



LinkedIn Basics – A “Tips & Tricks” Tutorial

By Terry Pope
SocialProfileMasters.com
Copyright © 2014-2015
All rights Reserved

LinkedIn – It's Not Your Father's Older Brother's Social Network Anymore!

Tradition would have you think that every social network is the same – tell us what you did on your vacation – post meaningless dribble about how your toddler threw-up on your new Ann Taylor blouse on the way to day-school – let us ALL know that you just went to the bathroom, or that you're "at Starbucks having a cinnamon spiced, holiday gingerbread biscotti, and a double-espresso, de-calf, low-fat, Tall caramel latte in a Grande cup with no whip" (a great tip for all those career home break-in thieves wanting to confirm that you're currently NOT at home).

Just like religion and politics, there's a time and place and a forum for everything. FaceBook is a great place to be casual and even down-right absurd, but it's NOT the place to do serious corporate type business and make a serious corporate business impression. Enter LinkedIn!

That is not to say that in a casual, liberal-arts career you can't have a casual non-conformist look and approach that may be prevalent in your particular field. LinkedIn caters to everyone.

It is, however, a way to show your "business" side, whether you're a studio musician, a tattoo-artist/parlor owner, or the CEO of a Fortune 100 global conglomerate.

When LinkedIn came along, it was noted as something different than your FaceBooks and MySpaces, and changed a lot of that demeanor – even though many people only thought and still think of LinkedIn as a job-board, or a way to virtually "congregate" with coworkers and water-cooler constituents. It is now being used for many different and substantial reasons – and all business related.

Just within the last few years, LinkedIn has become, not just THE business social network of choice, but a haven for recruiters, head-hunters, and HR departments looking for new talent, sales pros finding a whole new avenue to connect to new and existing clients, venture capitalist looking for new investments, and yes, even "brown-nosers" seeking new ways to butter-up the higher-ups.

It stands to reason why, in that same amount of time, the big job boards like Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com lost major market-share to LinkedIn, and smaller ones totally drying up. But why?

It has to do with the way LinkedIn is structured. One major component that LinkedIn possesses is that it feeds profiles right into Google and the other search engines, which means that a LinkedIn profile is not just limited to LinkedIn – each LinkedIn profile has two versions – one version seen in LinkedIn and a public version (which uses your LinkedIn Profile URL link) grabbed by all the search engines. The job boards don't do this (yet).

Another element has to do with the subscription plans – whichever subscription plan you're on can make a difference by the person searching for you. Too, it's built-in security and ways that people can interact (or get blocked) from one level to another. And, best of all – it's searchable – not just internally, but through Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc.

And, did you know over 50% of the decision-makers for fortune 500 companies are on LinkedIn (vs. less-than 25% each on FaceBook and Twitter)? Or, would you believe that the average person with a LinkedIn profile makes over double the income of the average FaceBook and Twitter audience combined (due mostly in part by the fact that FaceBook and Twitter are comprised of between 14% and 20% of their users who are 24 years old or younger).

It has become so adopted by not just business people, but even entire industries, that many companies are starting to mandate that all their employees have LinkedIn profiles. Professionally created LinkedIn profiles can show the caliber of people a company employs, the vast pool of talent a company can offer its clients, the synergy of accomplishments by all its employees to its businesses concerns, and portray a corporate environment that others would want to join.

Too, just like at a cocktail party where you would like to meet that other SVP of Sales because the SVP of Sales you work for is a jerk, LinkedIn lends itself several different ways to approach others through proper and more appropriate echelons of connections and groups that allow you a much quicker path than your traditional resume-heavy job board systems.

Having a LinkedIn profile is now the new “must-have” – NOT having one, or having one that is improperly constructed is like not having a resume, a background, or even any business existence.

Ask yourself these simple questions:

Do you have a job? Do you want a new job? Do you want a new position? Do you want to change careers? Do you have cellphone? Do you have an indoor toilet where you live? Do you have Internet access? Do you eat food? Do you breathe air?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, then you should have a LinkedIn profile as well. It’s become that important. Like a resume, a LinkedIn profile is a must for business. But even more so, it’s a whole new set of tools to do many things you just wouldn’t be able to do on your own – and it’s free – all you have to do is create an account and get started.

A Quick Tip About LinkedIn Profiles vs. Resumes.

Traditionally, resumes have been written in a concise, short, to-the-point approach, typically on no more than one or two pages max – no repetition, unless for job titles, scope of duties, etc. The art and science of SEO for a LinkedIn profile is much different – the more repetition on key-words and key-phrases the better. So even though your resume and bio are used as guidelines, much of which will be paralleled, your profile will not follow the same rules as your resume. Your resume could be “killer”, but if your not found, your resume holds absolutely no value whatsoever.

