Optimize your LinkedIn profile with this checklist from Duke Alumni

Pro-tip: Before you start updating your profile, go to the Visibility section under Settings and Privacy to temporarily hide your profile updates and activity.

PROFILE PHOTO

- Select a high-quality photo of you alone (does not need to be a professional headshot!).
- Look at the camera and consider smiling — your goal is to look approachable.
- Choose a professional look that is industry appropriate. That can range from a formal headshot in a suit to a smart-casual outfit and an outdoor photo.

PROFESSIONAL HEADLINE

- Be specific and explain the value you add to your field or organization.
- Use keywords, but avoid buzzwords.
- Don’t default to your job title — craft something intriguing that will make people click.
- Include skills, traits and personality.
- Use the Open To feature under your profile pix to tell people you’re hiring or looking for work.

ABOUT

- Write in the first person and provide an overview of who you are, what you’ve done and what you hope to achieve professionally.
- Use short paragraphs and bulleted lists.
- Looking to attract clients? Show your value, share how you’ve helped clients and how you can be reached.
- Early-career job seeker? Share your skills and strengths. Discuss what you’ve done, where you want to be and why.
- Mid-career job seeker? Focus on the impact you are having now, or had recently.
- Looking to brand yourself? Use a narrative to show your personality, share your mission, vision and values.

EXPERIENCE

- Highlight responsibilities that align with your brand.
- Quantify your experiences and be specific (scale, scope, volume, complexity).
- Showcase your work with images, presentations, video and articles.
- Fill in any gaps with volunteering, service or board work.
- Include previous experience, but minimize that which is irrelevant to your goals.
- Early career? Include internships, part-time jobs and T.A. positions.
- Mid-career? Start post-college unless an internship aligns with your goals.

EDUCATION

- Include education and training credentials, including certifications, training programs and professional development.
- Early career: include college major and minor, extra-curriculars, study abroad, summer programs, awards and honors.

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SKILLS AND ENDORSEMENTS
- Select 10-15 skills that best reflect your strengths.
- Endorse other individuals’ skills as a way to reconnect.

RECOMMENDATIONS
- Have 3+ recommendations by people who know your work and value.
- Be selective when asking others to write recommendations for you.
- Be thoughtful, specific and personal when leaving recommendations.
- Early career: ask professors, internship managers, project team members, part-time job supervisors and even high school teachers.

DISPLAY YOUR WORK
- Add multi-media examples of your work.

INTERESTS
- Connect with or follow key leaders in your target industries.
- Follow organizations and companies of interest.
- Join professional industry groups.

Pro-tip: use the filters on the Duke University page and the Duke Alumni group to find alumni with interesting jobs. Then visit the Duke Alumni Network (alumni.duke.edu) to connect with them directly!

Congratulations! Once you are finished with your changes, go to Settings and Privacy and make your updates and activities visible again.

*A special thank you to Thamina Stoll ’17, LinkedIn account director, for sharing many of these tips!