



MEADOWS CONSULTING, LLC

Lucy Meadows • Career and Life Coach

617-322-9622 • lucy@lmeadows.com • www.lmeadows.com

How to Shine on LinkedIn

WHY USE LINKEDIN?

LinkedIn is the largest professional online network. It's the first place someone will go to check you out professionally, so it's worth creating a profile that represents you well. Your profile needn't be very long, just clear.

LinkedIn allows you more space and creativity than a resume, and it lets you demonstrate your talents through links to materials you've produced.

PRESENT YOURSELF WELL

Post a good picture.

This is what viewers will look at first. *Have a photo taken professionally if you can.* Dress as you would for an interview.

It's a good idea to add a background photo too, as long as it's not distracting. This is a chance to say something more about yourself.

Have a creative, specific headline that sets you apart and contains keywords.

The headline gives you a chance to grab the reader's attention and summarize who you are. It can be up to about 120 characters. Here are examples of what you can use:

- your profession and highlights of your skills
- your current title, tweaked for clarity if necessary
- the title you want—which you will justify by how you present the rest of your profile.

If you're job-hunting, remember that your current employer can see what you say.

Keep your contact information clear and up to date.

LinkedIn will provide a "public profile URL" that you will want to simplify. On the right-hand column side of your profile page, find the section for your personal information. You'll see *Edit Public Profile and URL*. Below *Edit URL*, click on the pencil icon, and remove all the extraneous letters and numbers. For example: change linkedin.com/in/lisa-knutsen-999ba5140 to linkedin.com/in/lisaknutsen.

Also under this section, fill in your contact information. Scroll down to enter your personal email address, and be sure it sounds professional.

Give a clear, concise summary and job history.

The summary, though it takes a lot of thought to write a good one, is a crucial part of your profile. This is your chance to start telling your story, briefly. What’s important about you? Why would an employer want to hire you? It can be personal, as long as you remember that ultimately it’s all about the employer and what they are likely to care about. The summary can generally be a little less formal than what you would write on a resume, depending on your field. Avoid generic adjectives.

For the job history, omit any dense paragraphs or long lists—people won’t read them. Highlight your successes and accomplishments, not your duties. Quantify wherever possible.

It’s helpful to have a one- or two-line summary at the beginning of the description of each position. This continues the story you started to tell in your summary, but in more detail.

Bullets work well, in moderation. You can copy and paste bullets from another document. Or, to add bullets on a Mac, click on the Edit icon—the pencil—and put your cursor where you want the bullet. Then press Option plus 8, then add a space. On a PC, press Alt plus 1049 (this may work better on a keyboard with a separate number keypad).

Jargon is not your friend.

Even if you are writing for people in your field, use clear language. There might be an assistant doing the screening who doesn’t know all the terms used in your field.

Don’t go back too many years.

If you’re older, there’s no point in inviting age discrimination. Fifteen years’ worth of experience is a good maximum to show; older experience may be discounted anyway. You don’t have to put dates on your education. This is a balancing act: omitting dates suggests that you are older, but at least viewers can’t pigeonhole you based on your age.

BUILD YOUR NETWORK

*Also see the section below, **Search for People, Organizations, Jobs.***

Build a large list of connections to create a powerful network.

LinkedIn is good at suggesting people you may know. First, click on *My Network*. Below you will see *People you may know*. Contact people you’d like to be in touch with and ask to be connected, **always** sending a short personal note rather than a canned invitation. Do not connect straight from the list of *People You May Know*. Instead, go to the person’s profile, click on *Connect*, and click on *Add a note*.

It's best not to approach people cold. Get introduced through a mutual first-level connection if possible. Also I recommend not accepting invitations from people you don't know, since connecting with someone can be seen as a kind of endorsement.

LinkedIn will ask you to import your address book. You may or may not want to do this, and it's not necessary. Be careful not to invite your whole address book by mistake!

Share information.

Keep your contacts in touch with what you're doing and thinking. This is a great way to become better known, and your connections can share what you post. On your home page, you can click on *Share an article, photo, video or idea*, then *Post*.