Why? I’m glad you asked.

Your resume can be thought of as a single document, printed on one or two pieces of physical paper or saved as a PDF, an MS Word, a WordPerfect, a MAC Write document, and either sent electronically as an email attachment to an individual, or sent via the US Postal Service. Chances of others finding your information, now stored on someone’s computer or in someone’s physical file cabinet, are from literally only a handful of those who work in the same office, to zero – zip – zilch – nada - no one.

But on the Internet, you want your information to be found many different ways, and because we are all literally connected to one another via the Internet, it is now very possible, thanks to sites like LinkedIn. There are several other aspects about your LinkedIn profile and other options outside of LinkedIn that can boost your "searchability" as well. Personal websites and blogs are the easiest ways to accomplish this, and give you many more "searchability points", but we'll tackle that a little later.

First, let's talk about **SEO** – Search Engine Optimization – it is the #1 key element used in being found via any search mechanism – it's what Google, Bing, Yahoo, DogPile, Delicious, and several dozen other search engines use to determine "relevance". The more times a key-word or key-phrase is used on a webpage, the better chances it has to "ranking" with the search engines, placing it higher up the results pages toward the all-mighty Page #1 slot. And, remember – your LinkedIn Profile is just a webpage.

So, as an example, if I'm searching for an SVP of Sales, in the Cosmetic industry, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, with 10 years experience, and I place those words and phrases in my advanced search, and your website (or in this case your LinkedIn profile) has those words and phrases peppered repeatedly throughout it, you're going to list higher in the search results than someone who only has a few of those words and phrases or only has them in their profile once.

This means that having a profile that has been properly created to use the maximum amount of key-words and key-phrases relevant to your background will place you higher up the page-rank (if, of course, all other criteria has also been addressed).

Another important issue relating to your SEO and keywords/key phrases is the relevance they have to not just your background, but your industry, your connections, your groups, and many other factors. A thorough research of which keywords and key phrases are trending in your industry and position, in conjunction with the built-in algorithms internal to LinkedIn, is a must.

So, unlike a resume, in a LinkedIn profile "the more – the merrier". It gives the search engines more to match with those keywords and phrases. The higher the count it sees for a keyword or phrase, the more "relevant" your profile is to that search.

Welcome to the Brand New You – or should I say, You Are the New Brand

This is going to be a stretch for some of you, if not most of you. But, just like we humans have, over time, weathered the age of TV, and the age of Space Flight, and the age of shag-carpet, and the age of hot-pants, and the age of the "ME" Generation, and age of the "X" Generation, and the age of MBO (Management by Objective), and the age of Sam Walton's MBWA (Management by Wandering Around), we now find ourselves in the age of "Brandability"! Say, what?

OK, I made that word up, but it means we're now at that point in our "business and career evolution" that we need to "brand" ourselves to be noticed. The days of just coming to work and blending in with everyone else has passed us by. We now need to be our own "BRAND". And, again – LinkedIn to the rescue!

A banking SVP I recently worked with was questioning why they should worry about branding. I said, "given that you've been a banker for over 20 years, let me ask a question. If were to stand in the lobby of any bank in the country and loudly request, 'I NEED A VICE PRESIDENT!', would I not get 15 people rushing to my aid – two of which would be holding brooms"? He laughed and said, "banking is big into titles". I said, "so how am I supposed to get you to stand out amongst the over 30,000 other SVPs in US banking"?

So, how does one "brand" one's self? By making sure you're unique – you're the one who stands-out from all the others – you show different qualities than your competition. Everyone can boast at being "creative", but then define "creative". If I created a pie-chart for a meeting and I colored the largest slice "Red", and Carol made the same pie-chart, but colored her largest piece "Blue", which of us is the more "creative"? NEITHER – it's subjective.

Knowing that, then you'll have to make yourself stand out by other measures. One quick way is having your mug show up every time your contacts open their LinkedIn account page. How do you do that? By posting something – anything – and often.

It can be an industry tip or trend that is happening right now – it can be information that you picked up at one of your group meetings (either virtual or physical) – you don't even have to write anything – it can be a repost of an article you found on the web.

