LINK HUMANS

A Professional Approach to Social Media

HOW TO RECRUIT ON LINKEDIN

15 Tips for Your Profile, Networking & Branding

by Jorgen Sundberg

London
July 2012

Hello there,

In this short ebook I won't be telling you what LinkedIn is and why you should use it, instead I am sharing **15 useful tips** for recruiters already using LinkedIn. They are all based on the training I do and the challenges most recruiters I speak to are facing.

Although this is very much a how-to book, I am not going to do screenshots and tell you where to click. I'm writing this because the best information about LinkedIn has come to me in books and by talking to people, not looking at webinars or video tutorials.

This is the first version and I would like your help in improving it for the next version, which will also be free. Most people I train will have at least one LinkedIn nugget they can share and I ask you to share that one with me for the update.

Jorgen Sundberg
LinkHumans

CONTENTS

What are the essentials on your LinkedIn profile?

There are four essentials on an individual's LinkedIn profile; they are the picture, the headline, the summary and keywords:

- The **picture** should look professional and reflect your brand, people like dealing with faces as opposed to just text – studies show you get 30% more clicks in search results when you have a picture. And you are 7 times more likely to come up in search if you have a photo. As a recruitment professional you want to be approachable and a profile picture is an absolute must.

- The **headline** (along with your name and picture) is what comes up in search results and based on this the user will decide whether to click on you or the competitor. Make sure the headline talks about what you do and not who you are, i.e. "Recruiting Java Developers to Top Tier Consultancies in Manchester" instead of Consultant or Recruiter at Agency X – which means very little. You have 120 characters at your disposal, make sure you make the most of these.

- Your **summary** (the bio section) is where people go to see what you are all about and what your track record in the industry is. If you get someone to take their time to check this out you will want them to read 2-3 paragraphs about what you have done, what you can do for them and something memorable. Remember to add your contact details at the end of this section if you want new people to get in touch.

- Finally, you have to get the right **keywords** on your profile or you will not come up in any searches. Yes you might come up in searches for your name but let's face it if someone already knows your name you already have a foot in the door. It's better to come up in the search for "Java recruiter Manchester". Just remember that there is a fine balance between spraying keywords across your profile and staying professional.

How do you boost your LinkedIn profile SEO?

LinkedIn users run thousands of searches every day, typically to find someone that can help them in their niche or location. The good news is that you can **influence your own search rankings** fairly easily.

The LinkedIn search engine operates a bit like Google did 10 years ago, the more keywords the better ranking you will get for a while. The algorithm of the search rankings are that you will be promoted and if people actually take action – click on your profile in the search results – that tells LinkedIn you are relevant for those search terms. If however users don't click on you, you will be sent down to page 16 in no time and classed a spammer by the LinkedIn search engine.

To get better ranking make sure to insert **relevant keywords in your headline, in your job title and in your summary**. Use keywords such as industry, location, company names (if that's allowed), and even names of people. Bring it down to a micro level with versions of software and even postcodes.

Try tapping in 'Java Recruiter' and see what happens. Then tap in the same but replace 'Java' with your niche. Whichever profile is at the top of that search result will be deemed highly relevant by LinkedIn and they will have a very SEO friendly profile. See what they are doing and but don't copy their keywords – just take inspiration.

What applications should you use on your profile?

Applications are great for spicing up your profile a bit. Whereas Facebook and Twitter have thousands of applications, on LinkedIn you'll find a total of fifteen – a very controlled environment in other words. Having said that, some of these are extremely useful for recruiters.

Here are the ones I see recruiters using with success:

- **SlideShare** is presentation-sharing platform which allows anyone to upload PowerPoint presentations and then share these on their LinkedIn profile. You can set it to show up to for presentation but the best setting is to display one large deck that visitors can click their way through. What should you share on your slides? Could be a presentation about your company, the team, how you work, what type of clients you represent or simply a description of your current hot jobs. Some recruitment agencies (and HR departments) will have a boilerplate presentation that everyone can use on their profile. SlideShare is currently also the only way to get video onto your profile and will require a premium account. SlideShare was recently acquired by LinkedIn so expect to see further integration here.

