

LinkedIn Profile Mastery for Freelancers: 10 Steps to Get You Hired

By: Carol Tice

10 LinkedIn® Profile Tips FOR FREELANCERS

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Are you getting great freelance writing clients weekly from your LinkedIn profile? If not, this post is for you.

Most LinkedIn profiles do a poor job of attracting quality prospects. Also, LinkedIn changed its layout in early 2017, which has made the whole job of creating an effective profile a bit trickier.

Why should you care about your LinkedIn profile? Well, because LinkedIn is only the Internet's best search engine that 500 million users, including loads of major corporations, use every day to find freelancers.

If you don't believe you can get found in the sea of LinkedIn profiles, let me just say I've been hired by no less than three Fortune 500 companies via my LinkedIn profile. This. Is. Real.

Inbound leads from LinkedIn are often terrific, and not just for me. I've coached scores of writers through this, and once you fix up your profile, the results can be pretty amazing.

Also, you'd love to get inbound leads and not have to do proactive marketing, right?

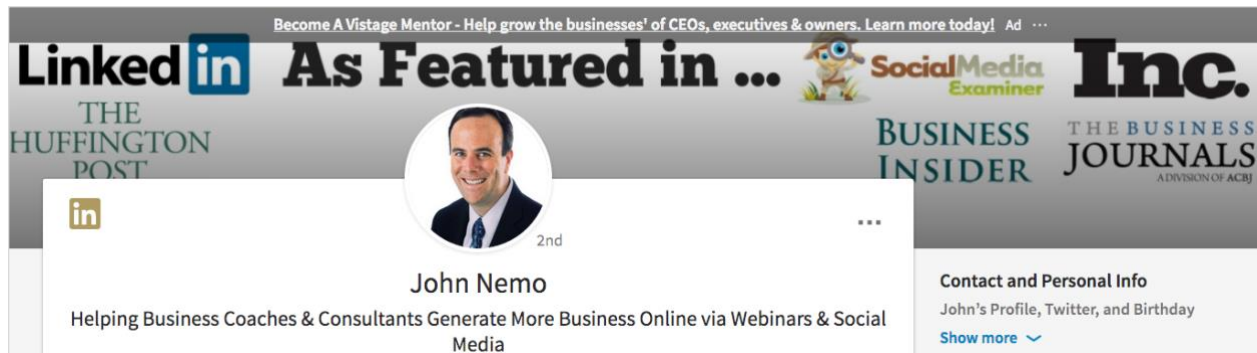
I found myself giving the same LinkedIn profile tips over and over in [coaching sessions](#) lately, so I thought I'd write it all down so more writers can benefit.

There are some basic things to know that will help you [find good clients on LinkedIn](#). Let's go element-by-element through the LinkedIn profile format, and I'll give you a tour of how to make each facet of your profile show you off to best advantage:

1. Your header

It's OK to use one of the default blue headers on LinkedIn. It's not a crime.

But uploading a custom header is better. It's a chance to show prospects your branding, your vibe, even a hint of your portfolio, as business coach John Nemo does here:



One thing you'll notice above is that LinkedIn is now slapping an obnoxious, translucent ad at the top of all our headers. And you can't make it disappear. John does a pretty good job of making sure nothing important is obscured by the ad. Leave some white space at the top of your header to allow for that ad, or your cool info may be hard to see.

Your header can even be a great place to put your contact info, as you see here:



Why would you put your contacts in your header? Because **only your connections can open your contacts tab** (it's now in the sidebar, by the way) and read what's in there.

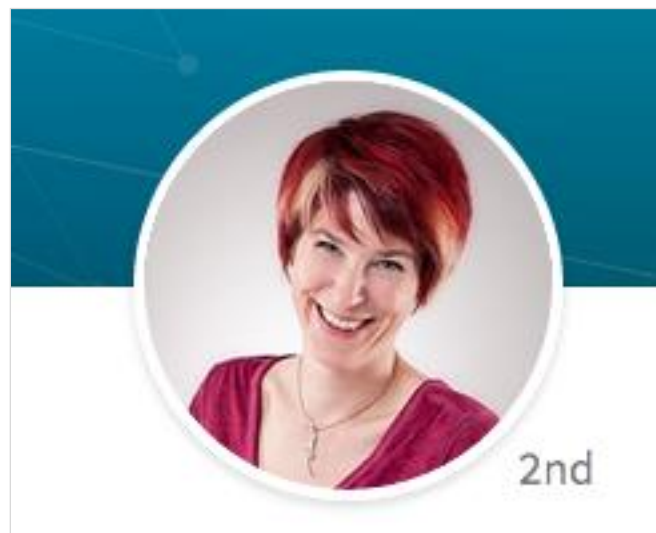
That means most prospects wouldn't know how to get in touch with you, beyond InMail. They won't get to your writer website and get all impressed and want to hire you.

