



Jason Alba, who recently released a DVD called [LinkedIn for Job Seekers](#), shared with CIO.com the six most common mistakes he sees on LinkedIn profiles.

1. Don't Get in Picture Trouble

Many people choose not to use a picture on their LinkedIn profiles. While some of you have your reasons, it's a mistake for the typical user, Alba says. Some common concerns: Perhaps you don't want to disclose your ethnicity, or you don't consider yourself photogenic.

"Some situations are justified in not using a profile picture, but in the end I encourage people to include one because it shows you're comfortable with yourself," Alba says. "It also makes your profile a lot more personable." Alba recommends a professional headshot for LinkedIn, rather than the picture of you in front of a mountain or lake that you utilize on Facebook. In addition, if you're a job seeker, odds are that you will meet your prospective employer in a face-to-face interview, so that picture of you twenty years ago that you like to leave up there - that needs to be replaced.

"Sometimes people are floored when they see the person if they left a really old picture up there," Alba says.

2. Write a Descriptive Professional Headline

When you [edit your LinkedIn profile](#), you have what Alba calls a "professional headline" right beneath the name. The common mistake here (as shown in the picture below) is to simply put your name and title. He believes you should use something catchier. Instead of saying, "project manager for X company," say something more specific: "I manage complex projects involving IT and marketing."

When people search for you, they will see this professional tagline, and it might decide whether or not they feel compelled to click on your name and see your profile, Alba says.

"Think of yourself as a marketer, and this is where your big ad appears to the world," Alba says.

3. Properly Label Websites Displaying Your Work or Blog

LinkedIn offers you the ability to list the websites where your work might be displayed. This is a great option if you keep a personal website with a resume or a blog. But when you go to edit the website descriptions, Alba recommends dispensing with LinkedIn's default descriptions of "my website" or "my company." Those descriptions aren't a compelling read for employers, he says. Instead, when you edit your "websites" section, LinkedIn provides a drop down menu (see picture below). Click "other," and you can upload the link and describe it as you see fit. Instead of "my blog," you might write, "my blog on complex project management."

4. Consider a Vanity URL

Maybe you haven't changed the default URL that LinkedIn provides for your profile. Especially if you have a common name, this will make your name after the LinkedIn address appear with a bunch of ugly code and numbers. If you have to give your LinkedIn profile address over the phone, or you wish to print it on your business card, it should be as concise and self-explanatory as possible, Alba says.

"It literally takes 30 seconds, and it makes your profile look more on purpose," Alba says.

(When you [edit your LinkedIn profile](#), go to the "public profile" section to create your LinkedIn URL of choice).

5. Finish with a Strong, SEO-Friendly Summary

The "summary" section of your LinkedIn profile could be the biggest missed opportunity for the majority of job seekers, Alba says. While this section has a 2,000 character limit, Alba suggests packing as much about you and your abilities into it as possible.

In reality, the ability for people to find you will depend on LinkedIn's search engine linking your name to certain search keywords. So (staying with our repeated example), a project manager might want the term "project management" to appear a few times throughout the summary.

"Most summaries are a couple sentences or a couple paragraphs, and they're missing out," Alba says. "The more you put in the summary, the better your SEO is."

Remember that you're in a crowded field of applicants. Alba recommends that you put in short "problem, action and results" stories that show how you contended with challenges that helped your business succeed.

Pay attention to your manners, be a real person, and follow these tips to do well on LinkedIn.

by JD Rucker on March 23, 2011 ·

1. **Be polite:** Remember your manners when interacting with others on LinkedIn.
2. **Stay active:** Update routinely-you don't want it to look like no one's home.
3. **Keep an eye on your competition:** Check out the public profile for companies to see who they are hiring and more.
4. **Research a company's health:** Look for former employees to get candid opinions.
5. **Say thank you:** Always remember to say thanks, publicly or privately, when someone does something thoughtful for you.
6. **Write like a human:** Avoid dry writing-robots are reading your profile, but people are more important.
7. **Ask questions:** Get answers and contribute to the knowledge available on LinkedIn with questions.

Job Search

These tips will come in handy for those working on a job search.

8. **Make connections where you want to work:** Get connected with people on the inside that can give you an in where you want to work.
9. **Don't advertise being unemployed:** Avoid the temptation to advertise that you're unemployed-recruiters believe that employed workers are better employees.
10. **Look up potential employers:** Before going into an interview, make sure and look up potential employers to find all of the information you can.

Networking & Connections

Pay attention to these tips that can help you with your network of LinkedIn contacts.

