



CHECKLIST

13 WAYS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR PROFILE FOR LINKEDIN SUCCESS

JOSH STEIMLE

Does this sound familiar to you?

“ **I’ve used LinkedIn for years, but I’m not sure what benefit I’ve gotten from it.**

— Everyone who has ever used LinkedIn

What if a few easy tweaks could change that?

What if you could turn your LinkedIn profile into a *machine* to bring you new career opportunities? What if LinkedIn started sending you speaking and consulting gigs? What if you could use LinkedIn to generate leads and sales for your business?

What if you could start seeing tangible benefits after just **five minutes** of optimizing your profile?

Use this checklist to get your LinkedIn profile in shape and let’s see what you can do!

HOW TO USE THIS CHECKLIST

The user manual for this checklist is simple:

Start at the beginning and work to the end.

The first action items in this checklist take just a few minutes, are easy to make, and produce big benefits. I ordered it this way that even if you only complete the first item you'll still get tangible results.

You may be tempted to think some of these optimization tasks are so simple, so easy, that they can't possibly help, and you may as well skip them. Don't fall for this temptation—sometimes it's the small and simple changes that bring the greatest results.

“ ...by small and simple things are great things brought to pass...

— Alma 37:6, *The Book of Mormon*

Before we jump in, I assume you already have a LinkedIn profile set up with basic information, like your name (and it better be *your* name, not a company name!).

Ready for the first task? Let's go!

01 PROFILE PHOTO

“ Users with a photo in their profile receive 21 times more profile views.

– LinkedIn

Upload a photo, and make sure it's a good one. It should be at least 400 x 400 pixels. Getting a professional photo is nice, but not at all necessary. A few minutes prep, your phone, and some decent lighting is enough.

BAD LINKEDIN PROFILE PHOTOS

To paraphrase Tolstoy, all good profile photos are the same. Every bad profile photos is bad in its own way. Bad photos may be blurry, faded, poorly cropped, shot from too far away, include only someone's eye, be overly serious, or be a logo rather than a person.



GOOD LINKEDIN PROFILE PHOTOS

Smiling, happy people. Crisp, bright, clear.



02 TITLE

“ If we were not impressed by job titles...we would demand that financial advisors show us their personal bank statements.

— Mokokoma Mokhonoana

When you send a connection request your title is one of just four pieces of information the person you want to connect to will see first (the others are your name, profile photo, and mutual connections). The keywords in your title also affect how you show up in searches on LinkedIn, so make your title count!

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE

Words like creative, team player, experienced, innovative, guru, influencer, thought leader, visionary, and successful do *not* make you sound like any of those things. Leave out the self-flattery. Also, don't put "Actively pursuing job opportunities." This does *not* make you an attractive candidate.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

If you do keynote speeches, put "keynote speaker" in there. If you've written a book, put "author" in. Go beyond the simple "Admin at XYZ Company" and follow Sally Hogshead's example—instead of a traditional title she includes the results she delivers:

“ To become more successful, don't CHANGE who you are, become MORE of who you are. I'll show you how, in 3 minutes.

03 BANNER

If someone researches you before they accept your connection request or share your content, one of the first things they'll see on your profile is your banner image. People do business with people they know, like, and trust, and your banner is an excellent way to build trust through imagery and social proof.

ATTRACTIVE IMAGE

Your image can be professional and serious, or fun and quirky, but it must be attractive, like these.



03 BANNER (CONTINUED)

An attractive banner image may be enough, but if you've got it, adding social proof can increase your credibility. Social proof is made of details that make people think "Well, if other people trust this guy, I suppose I should too."

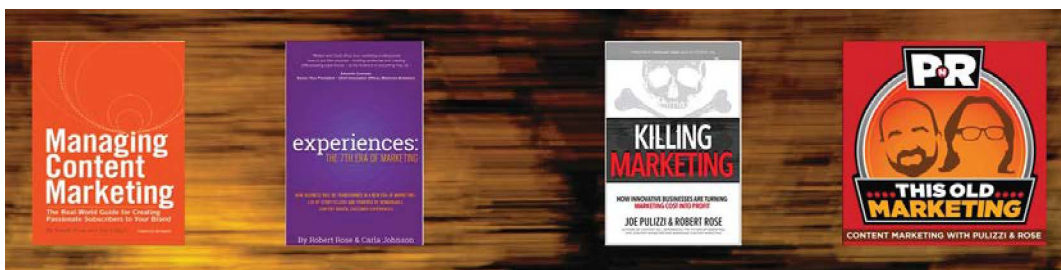
" We view a behavior as more correct in a given situation to the degree that we see others performing it.

