

HOW TO

# CREATE A LinkedIn PROFILE AND BUILD YOUR NETWORK

REVISED 2023



**McGill**

**CaPS**

Career Planning Service

Service de planification de carrière

# LINKEDIN PROFILE GUIDE

## WHY LINKEDIN?

The social media platform most associated with one's professional life is LinkedIn. In the world of recruitment, it has been recognized as the best online platform for employers to find candidates. This means that employers are increasingly searching for potential candidates' profiles online in addition to reviewing traditional applications.

2.5 million people on LinkedIn are hired through their connections every year. Over 10 million employers post approximately 7.5 million jobs per month and 92% of recruiters use LinkedIn daily.

LinkedIn is also one of the best tools to expand your professional network, research careers/industries and connect with alumni.

LinkedIn should be used as a professional portfolio as it allows you the space to outline your career goals, experience, achievements, and value you can offer a company.

## TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

### Customize your LinkedIn URL

- The default URL that LinkedIn provides you with will usually include your name along with a seemingly random sequence of numbers and letters.
- Take the time to customize the URL by clicking on the "edit your public profile & URL" tab. This will ensure that it looks more professional, especially if you are going to be using the URL on your CV.

### Start with a Professional Photo

- Profiles with a photo have 21 times more profile views and 9 times more connection requests than those without.
- Your head should take up about 60% of the frame and remember to smile.
- Ensure that the background is not distracting.

### Stand Out with a Creative and Informative Headline

- Think of this as your professional slogan! Creating a customized headline will help you stand out as LinkedIn will automatically generate a headline for you based on your most recent experience or education.

- Do not use this section to advertise that you're just generally seeking new opportunities or challenges. Instead, go to your account privacy settings and switch on the feature that lets recruiters know you're open to being contacted.
- Include one or two things you would want someone to know about you without having to view your profile. This can include areas you specialize in, skills that you have or jobs you aspire to obtain after you have completed your degree.
- Consider the company, job or industry that you will be targeting in the near future.

Examples:

- "A client-centered marketing student and social media branding specialist"
- "Experienced JavaScript and C# programmer"
- "Recent graduate with a focus in economics and marketing"
- "Analytical math student who loves making sense of large datasets"

### Summarizing Your Experience and Interests

- Use the About section to provide prospective readers with an overview that sells your experiences and highlights your skills and passion for your area of interest. Write it in the first person and use it to connect with your target market.
- This section should focus on your professional/academic story and achievements. If you don't have direct experience then you will want to focus on your strengths, interests, and career aspirations.
- When writing your summary, try to focus on making the first two lines the most engaging as they will be the only lines to show up on your main profile page. You will have to entice potential viewers with those two first lines to make them click "show more." Try using a personal anecdote, story, or humor to draw people into reading through your summary in more detail.
- Try to quantify your experience if possible. Numbers will draw the reader's eye and make the experience you're describing much more concrete and results oriented.

Example:

"As a lifelong student-athlete, the ability to successfully combine academics and athletics demands a high-level of diligence, sacrifice, and humility. I have taken pride and done my best to make sure the work, the game, and the job are done well.

As I prepare to graduate with a degree in Business and consider my experience on and off the field, in the classroom and among my peers, I know my optimistic view of the world, focus and follow-through will serve me well in a professional work environment. I have been challenged to think on my feet and act with confidence.

Last summer, I was involved in a study abroad program where I was able to directly see how business works on a global level. Due to the language barrier, I was also able to strengthen my communication skills and came to realize that I aspire to travel with my work some day.

Throughout the past 3 years, I have learned so much during my time at McGill University where I continue to grow and develop my knowledge. At the end of the day, I aspire to be the most successful and the best version of myself."

## Highlighting Your Experience

- After completing the About section, describing your experiences should be next on your list. Remember that LinkedIn is a space that should be more descriptive than your CV.
- Try to summarize your role in a short paragraph or with bullet points that focuses on your tasks, achievements and results of your work wherever possible. Incorporate industry key words and phrases throughout your experiences when possible.
- You can also include relevant volunteer experience in this section so that it appears at the top of your profile.

## Education

- This section should include any activities, societies, or clubs you have taken part in during your studies.
- If these experiences have been larger roles and would be interesting to a potential employer, include them in the experience or volunteer section.

## Projects

- Projects can be from either professional, volunteer, classroom, or academic roles.
- Include salient details, industry keywords, and any technical skills you used while completing the project. If appropriate, you can also connect your team members in your project description.