By making yourself known and having yourself show-up frequently by multiple methods, you can slowly build your "Brand". And not just on LinkedIn. That's, again why the personal website, blogs, article publishing, forums, group participation, and the whole gamut of "business squeaking" is a major component to getting noticed. (See more in "*Back-Links, Back-Links, Back-Links*" – further down)

The Unfair Search Relevance Methods Used by the LinkedIn SEO Algorithms

There are many different elements involved with search results internal to LinkedIn. When someone does a search on a set of skills, LinkedIn's search results algorithms look at a myriad of meta-data to determine whose profile gets placed at the top of Page 1, and why everyone else gets thrown further back – and it's more complicated than one would expect.

The general "weighting" involved has to do with what level or plan to which your subscription is tied, your contacts and their levels, the number of connections you have, the number of your given and received endorsements and recommendations, the groups with which you're associated, your SEO relevance, all sorts of things.

That is (in part) the reason why if you do a search on yourself by name, you may or may not list as #1 in the results – there could even be someone ahead of you that doesn't even have the same name – odd, but it happens all the time. It's all about the "hidden points system" internal to LinkedIn's algorithms.

Horribly, here's something most people don't know or expect. First, let's talk "hidden points system". Every element in LinkedIn has "points" to it. The more "points" you have the better treatment you receive for search results. But here's something that LinkedIn bases its search results on that many find unreasonable and actually down right unfair.

A search is done on, let's say, skills that you have and the person doing the search doesn't know you or your name, but they're looking for someone with your expertise and talent. And, let's also say that when they run the search, your profile gets listed in the first 100 results (the first 10 pages – 10 profiles per page). And, for whatever reasons, you're listed on page 7 of the results. Chances of the searcher actually getting to page 7 is remote, so they don't even see your profile, which means they don't click on your profile.

But, let's say your profile made it to Page #1. However, still the person searching never clicks your profile to see more detail – maybe it's your picture or the lack of one – maybe it's something in your title that didn't grab their attention – who knows why. The point is, if your profile is not chosen during a search results, you lose "points" – not fair, but it's even documented inside LinkedIn.

The next time someone runs that same exact search for your skills, with the same key-words or phrases, you may now only show-up on page 8 or 9. So you're punished, in a sense, for showing up in a search results and NOT being chosen. So now you have a quest – get on Page #1, or as close to it as you can.

And, by the way - you want and need to show-up in at least the first 10 pages. Why? Those with a Basic level subscription (the majority of users) can only view the first 100 profiles in a search results. YIKES!

Now, here's some good news – most HR professionals and head-hunters who use LinkedIn all the time typically have the more advanced, more expensive subscriptions, so they can view more than 100 profiles in search results. But, again – who is going to go that far back to find what they're looking for? Most won't because they're relying on "search relevance" – part of the search engine.

I know that sounds cruel, but that's the way it is setup. So, what do you do to get around that issue and how do you get to page #1? First, make sure you've got something in every section of your profile, get as many of what I call "collectables" as possible (endorsements, recommendation, groups, followings, etc.), and "Work" LinkedIn – the more you're seen, the more you thought of as an expert, without you saying a word about being an expert.

And, you can also cheat a little by having your friends and co-workers do a search on your skill-sets, find you, and click your link.

Also, remember that those who are already connected to you will see you first in a search results, so having people who are NOT in your connections will have a tougher time finding you, but they add more validity to your search result "points". It's strange how they have it setup – but what they're wanting to see is activity in and with your profile, and they will reward you by it.

Head-Shot Photos - A "Must Have" in LinkedIn Profiles, but Heed the Warnings!

Many of you shy away from cameras as if they're a group of zombies approaching your front door to sell you magazine subscriptions. And, you personally may be extremely self-conscious about having your photo taken and especially printed. And, if so, then you're probably even more horrified by the thought of having it digitally available on the Internet where everyone in the known universe can gawk at you, and make fun of you, and print your picture and draw mustaches on you, and scars and...

OK – got the picture (pun intended)?

But, imagine going to a store full of nothing but boxes, and none of the boxes have anything on them but text describing what is in each box. Now imagine plunking down \$30,000 on a car sight-unseen – you've only read its description in a want-ad. Now imagine purchasing a \$300,000 house without ever stepping inside or viewing the property. Scary huh?

OK - Now back to LinkedIn. **NO PICTURE? ARE YOU NUTS?**

We live in a society that lives and breathes by videos and photos – communication via text only (like email) leaves out a lot of information and limits our communication skills – no facial expressions – no body language – no voice inflection – nada!

For most of us, we would hope that other people just judge us from our experience and skills, our talents and accomplishments, etc. But you and I both know it doesn't work that way.

