

Forbes / Leadership / [#IfIOnlyKnew](#)

JAN 15, 2017 @ 11:10 AM

60,567 👁

LinkedIn 101: How To Craft A Stellar Profile

**William Arruda**, CONTRIBUTOR*I write about personal branding. [FULL BIO](#) ✓*

Opinions expressed by Forbes Contributors are their own.

TWEET THIS



You won't be effective at using LinkedIn for networking or expressing your thought-leadership if you don't have a profile that makes others want to get to know you.



Shutterstock

This is the first in a series of posts all focused on the most powerful social media tool for building your personal brand – LinkedIn. In this post, I'll tell you everything you need to know to build a stellar profile. That's the cornerstone of an effective LinkedIn strategy.

I am amazed by how many career-minded professionals don't have a LinkedIn profile or haven't updated it in years. As the work world continues to embrace the virtual world, your LinkedIn profile is you to those who don't know you. So it's worth spending some effort to get it into shape.

You won't be effective at using LinkedIn for networking or expressing your thought-leadership if you don't have a profile that makes others want to get to know you.  Here's the process for building a brilliant profile that reflects the authentic you:

Watch on Forbes:

Prepare

It's best to create or update your profile as one big project – making it accurate, relevant, and compelling all at once. So, before you log on to LinkedIn, there are some things you need to do.

Collect this content:

- Any current versions of your bio you have
- Your resume or CV with your employment history
- A high-quality headshot (if you don't have one, get one)

Create these lists:

- The 10 skills you want to be known for (include a good combination of hard skills, such as data analysis, and soft skills, such as relationship building)
- Keywords for which you want to be known (these are the words people would use in searching to find you). These keywords may be the same/similar to those in the list above or they could be additional words.

Subscribe To The Forbes Careers Newsletter

Sign up here to get top career advice delivered straight to your inbox every week.

Craft Your Content

Next, create the content you need. Here are the most important elements to work on:

Headline. You have only 120 characters for grabbing your audience. Your headline should include these three things: What you do, the keywords people would use to find you, and Zing. Zing is something interesting that makes people want to know more. Think of your headline as the headline of an ad. Its role? To get your audience to want to read on.

Headshot. It's a 500x500 pixel image. Crop it so about 80% of the frame shows your face, and make sure you are looking forward or left – into your content. Avoid selfies or images where you've cropped out your colleague. Then name your headshot yourname.jpg and upload it. In a world that's becoming virtual, your headshot makes you human.