

HOW TO OPTIMIZE YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Having a well-written profile and creating a credible online presence on the largest professional social media network with over 700 million users across 200 countries may be challenging for beginners initially but it's actually worth the time.

Ever since it was launched in 2003 by founders Reid Hoffman and Eric Ly and through the Leadership of its CEO, Ryan Roslansky as well as other executives, LinkedIn has been a powerful tool for professionals including aspiring ones to network by building the necessary connections with each other, demonstrate one's knowledge and expertise, gaining exposure to hiring managers and recruiters and so many other benefits.

How then can you optimize your LinkedIn profile to enjoy the benefits of using it especially as a youth. We will look at the following ways to do that.

1. Choose the right profile picture for LinkedIn.

Your profile picture is one of the first things researchers or hiring managers get to see when they get to your profile. It should be clear, professional, warm and inviting.

2. Add a background photo.

Your background photo is the second visual element at the top of your profile page. It grabs people's attention, sets the context and shows a little more about what matters to you. It should visually support the written portions of your profile.

3. Make your headline more than just a job title.

There's no rule that says the description at the top of your profile page has to be just a job title. Use the headline field to say a bit more about your role, let it be catchy so as to intrigue the reader in order to make them check your profile.

4. Turn your summary into your story.

Your summary is your chance to tell your own story. Try to bring to life why those skills matter and the difference they can make to the people you work with. Try to use optimized search terms and keywords in your summary.

5. Grow your network.

You need to actively engage your audience, employers, organization partners and other connections you have made on LinkedIn by following up with conversations, conferences, comments, publishing articles, making public posts and so many other activities to keep your profile relevant and active on LinkedIn.

6. List your relevant skills.

Scroll through the list of skills provided as options by LinkedIn on your profile and identify those

that are relevant to you. They instantly show recruiters or employers what you can do.

7. Spotlight the services you offer.

Services is a new LinkedIn feature that helps consultants, freelancers and those working for smaller businesses to showcase the range of services that they offer. Filling out the Services section of your profile can boost your visibility in search results.

8. Spread the endorsement love.

Endorsements from other members prove so much to recruiters that you actually have those skills and can offer services related to them. Don't be scared to reach out politely to connections to endorse you and at the same time, endorse others too.

9. Manage your endorsements

Be proactive in managing your endorsements list using the edit features in the skills section of your profile. You can also choose which to show and which to hide.

10. Take a skills assessment.

A skills assessment is an online test that enables you to demonstrate the level of your skills, and display a Verified Skills badge on your profile. Data shows that candidates with verified skills are around 30% more likely to be hired for the roles they apply for. Displaying the results of your skills assessments is entirely voluntary, and you can retake the tests as often as you like before showing that you've passed.

So what's stopping you from creating a credible profile today? Do that now or take out time often to optimize and update your profile. It can improve your career path, attract fellow workers, professionals, influencers, interested recruiters and set you up for an awesome future success!