

6 Tips to Increase Your Visibility in Search Rankings and Results

- Erika Strom, PHR

In the search for one's next career move, or just perhaps networking in general, most professionals have a LinkedIn profile. If, like most professionals, you do have a LinkedIn profile, are you utilizing it in the best possible way, to be found if someone is looking for a person like you? And, if you are one of those professionals who uses your LinkedIn profile in lieu of a formal resume, have you put all of the pertinent information in your profile?

What we've found here at JDA is that although most people use a LinkedIn profile, it's not optimized to show you at your best, nor does it give the information that you most want to provide to the business world. Even though we realize that there are a multitude of articles and presentations about how to maximize your profile, here are just a few simple things you can do with a minimum of effort to help you get noticed by the right people and increase your visibility in search rankings and results.

As you consider each of the following, keep in mind that search results are not universal; they are dependent on who is in your network, how many are in your network, geographical location, and whether or not people in your network have also optimized their own profiles.

- 1) Use the best possible profile pictures and background photos.

The background photo is really an opportunity for you to engage in some personal branding; it doesn't affect the search results one way or the other. However, once you are found in a search, it does give you that one more chance for some professional marketing.

Your personal photo actually does affect the way you will appear in search results, because profiles without photos are considered incomplete by LinkedIn. So get someone to take a nice headshot of you, professionally dressed and positioned against a solid color background. Crop the picture close to the face (think: headshot!); center it and add that to your profile.

- 2) Customize your LinkedIn profile link.
Go to "your profile" and then click at the top right on "edit public profile and URL."

This gives you an opportunity to personalize your public LinkedIn URL. While this can be changed, it should be considered a semi-permanent change. Think carefully on how you would like to be known or be known for, and choose your personalization wisely.

- 3) Your name is NOT a searchable field; the Headline is.

While your name is not a searchable field, it is a good place for a bit of an ego boost. If you have a degree and/or special certification, add these to your name. You can even add your phone number. While that makes the number bold, it could possibly impact search results because it is not a name feature and the algorithms may not filter a number correctly.



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However, the line below your name is searchable, and you have 120 characters to play with. Just remember that the first 18 characters are the most important: a “headline” of sorts. This is the place to put information that someone might search on while they are looking for a specifically trained professional. For example if someone is searching for CyberSecurity Architect, and you are the leading cybersecurity specialist in Houston working for your own company, don’t put “President of XYZ Company” first. That’s not how people search. Use the terms that people would search for so that your headline might look like: CyberSecurity Architect, CISO, CyberSecurity Authority, (etc), - President of XYZ Company.

4) The “About” section

This is an interesting section. While you have 2600 characters to use, the first 3 lines are what a person will see when search results are returned. Make those 3 lines count, and if a person reading them is interested enough, they will click on the “read more” and end up reading your entire profile. A practical application would be:

- a) Who you are
- b) Who do you help
- c) How do you help

Consider it your elevator pitch in written format. Make it interesting enough that someone will click to read more. Oh, and if you have listed degrees and/or certifications in your headline or name, make sure you reiterate them in your “about” section.

This is also a wonderful place to add any multimedia that you have going on, articles that you have written or co-written, etc. A maximum of 5 articles will show in your profile, so add them in the reverse order that you would like them viewed. In other words, add the most new, and/or dramatic, article last, as it will be the first one that people will see.

And lastly in the About section, give people a call to action, a way for them to contact you. If you have no contact information (email or phone number), no matter how wonderful your profile might be, people will not be able to reach you.

5) All Star Profile

An “all star” profile (as judged by LinkedIn) has a minimum of 150 connections, 3 experiences (jobs), education filled out, recommendations, at least 10 skills (skills and endorsements matter), and a profile photo.

In the recommendations section do not offer a *quid pro quo* for recommendations; LinkedIn doesn’t like it, and they will lower your profile ranking.



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6) General LinkedIn Profile Information

Your LinkedIn Profile can be scaled up or down depending on what you're currently looking for, whether you are a manager looking to hire, or a candidate looking for your next opportunity.

For managers looking for a great new colleague or that "hard-to-find", "best-in-show" employee, make sure your profile shows what you do, what your company does, and how a person might contact you if they're interested in you and your opportunities. People who are looking for their next role will check out a Company's profile and take a look at their managers, too.

Professionals, if you are looking for your next great role, and would like to be found by managers and recruiters alike, remember that the LinkedIn profile is a public online rendition of your professional life. Make it say what you think it says, and then match it to resumes (dates/titles/projects), and any other online profiles so that you are presenting a fully unified image, and that image shows you in the best possible light. You want to be easily found, especially by companies looking for a person with just your type of skills and experience.

When you're looking to be found, connect to reputable recruiters and managers in your industry, and when you scale your profile up, the manager will get the notifications, take a look, and reach out to you. Make sure you have a way for managers and recruiters to reach you, put in at least one form of contact information. Once you've got a great new challenge and you don't want quite the activity, disconnect from those recruiters and managers, remove your contact information and scale your profile down.

For more information about LinkedIn Profiles and social media professional presence or how to work with Recruiting Agencies who view your profile, contact us at 713.548.5400 or via email at jda@jdapsi.com, or find us on the web at www.jdapsi.com.

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