— Robert Cialdini, *Influence*

Example: I've received recognition from Forbes, Inc., Success, and other publications, so I've included their logos in my banner.



Others, like author and podcaster Kevin Rose, include images of books and other media that demonstrate their expertise.



04 **BIO**

Your bio is the main block of text under your photo, banner, title, and other basic information. Viewers only see the first two lines of your bio unless they click “See more” so those two first lines better count! Lewis Howes shows us how:

“ I am a lifestyle entrepreneur that teaches small business owners, freelancers, and entrepreneurs how to make a full time living doing what they love. Most of my students make 6 and 7 figures a year by applying basic online marketing p...

Lewis’ bio gets cut off here, but by this point he’s already captured the interest of his target audience.

DON'T

Don’t leave it blank. Don’t write in the third person. Don’t post a company description. Also, don’t tell us how awesome you are—show us with facts!

DO

If you have received recognition or awards list a few here, but keep it brief, you don’t want your bio to be the written equivalent of a selfie stick. Make your bio relevant to your audience and include a few personal details, like hobbies—sometimes these can create a connection that makes all the difference.

And make sure to include keywords so you’ll show up in relevant LinkedIn searches.

04 **BIO** (CONTINUED)

Your bio can be long or short, the goal is to give your audience what they want, whether that's a sense of trust, or useful information.

Here's the short bio author Dave Asprey uses:

“ I've traveled the world, from Tibet to private brain upgrade facilities outside the US, to try out all the biohacking techniques I've been able to find in order to discover:

What are the simplest things you can do to be better at everything?

All Bulletproof content is free on bulletproofexec.com. Or, try out Bulletproof Coffee made with butter and Brain Octane Oil. Enjoy! :-)

BTW, LinkedIn doesn't activate links within the bio (dangit!) so Dave's link isn't clickable, but some portion of his visitors will copy and paste it.

Your bio could be longer than this, but is it necessary? Again, it's all about what your audience wants, and there is no rule that will fit everyone's needs.

04 **BIO** (CONTINUED)

This bio from podcaster Pat Flynn is longer than the previous one, but still effective:

“ In 2008, I was laid off as a Job Captain in the architecture industry. Since then, I have built several businesses online that have now allowed me to make much more, and work much less.

I currently blog at The Smart Passive Income Blog which has recently become one of the fastest growing blogs in the online marketing and blogging industry. I also host The Smart Passive Income Podcast, which was at one point the #3 overall business podcast in iTunes, ahead of podcasts from well-known public figures and authors, including Oprah, Suze Orman and Jim Cramer.

My blog and podcast is about how I experiment with making money online and what I've learned along the way...

You get the idea? That's only half of Pat's bio, but the important part is how he establishes his credibility quickly by talking about the success of his podcast. If a reader doesn't finish his bio, at least they'll walk away knowing Pat isn't any slouch.

05 **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

People will never scrutinize your employment history as much as you think but they *will* check to make sure it's there. An empty employment history area is commonplace with fake LinkedIn profiles.

Many include a list of jobs, companies, and positions, but make sure your most recent employment includes a write-up describing your experience, like Dave Asprey does here:



Vice President, Cloud Security

Trend Micro

Nov 2010 – Nov 2013 • 3 yrs 1 mo

I'm Trend Micro's cloud computing and virtualization evangelist, responsible for thought leadership and strategy. I work with press, analysts, customers, partners, the Cloud Security Alliance, and the cloud and virtualization community in general to bring more cloud knowledge into Trend Micro, and to share Trend Micro's innovative new cloud and virtualization strategy.

If you know me personally or look at my career history, you can tell I wouldn't have joined Trend Micro if I didn't actually find differentiated and interesting cloud (public and private) things happening here! I'm really excited.

I blog about cloud security at <http://cloudsecurity.trendmicro.com>. You can also follow me at <http://www.twitter.com/daveasprey> where I tweet all of my blog postings, along with commentary on a mix of cloud and virtualization.