- You wouldn't expect the **Amazon Reading list** to be useful for recruiting but it actually is. It lets you list the books you have read and what you're currently reading. This is a chance to show off your extracurricular interests or you can of course list books about the industry that you recruit in. You will be surprised of how many people will mention your reading selections online and in person, it's a great conversation starter and branding tool. Just be sure to actually read the books you list in case that new clients starts asking about it…

- **TripIt** is a tool that keeps track of where you are travelling to and from. You sign up and tell it you are going to Edinburgh on 10 August and that you will attend a conference. The application will put that on your profile immediately but will also notify your network a day before the trip, giving heads up to your Edinburgh-based contacts to meet for a coffee. Don't overuse this tool, going from London to Edinburgh qualifies as useful, going from London to Chingford doesn't.

- If your company has a blog, or if you have a personal blog that is relevant to your professional network you should definitely integrate the **Blog Link** (or WordPress) application. This will import your latest blog posts in a feed to your profile and everytime you publish something new, it will notify your network automatically.

- **Twitter** (or Tweets) used to be a stand-alone application, now it's just integrated into your profile. You can add a total of four Twitter accounts to one profile, most users will only add their personal feed and maybe the company feed as well. Please make sure you get the settings right when using Twitter and LinkedIn, see more in the next section.

- **Google Docs** is another application which lets you put any type of Google Document on your profile, including PDFs. Think job specifications, brochures and even spread sheets.

Remember that every time you make any changes to your application, your network gets notified which is basically another way of indirect branding.

Privacy & other settings for you & your candidates

Most users on LinkedIn have realised that every update they do on LinkedIn (not just applications) notifies their network. As a result some people prefer not to connect, join groups, update their profile as they want to stay under the radar for whatever reason. There are however ways of hiding your activity and other bits on LinkedIn, all on the settings page:

- **Activity broadcast** – if you want to make lots of changes to your profile but not notify your network. Turn the broadcasts off and you can operate under the radar. This is of course very useful for candidates you headhunt, the candidate may not want the world to know they are connecting to a recruiter and improving their profile, getting recommendations etc.

- **Who's visited** your profile – unlike Facebook or Twitter, on LinkedIn you can actually see that other users have looked at your profile. How much you can see depends on your own settings, if you allow others to see your name, you'll be able to see theirs. Most recruiters will have this open setting but when doing research on a new client or competitors you may want to change the setting to anonymous, it's easy to change it back once your research is done.

- **Hide connections** on your profile – some candidates complain that 'recruiters only connect with me so they can have a look at my network'. Well, these people don't realise that you can hide your connections from being browsed on your profile. You might want to do the same if you want to keep connections close to your chest.

- **Email settings** – some LinkedIn users complain about the amount of emails they get every week from groups, discussions and general updates. You can choose which notifications you want on the settings page, think about which emails are actually useful to you and then turn off the rest. I have turned everything off apart from a weekly group email from 3 groups.

- **Twitter settings** – this used to be a pet peeve of mine. You may have experienced that some people connected Twitter to LinkedIn and *every* tweet went up on their profile and your timeline. The trouble is that the tone on Twitter is conversational; on LinkedIn it's professional. LinkedIn very wisely pulled the tweets into LinkedIn integration recently but still let you tweet from LinkedIn. Now it's simply a matter of ticking the Twitter box when making an update on LinkedIn and it will send it to Twitter as well.

Recommendations - do's & don'ts

The recommendation engine on LinkedIn is one of the keys to LinkedIn's success. Whereas you used to get recommendations on a CV or a website, these **recommendations are fully transparent** and people can click their way through to actually scrutinise who wrote the recommendation (and event check that person's recommendations).

Given that people sometimes check out the recommender, don't get recommendations from your mates, don't do back-to-back (reciprocal) endorsements and don't get recommendations from people who are obviously indebted to you (that graduate candidate you placed on an internship). Instead focus on quality endorsements from C-level executives and former bosses.

