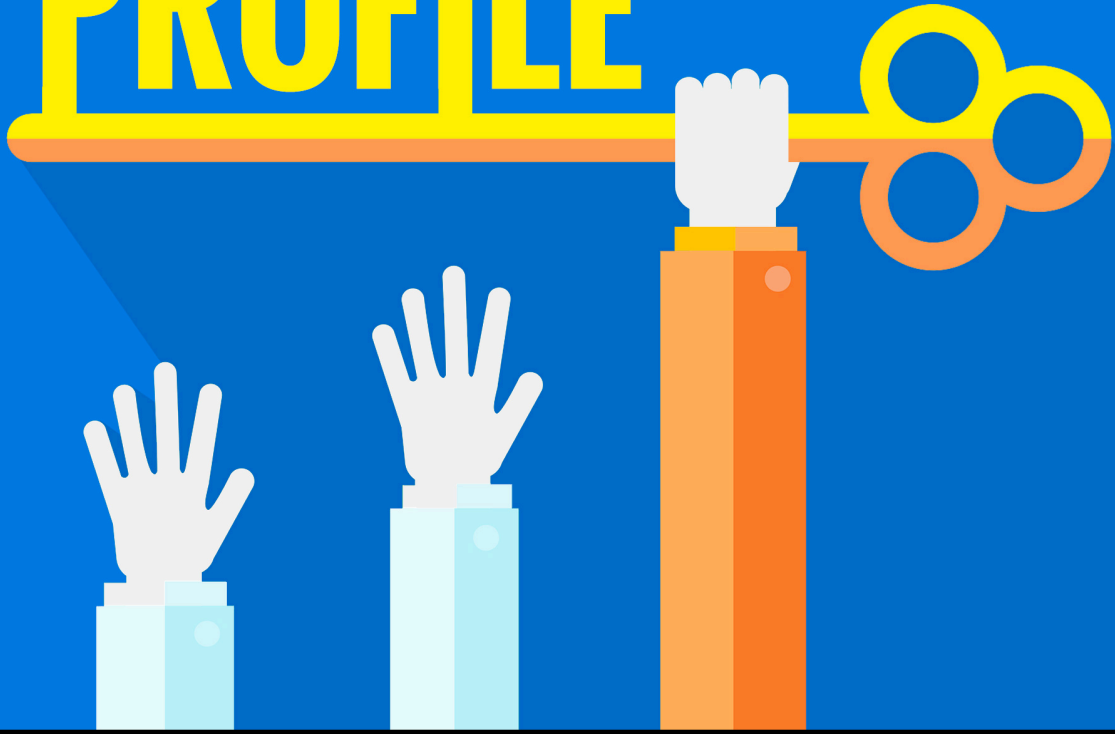


BEST  
IMPRESSION

The **5 Keys** to Success in  
**YOUR LINKEDIN**  
**PROFILE**



[www.YourBestImpression.com](http://www.YourBestImpression.com)

---

# The 5 Keys to Success in Your LinkedIn Profile

■ ■ ■ Louise Kursmark ■ Best Impression Career Services, Inc.

■ ■ ■ <http://www.louisekursmark.com>

**T**here's no doubt about it: **Your LinkedIn Profile is as important as your resume.** They serve *different* purposes and need to convey *different* information in a *different* way ... but, bottom line, you need both and both must be great.

As you're creating your profile, consider these 5 Keys to Success.

## ■ ■ ■ ONE: Understand the Differences

**Your LinkedIn Profile is not your resume.** You might think the best approach is to simply copy and paste your resume into the various fields on LinkedIn. After all, you've expended a good deal of effort to create your resume. Perhaps you've worked with a professional resume writer and paid a significant sum to get a resume that's great. Why not share the greatness?

When you think about it, though, it's easy to see why this approach is not the most beneficial. Here's why.

- 1. People reading your LinkedIn profile are likely to also see your resume—** either before or after they view your profile. If the content of both is identical, you miss the opportunity to share more and different things about yourself, and you eliminate any advantage from the dual view.

- 2. Resumes are written in resume language.** Yes, resumes have their own language! It's "telescopic," often omitting small words (notably "I" as well as "the," "an," "this," and other short modifiers). Because of space considerations—most executive resumes are or should be 2 pages long—only the most important words can stay.

LinkedIn, on the other hand, is a social medium. Although more professional and formal than Facebook, it shares the same need to engage readers and create an authentic presence. Thus, the somewhat stilted tone of a resume strikes the wrong note on LinkedIn.

- 3. LinkedIn is a public profile.** Unless you severely restrict its availability—and generally you don't want to do that during a job search!—your LinkedIn profile can be viewed by anyone on LinkedIn or even anyone doing a Google search for you (or someone like you).

That's good news for increasing your visibility to recruiters, employers, and influential people in your industry. But it presents some issues with regard to what you're sharing.

