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LinkedIn Profile Best Practices for Job Seekers:

1. Customize your randomly-assigned LinkedIn URL into one that has your name in it (ideally linkedin.com/yourname).
2. Choose a clear, friendly, and appropriately professional image, and pop that baby up there. Not sure what “appropriately professional” means? Take a look around at what the people in your target company, industry sector, or business level are wearing. Match that. (Pro tip: If you can show yourself in action in your photo, do it).
3. Write a Headline That Rocks: Your headline doesn’t have to be your job title and company—in fact, especially if you’re looking for jobs, it shouldn’t be. Instead, use that space to succinctly showcase your specialty, value proposition, or your “so what?” The more specific you can be about what sets you apart from the competition, the better.
4. Use Your Target Job Descriptions to Your Advantage in your LinkedIn profile: Take a look at the job descriptions of the positions you’re after, and dump them into a word cloud tool like Wordle. See those words that stand out? They’re likely what recruiters are searching for when they’re looking for people like you. Make sure those same words and phrases are sprinkled throughout your summary and experience sections of your LinkedIn profile.
5. Don’t Waste the Summary Space: Ideally, your summary should be around 3–5 short paragraphs long, preferably with a bulleted section in the middle. It should walk the reader through your work passions, key skills, unique qualifications, and a list of the various industries you’ve had exposure to over the years.
6. Use Numbers Right Up Front: Much like the rest of your resume, you’ll want to highlight past results in your summary. When possible, include numbers and case studies that prove success. Social media consultant and speaker Wayne Breitbarth, for example, quickly establishes credibility with his audience by stating in his summary’s second sentence: ‘I have helped more

than 40,000 businesspeople—from entry level to CEO—understand how to effectively use LinkedIn.’ Never underestimate the power of a few key stats to impress a reader.

7. **Avoid Buzzwords Like the Plague:** What do the words responsible, creative, effective, analytical, strategic, patient, expert, organizational, driven, and innovative have in common? They’re the most overused buzzwords on all of LinkedIn. Come on—we know you can be more creative!

8. **Treat Your Profile Like Your Resume:** Your resume isn’t just a list of job duties (or, at least, it shouldn’t be)—it’s a place to highlight your best accomplishments. Same goes for your LinkedIn profile: Make sure your experience section is fleshed out with bullet points that describe what you did, how well you did it, and who it impacted.

9. **Include a Current Job Entry, Even When Unemployed:** If you've only listed the past positions you’ve held in the experience section but show nothing current, you’ll probably get missed in most searches. Why? Because most recruiting professionals exclusively use the "current title" box to search for candidates; otherwise they’d have to sort through thousands of candidates who held a certain role as far back as 20 or more years ago. The simple workaround, if you’re unemployed, is to create a dummy job listing in the current section that includes the job title(s) you're targeting—‘Full-Time Student/Financial Analyst in Training’—followed by a phrase like ‘In Transition’ or ‘Seeking New Opportunity’ in the Company Name box.

10. **Add Multimedia to Your LinkedIn Summary:** A picture truly is worth a 1,000 words, especially when it comes to showcasing your work. LinkedIn lets you add photos, videos, and slideshow presentations to your profile summary. So instead of just talking about your work, you can show examples. Or show yourself in action. Or share a presentation. Click ‘Edit profile,’ scroll down to your summary, then click on the box symbol, then ‘add file.’ And, you can do the same thing for each of your work experience sections in your LinkedIn profile. So, use this to your advantage: Add your company websites, projects you’ve worked on, articles you’ve drafted, or anything else that can provide a more "multimedia look" at your work.

11. **Add Projects, Volunteer Experiences, or Languages:** Do you speak Mandarin? Have a project management certification? Do you volunteer for Dress for Success every weekend? Adding these “additional” profile features (listed on the left when you’re editing your profile) is a great way to showcase your unique skills and experiences and stand out from the crowd.

12. Request One LinkedIn Recommendation a Month: When someone says, “You did a great job on that project!” ask him or her to take a snapshot of that success by writing a recommendation about you on LinkedIn. And don’t be afraid to specify what you’d like the recommender to focus on. Getting generic recommendations that say, “Joe was great to work with” aren’t very helpful—but something specific, like “Joe’s contributions on the project enabled us to increase forecasted savings by 5% over our original plan” will really showcase your strengths. Make a strategic plan for your recommendations: approach different people and suggest particular skills or experiences that you would like them to highlight in their recommendations about you.

13. Manage Your Endorsements: Endorsements can be a great way to show off your skills—as long as your profile isn’t overloaded with too many to really send the right message. The secret to making them work for you is keeping your skills updated: As you transition between careers, develop new skills, or take on new responsibilities, drop outdated skills from your profile and add the ones you really want to be known for. Now, when connections land on your page, they’ll only see the most relevant skills.

Most recruiters won’t care whether you have 1,000 endorsements, experts say. They’re regarded as the confetti of the digital world: Scattered too randomly and, as such, they lose meaning. Recruiters are actually looking for thoughtful recommendations from a well-respected peer or former employer

14. Become an Author: LinkedIn allows all users to write and publish their work on the platform. Share your perspective about what’s going on in your field, weigh-in on a recent industry development, or show off your skills as a writer. It’s a great way to get noticed. Or Add Your Blog: If you have a WordPress blog, it is highly recommended that you feed your blog into your LinkedIn profile (unless, of course, the content isn’t appropriate for a LinkedIn page.) To enable this setting, Select More in the main nav bar and Select Applications. From there, choose the WordPress application and enter the link to your feed. The blog will then appear in your profile and will update each time a new post is added.

15. Make Sure People Can Find You: Don’t forget to add your email address (or blog, or Twitter handle, or anywhere else you’d like to be found) to the contact information section of your resume. You’d be surprised how many people leave this off!

16. Be Excited: At the end of the day, the most exciting people to hire are the people who are the most excited about what they do. So, make sure your LinkedIn profile shows your enthusiasm. Join and participate in groups related to your field of expertise. Use your status line to announce stuff you're doing related to your field. Share interesting articles or news. Connect with the leaders in your industry. Fly your cheerleader flag.

17. Avoid Age Discrimination: Older job-seekers need to walk a fine line. Unless you made the cover of "Time" or discovered a solar galaxy, experience has a shelf life on LinkedIn. There's no need to wax lyrical about a job that's more than 10 years old. And those who graduated from college a decade ago may want to exclude the date they graduated. Your college graduation date will "age you" and although ageism is illegal, it's happening all the time. On the other hand, if you're applying for a job as CEO of a Fortune 500 company and you graduated in 1986, it's okay to leave the date.