

# Guide: LinkedIn profile optimisation



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## Executive Summary: LinkedIn Profile Optimisation Guide

Your LinkedIn profile serves as your professional shop window; visible to recruiters, clients, and colleagues 24/7. Unlike your CV, which is only seen when submitted, your LinkedIn profile constantly represents you in the digital professional landscape.

## Key Optimisation Areas

**Visual elements:** A professional headshot with your face filling approximately 60% of the frame significantly increases profile views. Your background image should complement your professional identity consider industry-relevant imagery or clean graphics.

**Headline formula:** Go beyond your job title with this effective structure: [Current Role] at [Company] | [Your Specialist Area] | [Value You Deliver]. This brief formula follows you throughout LinkedIn and appears in search results.

**About section:** Craft a compelling narrative beginning with an attention-grabbing opener, followed by your professional journey, key achievements (with quantifiable results), your working philosophy, and ending with a clear call to action.

**Experience section:** Focus on impact rather than mere responsibilities. Include specific achievements with measurable results for each role, using strong action verbs and quantifying outcomes wherever possible.

**Skills & recommendations:** Strategically select and pin your top skills (including technical, industry-specific, and transferable ones). Cultivate meaningful recommendations by requesting them at opportune moments, such as after successful project completions.

## Effective Engagement

Visibility comes through regular, thoughtful engagement:

- Provide substantive comments on industry posts
- Share relevant content with your added perspective
- Create occasional original content focused on professional insights
- Use hashtags strategically (2-3 relevant ones)

## Maintenance Requirements

Your LinkedIn profile requires regular attention:

- Schedule quarterly profile updates
- Proactively seek skill endorsements and recommendations
- Regularly expand your network with meaningful connections
- Ensure consistency between your profile and broader digital presence

## Common Pitfalls

Avoid undermining your professional image with these common mistakes:

- Outdated information or chronological gaps
- Inconsistencies between LinkedIn and your CV
- Unprofessional profile picture
- Generic connection requests without personalisation
- Overly promotional or irrelevant content

By strategically optimising your profile and consistently engaging with your professional community, your LinkedIn presence becomes a powerful asset in your career toolkit, creating visibility for opportunities even when you're not actively looking.

## LinkedIn Profile Optimisation: A Complete Guide for UK Professionals

### Introduction: Why your LinkedIn profile matters

Hello there! If you're reading this, you've already realised that having a decent LinkedIn profile isn't just a "nice to have" anymore, it's become rather essential in today's job market. Whether you're actively looking for a new role, building your professional network, or simply want to be findable when opportunities come knocking, your LinkedIn profile works for you around the clock.

Think of your LinkedIn profile as your professional shop window. It's often the first impression recruiters, potential clients, or future colleagues will have of you. And unlike a CV that's only seen when you send it out, your LinkedIn profile is always on display so it's worth giving it a proper bit of attention.

In this guide, we'll walk through optimising every section of your profile, with plenty of practical examples you can adapt to your own circumstances. We'll focus on what really matters to UK recruiters and connections, with a dash of British pragmatism thrown in.

### Getting the basics right: Your profile photo and background image

#### Profile photo: First impressions count

Your profile photo is the first thing people notice, and research shows profiles with photos get up to 21 times more views. But not just any photo will do.

##### **What works well:**

- A recent, clear headshot where your face takes up about 60% of the frame
- Professional but approachable expression (a genuine smile works wonders)
- Simple, non-distracting background
- Good lighting that shows your face clearly

##### **What to avoid:**

- Group photos where it's not clear which person is you
- Very casual holiday snaps or photos from social occasions
- Distracting filters or effects
- Outdated photos that don't resemble your current appearance

**Pro tip:** You don't necessarily need a professional photographer. A smartphone photo taken by a friend against a plain wall with natural lighting can work perfectly well.

## Background image: Your personal billboard

The background image (or banner) is valuable real estate that many people overlook. It gives you a chance to visually communicate something about your professional identity.

