previous job taught you and how you use it today
☐ What you were hired to do
☐ What challenges you faced doing it
☐ How you overcame those challenges to achieve success
☐ Concrete achievements

You want to come off as competent and sincere. Don't try to impress with a big show or a bunch of fluff.

- Education

Most people provide a list of schools and degrees obtained. You can liven up this section by:

☐ Describing what the school and degree mean to you
☐ Telling how you have used what you learned
☐ Describing challenges you experienced and how you overcame them
☐ Adding links to videos, presentations, published papers or documents if relevant
☐ Providing lessons learned or what you would do differently if you could

This gives your viewers insight into your personality and demonstrates your authenticity.

- Licenses and Certifications

If you have professional certifications or licenses, list them here to add to your credibility.

- Volunteer Experience

Use this section as opportunity for you to demonstrate that you're well-rounded. It's also an opportunity to make an emotional connection to a prospective customer.

Since this is more about a potential emotional connection, be sure to include things like:

- ☐ Why you volunteer for that cause or charity
- ☐ What you have learned
- ☐ Challenges you experienced and how you overcame them

6. Skills and Endorsements

Customize this section by selecting your top 3 skills. Select them based on:

- ☐ Number of endorsements (this reinforces your expertise)
- ☐ Relevance to your business goals and the services you provide
- ☐ How closely they reflect what you want to be known for?

7. Recommendations

- ☐ Do you have at least 3 Recommendations?

From Josh Steimle, author of [60 Days to LinkedIn Mastery](#):

> Most people have zero recommendations. If they've really got it together, they may have two or three.
>
> It's rare to see a profile with more than five solid recommendations.
>
> If you have 20+ strong recommendations that go into detail about what type of person you are and why you're great at what you do, you set yourself apart from the vast majority.
>
> Ways to get recommendations:
>
> 1. **Give recommendations.** When you give someone a recommendation, LinkedIn invites them to write one for you, and since you just gave them something of value, they'll feel inclined to return the favor. Win-win.
> 2. **Ask for recommendations.** You should have a recommendation from every employer, manager, boss, or client you've ever had. If they don't give you one (they may not know how), ask for it.
>   Hint: The best time to ask is when you've done something that made them happy, because if they can mention something specific you've accomplished in the recommendation they write for you, then this is gold.

8. Accomplishments

This is a section you can add to your profile. It includes subsections for:

- Publications
- Patents
- Courses
- Projects
- Honors and Awards
- Test Scores
- Languages
- Organizations
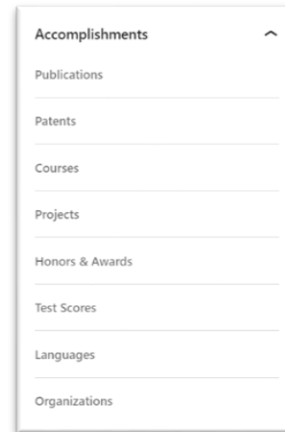
Only some of these sections would likely be relevant for your profile.

☐ Projects could be used to provide case study information.
☐ Honors and awards can build your credibility.
☐ Adding a profile in another language can help you be found by those who speak that language. You do not have to be fluent in that language.
☐ Organizations can be used to highlight your membership in professional organizations that are relevant to your credibility and contribute to your image. This section includes the option to list positions held within the organization and a description of the organization itself and/or your involvement.

9. Additional Information

This section does not add any information to your profile. It is a form you can fill out to request recommendations.

10. Interests

This section is automatically populated by LinkedIn. It shows your membership in groups and highly visible people you follow. It does give viewers insight into your interests and possibly your political or religious views.

Action Items:

☐ Review your profile and make sure that it tells a potential customer what they will gain from you
☐ Check your photo and update if needed
☐ Create or update your banner
☐ Update your title/ headline language to reflect benefits you provide
☐ Check your contact information and update if needed
☐ Check out these profiles for ideas
https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshbturner/
https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshuasteimle/