

LEARNING MADE EASY



2nd Edition

LinkedIn® Profile Optimization

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Create an integrated
LinkedIn branding strategy

Optimize with keywords
to get discovered

Determine and articulate
your professional story

Donna Serdula

Founder of LinkedIn-Makeover.com



LinkedIn[®] Profile Optimization

2nd Edition

by Donna Serdula

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

LinkedIn® Profile Optimization For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

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Introduction

LinkedIn is *the* professional network for business people. Whether you are a job seeker, a corporate executive, a small-business owner, an entrepreneur, or a professional with the desire for more, LinkedIn is the place to build and nurture your network. It's so easy to get caught up in your day-to-day life and job. People flow in and out. But by using LinkedIn to build a network of the people you meet and then keeping in touch with them, you are creating an engine for opportunities.

American businessman and author Robert Kiyosaki has said, "The richest people in the world look for and build networks; everyone else looks for work."

Beyond the network and networking capabilities, LinkedIn is also the place to forge a strong professional brand. As you move through your professional life, people will want to learn more about you. Who are you? What do you do? How do you help others? What do you represent? What is your mission? These are all questions on top of people's minds. The answers to these questions help people decide if they like you and want to spend more time with you.

Remember, people do business with people!

Not everyone has a personal website or websites devoted to them (well, unless you are a celebrity); however, the LinkedIn profile has become the *de facto* website for everyday professionals. A simple name search for most people returns their LinkedIn profile on the first page of search results. How does your LinkedIn profile portray you? Your LinkedIn profile is your online reputation, digital introduction, and first impression. The good news is that you have complete control over your profile and can shape how your reader perceives you.

Most people simply copy and paste their resume into their profile because it's easy, but a profile consisting of a copied-and-pasted resume impresses no one. Consider the recruiter who has your resume in his hot hands and wants to learn more about you, so he looks you up on LinkedIn, only to find the exact same information that is in your resume. He would be disappointed, to say the least. To have a strong and optimized LinkedIn profile, you need to move beyond just your resume that details your past and aligns you to a job. An optimized LinkedIn profile tells your professional story, is geared strategically toward your goals, and contains what your target audience needs to know about you.

When you are done with this book, your LinkedIn profile is going to be a true compendium of who you are and what you stand for. It's going to authentically tell your professional story, and people will see you as someone who inspires confidence and ability.

About This Book

This book is a how-to manual that shows you the steps to craft a strategic and compelling LinkedIn profile that captures your unique brand and professional story. I show you how to take your profile from nothing more than a simple outline to a robust, full-featured profile of you as a professional that commands attention and evokes action.

Although you can pick up this book at any point, I highly suggest, at the very least, reading Chapter 1 and then Part 2. In Chapter 1, I discuss the importance of determining your LinkedIn goal and target audience. If you don't identify your goal, your profile cannot be written strategically and it will not perform adequately. Likewise, you need to understand your target audience and write to what they need to know about you.

Part 2 is all about the intro card of your LinkedIn profile. This is the very first part people see when they open your LinkedIn profile and you want to make sure you capture their attention immediately, or else they'll surf off to another profile.

Regardless of your LinkedIn goal, you will benefit from the information in this book. Although LinkedIn isn't rocket science, it isn't the most intuitive social network either. Plus, writing about yourself is hard! In this book, I break everything down to its core to make it easy for you to use LinkedIn and create an impressive profile that helps you achieve your professional goals.

Foolish Assumptions

Having worked with thousands of professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, and companies from all over the world, I am going to assume that like them you are optimizing your profile for:

- » **Professional branding/reputation management.** You know that people are looking at your profile and you want to showcase yourself in a professional and impressive manner. You recognize that people draw conclusions based

upon what they read, and you want to ensure they see you as a thought leader and someone who deserves to be noticed and respected.

- » **Sales and prospecting.** You want to use your LinkedIn profile to help you prospect better and sell more. You know that prospects and clients are looking at your profile, and you want them to see you as a solution provider who can help them achieve their goals. You also know that people may be looking for a service or product that you sell and you want to appear in search results.
- » **Job search.** You are either currently working or displaced, but you are ready to spread your wings and find the next great opportunity that makes you want to get out of bed in the morning and go to work. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals are using LinkedIn to find candidates. You want to make sure that your profile stands out in those searches, and that when they click on your profile, what they read is compelling and makes them want to reach out to request your resume. Alternately, you have likely submitted your resume to various job postings and you know that recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals may look at your LinkedIn profile to learn more. You want to make sure your profile is an impressive introduction that compels them to call you for an interview.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is divided into five parts:

Part 1: The Strategy Before the Siege

Most people just jump into writing their LinkedIn profiles, but not you! In this first part, I show you how to immediately stand out by determining your LinkedIn goals, target audience, and keywords.

