

*Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive business card. It's a summary of your professional experience, interests and capabilities that is designed to attract the attention of recruiters and networking contacts. A strong profile is a key differentiator in the job market. Follow the tips below or contact the career development office for help creating your LinkedIn profile.*

**1. Craft an informative profile headline**

Your headline gives people a short, memorable way to understand who you are in a professional context. Think of the summary as the slogan for your professional brand, such as “Recent honors grad with strong writing skills seeking marketing position.” Check out the profiles of students and recent alums you admire for ideas and inspiration.

**2. Display an appropriate photo**

Remember that LinkedIn is not Facebook. If you choose to post a photograph — and we recommend that you do — select a professional, high-quality headshot of you alone. Party photos, cartoon avatars and cute pictures of your puppy don't fit in the professional environment of LinkedIn.

**3. Show off your education**

Be sure to include information about all institutions you've attended. Include your major and minor if you have one, as well as highlights of your activities. It's also appropriate to include study abroad or summer. Don't be shy — your LinkedIn profile is an appropriate place to show off your strong GPA and any honors or awards you've won.

**4. Develop a professional summary statement**

Your summary statement should resemble the first few paragraphs of your best-written cover letter — concise and confident about your goals and qualifications. Remember to include relevant internships, volunteer work and extra-curriculars. Present your summary statement in short blocks of text for easy reading. Bullet points are great, too.

**5. Fill your “Skills & Expertise” section with keywords**

“Skills & Expertise” is the place to include keywords and phrases that a recruiter or hiring manager might type into a search engine to find a person like you. The best place to find relevant keywords is in the job listings that appeal to you and the LinkedIn profiles of people who currently hold the kinds of positions you want. Your connections can also endorse your skills on your profile.

**6. Update your status regularly**

A great way to stay on other people's radar screens and enhance your professional image is to update your status at least once a week. Tell people about events you're attending, major projects you've completed, professional books you're reading, or any other news that you would tell someone at a networking reception or on a quick catch-up phone call.

## 7. Show your connectedness with LinkedIn Group badges

Joining Groups and displaying the group badges on your profile are the perfect ways to fill out the professionalism of your profile and show your desire to connect to people with whom you have something in common. Most students start by joining their university's LinkedIn group (Calvin University Alumni and Friends) as well as the larger industry groups related to the career they want to pursue.

## 8. Collect diverse recommendations

Nothing builds credibility like third-party recommendations. The most impressive LinkedIn profiles have at least one recommendation associated with each position a person has held. Think about soliciting recommendations from professors, internship coordinators and colleagues, employers and professional mentors.

## 9. Claim your unique LinkedIn URL

To increase the professional results that appear when people type your name into a search engine, set your LinkedIn profile to "public" and claim a unique URL for your profile (for example: [www.linkedin.com/in/yourname](http://www.linkedin.com/in/yourname)). This also makes it easier to include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature, which is a great way to demonstrate your professionalism.

## 10. Share your work

You can also add actual examples of your writing, design work, or other accomplishments on your profile, where you can share rich media or documents. What better way to sell your skills than to show employers exactly what you can produce?

*Handout adapted from [university.linkedin.com](http://university.linkedin.com)*

*For more resources related to using LinkedIn, visit [university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students](http://university.linkedin.com/linkedin-for-students)*