### Ideas for effective background images:

- Your industry's skyline or a relevant cityscape (London financial district for finance professionals, for example)
- A clean, simple graphic related to your sector
- A photo of you presenting or in your professional environment (but ensure it's high quality)
- Your company's branded background (appropriate if you're in a client-facing role)

**Dimensions:** Aim for 1584 x 396 pixels for optimal display across devices.

**Free resources:** Sites like Canva and Unsplash offer free templates and images you can use to create professional banners without design skills.

## Your headline: Much more than just your job title

Your headline appears directly below your name and follows you everywhere on LinkedIn, in search results, in comments, in connection requests. The default is your current job title and company, but customising it significantly increases your profile's impact.

### The headline formula that works:

[Current Role] at [Company] | [Your Specialist Area/Expertise] | [Value You Deliver]

### Examples of effective headlines:

*For a Project Manager:*

Project Manager at Lloyds Banking Group | Delivering Digital Transformation | Specialising in Agile Financial Services Projects

*For a Marketing Professional:*

Marketing Director at Sainsbury's | Building Brands That Connect with Consumers | Data-Driven Campaign Strategist

*For someone job searching (subtle approach):*

Operations Specialist | Streamlining Processes & Reducing Costs in Manufacturing | Lean Six Sigma Black Belt

### Key headline tips:

- Use all 220 characters available

- Include relevant keywords for your industry (these help you appear in searches)
- Focus on the value you deliver, not just what you do
- If job searching, avoid explicit statements like "seeking opportunities" and instead highlight your expertise

## About section: Your professional story

The About section (formerly called Summary) is where you can really bring your professional story to life. This is your chance to speak directly to your target audience in your own voice.

### Effective structure for your About section:

- 1. Hook opening:** Start with a compelling statement or question that grabs attention and relates to your professional value.
- 2. Professional narrative:** Briefly describe your professional journey and expertise, focusing on the consistent themes or specialisms.
- 3. Key achievements:** Include 3-4 specific accomplishments with concrete results, preferably with numbers.
- 4. Personal professional approach:** Share something about how you work—your philosophy, values, or working style.
- 5. Call to action:** End with what you want people to do (connect, contact you about specific opportunities, etc.)

### Example About section (Marketing Professional):

*What's the difference between marketing that drives results and marketing that just creates noise? After 12 years helping brands cut through the clutter, I've found it comes down to three things: genuine consumer insight, creative courage, and rigorous measurement.*

*I specialise in developing digital marketing strategies that connect brands meaningfully with their audiences, particularly in the competitive FMCG sector. My approach combines data-driven decision-making with creative storytelling to drive both immediate results and long-term brand value.*

*Key achievements include:*

- *Leading the digital strategy for Product X launch, achieving 43% higher engagement than category benchmarks*

- *Implementing personalisation across customer touchpoints, resulting in 27% increase in conversion rates*
- *Building and mentoring high-performing marketing teams that consistently deliver award-winning campaigns*

*I'm passionate about helping brands find their authentic voice in an increasingly noisy digital landscape, and believe the best marketing feels like a service to the customer rather than an interruption.*

*Currently open to discussing consulting opportunities or speaking at marketing events – feel free to connect or message me directly.*

## **About section tips:**

- Write in first person it's more authentic and engaging
- Use short paragraphs and bullet points for readability
- Include industry keywords naturally throughout
- Show some personality while maintaining professionalism
- The first 3 lines are visible before "see more," so make them count

## **Experience section: Beyond the bullet points**

Your Experience section needs to do more than just list job titles and responsibilities it should tell the story of your impact and growth.

### **For each role, include:**

- Company name and accurate dates
- Concise company description (if not a well-known organisation)
- Your key responsibilities (brief overview)
- Specific achievements with measurable results
- Skills and knowledge developed

### **Example Experience entry:**

*Senior Project Manager*

*Vodafone UK | January 2020 - Present*



*Leading cross-functional teams to deliver strategic technology initiatives that enhance customer experience across Vodafone's retail and digital channels.*

## *Key achievements:*

- *Delivered £2.3M point-of-sale system transformation across 300+ UK stores, completing on time and 8% under budget*
- *Reduced average transaction time by 34% through process optimisation and system enhancements*
- *Implemented agile methodologies across the retail technology team, improving delivery predictability by 40%*
- *Developed and mentored a team of 5 junior project managers, with 2 progressing to senior roles*