This description provides a great insight into Dave's time with this employer and the value he added while there.

Where possible, list factual accomplishments, especially those that include 3rd party recognition.

Pro tip: Include keywords in your employment history to increase your visibility in LinkedIn searches.

06 CONTACT AND PERSONAL INFO

Completing this information isn't mission-critical, but it's super easy, so let's take care of it real quick. To edit your contact and personal info, which includes your email address as well as links to other social profiles and website, go to your profile and find this link on the right side.

The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn profile page. On the left side, the profile header includes a cover photo, a profile picture, and the name 'eimle'. Below the name, it lists 'cutives, Author, Keynote Speaker.' and 'ung University'. The right side of the page features a navigation menu with several options: 'English', 'Edit public profile & URL', 'Promoted' (with sub-items like 'Happy New Year', 'E-commerce survey guide', and 'Host A Unique Party'), 'See connections (500+)', 'Contact and Personal Info' (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow), and 'People Also Viewed' (with sub-items like 'John Patrick Mullin' and 'Chelsea Krost'). A red arrow also points from the profile picture area towards the 'Contact and Personal Info' section.

07 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are like references or testimonials. Ask for them from your current employer, past employers you have a positive relationship with, clients, customers, and partners. Get at least five recommendations, but the more the better.

Recommendations

Ask to be recommended [Received \(34\)](#)[Given \(52\)](#)**Sean Hutchinson**Senior Account Director at
RevTraxAugust 17, 2017, Sean was a
client of Josh's

I can't recommend Josh highly enough. Every interaction with him has been positive. He is extremely knowledgeable, but that is not what makes him a good influencer. It is his work ethic, and openness to share his experiences.


Always thinking big picture he is a very shrewd operator who takes the time to nurture those within his environment and pass on his own thoughts and values. This is shown by the fact he ALWAYS makes time to reply to emails and follow up on conversations. A rare commodity in someone that busy.


If you are looking for guidance as to how to run, structure or promote your business, or enhance your network, then he's your man.

Pro tip: Don't ask for recommendations, give them. When you give recommendations, people tend to reciprocate by giving recommendations back.


08 SKILLS


You can list up to 50 skills on your profile. It's better if you choose what they are rather than allowing others to, so use all 50 slots.

Featured Skills & Endorsements Add a new skill 

Executive Coaching · 64  Endorsed by Danny P. Creed, Master Business Coach and Consultant, who is highly skilled at this


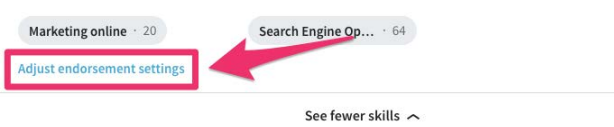
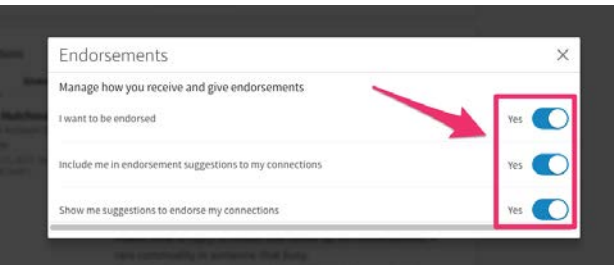
Corporate Training · 57 Lauren Sheffield (Lo) and 56 connections have given endorsements for this skill

Public Speaking · 99+  Endorsed by Jonathan Li, Public Speaking Coach and 2 others who are highly skilled at this

 Endorsed by 2 of Josh's colleagues at MWI Marketing

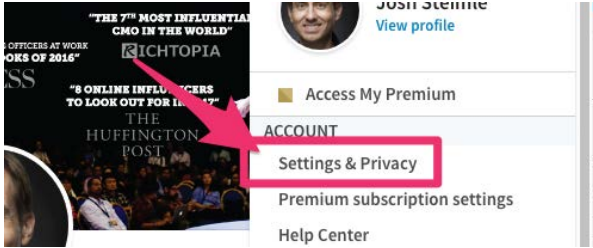
Make sure they're relevant. Make sure they're real skills people care about. "Microsoft Office" is not a skill anymore—that's so 2001.


