

HOW LINKEDIN CAN HELP YOUR CAREER IN TODAY'S DIGITAL FIRST WORLD



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I recently worked with a client who worked in a professional services business with a major corporation. She didn't have a particular role in mind, but her plan was to move to a new role within the next 12 months.

We had talked about her resume and the importance of making it outcomes focused. We were moving on to her LinkedIn profile when she asked: "But don't I just upload my resume to my LinkedIn profile?"

I explained that her resume could include more comprehensive details on her past, while her LinkedIn profile was about her future.

I explained that if she was to just upload her resume to her profile, she would not be maximising LinkedIn's capabilities. Her LinkedIn profile was in the public domain, and her resume contained confidential information we couldn't put on her profile.

*Business Insider Australia*¹ recently reported: "Users who simply post a static resume (on LinkedIn) and don't make an effort to interact with others in their network will not receive as many opportunities."

Like my client, when used effectively, LinkedIn can help in-house lawyers establish and grow their personal brand and career by:

- Supporting their establishment and positioning in their niche market.
- Being found and approached by recruiters and hiring managers for their target role.
- Positioning themselves to appeal to their ideal audience by tailoring language and key words. This will support their job applications, introductions or referrals as a validation tool.
- Nurturing and strengthening relationships with key industry stakeholders, recruiters and decision makers.

To ensure that in-house lawyers can leverage LinkedIn to benefit their personal brand and career, they need to be **found, positioned and validated**.

Be found: LinkedIn, first and foremost, is a search engine. In other words, it's similar to Google in that it's designed for people to use it to search for what they're looking for.

The first and one of the most important steps for developing a LinkedIn profile that will support your personal brand, network and career is to identify and research keywords for SEO.

*Gravitate Online*² reported that 94 percent of web visitors don't go beyond the first page of

their search results. Jeff Bullas³ reported that 25 million LinkedIn profiles are viewed every day.

There are five areas that will contribute to the search engine optimisation of your profile. These include your: title, summary, employment history, skills and endorsements and recommendations.

It is important to note that keywords are based on your goals moving forward and may not directly reflect what you are doing at the moment.

Reflections: Think about your ideal clients and the words they would use to find people like you and build your profile around these words.

Be Positioned: William Arruda recently wrote an article for *Forbes*⁴ that stated: "The resume used to be the tool that would get you noticed. Now, by the time someone has seen your resume, they've already Googled you."

In *Ctrl Alt Delete*⁵, Mitch Joel introduces "digital first": the concept that the first place we learn about people is online.

This means that you need to be aware that before someone has even read your resume, they have likely reviewed your LinkedIn profile and Google search results. Keeping this in mind, strong positioning in your LinkedIn profile is essential.

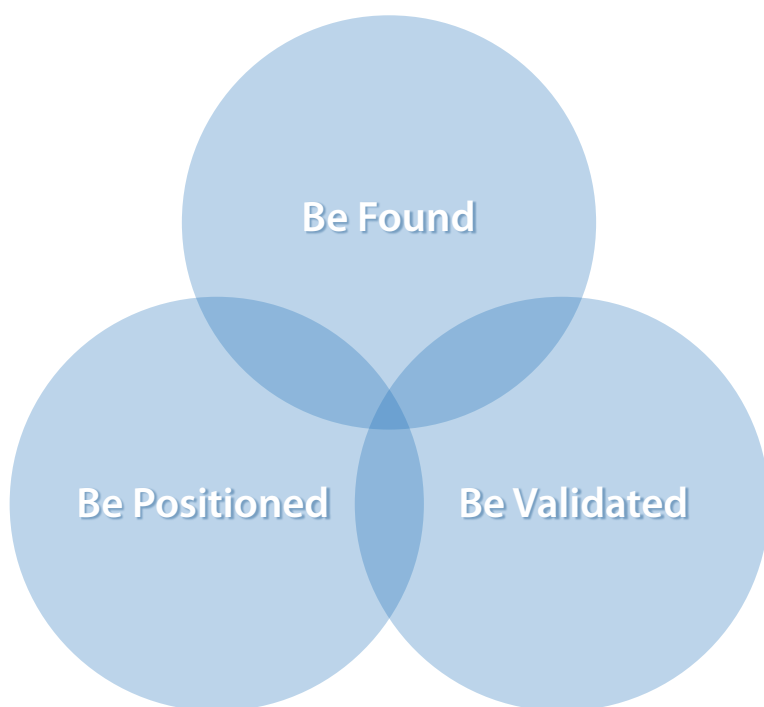
Your LinkedIn profile needs to have a clear value proposition with positioning. When you have positioning, it means you stand out from your competition. You have differentiated yourself from others and you are perceived in the market for the work you want to be perceived as being able to do.

