

How to Create a Professional LinkedIn Profile

1. Craft an informative profile headline

Your profile headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the headline as the slogan for your professional brand, such as “Student, Southern Methodist University” or “Recent Honors Grad Seeking Marketing Position.” Check out the profiles of students and recent alumni you admire for ideas and inspiration. Start by joining the group: **“SMU Alumni & Hegi Career Services”!**

2. Display an appropriate photo

Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook. If you choose to post a photograph — and we recommend that you do — select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Your dress should be at least business casual in whichever photo you choose. Stop by our “LinkedIn Photobooth” to have your photo taken.

3. Show off your education

Be sure to include information about all institutions you’ve attended. Include your major and minor (if you have one), as well as highlights of your activities. It’s also appropriate to include study abroad programs and summer institutes. Create categories that include volunteer experience, leadership positions, and student organizations. Don’t be shy!

4. Develop a professional summary statement

Your summary statement should be concise and confident. Write about your goals, experiences, and qualifications. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great, too.

5. Fill your “Specialties” section with keywords

“Specialties” is the place to include key words and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want.

7. Research industries and careers by joining LinkedIn Groups

Learn more about possible careers and from the people that are currently in your desired industry. Post a question, start a discussion, and connect with the experts. Most students start by joining their university’s LinkedIn group as well as the larger industry groups related to the career they want to pursue. **Check out and connect with us and our alumni on “SMU Alumni & Hegi Career Services”!**

8. Follow your favorite companies

Have you already found a few companies in your desired industry that strike your fancy? Great! Look them up on LinkedIn and follow them. Many of them post job openings right on their web pages. When they do, you can easily connect and show off what you’ve got. You can also see who you know that has connections with the company, making it easier for you to make the most of your networking skills.

9. Collect diverse recommendations

Nothing builds credibility like third-party endorsements. The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, customers, employers, and professional mentors.

10. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to “public” and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: www.linkedin.com/in/yourname). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature or resume, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism.

11. Share your work

A final way to enhance your LinkedIn profile is to add examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments by providing links to a portfolio or adding LinkedIn Applications. By including links, you can direct people to your website, blog, or Twitter feed. Through Applications, you can share a PowerPoint or store a downloadable version of your resume (we recommend PDF format for this).