Part 2: Getting Your LinkedIn Profile Started

In this part, I show you how develop a compelling intro card section by choosing a professional profile picture, creating a compelling headline, and uploading an on-brand background image. I also show you how to create a personalized link to your profile that makes marketing a cinch.

Part 3: Detailing Your Career Trajectory and Creating the Ultimate First Impression

In Part 3, I walk you through filling out the two LinkedIn profile sections the majority of people find the most challenging: Experience and About. You'll learn how to craft impressive experiences that focus on achievements over pure job description. You also learn how to craft an About section that acts as a professional manifesto that engages and impresses your target audience.

Part 4: Rounding Out Your Profile and Adding Finishing Touches

Part 4 is all about the extra flourishes you can add to your profile, such as with sample projects, publications, patents, organizations, and more. I show you how to spice up your profile and professional brand by getting active on LinkedIn and joining the LinkedIn conversation. When you are done with Chapter 15, you will know more than most Influencers do about LinkedIn publishing!

Part 5: The Part of Tens

The Part of Tens is the traditional end of a *For Dummies* book and contains lists of ten items that will help you leverage your profile and LinkedIn even better. This part is packed with links to external websites that provide the tools you can use to create a powerful profile.

The last three Part of Tens chapters are pure powerhouses of information. If you want a quick and dirty education on LinkedIn, don't skip these. By reading these chapters, I promise you, you'll have more knowledge of LinkedIn than most of those social media "gurus" who have set up shop.

Icons Used in This Book

I use a number of icons in this book to draw your attention to pieces of useful information.



TIP

This whole book can be considered a series of tips! When I share information that I find especially useful for optimizing your profile, I indicate it with a Tip icon.



REMEMBER

This icon is used to flag information that may be useful to remember when you think about and work on your profile.



WARNING

Whenever something may cause unnecessary work or a headache down the road, I alert you with a Warning icon.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

A Technical Stuff icon contains detailed or background information that is not necessary to know to optimize your profile, but is otherwise interesting.

Beyond the Book

In addition to what you're reading now, this book also comes with a free access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that gives you even more pointers on how to optimize your LinkedIn profile. My favorite cheat sheet details how to take your LinkedIn profile photo yourself! To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for *LinkedIn Profile Optimization For Dummies Cheat Sheet* in the Search box.

You can also visit my website for additional free resources like my LinkedIn Headline Generator, LinkedIn Text Formatter, Background Photo library, and more. Click the Free Resources tab at www.linkedin-makeover.com.

An optimized LinkedIn profile is more than just your online reputation. A powerfully written LinkedIn profile has the ability to change your life. After optimizing their profiles, I've seen people find amazing jobs and opportunities. They connect with more people and experience the full gamut of what LinkedIn and a successful career has to offer.

I wish you the very best of luck — now go get optimizing!

1

The Strategy Before the Siege

IN THIS PART . . .

Understand your LinkedIn goals and target audience to give your profile purpose.

Learn how to use the proper tone in your profile to draw people in, not push them away.

Optimize your LinkedIn search results by discovering your keywords and infusing them throughout your profile.

Learn how to use LinkedIn as a search tool and how to ensure your search result listing catches a reader's eye.

Add skills to showcase your strengths to potential employers or clients.

See why soliciting endorsements and endorsing others boosts your credibility.

- » Deciding your LinkedIn goal
- » Understanding your target audience
- » Using the proper tone

Chapter **1**

Determining Your LinkedIn Strategy

When you register for a LinkedIn account, the first thing you encounter is the LinkedIn profile. Most people jump in and immediately fill out the fields of the profile, not giving much thought as to why they are on LinkedIn or who will eventually be reading their profile.

Profiles created without a goal or a target audience in mind lack purpose. These profiles don't catch readers' eyes and compel them to reach out to the person behind the online persona. You see these profiles on LinkedIn every day. Scanning the profile, nothing grabs you or makes you want to learn more about that person.

To experience success on LinkedIn, you must approach your LinkedIn profile strategically. In this chapter, I show you how to determine your LinkedIn strategy by looking at the three most typical goals people are trying to accomplish on LinkedIn. Once you've determined your goal, I show you how to figure out your target audience and discuss the importance of creating a compelling profile tone.

Determining Your LinkedIn Goal

To create a profile that has purpose, you must ask yourself, “What am I trying to accomplish on LinkedIn?” Many people get a LinkedIn account because they want to find a new job. Other people are interested in reputation management and branding. Still other people are on LinkedIn because they are in sales and want to prospect and increase sales through social selling.

To help you determine what you want your profile to accomplish, review the following three most common types of LinkedIn profiles.

