

# LinkedIn Secrets that Showcase Your Value

It's vital to use LinkedIn to manage your career brand if you want a better professional future. Some little-known techniques can help you reveal your value in an attention-grabbing way.

**A**s a management accountant, you must constantly manage your career brand to build the career you want or at least to have better choices. Using LinkedIn ([www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)) is vital. But what are the secrets for telling your career story in a really effective way that makes others see your value?

## Cultivating Your LinkedIn Profile

A LinkedIn profile can convey a more complete picture of your value than a résumé can. View your profile as a cultivated, prize-winning garden of facts telling your career story as you would like others to see it. Every fact or item you include must be absolutely accurate and true to the letter. Never misrepresent yourself. And as with any prize-winning garden, include only the finest items. Choose those that best enhance your career story.

Include items such as:

- ◆ Photos, audio, or video of you speaking or making a presentation;
- ◆ A series of photos in a PDF

slideshow that showcase you at work;

- ◆ Tasteful photos of your challenging physical activities—such as rock climbing or running marathons—that show your drive and passion working toward a goal;
- ◆ Photos of you doing charitable or humanitarian activities that show your good character, which can reassure a hiring manager that you will handle job responsibilities properly; and
- ◆ A PowerPoint presentation you created for work that demonstrates your expertise.

But *never* include:

- ◆ Items you don't have the legal right to share, trade secrets, or anything restricted by a nondisclosure agreement;
- ◆ Photos of you showing off with physical stunts—they aren't for social media; and
- ◆ Joke or celebration photos—they can be misinterpreted.

## Using Text, Video, and More

Reveal your best self using a refined combination of text, graphics, audio, video, and recommendations. Your Summary and individual employer listings can accept PowerPoint, PDF, video files, and YouTube.com streams.

Here's how to use them.

**Text:** For accomplishments, reveal the challenge, the goals, and the results. But always lead with the selling points—the results. Include any keywords or acronyms that may be important in a keyword search.

On a résumé, when should you use boldface, italics, or underlining? The key is to make the bullet point you are communicating something that is easy to grasp visually. Viewers shouldn't feel they need to read every word to understand the concept or accomplishment you are showcasing. Remember, no one wants to read much anymore. Make it easy for viewers.

On LinkedIn, there's no ability to use boldface, italics, or underlining. But you can add blank lines, space, and uppercase to highlight text in certain instances. I recommend very selective use of uppercase to make sure the most important items stand out.

When moving from the résumé style to LinkedIn, how you highlight any particular point may change. You may want to use uppercase to emphasize a different part of a bullet point. That's because there's a big difference in the way a résumé communicates ideas and how we may do it in an ex-

panded digital space like LinkedIn.

In the examples on the right, most words become keywords. Highlight the most dazzling items on your résumé in boldface to catch a potential employer's attention. In expanding your résumé to create a LinkedIn profile, make the most important words uppercase.

Notice that careful use of white space is very important to highlight your best points. In your résumé, make your paragraphs short. List only one or two kinds of accomplishments in each paragraph, using short phrases. Insert a blank line between each paragraph on both the résumé and LinkedIn profile. And for added emphasis on your profile, you can occasionally put each detail on a separate line, as shown.

**Graphics:** To legally use the logos of companies where you worked in your LinkedIn profile, start typing a few characters of the first employer's name. LinkedIn will then show a dropdown menu of suggested companies that have LinkedIn sites. Select the name of the company where you worked, and its logo will automatically appear next to its name in your profile.

**PowerPoint Slides:** Don't make them all text; that's poor storytelling. Instead, include images, charts, and graphs using color in an engaging way. Use tasteful animations and slide transitions to move your message forward. For example, you could use PowerPoint's Wipe animation function to make text disappear before moving to the next slide. But you wouldn't want to use the more cartoon-like Bounce or Swivel functions. This is a serious busi-

From a résumé:

- P&L Profit up 20% YOY; Manage** Cash Flow / Client Billing (monthly) / Bank Reconciliations / Audit Records
- Recovered \$1.5M in Receivables** by Mastering **Billing Protocols** for Gov't Agencies: VA - DASNY - SCA - DDC – OGS

From the expanded LinkedIn profile:

- Manage FINANCES:
  - Cash Flow
  - Client Billing (monthly)
  - Bank Reconciliations
  - Audit Records
- P&L PROFITS Up by Double-Digit % (year-over-year)
- Recovered \$1.5M in RECEIVABLES / Outstanding A/R by MASTERING (multiple / individual) Online BILLING PROTOCOLS for government AGENCIES: VA – DASNY – SCA – DDC – OGS

ness presentation, not a cartoon.

**PDFs:** Scan an impressive traditional reference letter to create a PDF you can share. Always remove any of the individual's contact information from the version you post. PDFs also make wonderful slideshows to display images of you at work that illustrate your expertise.

**Video and Audio:** With permission, share a video of your speech at an industry conference. Or you can post a link to the video on your YouTube account. Avoid get-to-know-me videos unless you've had special performance training. But do illustrate the most impressive aspects of your career journey with color and motion.

### Fixing a Bad Profile

I recently began working again with a client I helped four years ago. When we first met, she was a business manager and controller who wanted to advance.

She had already met with a headhunter. He reviewed her edu-

cation, including an uncompleted degree decades earlier. Then he looked at her employers and job titles. And seeing that she was at a mature point in her career, he said, "I think all you can expect is more at the same level—with a salary no higher than \$60,000 to \$65,000 a year."

Her heart sank because she was already earning \$115,000 a year in the job she had! She thought the headhunter would recognize her value and see that she merited a higher salary. But he didn't.

At that point she decided to meet with me. We worked together to improve her LinkedIn profile and résumé so she could take back control of her career.

She had made a typical mistake on LinkedIn. Her profile was just a placeholder—with her name, a few job titles and employers, and not much else. That was far too little content to tell an effective career story or demonstrate her value to any employer. So I emphasized her

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## Careers

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specific contribution details:

- Opened California SATELLITE OFFICE:
  - Determined Needs
  - Researched Compliance/ Reporting issues (for the state of California)
  - Set up all Office, Professional and Employee Insurance Policies for new location

And because no one wants to read much anymore, I trimmed her sentences down to the absolute essentials:

- Managed Day-to-Day ACTIVITIES of the BUSINESS: Meetings – Travel – Critical Correspondence – Projects
- Responsibility for a STAFF of 20 Direct Supervision 2 full-time Office Assistants

My client saw her unfinished degree as a liability, but I presented it as extra coursework that enhanced her value:

Baruch College, City University of New York (CUNY)  
Coursework, Marketing & Accounting

### Mission Accomplished

A few months later, the same headhunter rediscovered my client after seeing her redesigned profile. “You are looking fantastic!” he said. “I have three jobs for you to consider.”

All the jobs offered six-figure salaries, and she was hired as a fi-

ancial controller with wider responsibilities for strategic financial operations. It was a big upgrade from her past jobs, running the back end of the business and financial reporting for architectural firms. Now in a more strategic finance role for other businesses, she was also more in charge of her career.

She said she never would have believed it if it hadn’t happened to her personally. So start managing your career brand with LinkedIn today to ensure a better professional future. **SF**

*John Crant is an author, career coach, and speaker on job search and career management. He is a featured speaker for the New York Public Library’s Job Search Central, the New York State Department of Labor, the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program, and the Harvard Business School Club of New York. You can reach him at (212) 372-9878 or [john@selfrecruiter.com](mailto:john@selfrecruiter.com).*