## Recommendations

- As you complete roles or projects, you can ask for recommendations from your supervisors or fellow team members.
- Most people will not think of offering to write these for you, so asking is your best bet if you think the experience working with that person was positive.
- You can also offer to write recommendations for others. Potential viewers of your profile will be able to see the recommendations you have written for fellow team members and colleagues, as well as the ones you have received.

## Skills & Endorsements

- Populate this section with skills that reflect your expertise, competencies, and abilities. These can include both hard skills (e.g. SPSS) and soft skills (e.g. Leadership).
- Try to be specific and list skills that are important in your industry or future role.
- LinkedIn allows you to add up to 50 skills to your profile. You can build this section slowly as you progress through your studies and career.
- If you are unsure of which words to use at this point, one way of starting is to review job postings that interest you and look for the skills that employers are using to describe the role.

- Once you have created your skills list, you can ask former/present co-workers, classmates or friends to endorse you. It is a simple click of the mouse to endorse someone so typically people will be willing to help.
- You can also endorse people in your network for skills they possess. This may in turn lead to them endorsing you as well.

### Remaining Sections

- Try to complete as many remaining sections as possible. LinkedIn members with complete profile accounts are 40 times more likely to receive opportunities through the platform.
- Fill out the courses section with a selection of classes you have taken to date that relate best to your field of interest.
- List the languages you are able to communicate in, as well as the proficiency level.
- Add any honours or awards you have received.

### Security Features

There are precautions you should keep in mind when using this platform. For example, when searching for jobs online, be wary of recruiters who ask you to send personal information (other than your CV), as well as requests to wire or transfer money for an application or training fee.

The link below will provide you with more information on how to stay safe on LinkedIn.

<https://safety.linkedin.com/staying-safe>

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## BUILDING YOUR LINKEDIN NETWORK AND CONNECTING TO OPPORTUNITIES

A strong professional network is the key to finding more job opportunities, as well as gaining insight into a variety of jobs and industries. Networking is a proven strategy to make connections that can further your career. You can make your request more personal and customize it to each potential connection by using the “Personalize Invite” feature.

### "My Network"

Check out the “People You May Know” feature on the “My Network” tab as an easy way to find and connect with people who went to the same school as you, who work in similar roles or industries, or who are based in the same city.

## Alumni Feature

This feature provides high-level insights about McGill alumni, as well as access to more detailed professional profiles. Go to McGill's LinkedIn Page and click on the "Alumni" tab. Utilizing LinkedIn's Alumni tool will help you find people who you already have something in common with (attending the same university or program), identify alumni in your field who you can reach out to ask for a career conversation, learn about skills needed for different industries, and discover who may be working in your dream job or company!

## Join Groups

LinkedIn Groups provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share their insights and experiences, and build valuable connections. You can find groups to join by searching at the top of your homepage. When you join a Group, take the time to familiarize yourself with the content people are sharing, and the types of questions that are being asked.

There are also many McGill LinkedIn groups that you may be interested in joining! Feel free to join ours!

McGill Career Planning Service (CaPS) and Alumni Exchange:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3498652/>

## Next Steps

- Begin to follow companies, request to join groups, connect with people working in areas you would like to work in, actively use your account, and finally reach out to people you would like to have a career conversation with.
- Your LinkedIn feed on your homepage contains posts from your network, news articles and available positions. To increase your visibility, you can post content on your homepage, or "like" and share posts from your network.
- Don't forget to personalize your connection requests and more importantly have fun with the platform!

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## INITIAL CONNECTION REQUEST ON LINKEDIN (200 CHARACTERS MAX)

Keep your request brief and to the point: introduce yourself, establish a point of connection (something you have in common or how you came across their profile) and let them know you are happy to become part of their network.

### **For an alum:**

Hello X, I see you graduated from McGill a few years back! I am a X major exploring career paths in X. I'm excited to join your network and to connect. Have a great day!

### **For someone in a field of interest or working at a company you are interested in:**

Hello X, I'm finishing up my degree at McGill and am interested in career paths in X. I'd love to connect with you!

Dear X, I'm interested in (field), and I am enjoying your posts. I thought your post yesterday on (topic) was interesting. I'd love to add you to my network and keep in touch!

### **For someone you met at an in-person networking event and/or a speaker at a conference or webinar:**

Hi X, it was wonderful meeting you at X event last night, I really enjoyed hearing about X-Y-Z. I'm happy to connect with you on LinkedIn. Have a great week!

Hi X, I heard you speak at the Ceric webinar yesterday. It was fantastic! Thanks again!

### **For a recruiter or hiring manager:**

Dear Recruiter X, as a recent graduate of X program with strong skills in X, I am particularly interested in roles related to X and Y. I came across your profile while researching opportunities in X. I'm excited to connect and would love to hear about any roles you are currently recruiting for.



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