Job search

LinkedIn plays a huge role in the job search process. Recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals search LinkedIn looking for potential candidates. They may perform broad-based keyword searches looking for a candidate who matches the skill sets the position requires, or they may already have certain candidates in mind. When they have a person already in mind for a position, a name search is performed on LinkedIn with the goal of learning more about that person than what is stated on his or her resume.

LinkedIn is also a job board. The LinkedIn Jobs section (www.linkedin.com/jobs) is where thousands of jobs from all over the world are posted. These job postings are promoted throughout LinkedIn as well. When you find a job posting that interests you, you can apply for the position by submitting your resume and LinkedIn profile.



TIP

Even if you aren’t utilizing LinkedIn’s job postings or hoping to collide with a recruiter, potential employers are still looking you up on LinkedIn and reviewing your LinkedIn profile. Think about it: If you are about to hire someone, and available to you is a database in which to look this person up and see a picture of the candidate, a listing of people he or she knows, and recommendations of his or her work ethic, of course you would use it!

Potential employers are looking at your profile. The good news is you have control over how you represent yourself and how they perceive you. A job search profile complements and echoes your resume without being a direct one-to-one copy. The profile is written to the job description of that next position you are targeting and showcases you as the perfect candidate for that role. See Figure 1-1 for an example.

To find out more about how to create a powerful job search profile, see Chapter 11.

About

The healthcare industry is undergoing unprecedented disruption. With a combination of novel treatments and increasingly digitized business processes, the options to improve the health and the health services of the global community are growing at a swift pace.

As an Account Manager specializing in healthcare services, I help clients achieve their business and IT initiatives by providing innovative cost-effective solutions that are at once practical and efficient. Working closely with healthcare providers, I deliver targeted needs for varying levels and functions of organizations.

I am currently seeking new opportunities in similar roles in the healthcare services industry.

I have a proven track record in achieving—and exceeding—sales goals. During my tenure at ABC Healthcare, the scope of my portfolio included diverse clients across hospitals and healthcare systems where I specialized in healthcare IT services.

I'm proactive in project management and work diligently to ensure excellence in customer service, tackling issues head-on when they arrive. An Account Manager is essentially about customers, regardless of what they sell or manage, and I'm dedicated to quality in everything I do from communications to meeting deadlines. This is the driving force of sustainable business practices and company growth.

Another essential element of a successful business is a healthy company culture. I place an emphasis on collaboration, trust, and respect, and am proud to be known as a professional that honors and supports diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

I strive each day to make a positive impact in a field that I love and look forward to new opportunities to contribute my expertise and help companies thrive. Connect with me on LinkedIn or contact me here:

Email: Joedoe@gmail.com

Phone: 215-555-1234

FIGURE 1-1:
A job search
profile.

Reputation management and branding

It's a Google world. At one time, if you needed to find out information, you headed to the library to search the encyclopedias and other reference materials. Now, all you need to do is pull up a web browser and perform an Internet search to get more information than you could ever read or use.

This easy access to information has some side effects. People are doing more research than ever before and they are researching you! Going to the doctor? Most people search the Internet for the doctor's name to see the results that pop up in a search engine. Executives who find their names appearing in press releases or in magazine articles may find that views to their LinkedIn profiles skyrocket by readers wanting to know more about them.

Job candidates' names are entered into search engines all the time by hiring managers looking to discover more than what is provided in the resume. Similarly, hiring managers' names are searched by job candidates wanting to learn more about their potential new employer.

LinkedIn profiles rank high in search results. Not only is it usually the top result when a person searches for your name, but also it's sometimes the only result, as most people don't have a personal website. *You* create your LinkedIn profile. *You* choose what people learn about you. *You* have total control over how people perceive you. A reputation management profile is one that showcases your successes,

honors, awards, and accomplishments, and leads people to see you as a credible, impressive professional.

Sales and prospecting

LinkedIn is more than just a job search tool. LinkedIn is a compendium of professional profiles with industry and contact information, which makes it a terrific prospecting tool for sales professionals. However, it's not just for sales people looking for prospects. People use LinkedIn to search for service providers and consultants who can help them.

Most people prefer to do business with someone they know or someone with whom they share a connection. When searching LinkedIn for a service provider, you see how you are connected to that service provider through the degrees of connection. This ability to see shared connections provides a level of trust and comfort.

A sales and prospecting profile shines the spotlight on not just the salesperson, but also on that person's products, services, and company he or she represents. Most important, the sales and prospecting profile focuses on prospective clients and their needs, and solidifies the salesperson as someone clients can feel confident in working with. See Figure 1-2 for an example.

About

Trustworthy. Knowledgeable. Reliable. These qualities are the foundation of my success in the Real Estate industry. From first contact to closing, I am a well-rounded Real Estate professional that puts the needs of my clients first to give them the confidence they need for a positive efficient process.

