

How to Build the Ideal Student Profile on LinkedIn

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Job searching adheres very closely to that saying, “it’s not what you know, it’s who you know...and who knows you.” Many job openings are filled by current employee referrals. And building a strong network takes time. With that in mind, do not wait until your senior year, or after graduation to start building your network.

As the most powerful online networking tool, LinkedIn is a great networking tool. Before you can start, you need to build a LinkedIn profile.

Here are 10 tips to start building and updating a great student profile on LinkedIn.

1. Pick an Appropriate Profile Photo

LinkedIn is *not* your Facebook. When you select your picture—and we suggest you actually upload a photo—take the professional route. This doesn’t mean you need to go hire a professional in your community (unless you want to). It simply means you need to find a friend or family member with a digital camera to take a photo of you in front of a solid background. Your photo serves as the first opportunity for people to see you as a real person. Make it count.

2. Brand Yourself with a Personal Headline

What do you do? Who do you do it for? Are you a student? PR Intern? Tell your audience, in this case, the LinkedIn community. Think of this as your own personal branding slogan. This short headline will provide insight into who you are, what you do, and for whom you do it. Craft something unique to you that is also relevant to your industry.

3. Craft a Professional Summary

This summary is an extension of your personal headline. Expand on the information you want your contacts, new and old, and those who find you through search to know about you. That’s what LinkedIn is for. Be concise and confident in your goals and capability. Communicate the value you bring to your market, customers, and clients. The fact that you’re a student changes nothing.

4. Share Your Work Experiences and/or School Projects

Why should I hire you? Why should I recommend you to a friend? This is your opportunity to show me—aka the LinkedIn community—just *why* you’re a valuable asset. Are you a writer? Include examples of your writing. Perhaps you’re a designer and have an online portfolio.

Whatever your field of study, be linkable to your work. Include URLs and direct people through these links to your personal website, blog, or Twitter-feed (assuming you’re keeping things appropriate).

5. Be Keyword Specific in Your Profile

In your professional summary, be sure to include any keywords that are relevant to your capabilities and experiences. These are used in much the same way websites use keywords for SEO. The more searchable keywords you have in your summary, the higher you’ll appear in search results. Find people who currently hold similar positions in your desired field and see what common keywords/phrases they’re using.

6. Claim a Personal URL

LinkedIn has made it their mission to be the first result in a Google Search when someone googles your name. You

can help this matter along by claiming a personal URL. If your name is John Smith, you may have to get a little bit more creative with middle initials.

To claim a personal URL, go to the LinkedIn homepage: “*Profile > Edit Profile*” and use the “edit” button below your photo to create a personal URL.



7. Show Off Your Education and Volunteering

Here’s your chance, valedictorian. Show off how awesome of a student you’ve been or your countless involvement in organizations. Perhaps you’ve volunteered at six nursing homes or shelters in the last year. Whatever it may be, use your efforts from school, volunteer projects and organizations to improve your student profile on LinkedIn. Don’t be timid. Make sure to include your responsibilities concerning school projects and organizations.

8. Utilize Group Badges

Having the ideal student profile isn’t *just* about having badges on your profile. It’s about *how* you connect with the people in those groups.

Having group badges on your profile will show others that you’re connected. Moreover, group badges show others that you’re *willing* to connect. Your willingness to connect lends to the idea that you want to learn from other people. When you want to learn from other people, you don’t look like a know-it-all. People will make assumptions about you. Make the assumptions count.

9. Endorse and Be Endorsed in Return

You’ve spent hours creating a detail oriented profile in an attempt to communicate value. In creating a detail orientated profile, you’ve made sure to present the value you’ve brought from past employers and the values future employers may expect from you.

Now, you need someone to second the motion...figuratively speaking. Endorsements are more informal than recommendations, but they are important in building the ideal student profile on LinkedIn. Endorsements allow legitimacy to be brought to the value you’re claiming to have. Endorsing someone’s skills on LinkedIn is not complicated. Simply, click “Endorse [this skill]” on an individual’s profile.

10. Collect and Give Recommendations

If a former employer is active on LinkedIn, ask former managers, co-workers, and colleagues if they’re willing to write you a recommendation based on your work with them.

Recommendations reinforce the values mentioned in your profile. Also, if one area of your profile is not as compelling as you’d like, recommendations can strengthen a profile.

11. Ask for Help

Reed career services is available to help with your LinkedIn profile as well as your resume, coverletters, all the details of your job search. We have a LinkedIn station in our office and can take your picture right there. Just give us a call, 503.777.7550.