The header is one good place to daylight your contacts — I'll discuss a couple other spots below.

2. Your LinkedIn profile photo

As I said above, LinkedIn is a place for business. So your headshot shouldn't be you with a drink in your hand holding your pocket poodle. And it's blurry.

Think professional, but business-casual. You should look confident, friendly, smiling, happy to be a freelance writer. Like this shot of Men With Pens' James Chartrand:



Doesn't that look nice? I feel like I want to invite her out for coffee, right now.

Avoid Sears-photo type stock backgrounds that make it look like you've come out of a time machine from the 1950s. You don't need a suit jacket necessarily, and you can definitely skip a tie, guys. Be a little more approachable than that.

Whatever you do, don't leave your photo space blank. I don't care how much you don't like your double chin. I'm an old bag, myself. Get one decent shot of you, and post it. If I can manage it, so can you.

Without a photo, you will be totally ignored on LinkedIn. Folks will assume you're just not serious about this platform. I personally decline every single connection invite I get from people with the gray head default graphic. Let us see you!

3. Your tagline

Writers love to be creative with their LinkedIn profile tagline. "Priestess of clever words!" you want to write. But don't.

The tagline on LinkedIn profiles is purely an SEO opportunity. Save your clever words for your summary.

Here, you want to take 2 lines (not more) and put in all the keyword information that can help prospects for your type of writing find you. Like this:



See how Linda also put in some of her credits and her phone, right in that tagline? Way to impress off the bat, and let people get in touch! Using the • (dot) or | (pipe) symbol is also a useful way to pack in more tagline info and help yourself get found.

Tagline rules

Three quick tagline rules for freelance writers:

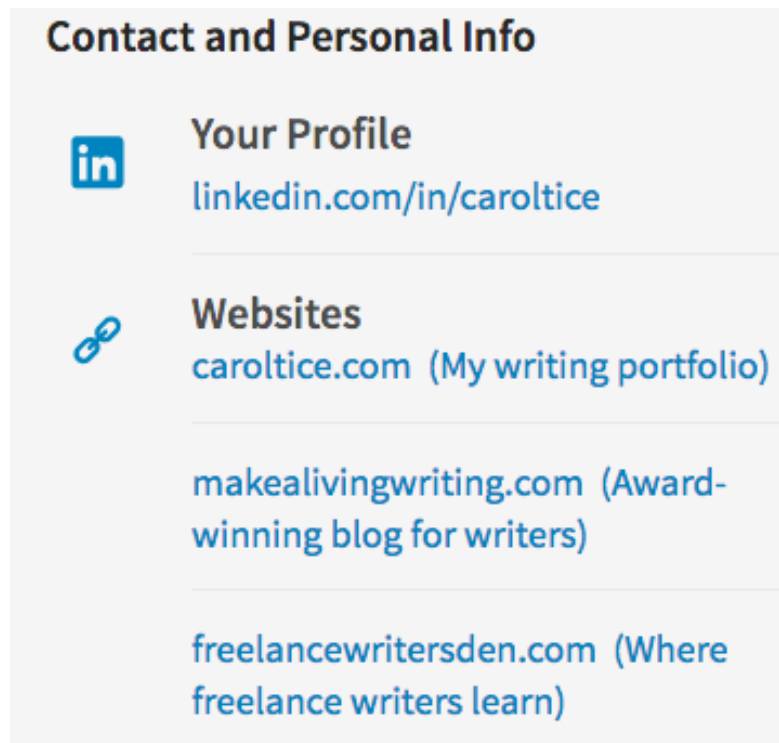
- **Use the word 'freelance.'** Remember, most people on LinkedIn are trolling for their next full-time job, so you want to signal immediately that you are different — you're looking for freelance gigs. That helps you avoid wasting time with headhunters who want a full-timer, and helps you attract those who need a freelancer.
- **Use niche or geography — or both.** It'll be hard to top a LinkedIn search for 'writer.' Go after a niche phrase instead, such as healthcare writer or fintech copywriter, and your odds improve. If you want local clients, use 'Atlanta freelance writer' or even better, 'Atlanta freelance healthcare writer.'

- **Nouns, not verbs.** Did you note above how Linda uses the noun form for her types of writing? I believe clients tend to search for the person they want. Not *writing*, but a *writer*. Lots of writers get that wrong. So be a content strategist, not someone who offers content strategy, and LinkedIn search will likely connect you to more good prospects.

As with the photo, don't leave your tagline blank, or prospects just move on.