My name is Andy Gates and I am a licensed Realtor in Fort Worth, TX with Widget Real Estate Partners. I help clients with a wide range of properties from Single Family Homes to Commercial Real Estate. With ten years of experience in the Real Estate industry, I understand what it takes to find the right property at the right price and am with potential homeowners and investors every step of the way.

A key component of my success is an emphasis on top quality service. It's about streamlined processes, transparency and accessibility in communications, and a dedication to listening to client priorities and concerns. This serves as the foundation for successful Real Estate experiences in both residential and commercial transactions.

Proficiencies include Residential Real Estate, Commercial Real Estate, Investment Properties, REO, Foreclosures, Short Sales, Listing, Marketing, Social Media, First Time Home Buyers, and Closing Deals.

Industry Credentials:

- * National Association of Realtors
- * National Multifamily Housing Council
- * Institute of Real Estate Management

As an enthusiastic leader and experienced Real Estate professional, I keep an ever-present eye on market trends and utilize the latest technology to discover the best options for client needs. Leveraging my market knowledge and data-driven strategies, I drive success for commercial real estate investors and families across the greater Philadelphia area.

Let's start a conversation about your Real Estate needs.

Email: [redacted]@gmail.com
Phone: 215-555-1234

FIGURE 1-2:
A sales and
prospecting
profile.

Figuring Out Your Target Audience

Knowing your goal is only half the battle. Now it's time to figure out your target audience. One of the most common mistakes people make with their LinkedIn profiles is using it to tell the story they want to tell. Instead, you need to use your profile to tell the story your audience *wants to read*. Write for your target audience first.

When you are looking for a job, your target audience is typically recruiters, hiring managers, and human resources professionals. In almost every case, they are armed with a job description. Recruiters want to know that you have the skill sets and experience required to fulfill the job. They also want to know that you are professional, respectful, and capable of doing the job. You want to make it clear in your profile that you are the perfect person for your desired position. After reading your profile, the recruiter should feel confident in your skills and abilities.

When you are on LinkedIn for sales and prospecting, your target audience is your client and prospective client. They are less interested in hearing about your sales expertise and more interested in knowing that you understand their industry and their needs, and can provide solutions to their issues. As you consider your target audience, think in terms of the solutions you offer them and provide them the information they need to feel confident with you as a potential partner.

The sales world has changed in the age of Google and social media. Buyers now educate themselves, researching products and services online. They even research the salesperson, wanting to make sure they are reaching out to someone they can feel comfortable working with. Knowing that you are under a magnifying glass, make sure you provide your target audience with the information they need to feel confident in you and your products or services.

When the goal of your LinkedIn profile is reputation management and branding, your target audience may not be as clear cut as it is with a job search or sale and prospecting. To figure out your audience, you need to determine the type of person you want to cater your profile toward. Is it the executive team and colleagues at your company? Audience members who watched you give a presentation? Readers of articles you wrote? Private equity investors? Once you pinpoint the type of person who you want to target, consider what that person needs to know to take that next step forward.

Do you want your target audience to connect with you on LinkedIn? Perhaps you want them to visit your website and download a white paper. You may want your target audience to email you to request your resume. Your target audience could pick up the phone and call you. Figure out what that next step is so you can build it into your profile as a clear call to action.



TIP

Strategically written profiles do not state what you want to say as much as what your target audience needs to know.

Creating a Compelling Tone

LinkedIn is a social network, and writing an impersonal profile filled with business jargon doesn't mesh. Social networks are all about you interacting with your network. And because your network will check out your profile, it's imperative that what they read is from your pen. You don't want to push people away by creating distance between you and your reader.

A powerful LinkedIn profile is written in first person narrative form ("I"). Draw readers in by writing about yourself in the first person. Writing in a conversational, natural tone is a great way to connect with your audience and start forging an easy rapport.

As important as it is to write in first person, you also must be careful not to overuse "I." There is nothing worse than a profile where every sentence starts with I. In my profile, I sometimes use the second person narrative form ("You") because it brings your reader in even closer by speaking directly to them, and it eases the potential overuse of "I."



TIP

The best way to ensure your profile is compellingly written is to read it aloud. Does it sound stilted? Does it sound like it's something you would never say to an acquaintance live in person? If so, the writing is forced and not conversational in tone.

Here is an example of stilted, hard-to-read resume speak:

Creating a clear strategy for leveraging resources to produce the maximum number of insights possible. Integrating contextual analytics to business processes. Centralizing deep analysis expertise for use across the organizational axis but mandating each individual department and line of business takes responsibility for their own reporting needs.



REMEMBER

You want to write your profile as if you are talking directly to your reader. Your words should sound professional yet natural. A profile written in corporate jargon or resume speak is a turn off. Demonstrate your human side and warmth by writing in a natural, conversational tone.

When you see profiles written in the third person, typically the reason is that they simply copied and pasted their biography or resume into the LinkedIn profile.