Reading the specs on a car is great, but is it bright yellow, or how does it handle? Does the view from the kitchen allow a glimpse of the lake? Does the person I'm about to hire as our new customer service manager look as if they are approachable, or like they just knocked over a convenience store and would stab the first person who says, "Good Morning" as they came to work.

Don't get me wrong – your experience and talent and skills and accomplishments will usually out-weigh any photo you have. But the way you look and a photo of your face, is part of your "brand" – it is, in fact, **YOU**.

If you're going to take a position with a company and that position merits a certain look, then your "brand" should at least coincide with the type of business you're about to work for.

Too, if you already have a position with a company – here's a question: does your look and demeanor portray the company's image or your position's image as far as branding is concerned?

Sorry people – we can no longer hide. Your profile photo is very important for all sorts of reasons. Without a profile photo you leave people wondering, "Is she so self-conscious about the way she looks that she would never let anyone see her? Would she come to work each day with a paper bag over her head? Would I want someone like that working for me?", or "What is he hiding? Did he just knock over that convenience store, and is afraid that someone will recognize him from one of those crime shows"?

Fact is, having a good **PROFESSIONAL** photo is a must in business these days, especially on your LinkedIn Profile. But, let me be really clear about this – if you work or are trying to work in a typical corporate environment, where everyone dresses in typical business attire, (you know – coats, ties, shiny shoes, etc.), then your **PROFESSIONAL** photo should portray you in that attire. Your photo should look like you just came out of a board meeting.

Now - If you are in a liberal arts arena and zoot-suits aren't required, then by all means, have a **PROFESSIONAL** photo taken of you in your everyday work apparel. And, notice I mentioned "**PROFESSIONAL**" multiple times – and for a big reason.

Here are some **NO-NOs** for a **LinkedIn Profile Head-Shot**:

- **DON'T** use a photo taken by your spouse at the School Bazaar.
- **DON'T** use a photo taken by your girl or boy friend anywhere.
- **DON'T** use a photo taken by someone at the bar Friday night.
- **DON'T** use a photo that you've cropped yourself out of.
- **DON'T** use a photo taken with a cellphone, regardless of the res
- **DON'T** use any photo that smacks of FaceBook or MySpace or any of the other truly "social media" sites, unless you really want to be matched with people who aren't serious about their careers. Those photos need to stay on those sites – not on LinkedIn.

"But my friend has a really expensive camera – they should be able to take a really good shot, right"? **WRONG**. If I gave you keys to a Boeing 777, would that make you a professional pilot with 1000s of hours of experience, a ground crew, and a traffic control team? **NO!**

When I say "**PROFESSIONAL**" photo, I mean in a photo studio with **PROFESSIONAL** lighting, backdrops, and yes, expensive, **PROFESSIONAL** cameras.

But mostly, aside from all the professional equipment, I mean a studio that has a **PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER**, or at least someone who has been trained and knows what they're doing.

The big difference between what I'll call the "FaceBooks" and LinkedIn is the fact that LinkedIn is designed for **PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS** people – it's a **BUSINESS NETWORK** platform, and the "FaceBooks" were designed for a more casual, "here I am at home", "here we are on vacation", "Yo Dudes – check-out the frat-party pix", "aren't my kids cute in this picture I took at the beach?", "Can't you see me? I'm way over there next to the fountain in this really bad, out of focus, poorly lit shot my sister took with her iPhone", type photos.

DON'T DO IT! You'll embarrass yourself, you'll embarrass your employer, and you may actually damage your brand.

Now that I've gotten your attention about how you really **DO** need a professional studio photo, don't start sweating about paying a high-dollar photographer for that **PROFESSIONAL** mug-shot.

It just so happens that a few major retailers have been paying attention to LinkedIn's ever growing gravity, and have started to capitalize on it – and it's a really smart move on their part, I think.

As an example, check around your local town to see if you have a [TARGET](#) that has a [Portrait Studio](#) (not all Targets have them – the links I've provided will help you find where they are closest to you). And, if you have one that does, checkout their new **Business Portraits** packages – they're designed for profile type head-shots, great for use on a LinkedIn profile. And, they're not expensive – for \$50 you can get a single photo on a CD that looks professional, has a choice of backgrounds, they'll take several shots – you just pick which one you want to keep. They and JC Penney's have other packages as well.

What's that grumbling I'm hearing - "But, Target? Penney's? What about the quality," you ask? And, you're right – it won't be the same as a high-end photographer with sitting fees, higher per-hour rates, and who may also require you to purchase \$XXX of prints.