Just get one from each company and ideally you don't want to show more than **5 - 10 recommendations on your profile**. Anything more than that defeats the purpose and you can look a bit needy. You are able to hide endorsements that are no longer relevant so try to narrow them down to the absolute best ones. And bear in mind that most people will only look at the first one or two so make sure they are outstanding.

What's the best way to connect to new people?

There are of course lots of ways of connecting with people you'd like to get in touch with. You can claim that you have done work together but that's not advisable, if you have their email you can tick the friend option. Or if you are stuck you can ask a common connection to introduce you, the trouble with that is that it takes time – the other person has to go in and manually forward your message.

My recommendation would be to use the **group short cut**. Have a look at that person's profile, scroll down and sew what groups they are a member of. If you happen to be in the same group, great. If you're not, you can always join a group they are in as you are allowed to connect direct with people in the same group.

You simply tick the group option which will auto-generate when you send the invite. You are also able to **send messages** to users who you are not connected to but you're in the **same group**. Note that users are able to turn this off, it's enabled by default but if someone gets spammed they are likely to opt out of these contact settings.

Whom to connect with on LinkedIn (& not to)?

LinkedIn is all about connections, the more you have the better visibility your profile will have and more people you will be able to search for. But it's also about quality connections, it's worth identifying the so called **'super connectors'** in your field and start connecting with them – if they have 1,000 relevant connections that will save you a lot of leg work.

In general, connect with **candidates** of all levels. Juniors become seniors within companies, candidates become clients and then candidates again…

Don't connect with your **competitors** unless you know they have more useful connections than you do. Yes you can hide them from browsing your connections but your connections will still come up in search results so be wary of connecting with competitors.

Clients – some recruiters are very protective about their networks and won't connect, as they are afraid of showing who their candidates are. Whilst this may be necessary in very tight marketplaces, in general it's better to connect with clients. Just because a client can see a candidate on LinkedIn doesn't mean they want to do the actual recruitment work – unless of course they are of the entrepreneurial and/or cost saving kind. Assuming they are not, the upside of connecting with clients is that you can of course further develop that account and map out the other hiring managers.

Connecting etiquette

How do you connect to potential candidates that don't know you? This can be tricky sometimes on LinkedIn. If you send five connection requests and the receivers mark them as spam or **IDK** (I Don't Know), your account will be **suspended from sending invites** without having the person's email address. You will have to beg LinkedIn customer services to lift the suspension; this gets harder and harder depending on how many times you get the five IDKs.

The best way to connect with new people is not revolutionary; it's just actually taking an interest in the other person. **Personalise your invite** where possible, have a look at the profile and try to find some common denominators. Are you a member of the same group (a very useful way), did you notice they are connected with someone you know, did you go to the same school or do you share a passion for trainspotting? Whatever it is, put it into your invite message and I can guarantee the person won't mark you as a spammer. The worst thing that can happen is that they ignore you or politely reply that they only connect with people they have met.

The way not to do it is to sell at the first given opportunity, even before you are connected. If you go in and pitch a role 'the perfect Java position in Manchester for you' as the invite, chances are they will see you as a one trick pony. If that role isn't perfect, why connect with you? Instead, I would **demonstrate value over time** and mention that you work with a number of clients in Manchester and across the UK on recurring Java and other high-level roles – this way the candidate will know that you're the go-to person once they are ready for a move.

How do you categorise connections & send group emails?

Another very underutilised feature of I is the ability to **tag people**. This means you can categorise your connections according to skills, location, salary or whatever you choose. You can see this as **your mini-CRM** system on I, these tags are only visible on your profile. There is also a free text field where you can fill in that prospective client's holiday movements and hobbies.

When working a role, you can tag everyone that does Java in Manchester for instance. This means you can pull up that category in seconds, no need to run another search again. When another role comes up you'll have an instant shortlist and you are able to **send a group email to up to 50 people** in that category (Java, Manchester) to get it out quickly.