One way to get strong positioning is in the summary section. Many people don't realise the importance of a great summary section in your LinkedIn profile. More than any other section, the summary represents you, your business and your brand. It is also one of the most viewed sections on LinkedIn.

It's a bit like the introduction on a company website. If it is not compelling to the reader they will simply go to another website.

To write a standout summary you need three key elements:

Clarity: Firstly, be clear about your objective. Before writing your summary, be clear about what you want to achieve with LinkedIn. Are you using it to raise your credibility or are you looking to expand your network? Are you looking to attract recruiters? Understand



what you are trying to do and make sure this is clear in your summary. Make a strong, compelling summary that will have your ideal audience thinking you are what they need to solve their problem.

Relevance: You need to make it relevant to your audience. Again, as in the “clarity” element above, make a strong, compelling summary that will have your ideal audience thinking you are what they need to solve their problem. The key to a strong LinkedIn summary is writing for your future, not your past.

Keywords: Your summary meets the blend of keywords and your purpose. The content will be targeted to your audience and purpose. For a job seeker, think about content that will engage a recruiter.

The summary section is limited to 2,000 characters. Ensure your LinkedIn summary aligns with who you are but isn’t all about how great you are. It is about how you can help solve your ideal audience’s problem.

Positioning can also include sharing content. According to a LinkedIn blog post⁶, users who share content on their professional social network at least once a week are nearly 10 times more likely to be contacted for new opportunities than people who don’t share. Curate information of value to your audience. This offers the opportunity to develop credibility as an educator and is a great option for those who do not wish to write their own articles.

Reflections: Assess your current “Digital First” impression. Is it aligned with your current goals? Review your current summary. Is it keyword rich and talking to solving the audience’s problems?

Be validated: What others say about you is more important than what you say about yourself. The importance of validation, testimonials and case studies cannot be over emphasised. The evidence that you can do what you say you can do is invaluable and gives people hope as well as trust in you. One way to do this is in skills and endorsements.

*DMR*⁷ reported that profile views increase 13 times for LinkedIn members who list skills on their profiles.

Although skill endorsements are not generally a favourite for users, you can control what you are endorsed for and how this is presented on your profile.

Why testimonials? Testimonials give hope and evidence. The person looking at your testimonials uses their imagination to think, “Wow, I would love that to happen for me.” They make the direct connection between what they need and how you can help them without you telling them.

Also, what others say about us is more important than what we say about ourselves. Quite often, we work with clients to tone back their self-selling and let others do the talking.

A good testimonial includes a before and after. For example, “Before working with

this person, I . . .” (This brings up the known unspoken of your audience. This means that the audience can relate to the person giving the testimonial.) “After working with them, I now . . .”

In addition to skills and testimonials, you can also add websites and plugins to showcase your work.

Reflections: What validation is on your current profile? Can you increase this by adding testimonials, endorsements or plugins?


The importance of contact information

I am sure you have had the experience of finding exactly what you were looking for – the perfect product or service – and then couldn’t find the necessary contact information or instructions on how to place your order.

Quickly, happiness is replaced with frustration. LinkedIn offers a number of ways to manage contact information.

Once you have developed your profile, make it easy for people to connect with you. Include links to your LinkedIn profile on your other material. This includes your business card, email signature and other websites. Remember to send a meaningful, personalised request for new connections.

You can also join groups to keep up-to-date on industry changes. The Association of Corporate Counsel⁸ group on LinkedIn is a closed group of in-house counsel professionals only.

Remember that LinkedIn is about your future, so write your content to reflect this. Your profile works for you 24/7, so it needs to align with your goals, support your face-to-face activity and define what you’re trying to achieve. 

Footnotes

- <http://www.businessinsider.com.au/users-who-post-on-linkedin-get-more-jobs-2013-9>
- <http://gravitateonline.com/2nd-place-1st-place-loser-seriously/>
- <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2014/12/02/25-linkedin-facts-and-statistics-you-need-to-share/>
- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/2014/03/18/move-over-resume-youve-been-replaced/>
- <http://www.twistimage.com/books/>
- <http://blog.linkedin.com/2013/09/03/4-steps-to-joining-the-professional-conversation-on-linkedin/>
- <http://expandedramblings.com/index.php/by-the-numbers-a-few-important-linkedin-stats/>
- <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1458/profile>