

10 Incredibly Simple Ways to Maximize Your LinkedIn Profile for Inbound Marketing

Your LinkedIn profile is the public-facing of who you are, what you represent, what your professional history is, and your area of expertise. In essence, your profile is a snapshot of the brand you are sharing with the entire world. It's only natural, then, that increasing the inbound marketing potential of our profile can lead to more exposure – and business – from our target audience.

When you establish your profile in a way that highlights your company's expertise and outlines how you can assist potential customers, you maximize the business opportunities for you and your business. Although you might customize the way in which you present your company in each business interaction, there is only one universal profile on LinkedIn that everyone will be able to see. This is the secret to why LinkedIn's database and people search capabilities are so impressive. The fields in which everyone enters information are standardized; therefore, it is easier to brand yourself by differentiating what you include in your profile because everyone else has to complete the same data fields as you do.

So how much information should you include in your LinkedIn profile to make it complete? To develop and strengthen your own LinkedIn brand and increase your chances of being found, you will want to include as much data as possible. Let's dig deeper into the 10 main functions of a LinkedIn profile and explain the importance of each component.

Photo – Basically, if you don't have a LinkedIn profile, you are invisible. Don't forget that much of Social Media is about people-centric networking, and without a photo, it will be harder to gain credibility with those whom you want to engage.

Name – LinkedIn is strict when asking you to input your name, and only your name, where specified. There are plenty of fake profiles out there, so there is no reason not to be upfront and honest about who you are. Also, if

you are representing a business and want to use your company name, remember that LinkedIn is a social network for professionals and people, not companies, and there are plenty of opportunities to brand your company within your profile.

Headline – Your headline is important real estate that appears next to your name in search results, and it’s wording may determine whether a new potential client contacts you after you appear in search results. Your headline should be customized to align with your objective for being on LinkedIn in the first place, which is to market your company. Remember to *brand* your headline, not make it a collection of keywords, which will make your potential customer think you are merely trying to dupe the LinkedIn search results (more on that pet peeve of mine in a future blog post)

Location – A no-brainer? NOT! This is the field that gives potential customers a way to filter out profiles by location, so it is of the utmost importance that you classify yourself as “living” where your market is.

Industry – A critical aspect to your profile. If your company crosses industries, or it’s not specific, make sure to choose the one which you most want to be associated with. If you’re confused, check out the sales and marketing folks from your competitors and see what industry they chose for one reference point.

Summary – Much like your headline, which acts as an initial filter, your summary is the basis upon which people will form opinions about you and your brand. It is what helps them decide how they will view you and potentially your company. Make sure to include keywords that will appear in searches as well as what your specialties are, and more importantly, how you can help potential clients.

Experience – This is where you have the opportunity to show off your company’s niche and your own unique expertise. To effectively brand yourself, include details that support the info you included in your headline and summary.

Education – Do not skip this, as it is simply another way to prove you are “real” – and get found.

Websites/URLs – Not only do you have the opportunity to list your company website here, you can also list up to three URL's to appear on your profile. Take advantage of this – and make sure to customize the anchor text for potential additional SEO juice.

Contact Settings – Make it easy for potential clients to contact you by inputting your contact information. If you do not want to show your phone #, a business email is sufficient. Just don't leave it blank and let this precious space go to waste.

It's safe to say that LinkedIn gives you a lot of real estate in which to work, so the more you use, the better you can brand yourself and your company, making it easier to be found in search results.

And lastly, one final word of advice: After you create a stellar profile that embodies your brand, make sure you revisit it on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date and continues to reflect your professional objectives. In other words ... always keep your LinkedIn brand fresh!

How has *your* LinkedIn profile attracted new business for *you*?

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The above is a summary of selected content from book “Maximizing LinkedIn for Sales and Social Media Marketing,” available at Amazon, Kindle, Nook, or iTunes.