What status updates should you be making?

Most users on I have never made a status update. This is a big shame as it's probably the best and easiest way to promote your business.

How to do it:

- Sharing valuable information that **educates, inspires or entertains** your audience. This means relevant industry articles, general business hacks and occasionally something light like 'How Darth Vader was the best project manager ever'. The secret is to **mix up** your content, to demonstrate that you're not a robot.

- Do share a **vacancy** every now and then but do it in the right way. Instead of just pushing out a link to a job specification on your site, **describe the opportunity** and what makes it unique if you can. 'Their office even has a helipad on the roof' will get more likes, shares and comments than '£50k basic'.

- **Sharing events** you are going to is always useful, if someone in your network is thinking of going they will get in touch. And it shows that you're out and about amongst your clients and candidates. If your company hosts events, these should definitely be shared as well in status updates (and listed in the events section).

- Remember the ratios; try to stick to about **1/5 promotion** and the rest helpful and useful content for your network.

How not to do it:

- **Spamming out job after job** on your profile – this is what gives recruiters a bad name on LinkedIn. People will get sick of these type of updates and either hide the spammer in their feed or remove them as a connection altogether.

How can you scan what anyone on LinkedIn is saying about a company or topic?

Another underutilised feature of I is what's called I Signal. It's basically a **search tool for status and other updates updates** on I. You can search for your company name, your field or location or even a combination of them all. I will tell you who is talking about the keyword, including people up to three degrees away from you. If someone is talking about Java programming on I but the profile says 'consultant' – chances are they are actually a Java developer with a misleading profile.

Instead of relying on what people have put on their profiles, with Signal you are able to see what they are talking about – most certainly **more current than the profile** information.

How do you advertise jobs on LinkedIn (free & paid)?

Anyone can advertise a job on I but it comes at a price. When you set up a pay-per-click campaign you can **target segments** on I such as CFOs and FDs based in Manchester in the Pharmaceutical industry. This will narrow down your audience to a few hundred people and only they will see your ad. The smaller the target group, the less clicks but when you do get clicks you know they are right. So it's better to get one **relevant click** per week than ten tyre kickers.

One way of doing ads for free is of course your **status update**; another way is to post it into **groups** (job discussions). These are in theory good ways but the trouble is that most people see those updates as adverts and tend to ignore them.

One more creative way is to use a **Slideshare deck** or Google presentation where you put a slide about your company, a slide about current vacancies and a slide about how to get in touch. Integrate this on your I profile and share it with your network. This will actually get clicks and if it's done well it could get viral.

How do you use the events section on LinkedIn?

The events section is one of the most underutilised sections of I. We all attend events, and so do clients and candidates. Search for these events on LinkedIn and you'll be able to see who is coming, so that you can plan your conversations way ahead of the event. The **attendee list** is sometimes a great place for **headhunting**, if ten people are attending a Java meetup – I would expect a few of them to be decent developers.

Even better, if there is a big Java conference happening you'll get three types of people attending: organisers, speakers and paid attendees. When you can see their names on the event listing,
it's a matter of taking up contact. Organisers and speakers will be great for referrals, the paid attendees have been sent by their company meaning they are probably influential in the Java world. These attendees will either be good **candidates** or they are sitting on **referrals** aplenty.

Some recruiters will put on events for clients and/or candidates. Whether it's your breakfast briefing on new regulations or networking drinks you are hosting – be sure to list these in the LinkedIn Events section. I know recruiters who have had new clients walk in to events just from seeing them on LinkedIn.

When you **list an event**, your entire network gets notified. You can then share it again to anyone in your network by LinkedIn messages. Every time someone clicks 'attending' or 'following' – their **networks get notified** as well.

What third party applications are useful for recruiters?

We've already looked at profile applications on LinkedIn, here are a few other stand-alone products that plug in to LinkedIn.