But, consider this - those staff "photographers" at Target or Penney's have gone through training on how to use the equipment, how to setup what is called 3-point lighting, how to operate the cameras, and since the equipment is computerized, they rarely take a bad shot – and if they do, they just take another. You get to see each shot right after it's taken on a monitor there in the studio.

But here's the best part – **YOU OWN THE LICENSING AND COPYRIGHT TO THE PHOTO!**

See, most people don't realize that it's illegal to take a portrait photo they've had done with a professional photographer or a portrait studio like Penney's, Target, Sears, etc., and make their own copies from scans of the printed portraits – those companies essentially own the copyrights to those photos, and want you to request prints made through them – that's how they make their money (just look at the fine print on the "contract" you sign when you get your photos).

And, that's just another reason why Kinko's won't make scans of portraits – they know those portraits are copyrighted – and they also know that usually YOU don't own the copyright.

In this case, Target or Penney's is giving you the legal license to use that photo where ever and however many times you wish – either making your own prints or uploading it to a website. They don't care – it's legally yours, copyright and everything.

So it makes sense to have it done this way – you save money and get a really good professional studio type portrait of yourself, they give you the digital photo on a disc available to upload to any profile page or website that same day, you can use it on your resume, put on your bio, even use it in marketing pieces about yourself. And, all for about \$50 to \$100 – what a deal!

Now – I do recommend if you're wanting to put together a website, you're going to definitely want to get more and better quality photos done – this is where you may want to spend the extra money and go with a professional portrait photographer who specializes in business profile head-shots.

And, yes – they'll be more expensive. But, here's a question:

If you'll invested \$600 for a business suit, \$100 for a tie or accessories, \$200 for shoes, \$300 for a slick brief-case or handbag because you want to look your best at work or on those business trips, then why in the world would you NOT invest in your portrait. Your attire will be seen once at that all important meeting in Boise – your portrait will be seen all over the world multiple times. It's your "BRAND"! You'll buy other suits – you only have one face.

Yes, your apparel is important, even for the photo. But for your LinkedIn head-shot (which is only 500 pixels square), we won't see much of that \$600 suit – we want and need to see just your face – not your shoes – not your purse – not your briefcase.

But for a website where you get to use multiple photos, it's the quality that will make or break your brand. For this platform you definitely need a professional photographer with lots of experience doing business profile photography – don't go cheap!

Homework and Maintenance: Ongoing Concerns With Your LinkedIn Profile

So, even if you've done your due diligence to make sure your profile is SEO maxed, you've still got more work ahead of you to help your search rankings with LinkedIn. Here's a short list of things you need to do and maintain periodically to make sure you're getting the most out of LinkedIn's search results algorithms:

- ✓ Endorse and recommend as many people as you can – LinkedIn added a feature that makes endorsing others a really simple task
- ✓ Ask for recommendations – sure, it's pandering – but it's part of the game. The more recommendations (to & from) – the better
- ✓ Join as many groups as you can – it's a great way to connect to those with whom you would normally not get a chance to connect due to the difference in plan levels
- ✓ Joining groups is also a great way to get to someone indirectly – if they are local to you, many groups have physical events where you can actually meet those other members and get to hob-knob with them over cocktails. Try to get some of the other members you've met to introduce you to that CEO you've been wanting to meet
- ✓ Follow companies you're wanting to approach for sales or jobs or other reason – it helps you keep abreast of things going on with that possible prospect
- ✓ Then, ask for introductions to those people who are connected to your connections that would benefit you in possible sales, job offers, etc.
- ✓ Watch and comment on the activity going on with your connections – those innocuous yet somewhat irritating little announcements on the right side of the screen. The more activity LinkedIn sees you doing, the more "points" you gain

- ✓ Post your own authored articles or links to articles from time to time relevant to your industry – as others see the posting, they click on your profile to “read more”, giving you “points”
- ✓ Broadcast your changes? – this is one that not everyone is comfortable with – if you’re about to change jobs, by all means, turn OFF your activity broadcast, but be aware of something – turning off your profile is only turning off your PUBLIC profile – that’s the one that gets picked up by Google and the search engines – you can never turn your profile off entirely, unless you close your account and start another one. In that case, you lose all your contacts, endorsements, recommendations, etc. NOT a good idea.

But, if you’re in a solid situation (where you’re NOT changing jobs) having your activity broadcast turned ON means that every time you make a change to your profile, add a contact, post an article, you get free advertising on that right side of the page and all your connections get to see it.

