





LinkedIn Hackathons

How to Create an Effective Linked-In Profile: A Step-by-Step Guide

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What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is an app/website where individuals and companies can create a profile to assist with professional goals. LinkedIn can be described as your online resume. It is a platform where you can build your network, look for jobs, apply for positions, and for businesses to find and hire potential employees.

Basic Components of a LinkedIn Profile:

While a LinkedIn page has the potential to be quite in-depth, here is a list of the important parts you should prioritize when you first create your profile:

- Profile Picture
- Background Photo
- Headline
- About
- Education
- Positions
- Skills

These are the highlights of any individual's profile. These core sections are what most people will focus on when viewing your page. More information on each component will be explained in more detail in the step-by-step guide.

Step-by-Step Guide:

1. Download the LinkedIn app or go to the website: <https://www.linkedin.com>.
2. Signing Up



Create an account by typing in your email address you wish to use for your LinkedIn and create a password.

- This should be an email you have access to and check regularly. Then, create a password you will remember for future access to your account.
- The other option is to sign in with Google. This will sign you right into LinkedIn and will connect your Google account with your LinkedIn account. You would sign into LinkedIn with the email and password information from your Google account.
- You will likely be sent a confirmation code to your email inbox to confirm to continue.

Questions from LinkedIn

You will be asked a series of questions by LinkedIn to help start to build your profile.

- Answer questions according to the information you want displayed in your account. Some questions are important and need to be accurately filled out right at the start, such as your full name and your college information.
- Other prompts that show up can either be answered right away or skipped, dealt with, and changed later. For example, “Are you looking for a job right now?”. These are just for LinkedIn to get an idea of what to guide your account towards.
- It will also encourage you to follow people and companies right away. You can skip this section and connect with people after your profile is complete, or if something or someone interests you, feel free to start making connections now.

Profile Picture

Time for customization. LinkedIn will start with your profile picture, which is a critical part of your account. Your photo will be the first thing viewers see before even looking at your profile and will be displayed on your main page. You will want to give out the best first impression you can. Some tips include:



- Choose a professional photo of yourself. Select an image where the quality is as clear as you can get it. You yourself should also look clean and professional.
- Use a headshot. This is the best way to display your face to your audience.

Background Photo

The background image is a banner-like photo at the top of your page. It may not have the same importance as your profile picture, but it is still a key element. Images draw the eye's attention faster than words can, so have a photo that represents you well. Examples of what to select could be:

- The logo of the organization you work for.
- An action shot of you working well with others.
- Your product you created and sell.

Headline

The headline is a short label that goes right underneath your name on your page. Headlines can be your current occupation, or what you are enrolled in at the current moment. The headline can be updated at any time. Recommended headlines for a student attending college could look like this:

- Student at
- Biology Student atUniversity

Once graduated, a more professional one might look like:

- Graphic Designer for
- Reporter of for 3 years



About

When on your profile, click on the “Add profile section” button, then open the “Core” tab to view the rest of the key sections of your page. Begin with the “About” section. This is a free place to tell your story. 2,600 characters are available for you to write anything you want about yourself.

- Include any information you would want an employer to know about you.
- This is a space where you could provide more details about an experience you had or what you accomplished at a previous job.

Education

Add where you go/went to school. LinkedIn may have already had you do some of this section when signing up. If not, select your school and fill out the rest of the section. If your school is already selected, click the pencil icon to edit your education section as there is still more to add.

- Make sure to include your major(s) and degree(s).
- List any activities or clubs you participated in while at school.
- Fill in any other blanks of your choice to give the best summary of your life in college.

Positions

This is where LinkedIn becomes like a resume. It is the place to show your experience with positions you have held. Once you have clicked “Add position,” follow along with the prompts and save to your profile.

- You can add as many positions as you wish
- There is another option to include a “Career break” to your profile if you choose to show why you were not working during a certain time.