Once you enter your skills, make sure your settings match mine so that LinkedIn will invite others to endorse you for your skills.

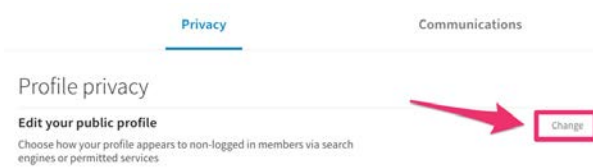
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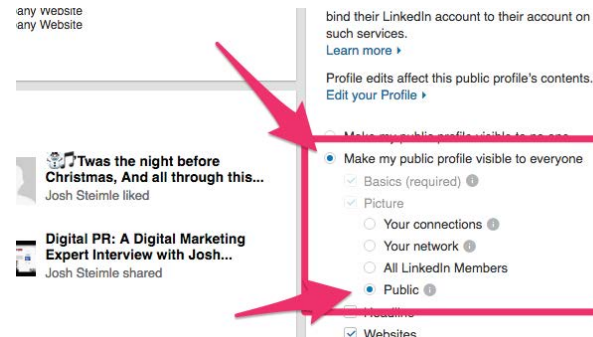
09 PUBLIC SETTINGS

Sometimes your privacy settings have been set so that when you visit someone's profile your visit shows up as "Anonymous" or that not everyone can find your profile. Switch it to public so that people can discover you easily and then connect with or follow you.

- 

1. Access your account menu and click on **Settings & Privacy**.
- 

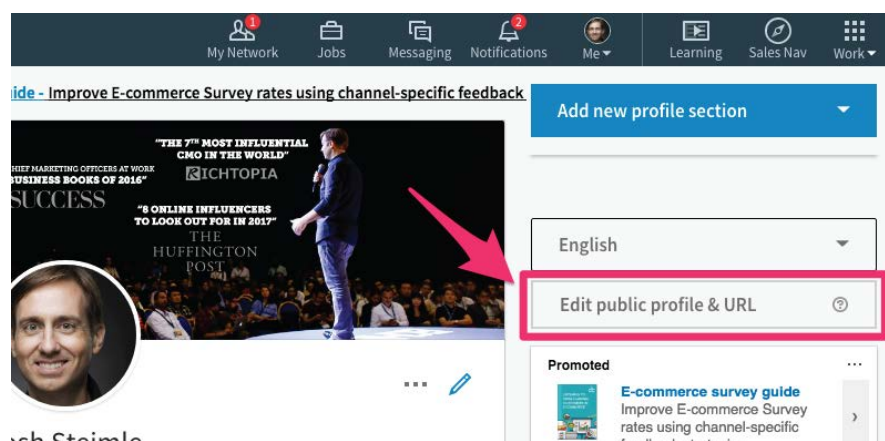
2. Click on the **Privacy** tab.
- 

3. Click on the **Change** button to edit your profile privacy.
- 

4. Select the option **Make my public profile visible to everyone**.

10 URL

Choose a customized URL, rather than a default one. It just looks more professional.



Mine is [linkedin.com/in/joshuasteimle](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshuasteimle). Go ahead, click it, I'd love to connect with you (personalize your connection request to say "I downloaded your LinkedIn Success checklist..." so I know you're not just one of the 30 fake connection requests I receive each day).

11 EDUCATION & GROUPS

If you haven't done so already, add your educational experience and join a few groups you're interested in. This makes your profile more complete, alive, and credible, but it does something else even more important.

When you send someone a connection request, especially someone well-connected, they often scan your profile to quickly see if your profile is real or fake. If they see that you both went to the same school, this is often all it takes to put their mind at ease. Common group memberships provide similar reassurance.

Since people can also filter their searches on LinkedIn by school and groups, joining these groups can also increase how many connection requests you receive from your peers.