- **Bullhorn Reach** is a useful tool that plugs into your LinkedIn profile (as well as Facebook if you like). Using Bullhorn Reach you can publish your jobs across social networks and it also gives you suggestions of news stories to share. The most useful feature in my opinion is Radar – a tool that detects who in your network might be preparing to move jobs. It picks up people in your network doing changes to their profiles such as tinkering with headlines, uploading a new photo and getting recommendations – all typical behaviour of a jobseeker.

- **Job Change Notifier** is a similar product to Bullhorn Reach but it simply tells you who has already moved jobs so you can give them a call to congratulate and catch up. These users are typically useful for referrals and may refer you to backfill their old role.

- **Klout** can also be useful, it is an online influence measurement tool (not just for LinkedIn). It will give you a score from 1 to 100 and it will tell you what topics you are influential about online, ideally you want these to be the industry that you are recruiting in. It also tells you who you influence and what users influence you. Finally, the score I mentioned will go up and down – indicating clearly how you are performing online over time.

- The **iPad and iPhone apps** have just had a facelift and now more useful than ever. The calendar function now plugs into your Outlook or iCal and matches up people you have calls or meetings with against their LinkedIn profiles – very handy when preparing your pitch. It's also easier to connect with people you may know on these devices, for some reason LinkedIn don't ask you to personalise the invites at all, they just send with the click of a button. The handheld apps look great but don't offer all the features you get from the desktop version, you can still access the full version by using the Safari browser inside your IOS device.

- **Hootsuite, TweetDeck and Buffer** are all scheduling tools for your status updates. These are of course handy when you're travelling or on day off, you can make it look as though you are there by scheduling an update in the morning, at lunch and one at close of play. Hootsuite and TweetDeck are roughly similar, both fairly powerful whereas Buffer is dead simple and a tool to start with.

What LinkedIn activities should you really be spending time on?

As with all social media, it's easy to get lost on LinkedIn and mindlessly click from one profile to another. As a recruiter you have lots to do already so here is what I would recommend you do:

- Check your **homefeed**, this may sound very basic but very few recruiters actually keep an eye on the homepage of LinkedIn. This is where you see what's happening in real time and it's your chance to tell members of your network that you are there and that you care.

- Do at least **one status update per day** and make it count. It's better to go for one quality update that gets attention from your network (and beyond) than a number of updates that nobody outside your team will care about. When you do get a reaction from someone, use that to start a conversation which may lead to their career and/or hiring needs.

- Be **active in one or two groups**, not more. It's very hard to keep track of ten discussions happening in as many groups so again, go for a quality discussion in a useful group. When you have a meaningful exchange with someone, it's time to connect and take things further.

- Know your **core hours**, most recruiters will work in a specific geographic marketplace and their target audience will check LinkedIn in the morning, at lunch an just before they leave the office. This is the same for any demographic on the planet, just make sure you know the hours of your network. If you're recruiting globally, the best time for a status update is 4pm GMT.

- Check your **progress over time**. Once a month I would see how many new connections I've made, how my total network has expanded, how many people have found me in search results and how many clicked on my profile. If this trend doesn't go up, you've either been on holiday or you're doing something wrong.

LINKHUMANS

At *LinkHumans* we deliver LinkedIn Masterclass trainings for recruitment and HR at open courses, in-house training and webinars.

In our *LinkedIn for Recruitment Masterclasses* we cover:

- Advanced search techniques for sourcing
- Running successful groups and branding company pages
- Content marketing strategies for individuals and companies
- Getting company followers and recommendations
- Setting up listening stations to procure content
- Searching LinkedIn via Google and Bing
- Getting names and emails from people outside of your network
- More tools, plugins and applications to increase productivity
- Exercises based on live requirements and real case studies and best practice

LinkHumans is a Social Media consulting and training company for recruitment and HR.

We help clients with

- Using Social Media for Recruitment
- Employer and Recruiter Branding Online
- LinkedIn Strategy and Training
- More information at *What We Do*

Connect with us

Tel: 0207 193 9695
Email: *info@linkhumans.com*
Web : *www.linkhumans.com*

Big thanks to **Helen Menhenett** for proofreading and **Gingerbread Lady** for design