



## Improve Your LinkedIn Profile With These Tips

I was recently asked by several people, "How should I create my LinkedIn Profile so that it shows who I really am and what I really offer...and have people pay attention to what it says?" Whether you are a business owner, working for a company, or even looking for a new job, there are certain elements that are essential to have in your profile. Being 'socially validated' goes a long way in the business world.

### Ask Yourself

Does your headline create interest for your target market or ideal client, and compel them to read on? There are some simple questions you'll find helpful in building your headline:

- (1) What value do you provide to your clients, your company, your potential employer?
- (2) What PROBLEM do you solve for them (or have you solved in the past)?
- (3) Who do you provide this value or solution for?

While your professional headline is perhaps the #1 most important part of your profile, 90% of LinkedIn users put only their job title. Remember, the person looking at your profile is tuned to WIIFM (What's In It For Me!).

### Marketing Mistakes—Headlines

I can appreciate that it is difficult to look at yourself as others do, in any situation. We think they can read our minds, and know what we mean. Not true. One of the hugest mistakes anyone can make in their job title headline is to simply list their job title.

For instance, a Real Estate Agent could say that they "Match Families With Their Dream Home". Or a Teacher could say something like "Transforming the Way Children Grow and Learn". These titles are a bit more interesting. Take for example mine: Marilyn Dayton, "Marketing & Social Media Strategist, The Business Transformer."

Aren't these people you would want to learn more about?

### Profile Summary

Toward the top of your LinkedIn page, there is a section where you can write a short paragraph to summarize the highlights of your professional life. This is where you make that strong first impression...or not. Ask yourself if your profile summary compels or inspires a prospect to take action and contact you. Here are some guidelines to help you:

- (1) What value you provide/have provided in business with clients or your company?
- (2) Who do you provide that value to?
- (3) A little about yourself to make you "human"
- (4) A clear call to action or next step that is NOT a sales pitch.

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Make sure to add in your passion here. For instance, "I thrive in challenging marketing roles." Also, don't hesitate to add in the edge you have over others in your field, such as "My math degree gives me an edge over most folks in the industry who rely too much on their intuition." You may think that "gee, isn't this a bit strong and tooting your own horn?" Of course, and this is where you put it! You are who you are, what you have learned, what you have done and contributed to help others. Tell them!

## Recommendations & Connections

This can be a powerful tool to give that strong impression that you are and have done what you just said. Colleagues, clients, managers all take the time to publicly acknowledge something positive about you...SO important. It is a third party endorsement for you...Yes, I am who I said I am, look who says so too. And your professional network, all of those that you have connected with over the years, is helpful for two reasons. First, it gives a potential client or recruiter an easy way to find a common connection to use as a reference, and second, it gives you an easy way to ask for a warm introduction to a company you are interested in now or in the future.

## Fill In ALL The Blanks

There is no explanation needed here...you should have your complete work history listed on your profile. And for your Education, many people make the mistake of being selective what they add here, thinking education is not relevant in their current career or if they are afraid their education "ages" them. If you are worried that you are 'too old' for consideration or will be labeled as 'too young', leave out the years on your education section.

## Bonus—Articles

LinkedIn has an easy way for you to write and publish articles. These articles are highlighted at the top of your LinkedIn profile, and if you use a good image, they undoubtedly get noticed and read. These articles are a great way for someone to see you in action. You can demonstrate your ability to clearly communicate your thoughts and prove that you are knowledgeable about an industry related subject.

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