Education



Brigham Young University

Masters, Information Systems Management, Business Strategy

2000 – 2002

Activities and Societies: Center for eBusiness, Association for Systems Management, Center for Entrepreneurship



Brigham Young University

Bachelors, Information Systems Management

1998 – 2000



Brigham Young University - Idaho

Associates, General Business

1994 – 1997



12 CONTENT

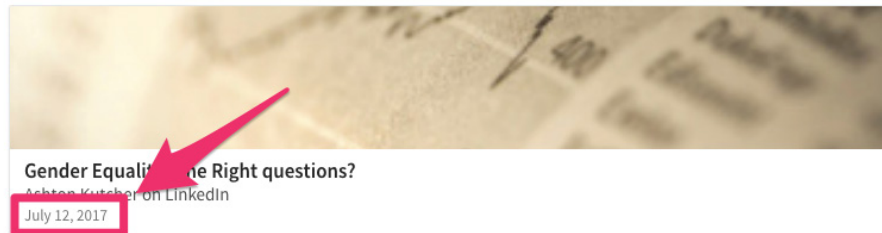
This is where we switch from one-time actions to activities that are still part of optimizing your profile, but need to be done on a regular basis.

The first ongoing activity is to produce fresh content so your profile looks like it's alive, rather than a zombie profile like Ashton Kuser's.

Ashton's Articles

12,642 followers

+ Follow



[See all articles](#)

The old content and lack of any other activity tells me Ashton doesn't get on LinkedIn much. Compare that to Shama Hyder's articles and activity, which tell me she's very active on LinkedIn. That's what you want.


Shama's Articles & Activity

399,916 followers

✓ Following



[See 159 more articles](#)

- 
 Shama Hyder and Jared Skinner Shake Up the Architectural Design Space
 Shama liked a comment
- 
 Start 2018 with confidence and positivity. Let's make the most of this New Year!...
 Shama liked
- 
 HAPPY NEW YEAR !!!! "we finally got there, I'm not going to tell a lie, I'm so glad to s...
 Shama liked

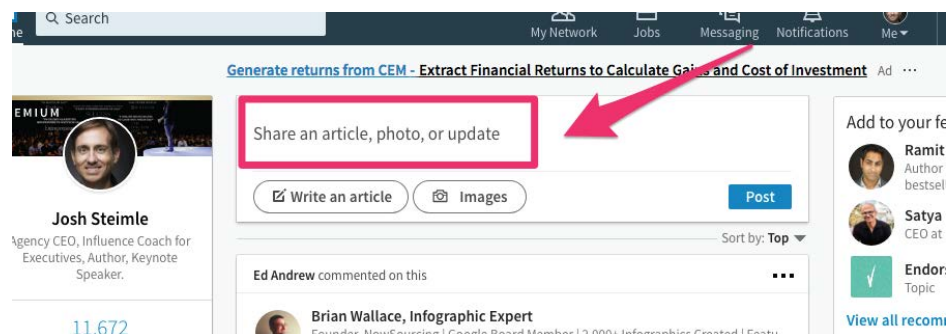
[See all activity](#)

12 **CONTENT** *(CONTINUED)*

There are two primary types of content on LinkedIn, posts and articles, and you need at least three of each. The most recent will ideally never be more than two weeks old.

POST

To create a post, simply go to the LinkedIn homepage and start typing at the top of the feed, right here.



An entire ebook could be written on how to create viral posts that generate real results (say, that sounds like a good idea) but right now you just need to create enough content to show your profile is alive. Here are some quick ideas for what you might post:

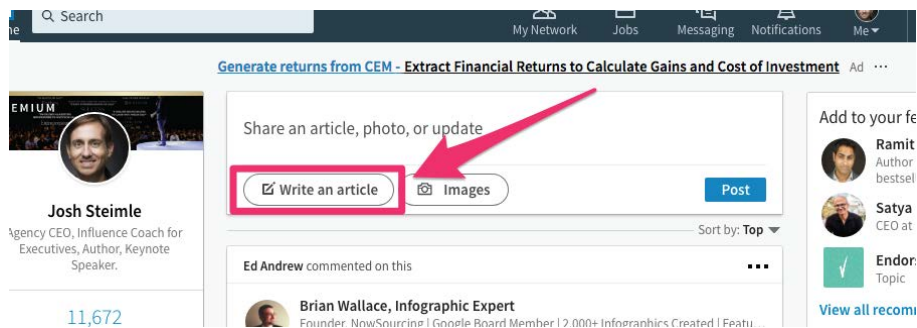
- Career or business questions you have
- Career or business answers you've discovered
- Stories about challenges you've overcome
- Links to articles and books you've read and enjoyed
- Links to podcasts you've listened to

Also reshare posts from others which you find compelling.