4. Your contact info

As we've discussed, your contacts will be hidden from many people. But for those who are a connection and can look at your 'contacts' tab, you can edit your profile and style up your contacts area to make it classier and more descriptive, as I do here:



The default for these just says "my blog" or "my website" — you can do better than that.

5. Your summary

Here's one of my least favorite things about the new LinkedIn layout — our Summary section is now hidden except for the first two lines. My advice? Really make those two pack a punch!

Your summary info should *not* be about you. This is not a space for regurgitating your resume.

Instead, the point of the summary is to quickly identify your ideal prospect. That's so when they land on your profile, they immediately understand you are the writer for them.

Good summary copy is like good [writer website](#) homepage copy — it identifies:

- your ideal prospect
- their biggest problems, and
- why you are the writer in the best position to solve those problems

Hint: If most of your paragraphs begin with “I,” you're doing it wrong. Yes, writing strong summary copy is hard! But keep at it — it's worth it. Check out the two lines that show at the top of Tammy Farrell's summary (her tagline's worth looking at, too):



The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Tammy Farrell. At the top is a circular profile picture of a woman with short brown hair wearing a yellow shirt. Below the picture is the name "Tammy Farrell CPA, CFE" and a tagline: "B2B Freelance Writer | CPA * Fraud * FinTech * Insurance * Accounting * Data * Cloud * White Paper * Case Study * Ghost". Underneath the tagline are the details "Savvy White Papers • Arizona State University" and "Phoenix, Arizona Area • 421". A blue "Message" button is visible. At the bottom of the summary section, there is a short paragraph of text: "Would it be amazing to work with someone who's been on your clients' side of the table and can also write to provoke, educate and inspire? You can't afford to have your copy wrong when your audience is a C-Suite,..." followed by a "See more" link.

Her summary goes on to plug her background as a former business owner/CPA, and her unique knowledge of the industries she writes in. Ding-ding! That's how this should look.


Making your summary visual and valuable

Know what makes a really pro-looking Summary now? One that adds some of your portfolio clips.


Use the portfolio tool to add a few to the bottom of your summary, so that folks too lazy to go see your writer site get a quick taste of your work. This makes your summary look more visually interesting. Here's the bottom of Allen Taylor's Summary, for instance:

Writing services include case studies, white papers, blog posts, press releases, special reports, e-books, magazine articles, website content, and reported stories.


Media (4) < Previous Next >



Mobile Apps Security
Cover--EnergyBiz



Diversify Your Portfolio:
Why Real Estate
Crowdfunding Should B...



7 Types of Authority
Content

Sexy, no? Beats plain gray text, any day.

6. Your 'Articles and Activity' area

There are two ways you can juice up your 'activity' area. Post something in your status with a link to a nice graphic in it, and that'll help. What helps more is when you post (or re-post) a piece to LinkedIn's blog a/k/a Pulse, and it has a nice graphic:

Your Articles & Activity

1,624 followers



Negotiating Tips for Freelancers: M...
Carol Tice on LinkedIn



Should you spend more time on LinkedIn -- and less on Facebook?

Carol shared this



New: Double Your Rates With This Writer's Proven Negotiation Techniques

Carol shared this



Emergency help for freelance writers: My Top 7 Answer Posts

Carol shared this

You can see that LinkedIn favors Pulse posts, and features them much bigger than your regular status updates.

You may think with writers, it's all about our words, but having a few graphics sprinkled in can seriously help make your profile more interesting to prospects. Having some of your content on here, or posted in your summary, also allows prospects an instant look at your work that may give you a leg-up.

7. Your experience

Here's a common mistake I see many writers making: Instead of taking the time to put your past clients in one by one under the Experience area, you just mention them in passing in your summary.

Don't do that! Without listing them in Experience, those impressive past clients are hidden from LinkedIn's search engine. By posting your timeframes and job role with each past client, you increase your search odds.

Why? Each Experience listing is another point of commonality that might make your profile rise to the top in a search. If that searcher also once worked with that company, it'll shoot you to the top of the pile. I know it's gruntwork, but plug in all your past prospects. Ditto with schools you attended.

8. Your groups

As with Experience, relevant groups you join can also help you rank on search. People searching who belong to one of your groups will see you near the top.

Not in any groups? Time to join some! Your LinkedIn profile will list them, and give visitors a sense of your interests.

