TOP 10 TIPS AND TRICKS TO CREATING A STELLAR LINKEDIN PROFILE

According to Forbes Magazine, 90% of recruiters use LinkedIn as a primary way to reach up-and-coming talent for their respective businesses. Having a stellar LinkedIn profile is absolutely essential if you want to stand out from the crowd and market yourself professionally. And remember, your LinkedIn profile is more than what you can put on your resume – it's every bit a reflection of who you are as well as what you can do. Check out these 10 tips for creating your LinkedIn profile:

1. Get a professional photo taken. This is not the place to post your latest selfie – dress professionally and hire someone to take a professional headshot for you. As much as you may love your friends and family or your pet, leave them out of the photo. And no matter what, don't skip the picture! Forbes suggests leaving your photo out of your LinkedIn profile signals a lack of trust and recruiters instantly think, “What is this person trying to hide?”

2. Maximize your headline. You are allowed 120 characters for your headline – use them to the best of your ability! Don't just put down your current job title because that isn't necessarily a good indication of what you have to offer. So instead of putting something like “Certified Personal Accountant” try inserting, “Certified Personal Accountant: Guiding Clients in Maximizing their Profitability.”

3. Think about your summary. This 2,000-character space is what search engines use to pull your profile, so adding in key search words is vital. Think about your audience and who may be searching for you and what they would want to read. Include any kind of awards you've received, top achievements you've made so far in your career, or any top projects you've worked on in college (if you are searching for your first post-collegiate job). Also, you'll want to quantify any information that you can. For example, “I was part of a team which helped increase student employment on campus by 20% in two semesters.” Just make sure what you enter is accurate and measurable.

4. Highlight your experience. Don't just copy and paste your resume in this section. Go beyond what you can put on a resume by adding in other types of media such as relevant videos, images, or presentations you've created. Engaging your readers mean they spend more time on your page and more time getting to know you.

5. Give relevant references. Forbes suggests that you include two references per job you've had. So, if you've had five jobs in the past, you should have 10 references listed. Make sure you ask your references before listing them and make sure these are people who can attest to the quality of your work, work ethic, and abilities. Stay away from family and personal friends.

6. Make connections. Forbes recommends you have at least 300 connections in order to be on a recruiter’s radar. Additionally, you’ll also want to stay under 3,000 connections, because at that point, LinkedIn starts to dismiss your authenticity.

7. Make it easy for them to contact you. You don't necessarily need to put your personal phone number for the world to see, but perhaps you can use an alternate number or email address so that people can easily contact you. Whatever you choose to put down, make sure the information is accurate.

8. Customize your URL. Make your LinkedIn profile URL easy to remember. Using your first and last name is a great place to start if it isn't already taken, or add in your middle initial.

9. Update your profile. Any time you change jobs, achieve an accomplishment, or win an award, update your LinkedIn profile. The more updated the profile, the more search engines will pick up on it.

10. Don't forget about the extras. Add in any additional information you think your readers would be interested in knowing about you. You could add in your volunteer experience, pieces of work you've published or have been quoted in, test scores you have received on professional examinations, etc. But don't feel like you have to put every last detail about yourself in the Extras section – it’s all about thinking what’s relevant to your line of work and what you think prospective businesses would want to know about you.