Be active in LinkedIn groups in your profession—or the profession you want to join.

This can be another good way to demonstrate your expertise. Join groups that interest you, ask questions, follow discussions and post comments. See below for how to search for groups.

Follow organizations that interest you.

These are now listed on your profile under "Interests". They give a picture of who you are and open up opportunities to connect with people who share your interests, such as fellow alums.

Beware: keep an eye on your "interests" section. Sometimes LinkedIn will add a group without consulting you—and it may or may not relate to you.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TYPE OF LINKEDIN ACCOUNT

Join the appropriate level of LinkedIn for your needs.

The free level has a fair amount of capabilities, and as of March 2018 the least expensive paid plan is \$60/month—so chances are you will be fine with a free account.

A free account enables you to:

- Create an online identity and build your professional network.
- Request and provide recommendations.
- Browse profiles of other LinkedIn members (there are limits but LinkedIn doesn't specify what they are – they want to be sure you are not a recruiter).
- Receive InMail messages.
- Save up to three searches and get weekly alerts.

The Premier Business level costs \$59.99 per month as of March 2018. This level enables you to also:

- See who has viewed your profile.
- Send 5 messages per month through InMail, LinkedIn's email system--but there is debate about whether InMail messages are any more effective than regular email.

- If you apply for a job through LinkedIn, get information on how you compare to other applicants, and show up at the top of the list of applicants for jobs.
- Find some salary information from LinkedIn members.
- Access LinkedIn Learning video courses.
- Access information on companies, including hiring trends and profiles of recent senior management hires.
- Browse people without limits.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY

Click on your photo on the top right of the home page to find the *Settings & Privacy/Privacy* page. There are a dozen settings here to review, including very important ones. Two of these are:

- *Profile viewing options*. This means whether people know that you viewed their profile.
- *Sharing profile edits*. This means whether your network is notified about your profile changes. Job seekers are likely not to want this, and you certainly don't want it to happen while you are actively working on your profile.

SEARCH FOR PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS, JOBS

Use LinkedIn routinely to get information on:

- **people you have met or would like to meet,**
- **organizations, and**
- **jobs.**

If you know what you are looking for, just enter it in the *Search* box at the top. Or to browse, click in the *Search* box. Then you can choose from a menu bar listing *People/Jobs/Posts*. Once you click on one of these categories, you'll see more filters listed at the top, such as *Location*.

Find individuals.

It may take several steps to find the right person. First, type a name in the *Search* box at the top. A list will probably come up. Unless you already see the person you're looking for, click at the bottom of the list on *See all results for [Sarah Winesap]*. Then you can narrow the search by using any of these filters on the top:

- *Connections*
- *Locations*
- *Current Companies*
- and more, under *All Filters* (scroll down to see all filters)

Use LinkedIn to learn more about an organization.

Use *Search* to find the organization, then you can usually click on *People* or *Jobs*. Under *People*, your first-level connections will usually be listed first, followed by second-level connections, etc. To reach a second-level connection, contact a person you know and ask if they would be willing to introduce you, normally by email. After you get an introduction, follow up to thank the person who connected you.

Use LinkedIn to search for jobs, but don't ignore websites that may have more job postings.

A number of employers post jobs on LinkedIn, and you can apply directly through LinkedIn. Use either the LinkedIn website or the LinkedIn Jobs app.

You can also save jobs or set a search alert that will notify you of jobs that meet your criteria, such as:

- *Location*
- *Company*
- *Salary* (only for paid accounts)
- *Date Posted*
- *Experience Level*
- *Industry*
- *Job Function*

Remember that many other websites have far more job listings. Find the ones that are best for your profession and check them regularly. Set up job search alerts that will notify you of appropriate postings.

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!

For more career information, see my website, www.lmeadows.com.

For more LinkedIn information, I recommend Sabrina Woods's website, www.sabrina-woods.com/LinkedIn. Under *Handouts*, click on *LinkedIn For Job Search*.