Why is this a good thing? You know, I learned several things many years ago about advertising that still hold true today. These advertising industry mantras have worked for decades:

- ✓ “When I want your opinion, I’ll give it to you,” (staying on the minds of those you’re wanting to notice you eventually becomes their idea, and they become proactive – if it’s their idea they’ll do it – if it’s an ad???)
- ✓ “Give the consumer enough rope to let them hang themselves”. Remember this commercial?:

“Excedrin – You can’t buy a more effective pain relief”.

Your first thought is, “they must be the best since I can’t buy anything better”. What they DIDN’T say is that the FDA regulates the main ingredient that reduces the pain, therefore, even their competitors can’t give you more “effective pain relief”. They didn’t lie - they just allowed the public to “fill in the blanks” – advertising loves this.

If you're constantly reposting trending topic articles about your industry, eventually you're seen as an expert yet you never mentioned it yourself. Advertising psychologists refer to this as "mind-set-positioning", and it works every time.

And, my all-time favorite,

- ✓ "A terrible thing happens when you don't advertise – NOTHING"!

By allowing your activities to be broadcasted, you and your "brand" are staying on the minds of those who know you or those who may suddenly WANT to know you. You become seen as a leader – it's a little twist on the old adage of "the squeaky wheel gets the grease", except this time, you're not whining about something. If you're constantly adding content and activity and connections within LinkedIn, others will start to notice. That's why posting articles and little industry "snippets" two or three times a week works great.

Suddenly – you're the authority, but in a subconscious manner, which is the best place to be. And, if you're in sales, who do you think they're going to come to when it's time for them to purchase something you sell? I think you know the answer.

When working with clients, to demonstrate this point, I'll ask them to quickly (without thinking more than one second) name an insurance company that advertises. The majority of people will say "GEICO" or "PROGRESSIVE" came to mind first – then I'll ask them if they own that insurance – they usually say NO.

So, why did they name one of those companies instead of Allstate or State Farm which have been around 4 times longer? Because of repetition – those first two advertise more frequently than the larger two. On average, a GEICO ad airs on radio or television, is read in a magazine or billboard, or seen on the web every 7 seconds – go figure!

Back-Links, Back-Links, Back-Links

One of the major things that always gets the attention of the search engines is what is known as “back-links” – links coming from one website and going to another. As far as Google is concerned, back-links is a major element of search relevance and content popularity.

If one website feels the content on another website is relevant or good enough to incorporate a link to send their own visitors to, then Google says, “WOW! That other website must be really good”. So, Google admonishes that other website with search results “points”, placing it higher up the page rank.

The same happens, but not to the same degree, in LinkedIn. But here should be your main objective of being on LinkedIn – get people to find you! Whether they do a search inside of LinkedIn, or they do a search on Google, you still want to be found – remember – you’re building your brand.

So a little trick that works wonders is to create other webpages, outside of LinkedIn which all point to your LinkedIn profile. There are several great ways to do this:

1. Capture your Name-Sake domain – say what? A Name-Sake domain is a domain (a “.com”) that is built around your name. So, if your name is Barbara K. Smith, then a good candidate would be to see if the domain BarbaraKSmith.com is available. If not, then try something like BarbKSmith.com or BarbaraKaySmith.com (using your full middle name) or

BKaySmith.com – even using something that identifies your geographic location like BarbaraKSmithDFW.com, or BKSmithChicago.com.

Many people shy away from the thought of having a website in general, but the advantages are too compelling:

- Use your domain to create a website that mimics your LinkedIn profile and links directly to it, creating a back-link

- With your own personal domain you can now have a more personal and more professional email address than that "home consumer" email address like everybody else has (johnsmith22345@yahoo.com, sheryljones999@hotmail.com, mystupidemailname@gmail.com).

Barbara K Smith can now have an email address like:
barbara@barbaraksmith.com.

And there is another added attraction to that email – as long as you keep the domain registered, you will always have that email address. Think back when you started with a clumsy SWBell.net address, which was later changed to SBCGlobal.net, then later changed to ATT.SBCGlobal.yahoo.com, then to ATT.net – God only knows what the next change in AT&T's corporate water is going to cause major headaches for its customers and their personal email addresses.

But with your own domain, YOU control the email addresses. And owning a domain is really cheap – like \$25 to \$40 a year cheap, and that covers registration fees and hosting - and it comes with 10 emails, unlimited alias email addresses (email addresses that don't have mailboxes – they are just redirected to other email addresses), blogs, forums, guest-books, photo galleries, web-forms (used so visitors can fill out a form with their contact info to send to you, but neither they nor robots can find out your actual email address – if you don't want anyone knowing until you give it to them yourself), even a built-in template driven web-design application that let's you create your own website in a matter of minutes.