Are all of the numbers on your resume suitable for public viewing? Have you revealed any details about company strategy or problems that shouldn't be widely circulated? You'll want to curate your profile so that it conveys your expertise, value, and interests without revealing confidential or inappropriate information.

- 4. Readers want to know more.** If they've taken the time to look you up online, your readers are interested. Typically they want to know more than your credentials and qualifications. They want to know who you are, what you're like, how you work, what you get jazzed about.

In your profile, it's OK to show some emotion and personality. It's important to be professional—this is a *professional* networking site, not a personal

venue for sharing with friends and family. But don't be afraid to use words and tell stories that let readers know how you feel, what excites you, what you're passionate about with regard to your work and life.

## ■ ■ ■ TWO: Be Conversational

**Online readers have different expectations than those reading traditional paper content.** Write your profile to meet those expectations.

That means introducing all those “extra” words back into your narrative, writing in a conversational tone, and adding details that help tell the story.

It *doesn't* mean creating text that's overly long and hard to read, or sharing inappropriate personal information, or forgetting the rules of good writing and effective communication.

However, consider the difference in style between these two excerpts. The first was written for a resume, the second for LinkedIn.

*Brought on board to rapidly grow sales for outsourcing division that had stalled in its first year.*

*My 7 years at Cranford Group were tremendously exciting and productive. Joining the company about a year after the launch of a new Outsourcing Division, I was challenged to jump-start sales that had stalled.*

In both cases, we learn important details about *why* this person was hired so that we can evaluate performance within that context. The LinkedIn excerpt would be too lengthy and conversational for a resume—yet it works perfectly for the online profile.

## ■ ■ ■ THREE: Tell Your Stories

**Many years ago I chose “tell your story” as my business tagline** because I recognized the power of storytelling and the value of stories in executive resumes. I’ve found that stories are, if anything, even *more* powerful and valuable in LinkedIn profiles.

Your career success stories are unique to you. They prove that you have the skills, talents, and experiences that you are claiming in all of your career messages. And they distinguish you from all the other candidates who have similar qualifications.

Let’s consider a qualifications statement:

*Skills include leading business turnarounds and transformations, developing business strategy, and expanding into new markets.*

How many people—those vying for the same jobs you are—could say something identical? Chances are, all or most of them!

Now consider how much more powerful and memorable it is to say something like this:

*I was tasked with evaluating a \$400M division being considered for divestiture. I identified a growth opportunity in an untapped market, orchestrated 3 acquisitions to expand our footprint across South America, and grew sales to \$1.5B in 3 years.*

Learn to tell your stories concisely in your resume ... more expansively in your LinkedIn profile ... and with additional context and details in interviews. You’ll provide tangible proof of your value and set yourself apart from everyone else.

## ■ ■ ■ FOUR: Make It Readable

**Readability is everything—both on paper and online.** If your profile is text-dense and hard to skim, many readers won't take the time to wade through all the text to find the information they're looking for. They will simply move on to the next profile.

In fact, the way we read has changed fundamentally over the past decade. We no longer leisurely peruse text-heavy documents with full attention. Now we are faced with a deluge of information from many different sources—phone calls and text messages, pings and banner ads and pop-ups, distractions and interruptions.

Content first has to *capture* our attention—then *keep* it by sharing interesting and relevant information.

As you write your LinkedIn profile, keep your sentences, paragraphs, and bullet points short. Add plenty of white space so that the page can be quickly skimmed.

Don't get so carried away with telling your stories that you forget to keep your readers in mind! Omit details that really aren't necessary to tell the story or convey the message.

## ■ ■ ■ FIVE: Expand the View

**Video, graphics, and links are extraordinarily powerful additions to your profile.** They capture attention and keep readers clicking to learn more.

You may have existing material that you can attach or link to your profile. And you can easily create new content that will enhance your career facts and success stories.

Here are a few ideas ... though in reality the list is endless!

- Video interview
- Video bio (self-introduction)
- PowerPoint or SlideShare presentation
- Infographic presentation of some of your career stats
- Media mentions
- Honors and awards (photograph or other visual)
- Blog posts
- Projects you've completed
- Examples of your work
- Graphs illustrating various career successes

When you take the time to enhance your profile with extras, you create a richer experience for those viewing your site—and paint a deeper, more complex picture of who you are.

### ■ ■ ■ Summing It All Up

A great executive resume is just the start. Your LinkedIn profile is equally important yet quite different. In many ways, it's *more* than your resume and gives you endless opportunity for customization, expansion, and personalization. Make the most of it!

---

■ ■ ■ **Louise Kursmark** is an award-winning resume and LinkedIn profile writer, president of Best Impression Career Services, and one of the most widely published authors in the careers field. She works exclusively with executive job seekers, developing powerful career marketing documents that help executives tell their story with power, meaning, and relevance.

Contact Louise for a complimentary career/resume review:  
[louise@louisekursmark.com](mailto:louise@louisekursmark.com)