*Work closely with C-suite stakeholders to align technology initiatives with business strategy while ensuring excellent customer experience remains central to all developments.*

## **Experience section tips:**

- Prioritise achievements over routine responsibilities
- Use strong action verbs (delivered, transformed, created, etc.)
- Quantify results wherever possible (%, £, time saved, etc.)
- Show progression if you've had multiple roles at the same company
- Include media such as presentations, videos, or relevant documents
- Tailor the detail - more for recent roles, less for older positions

## **Skills & endorsements: Strategic selection**

LinkedIn allows you to add up to 50 skills, but you should be strategic about which ones you showcase. The right skills help you appear in search results and demonstrate your expertise.

## **Types of skills to include:**

- **Technical skills** specific to your field (e.g., Python, Financial Modelling, UX Design)
- **Industry knowledge** (e.g., GDPR, Retail Banking, NHS Frameworks)
- **Transferable skills** (e.g., Stakeholder Management, Strategic Planning)

- **Soft skills** (e.g., Team Leadership, Negotiation, Public Speaking)

## Skills section optimisation:

- Pin your top 3 most important skills that you want to be endorsed for
- Regularly review and update as you gain new skills
- Remove outdated or irrelevant skills that don't align with your goals
- Aim for at least 5 endorsements on key skills
- Endorse others thoughtfully (they'll often reciprocate)

## Recommendations: Social proof that matters

Recommendations provide powerful social proof. A handful of quality recommendations can significantly strengthen your profile.

### How to get meaningful recommendations:

1. **Be specific in your request:** When asking for a recommendation, suggest aspects of your work together you'd like them to highlight.
2. **Target varied perspectives:** Seek recommendations from managers, colleagues, clients, and direct reports for a well-rounded picture.
3. **Offer to reciprocate:** Be willing to write thoughtful recommendations for others.
4. **Time it right:** Ask shortly after a successful project completion or positive milestone.

### Example recommendation request message:

*Hi Jane,*

*I hope you're well. I'm currently updating my LinkedIn profile and would value a recommendation from you based on the Thompson project we completed last quarter.*

*If you're comfortable providing one, I'd appreciate if you could highlight our approach to stakeholder management and the results we achieved with the new communication framework.*

*Of course, I'd be happy to write a recommendation for you as well, focusing on any aspects of your leadership you'd find most helpful.*

*Thanks for considering this,*

*[Your Name]*

## Activity & content: Becoming visible

Your LinkedIn activity significantly impacts your visibility. Regular, thoughtful engagement helps you stay top-of-mind with your network.

### Effective LinkedIn activity strategies:

#### 1. Thoughtful engagement:

- Comment substantively on posts in your field
- Ask genuine questions that advance the conversation
- Share insights from your experience
- Avoid generic comments like "Great post!" or "Thanks for sharing"

#### 2. Strategic content sharing:

- Share relevant industry articles with your added perspective
- Celebrate team and company achievements (with permission)
- Post about events or conferences you've attended
- Share learning resources that others might find valuable

#### 3. Original content creation (if appropriate):

- Write short-form posts about professional insights (500-1,300 characters work best)
- Share practical tips related to your expertise
- Discuss industry trends or news
- Tell stories about professional challenges you've overcome

### Example of an effective LinkedIn post:

*I've noticed something surprising in the 15+ user testing sessions we've run this month for our new banking app:*

*The feature our developers spent the most time perfecting (instant transaction categorisation) barely got mentioned by users.*

*Meanwhile, the simple ability to take a photo of a receipt and attach it to a transaction—something we almost cut from the MVP—has been consistently highlighted as "game-changing" for their financial organisation.*

*Three lessons this reinforced for me:*

- 1. What seems minor to us can be major to users*
- 2. Developer priorities ≠ user priorities*
- 3. Nothing replaces direct user feedback*

*Has anyone else discovered unexpected user preferences that changed your product direction?*

*#UXResearch #DigitalBanking #ProductDevelopment*

## **Content tips:**

- Be authentic rather than performative
- Share genuine insights, not platitudes
- Use hashtags strategically (2-3 relevant ones, not 20)
- Respond thoughtfully to comments
- Consistency matters more than frequency—even just 1-2 thoughtful engagements per week makes a difference

## **Customising your LinkedIn URL**

A customised LinkedIn URL looks more professional and is easier to share on CVs and email signatures.