And, these inexpensive hosting packages are good enough to launch small business sites with no forced advertising. I do recommend one particular host that does all this – DotEasy.com – they are based out of Canada, which I like due to the fact that hackers usually want to go after the US hosting companies, but they tend to leave the Canadian hosts alone. And, they give the most bang for the buck.

This is not a sales job - it is a piece of experience from working with just about every hosting company out there over the last 20 years. The FREE hosting sites, although inexpensive, will give you quite a bit of stuff for free. But watch-out for those that force you to display their advertisers' ads on your site - you don't have control of the content.

* (see a warning I've placed about why you should be very leery of GoDaddy further down)

As examples of personal "branding" websites designed as back-links to LinkedIn profiles, first take a look at [Jeff Walker](#) - using a single-page design - Jeff is a client who happens to be a healthcare professional with a remarkable CEO background in the Virginia/Tennessee/Kentucky area healthcare system. If you'll notice, once you get to his page, the LinkedIn buttons take you directly to his LinkedIn Public profile - hence creating a back-link. Also, notice there are two - one at the top and another near the bottom - making it easy for the person looking at the one-page mini-site to see more information about Jeff, while giving him points.

Another design example using a multi-page navigation is one for [Patricia Q Connolly](#) - notice that the LinkedIn badges are on every page and in the footer of each page as well. By the way - Back-Links are big "point gainers" with all of the Search Engines.

2. Blogging is another way to create back-links - whether from a DotEasy free-hosted website blog, or from one of the many blogging sites like www.wordpress.com, or www.blogger.com, or www.tumblr.com (all free), and by creating industry related content and posting consistently with links back to your LinkedIn profile, you've got more back-links.
3. Posting in industry related forums and leaving your LinkedIn public profile link - Ding! Back-links!
4. Posting industry related articles on eZine sites like ehow.com, or hubpages.com, or squidoo.com, or ezinearticles.com (here's a [directory](#) of article sites) making sure you include links to your LinkedIn profile in your byline.

5. Comments in industry blogs on topic for which you have experience – again leaving your LinkedIn public profile URL link.
6. Don't forget FaceBook and Twitter – you can post casual, unassuming things in your FaceBook and Twitter accounts and leave your LinkedIn URL as a way for people to see more about something you want them to see. But a word to the wise –be VERY CAREFUL when posting to the casual social network sites – management is watching.

As a rule of thumb, even if you have a professional looking LinkedIn profile, don't assume that you can get away with posting trash or inappropriate photos on FaceBook of you and your friends getting "smash-faced" during Happy Hour and not receive some office repercussions. Keep to the "family friendly" rule of a "G" rating on any and all social media sites. (can we all say, "DUH"!)

There are a myriad of methods for getting your LinkedIn public profile URL posted all over the web, and the more of that you can accomplish, the more "traffic" your link will receive. In turn, the more traffic you receive, Google and Yahoo and Bing and all the other search engines will boost your search rankings with LinkedIn.

- * Words of caution about registering or hosting a domain on GoDaddy – most people don't know a lot about domain registration and hosting, and, see the low prices of GoDaddy and later find out that they either have to pay a whole lot more to actually use their new domain (besides just parking it, which is where they get you on the really cheap prices) or, as many found out years ago, they really didn't own their domain – GoDaddy did (read the fine print), and were forced to pay ridiculous rates to actually buy their domains away from GoDaddy.com.

Something else to know – the US is the origin of the majority of spam in the world – sites either registered on or hosted with GoDaddy constitute the biggest part of that spam. Because of this, many ISPs (Internet Service Providers) intentionally block email coming from email hosted or even registered by GoDaddy. Do a Google search on "GoDaddy Scam" and you'll see plenty of posting about issues with GoDaddy.com – and, although they've changed some of their business practices over the last few years, my recommendation is to RUN AWAY AND STAY AWAY!

Job Seeking – Tips and Links on Helping You Use LinkedIn to Find a Job

Using LinkedIn to find a job is strategically smart, as most Fortune 1000 company HR Directors will tell you. But, let's not stop there – just about EVERY HR Director, HR department employee, Head-Hunter, Career Coach, Professional Career Counselor, Resume Writer, RECRUITER, and others who help people find employment will ALL endorse LinkedIn as THE current proven mechanism for finding employment.