12 **CONTENT** (CONTINUED)

ARTICLES

To create an article, go to the LinkedIn homepage just as if you were going to create a post, but click on the “Write an article” button.



Articles aren't getting the traction on LinkedIn that they once did, so don't expect to post an article and have it go viral—the posts are much better for producing viral content. But since the articles show up in your Articles and Activity area it's still a good idea to have three or more up. This will make your profile look more legitimate and alive, and more people will accept your connection requests as a result.

12 **CONTENT** *(CONTINUED)*

VIDEO

LinkedIn recently added the ability to record and post videos using the smartphone app. While you don't need to post videos to optimize your profile, I still wanted to mention it as a form of content you may want to consider creating because video is so hot right now.

Not everyone has the video option in their app right now. To check, open the app and then go to create a post. You should see an icon like this:



Press the icon, and create a video of yourself answering a commonly asked question in your industry. If the icon doesn't show for you right now, don't worry, it will soon!

13 CONNECTIONS

If there is nothing else you take away from this checklist I hope you will understand this one key to LinkedIn success—the more connections you have, the more people will see the content you post, and the more results you'll get.

The second takeaway I hope you remember is that you want to connect with people who have lots of connections.

Why?

When you create a post, the people you're connected to see it, but nobody else does. If you're connected to 200 people, then that's how many people will see your content firsthand, and if nobody likes or comments on your content, that's as far as it will go. But if you have 30,000 connections, then 30,000 people will see your content.

In addition, whenever someone likes, comments, or shares your posts, it shows up in their feed to all *their* connections. Therefore, if you want your content to spread far and wide, you want lots of connections, and you want your connections to have lots of connections.

But if you only have a few hundred connections today, how do you get more? Hint: Keep reading.

13 CONNECTIONS (CONTINUED)

Nothing begets success like success. People on LinkedIn want to connect with others who are already well-connected. The more connections you get, the more people will want to connect with you. But at the beginning, you need to reach out to others.

Start by connecting with everyone you already know offline. Use LinkedIn's features to upload your contact list or connect to services like Gmail to simplify and speed up this process.

Once you reach 500 connections LinkedIn simply shows "500+" as your connection count, so this is the first number you want to reach. You likely have more than 500 people you already know offline who are also on LinkedIn, so you shouldn't have to reach out to people you don't know to get to this number.

Once you have connected with everyone you know, start connecting with members of your target audience who are 2nd connections, meaning you and they share a mutual connection. The more mutual connections you share, the more likely they are to accept your connection request. LinkedIn is quite good at suggesting who you should connect with, so take its suggestions.

Pro tip: Customize your connection request message to dramatically increase your success rate.

THE END IN MIND

What's your goal on LinkedIn? Do you want a new and better career? Do you want to sell more? Are you looking for investors? Are you looking for investments? Do you want to become a thought leader, an influencer? Regardless of what your goal is, you're more likely to achieve it if you apply these tips to complete and optimize your profile.

“ Members with complete profiles are 40x more likely to receive opportunities through LinkedIn.

— LinkedIn

Now that your profile is ready for action, make connections and create content. As you do, you'll get better at it, and you'll see real results. I've seen people go from invisible to influential within weeks, and you can do it to.

Good luck!

ABOUT ME

Hi! I'm **Josh Steimle**, and I help executives, entrepreneurs, and working professionals become thought leaders and influencers through public speaking, social media, books, and media attention in top business publications.

In 1999 I founded the marketing agency MWI, which failed its way forward until in 2013 I stumbled onto the power of personal branding when I was invited to contribute articles to Forbes magazine. As I wrote more, my personal brand grew, and I leveraged my brand to get into other publications, ultimately contributing more than 300 articles to places like Fortune, Mashable, TechCrunch, Time, and Fast Company. This writing led to a book deal, speaking engagements worldwide, and millions in revenue for my marketing agency which has grown to include offices in the US, Europe, and Asia.

In 2016 I founded Influencer Inc, a publishing, events, and training company to help individuals like you become more influential and build your business and career, just like I and others have done. Learn more at InfluencerInc.co.

I blog regularly at JoshSteimle.com.