

5 Parts of Your LinkedIn Profile

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So you have decided to use LinkedIn, perhaps because you have received an invitation from somebody, perhaps because you have been told you have to or because you have been convinced by our previous download 'Five Reasons to Use LinkedIn'. You now need to write your LinkedIn profile. When you are reviewing your profile, consider the following:

1. **Headline**

What does your headline or title say about you?

The headline is the first thing people see about you apart from your name and photo. When you appear in a list of search results, does your headline encourage people to click on you to find out more about you? Your headline is also keyword searchable, so think about some of your keywords that you could use. If you don't know what keywords are, have a look at our 'All about Keywords' download.

2. **Summary**

The summary on your LinkedIn profile is probably the part that people will read once they have found you. Your summary should be current and should be written in the first person. Remember social networking is all about people and viewers want to find out about you and what you can offer. Depending on your business you may want to write this from a benefit point of view. Apply the 'so what' test. If your summary describes how conscientious and target focused you are - 'so what' - what makes you different from the next person.

3. **Status Update**

The status or network update is your opportunity to talk to all your contacts at the same time. Take the opportunity to send out a quality update. You can now use up to 700 characters in your update (this has increased in size recently), but I would still keep it 'short and snappy'. Don't forget your update will appear in a list with all the other updates that your contacts see - they do not have time to read a great long paragraph. I would update at least once a week, but no more than 3 times a week - you don't want to overload, I think quality not quantity is important. Remember, this isn't Twitter - please don't update your LinkedIn status with your Twitter updates - it is a different audience. If people want to see your Twitter updates, they will follow you on Twitter.

4. **Specialties**

At the bottom of the summary part of the profile, there is an area entitled 'Specialties'. This should essentially be a list of your keywords written in English. You may see some people use a bulleted list. To do this, write the bulleted list in Word, copy into LinkedIn and adjust the spacing.

5. **Photo**

I think it is really important to have a good quality picture on LinkedIn. You should be easily recognisable from your picture, which means it should be a focused, close up head and shoulders shot. I believe an informal, professional shot looks good - try to avoid the passport photo look and I'm not so keen on the photos with kids. I use the same photo all over my Marketing (Social Networking, Websites, printed material, etc.), this is part of my brand and means that I am recognised in face to face meetings.