

## LinkedIn and Ensuring a Professional Online Brand

Often, we consider consumer products when we think of a brand. The reality is, every person also has a brand. Think of your favorite celebrity – what is their brand? Never before in the history of business have our brands been so available for the world to see. When entering and working within the business world, your brand can make the difference between landing the interview and the job, or never getting that first call.

### Top Social Media Used by Recruiters:

77% - LinkedIn

63% - Facebook

25% - Instagram

Source: 2018  
Jobvite Recruiter  
Nation Survey

- In today’s job market, you will want to ensure your online presence demonstrates a professional brand.
- It is common practice for hiring managers, recruiters and other individuals you interact with to search for you online and view your LinkedIn and other social media sites to see how you present yourself online.
- Activate your privacy settings for all social media sites you participate in. Ensure you manage what is visible to others by setting to ‘Friends’ and not to ‘Everyone’. This way, if an employer searches for you online, they won’t be able to see personal information.
- Scrub websites of inappropriate pictures that don’t add value to your professional brand. When attending school, it may be fun to show a picture of you partying with friends, but these types of photos won’t bring any value to your job search efforts.
- Be careful what you say online. Engage and only post positive comments and give credit where it is due. When sharing anything via social media, it’s important to maintain your professional credibility. Consider everything you write online as ‘written in ink’ and think before you share it! A negative comment you post today may follow you for years to come.
- Develop a LinkedIn profile that is professional and keyword driven. Use your resume as the foundation. Key aspects of a professional LinkedIn profile include:
  - **Photo:** A great photo can get you 21x more profile views and 9x more connection requests; Head/head and shoulders; Professional appearance (no selfies please!)
  - **Headline** (appears under your name): Use either a current job title or keywords that describe your capabilities. The keywords should be ones an employer might use when trying to find candidates on LinkedIn.
  - **About:** Use your **Profile Statement / Career Objective** from your resume. Also, include a list of relevant **Attributes / Skills / Knowledge** you have to offer. Remember LinkedIn is keyword driven so you can include a longer list on LinkedIn than you might on your resume to try to get picked up during a search.

- **Experience:** Include a chronology of **Work Experience** starting with your most recent position. Double-check that all dates/companies/job titles exactly match your resume. Inconsistencies can raise red flags for employers. Include a brief description of your duties. /responsibilities and 2-3 accomplishments for each relevant position
  - Include **Education** and **Licenses & Certifications** information. Include details of your education including any special awards/commendations and/or impressive GPA scores.
  - **Skills:** Set up this section to be consistent with other areas of your LinkedIn profile. Repeat attributes/skills/knowledge you may have listed earlier in your profile. Remember LinkedIn is keyword driven so repetition is a positive thing! Your connections will be able to endorse your skills, thereby reinforcing your capabilities and brand.
  - **Recommendations:** Written recommendations are like references to potential employers who may be viewing your LinkedIn profile. Recommendations could give you the edge over other candidates that have applied for the job. Request a few recommendations from a teacher, coach or past employer. The optimal number would be 2-6 recommendations displayed on your profile.
  - **Other** valuable information to consider including in your LinkedIn profile: Languages, Volunteer Experience, Honors & Awards, Courses, Projects, and Publications.
  - **Follow** organizations of interest to you.
  - **Join** industry groups that are relevant groups to your field of study/work.
- Once your LinkedIn profile is set-up, check your settings under 'Settings & Privacy' to ensure your profile is visible to others and start building your network by inviting others to connect. Be sure to send a personalized message when inviting others to connect on LinkedIn. Ideally, you will want to connect to people you know well or that you have someone or something in common with. Start with your parents/parents of friends and build from there.
  - For further information, access the LinkedIn Help Center for available training videos on developing your LinkedIn profile.
  - Once you have set up a great LinkedIn profile, actively maintain it to ensure it is up to date and reflects your current experience. Set aside time each week to review and react to your notifications.
  - Continuously seek LinkedIn recommendations. Set a goal to add one new recommendation each year to keep this valuable section up to date, relevant and reflective of the great work you do!