

So long resume, hello LinkedIn

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Recently I read an interesting [article](#) by Jeff Haden discussing six steps to a more marketable LinkedIn profile. Professionals everywhere are becoming more acclimated with LinkedIn. Every few days, a peer or business colleague tells me they just created a LinkedIn account at the insistence of a co-worker, friend, or teacher. As more and more people [realize the importance and potential of LinkedIn](#), though, they do not necessarily understand how to properly utilize LinkedIn or create an effective LinkedIn profile. In his article, Haden touches upon this trend, noting that while LinkedIn is the top social media platform for the business world, many people get lost in creating their LinkedIn profile and treat the platform more like a résumé, which under-utilizes LinkedIn's potential for personal and business branding and business creation.

The [article](#) lists several steps to a more marketable LinkedIn profile, including:

1. **Focus on the big picture.** LinkedIn is about marketing one's professional skills in order to make connections and generate business. However, as an individual creates their LinkedIn profile, and adds content, they may become lost in the process and instead take part in a résumé,-building exercise. By the time an individual finishes, their LinkedIn profile may reflect their skills and experiences, but does a poor job of attracting clients, connections and business through worthwhile content and targeted keywords. LinkedIn users should take a step back at the beginning and every so often and remember why they created a LinkedIn profile, and think about what keywords in their profile will best attract connections and business.
2. **The headline and keywords matter.** One of the key factors in LinkedIn search results is the headline, and individuals often neglect to make sure this crucial area is as search friendly as possible. Haden notes that keywords should be sprinkled throughout a LinkedIn profile not only in the headline, but in the skills, experience and education areas as well. A succinct LinkedIn profile that efficiently uses keywords can go a long way in coming up in desired search results.
3. **Less is more.** Simply put, a LinkedIn profile should avoid extra clutter and focus on content that supports one's professional goals.
4. **A picture may be worth a thousand connections.** While a LinkedIn profile picture may not make or break a deal, a bad picture may lose business, as the [article](#) notes. As with any professional photograph, a LinkedIn profile photo should reflect your professional goals and how you want to present yourself to clients. Social photos may exude an unprofessional air with potential connections and clients. Haden notes that the best LinkedIn profile picture strikes a balance between professionalism and approachability. LinkedIn users should make sure their profile picture puts their best professional foot forward.

5. **Get recommended.** Many individuals I know ask for an endorsement or recommendation as soon as they make a LinkedIn connection. LinkedIn recommendations add depth to a LinkedIn profile and can help potential clients better connect with a LinkedIn user. LinkedIn users are wise to seek out recommendations from appropriate clients and colleagues so that potential clients and colleagues can read firsthand how one's skills positively translate in the business world.

I spoke with Neil Levin, networking expert and founder of [HereMatch](#) to get his thoughts on making the most of a LinkedIn profile. (*Editor's Note: Read LIBN's feature on [HereMatch](#) here.*) Levin stated that to use LinkedIn effectively, one should start with a well organized, complete profile. Levin added that "as with all social media, the goal should be to present yourself as an expert in your industry and to participate in a dialogue about trends and issues in that industry. By providing advice to others, you can begin to create new connections based on common interests and expertise."

When asked about the most important part of a LinkedIn profile, Levin answered: "For a personal profile, a picture is essential. Your headline is also extremely important (and something people often do not edit). In general your profile should be professional, but it should not look and feel like a resume." I recently heeded this advice on my LinkedIn [profile](#). Levin adds that regularly updating a LinkedIn profile, including status updates that focus on trending topics in one's industry and other information of interest to your connections, is important.

On how to best network on LinkedIn, Levin stated: "LinkedIn, much like your website, is a way to legitimize yourself to people you meet outside of LinkedIn. It can also be a place to extend your reach, but as mentioned above, the way to do this is to immerse yourself in relevant communities, offer valuable advice, and provide status updates with information valuable to your followers."

There are a number of ways individuals can enhance their LinkedIn profile and experience. LinkedIn users should consider the above steps to ensure they utilize LinkedIn for more than just resume posting, but as an online platform to make professional connections, convey knowledge and expertise, and generate business.