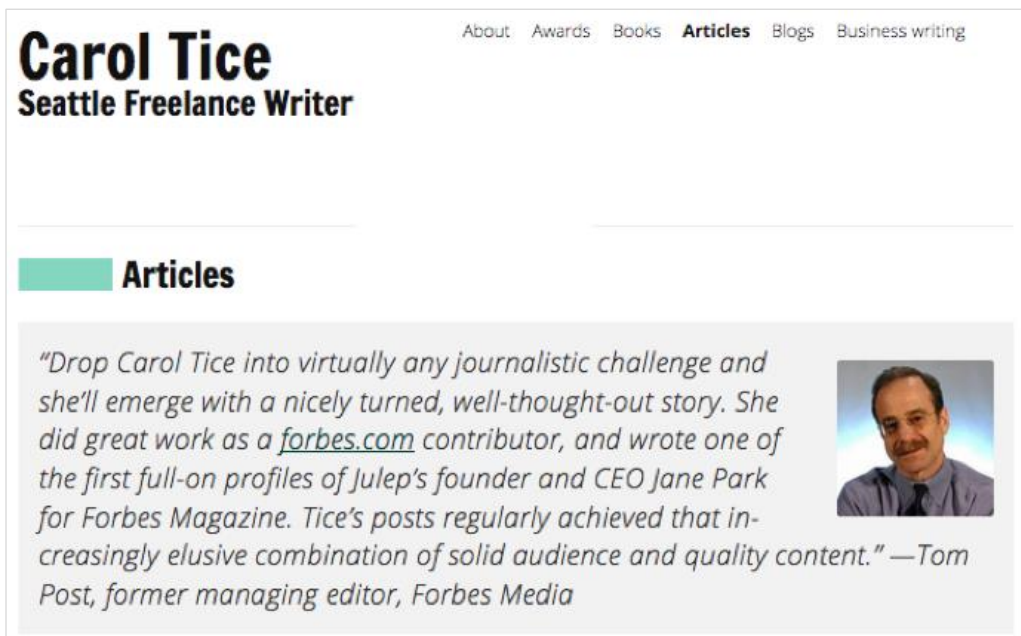
Try not just writer ones, but ones for industries and topics you write about. They can be a great place to listen in on prospect conversations, discover pain points, share expertise, get known, and find useful connections. You can even join groups such as [Writeful Share](#), which exist to share leads and info.

9. Your recommendations

Recommendations really make your profile shine. Don't wait to collect them, either.

If you've done one successful project for a client and got positive feedback, shoot them a request for a testimonial immediately. If they agree, use the '[Recommendations](#)' tool on LinkedIn to collect and feature your testimonial.

You can also screen-shot that sucker and use it on your writer website, too, as I do here:



The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Carol Tice, a Seattle Freelance Writer. The profile includes navigation links for About, Awards, Books, Articles, Blogs, and Business writing. Below the profile name, there is a section titled 'Articles' with a green highlight. A testimonial is featured, quoting Tom Post, former managing editor of Forbes Media, praising Carol Tice's work. To the right of the testimonial is a small portrait photo of Tom Post.

Carol Tice
Seattle Freelance Writer

About Awards Books **Articles** Blogs Business writing

Articles

"Drop Carol Tice into virtually any journalistic challenge and she'll emerge with a nicely turned, well-thought-out story. She did great work as a [forbes.com](#) contributor, and wrote one of the first full-on profiles of Julep's founder and CEO Jane Park for Forbes Magazine. Tice's posts regularly achieved that increasingly elusive combination of solid audience and quality content." —Tom Post, former managing editor, Forbes Media

10. Your connections

The number of connections you have on LinkedIn is a vital part of your 'cred' on this platform. You want as many as you can get, but don't just randomly connect to people.

The difference between LinkedIn and other platforms such as Twitter is here, you only want to be connected to people you truly know, so you can recommend and refer them. I turn down about 100 invites a month.

Sometimes, you might see someone you don't know, but you have scads of common connections. Or maybe they smell like a prospect, and you want to connect. That's fine.

Just saying — you want to be able to use this list to brainstorm with and market to from time to time. So keep it a useful list. But if you don't have a lot of connections — be building them! Look through your friends' connections, look up people you know but haven't connected with yet.

Why? I know one writer who lost a client unexpectedly and needed money *now*. She had a large LinkedIn network, so all she had to do to find a replacement client was [InMail contacts](#) to let them know she was available and ask them to refer her. She got a new client within a few days. You want this ability, yes?

Stuff you don't need to worry about

Not everything on LinkedIn is vital. The 'endorsements'? They don't matter.

The other thing that's great about LinkedIn is that you don't have to spend hours a day on here...or even hours a week. When I was actively marketing on LinkedIn to get more clients, I found popping on once a week to update my status, share a thing or two, and comment in a group seemed to be all I needed to get found by plenty of leads.

The other good thing? Once you fix up this LinkedIn profile, it'll keep bringing you leads for months and years to come, with only the occasional quick tweak for updating.