11. **Send personalized connection requests:** When you send an invitation, make sure you've for a personalized message to go along with it.
12. **Connect your contacts:** Provide a valuable social resource and become a more influential person by connecting your contacts.
13. **Initiate a conversation:** After you've made a connection with someone, keep the ball rolling with a new conversation.
14. **Raise funding:** Find mentors or potential investors with the help of your LinkedIn network.
15. **Look up everyone you know:** You'll never know the connections you have until you find everyone you possibly can.

16. **Get answers to questions:** Ask your friends to help you out with tough business questions.
17. **Reply to connection requests:** When you accept connection requests, be sure to send a short message back.
18. **Search in terms and industries:** Connect with people you don't personally know by searching on terms and industries.
19. **Start a group:** Become the center of information and a connector on LinkedIn by starting a group.
20. **Do small things:** Click "like" on shared articles, write short notes of congratulations, and find other ways to show others that you're listening to what they're saying.
21. **Reach out to event attendees:** If you're attending an event, be sure to talk to attendees that you're connected with.
22. **Take advantage of travel:** Check out your connections by location, and let them know when you're going to be traveling to their area.

Profile

Follow these tips for setting up and maintaining your profile.

23. **Find out who's viewed your profile:** See the statistics on your profile to learn more about your performance on LinkedIn, and know when it's a good time to follow up with a contact.
24. **Update at least every 3 months:** Make sure your profile reflects your changing roles.
25. **Be transparent:** Let people learn about you, but still be appropriate.
26. **Rearrange your profile sections:** Showcase what's most important to you by putting it front and center.
27. **Include your entire job history:** People may be trying to find you by searching for previous companies you've worked for.
28. **Optimize your job titles:** Use descriptive keywords in your job titles to attract relevant search engine traffic.
29. **Customize your links:** Instead of using generic links, create personal URLs with more meaning.
30. **Establish keywords:** Consider what words you'd like people to use in order to find you, and make sure they are used liberally in your profile.
31. **Join groups:** Associate the name of the group with your search profile.
32. **Don't forget your headline:** Make sure that your headline is filled in and accurately reflects your situation.
33. **Create a unique URL:** Use LinkedIn's vanity URLs to control your Google results.
34. **Add a repeatable photo:** Of course you're going to add a photo-make sure it's the same one you use on Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites.
35. **Answer questions:** Win new business by answering questions in your area of expertise.

36. **Create an email signature file:** Display your contact info and link to your LinkedIn profile in every email you send with a signature file.
37. **Are you public?:** Consider whether you'd like your full profile to be publicly viewed or not, and adjust your privacy settings accordingly.
38. **Don't link to unused websites:** Showcase websites or profiles that are updated regularly instead of dead ends.
39. **Fill out your profile:** Don't leave your profile incomplete, or it will look like you're not doing much.
40. **Find meaningful content to re purpose:** For example, use tools like Company Buzz to highlight mentions of you or your brand on Twitter.
41. **Pay special attention to Specialties:** Include all of your areas of expertise in the Specialties field.
42. **Use applications:** Make use of applications that show your blog, presentations, and more on your profile.
43. **Share updates:** Let people know what you're up to, in a professional way.

Recommendations

These tips will help you get the most out of the recommendations feature on LinkedIn.

44. **Use strong language:** Start off with the strongest things you can say about a person.
45. **Give recommendations to get them:** Acquire recommendations by writing statements of review of people in your network.
46. **Request while your relationship is fresh:** After leaving a company or meeting someone, be sure to ask for a recommendation while you are still fresh in their mind.
47. **Be brief:** Don't write an essay-write a short recommendation.
48. **Ask for recommendations:** Talk to colleagues and friends, and ask them to write recommendations for you.
49. **Be gentle with negatives:** Be careful not to crush someone in a recommendation, and if you can't say something nice, don't recommend them.
50. **Don't publish every recommendation:** You don't have to publish recommendations that you don't like.

Helpful LinkedIn Resources

***LinkedIn for Dummies* by Joel Elad** – this book is packed with information for beginners and users who are looking to expand their LinkedIn capabilities.

The Official LinkedIn Blog: <http://blog.linkedin.com>

Weekly blog posts by various LinkedIn employees – typically fun and informative with lots of great tips.

LinkedInABox / LinkedIn Widget: www.linkedinabox.com

Add your LinkedIn profile to your blog or Web page with this special Web software application.

Hello TXT: <http://hellotxt.com>

If you are active on multiple social networking sites, you may be interested in this one. Hello TXT allows you to update your status across all of your social networking pages and micro blogs in one function.

Podcast Network Connections: <http://connections.thepodcastnetwork.com>

At this site you can join a weekly audio podcast about the art of business networking. Host conducts interviews with his network of connections to discuss how different social networks can be used to provide a benefit to any business.