Skills

Click “Add skills.” LinkedIn has tons of skills in their database to choose from. Search for skills you believe you possess and then select the experience in which the skill was demonstrated.

- Choose only a good handful of skills to add to your page. Too many listed may seem unrealistic and could hide the important ones you want to highlight.
- Make the skills relevant. If you are applying for computer engineering jobs, including “Food Safety” as your top skill is not particularly useful. You may have worked a culinary job before, but that should not be top of the list.

Additional Profile Information

All the important sections have now been filled out. There are still some areas available for more information and customization. Go to your page and click on the “Add profile section.” Your “Core” should already be all filled out, now look under the “Recommended” and “Additional” tabs. There you will find many different features for you to further enhance your page if you choose. Some key segments include:

- Projects
- Volunteer experience
- Licenses & certifications
- Honors & awards



Make Connections

Now that your profile is complete to your liking, think about making some connections. Go to the “My Network” tab or the “Search” bar and look for people who you would want to add to have as part of your network. Here are examples of people who you could begin to follow:

- Your friends who have accounts
- Acquaintances you know from school
- Some of your favorite companies
- Well-known people who inspire you

What you do with the rest of the page is now all up to you. Now you know the basics and how to maneuver your page. You may add, change, or delete anything along the way. Decide how you want to use LinkedIn to your advantage to enhance your career path.

The Alumni Feature on LinkedIn: A Step-by-Step Guide

What is the Alumni Feature?

The Alumni Feature is a place on LinkedIn where you can find the accounts of alumni who have attended and graduated from your school. You can set filters based on statistics of key information about the alumni, where they live, what they do for work, and more.

Why is the Alumni Feature Important?

This feature is significant because it allows you to easily access and connect with alumni from your school. When networking and looking for opportunities, similarities are highly valued. You could use this feature to reach out to alumni who currently work in the same field you are looking to go into. When alumni view your



profile and see their alma mater on your page, they may be a lot more willing to connect and engage with you.

Step-by-Step Guide:

The interface of this feature is different on the app and on the website. Follow the guide that corresponds to the device you are using.

You may miss out on more intricate features when using the app. If you want the best experience using this feature, it is recommended to explore on the website.

Website:

1. Open the LinkedIn [website](#) on your computer and make sure you are logged in.
2. Go to the education section of your profile and click on your school or look up your school in the “Search” bar to access your school’s page.
3. Underneath where it says “Following”, there is a row of options to explore. Click on the one that says “Alumni”.
4. You should now be able to see the stats of how many alumni are on LinkedIn and the demographics related to their work. Take some time and explore this section. You can set filters by clicking on a specific section, which will then show only alumni and break down stats from the filters you clicked.
5. If you scroll down a little further, you can see the individuals who fit within the filters you set. Set the filters to show people who majored in the same subject as you. Now you will be able to see where people who were once in the same spot as you ended up.



6. Feel free to use this feature in any way best suited for you to connect with alumni. Also, think about potentially reaching out by sending them a message to build relationships, that one day could help you out in the future.

App:

1. Open the LinkedIn app on your mobile device and make sure you are logged in.
2. Go to the education section of your profile and click on your school or look up your school in the “Search” bar to access your school’s page.
3. Underneath where it says “Following”, there is a row of options to explore. Click on the one that says “Alumni”.
4. You will now see the “Highlights” section, which filters alumni related to similar information you included on your profile. Scroll all the way down to the bottom and press “Show all alumni”. Here you can see all alumni on LinkedIn that went to your school.
5. To set search filters of your own, click on the button with the three slider bars in the top left corner of your screen. Set any parameters you want to search with and then press “Show Results”.
6. Feel free to explore and utilize this feature in any way you choose. Consider connecting with a few alumni and potentially reaching out by sending them a message. Building relationships grows your network, which one day could help you out in the future.¹

¹ This paper has been adapted from ‘HESSA Linked-In student Step by Step Guides’