And, "YES", job searching has changed dramatically due to LinkedIn, so the techniques are all new and different. So, "why", you ask, "do all the experts agree that LinkedIn is the place to be seen"?

Because THEY know that's where the "Hiring Gurus" go to find new hires. Why, you again ask? Because the "Hiring Gurus" know that LinkedIn is where they can learn a lot more about you from your profile, your group affiliations, your connections, your LinkedIn activity, and a whole bunch of other things your little minimal resume isn't going to disclose.

Plus, since they have access to your connections, when they find YOU they have also hit "pay dirt" by the fact that many of your connections do the same thing you do, so now they've not only found you, but they have a direct connection to your contacts who may ALSO be good candidates for the position for which they're looking.

And, LinkedIn is a digital platform – it can be searched. An HR professional can more quickly pull up 100 qualified candidates (literally in a matter of seconds) instead of sifting through 100 paper resumes or 100 separate PDFs which are not in the same document, and lend themselves to no searching.

To help you with a basic knowledge of LinkedIn's business model, and tips on how to "work" LinkedIn like a comedian would "work" a room, here are some links written by LinkedIn Insiders to give you the "scoop" on using LinkedIn as your personal "Job Guru Sniper" – that's right! It's COMBAT TIME!

[How LinkedIn Has Turned Your Resume Into A Cash Machine](#)

by George Anders - Forbes

[How to Attract Employers' Attention on LinkedIn](#)

by LinkedIn's Lindsey Pollak

[Locking Down Your Dream Career](#)

by Nicole Williams - [InfoGraphic]

[What To Say On LinkedIn When You've Been Laid Off](#)

by Deborah Jacobs - Forbes

Periodic Maintenance – Backing up Your LinkedIn Profile and Contacts

Every so often it's wise to do a backup of anything on a computer you wish to keep. Those who have had a computer crash on them can tell you, "I wish I had backed up all my stuff before it crashed", like they knew when the computer was going to crash. It's not a matter of "IF", but "WHEN" – they all crash eventually. And the problem we all have with content we've uploaded to someone else's computer, is hoping and praying that THEY are doing back-ups of our stuff for us since we can't get to those computers.

LinkedIn, like any other data-warehousing site, does do backups, but they also make changes to format and design that may or may not get put back the way you wanted it. And if you have no backup of your own, many times you get to start all over from scratch.

So, it's a good idea to every so often grab current copies of your profile and your list of connections from your LinkedIn account, just in case. At least at this writing (since LinkedIn changes things periodically), to backup your profile to at least a PDF copy:

- Log into your account
- Click **PROFILE** on the main menu at the top of the screen
- Next to your photo are two buttons > **IMPROVE YOUR PROFILE** and **EDIT PROFILE**, and next to the **EDIT PROFILE** button you'll see a **triangle**
- Hover over the triangle and a drop-down menu appears and one of the options is **EXPORT TO PDF**.

To backup your contacts:

- On the main page, hover over the menu option **NETWORK**
- Choose **CONTACTS**
- Making sure you're seeing the top of the page, on the right end of the row that has the icon for and the word **CONTACTS**, click the **GEAR ICON** which is your **SETTINGS**
- At the top of the right column, you should see the words, **ADVANCED SETTINGS**
- Just beneath that, click on **Export LinkedIn Connections**
- Based on into which program you'd like to import the connections, choose the appropriate format (CSV is a text file and used for most mail programs – it can also be opened by MS Excel, NotePad (Windows), or any text editor). A vCard or VCF format can be used to import into MACs, iPhones, or Android SmartPhone.

And, I have one other recommendation. To really capture all the things you can be doing with LinkedIn, there is a course I'm familiar with that covers a ton of techniques to help you "work" LinkedIn for things like company branding, sales, jobs, career enhancements, business networking, and a whole lot of other categories. It's well worth the price: It's called "[LinkedInfluence – The Ultimate LinkedIn Training Course](#)".

I hope this has been beneficial. If you need clarification on any of this, please feel free to contact me at:

terry@socialprofilemasters.com or



Terry Pope is an author, guest speaker, and owner of Social Profile Masters, LinkedIn SEO Max, and Biz Ed Central. He creates, re-makes, and updates LinkedIn Profiles with maximized SEO, performs SEO for other social network profiles, and websites, develops both corporate and personal websites (called Name-Sake Domain Mini-Sites, used as an SEO element to a LinkedIn Profile), and lives in the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex. Download a free copy of Terry's [10 Reasons – Why LinkedIn?](#) You can contact Terry for additional info, speaking engagements, and profile Make-Overs through his LinkedIn Profile