### **How to customise your URL:**

1. Click the 'Me' icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage
2. Click 'View profile'
3. Click 'Edit public profile & URL' on the right
4. Under 'Edit your custom URL', click the pencil icon
5. Type your preferred URL

## Best practices for LinkedIn URLs:

- Use your name (firstname-lastname)
- Avoid numbers unless necessary
- Keep it simple and professional
- If your name is taken, consider adding your profession (firstname-lastname-accountant)

## Example:

*linkedin.com/in/sarah-johnson*

## Privacy and visibility settings

Optimising your privacy settings ensures you have the right balance of visibility and control.

### Key settings to review:

- **Profile visibility:** Generally, public visibility is best for networking and opportunities
- **Profile viewing options:** Choose whether others see your name when you view their profile
- **Share job changes, education changes, etc.:** Usually good to enable for celebrations but consider turning off if making multiple updates at once
- **Visibility of email address:** Consider who can see this (connections only is usually safest)

### For job seekers:

- Turn on the "Open to Work" feature, but consider making it visible to recruiters only
- Adjust your notification settings so your current company doesn't see activity spikes
- Enable job alerts for relevant positions

## LinkedIn Premium: Worth it or not?

Many professionals wonder if LinkedIn Premium is worth the investment. Here's a balanced perspective:

### When Premium might be worth it:

- You're actively job searching and want to see who's viewed your profile
- You need to send InMail to people outside your network
- You want access to LinkedIn Learning courses
- You're in sales or recruitment and need advanced search features

### When the free version is probably sufficient:

- You have a strong existing network
- You're not actively job hunting
- You're primarily using LinkedIn to share content and engage
- You're on a tight budget

**Practical alternative:** Consider subscribing just for 1-2 months during intensive job searching periods rather than year-round.

## Common LinkedIn mistakes to avoid

Even well-crafted profiles can be undermined by these common mistakes:

### Profile mistakes:

- Outdated information or long gaps in your timeline
- Inconsistencies between your LinkedIn profile and CV
- Unprofessional or very outdated profile picture
- Spelling and grammar errors
- Empty sections that make your profile look incomplete

### Behaviour mistakes:

- Connecting with people without personalised messages
- Immediately trying to sell something to new connections
- Posting controversial or overly personal content
- Being overly promotional rather than providing value
- Endorsing people for skills you've never actually seen them demonstrate

## Conclusion: Your LinkedIn profile is a living document

We can't overemphasise how important this point is – you need to show up consistently!

Your LinkedIn profile isn't a "set it and forget it" task it should evolve as your career develops. Schedule a quarterly review to update your profile with new skills, achievements, and experiences.

Get people to endorse you for skills and ask for recommendations on a regular basis.

Use it pro-actively. Search your contacts for people you have enjoyed working with in the past. If you are looking for work, spread the word and see if they are aware of any suitable roles. Ask for introductions or referrals if they are relevant to your job search.

Think about who you have worked with recently/currently and connect to them. Assuming that your network is people you genuinely know, growing your network is powerful and this is a task best done by regularly reviewing your connections.

Make yourself as open to finding a new role (in your profile section). This will encourage Recruiters or Resourcers searching LinkedIn to reach out to you. Of course, it is a good idea to change this once you secure the right opportunity.

Remember that an optimised LinkedIn profile works for you even when you're not actively looking, creating visibility for opportunities, building your professional reputation, and connecting you with a broader network.

Finally, while optimisation is important, authenticity matters most. Your profile should be the best professional representation of the real you, not a fabricated persona that you can't sustain in real professional interactions.

Happy networking!

YOUR CAREER | YOUR DATA | YOUR CV

