Alumni Job Search Intensive – LinkedIn Profile Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome. This is week 2 and this webinar focuses on developing a strong LinkedIn profile.

Slide 2: LinkedIn, as you hopefully already know, is the premier professional networking site. If you’re not actively using it for your job search and to grow and develop your professional network, you need to do so. LinkedIn is important because it facilitates networking connections across many categories, including personal, alumni, company, professional associations, and other groups for your field and interest areas. It’s still true that at least 60% of jobs are found through proactive networking, so it’s key that you utilize LinkedIn to its full extent. We’ll discuss using LinkedIn for networking and for your job search in later webinars; for now, we’ll focus on developing a strong profile.

Slide 3: Your goals in using LinkedIn should be to develop a strong, influential presence, so that you can be found – by recruiters, hiring managers and key people in your field, and to find the key people in your field (including recruiters, HR and hiring managers, RIT alumni and other contacts) who can help move you forward in your career and job search goals. You want your LinkedIn profile to support and reflect your brand, consistently with all your other marketing materials.

Slide 4: Here’s a checklist of the elements your profile should include. We’ll go through these in more detail now.

Slide 5: The “headline” is the space beneath your name. The recommendation is that you should use keywords that convey what you know how to do and what you want to be doing moving forward in your career. Don’t concentrate so much on what you have done in the past, or your current job title. Concentrate instead on your future self. Choose keywords that are likely to be searched by recruiters, hiring managers and Human Resource Directors. If you’d really like to distinguish yourself, you might consider a branding statement that does the same thing but states the group you specialize in helping or how you solve a particular problem, or in what areas you are a specialist. For example, Pharmaceutical Sales Rep, Focusing on Heart Disease, Consistently Ranked Top Performer. It’s often helpful to look at other headlines of individuals who do work you want to be doing to get a sense of what you might include in yours. You want others to connect with you and access your profile, and your headline is a good first step to help with that.

Slide 6: Creating a customized URL is easy to do, and if you don’t take advantage of the opportunity, you wind up with a random LinkedIn URL with a mix of letters and numbers that don’t mean anything. What you want is the URL with your name as you’re found on LinkedIn. In some instances, if you have a name that other people also have, your name may have been taken, and you will be offered alternatives. Choose one that makes sense for you. Even if you have a URL that has numbers in it, it won’t be the mess that your original URL is. To change your LinkedIn assigned URL, hover your computer’s mouse over it, and when you are asked if you would like to customize your URL, say “yes,” and follow the directions. Once you have your personalized URL, be sure to add it to your resume, and on your signature line on emails, (again, part of consistent branding).
Slide 7: Be sure you have a professional photo on your profile page. This is your first impression for
people searching LinkedIn for potential candidates, so you’ll want a photo that reflects your confidence
and competence. Don’t just throw any photo up, take the time to make sure it reflects the image you
want to project to your target audience. So if you’re an accountant, you’ll want to wear a suit, and have
a business type of background. If you’re a marine biologist, on the other hand, it’s ok to be in front of an
aquarium.

Slide 8: Regarding your summary, it’s key that you differentiate yourself from the competition – even if
you use the right keywords you’ll want to demonstrate what makes you unique and the best candidate.
You’ll want to do some self-assessment to uncover what your niche is, and the key strengths and
specialties that support that. Then use this information to develop a profile that will grab attention. It’s
helpful to do research for your field as well, and a good way to do this is to check out other LinkedIn
profiles for your targeted field and position. Once you have your summary put together, do an
advanced people search with your industry keywords, to see if you show up in the results. If you find
yourself, you know recruiters will be able to find you too.

Slide 9: Again, the section where you can make yourself memorable to recruiters and HR reps is your
“Summary” section. Don’t make the mistake of making this section sound sterile or too much like a
repeat of your resume. You should take advantage of the opportunity to use your own, authentic voice
and describe yourself and your professional journey in this section. Write in first person, and write a
narrative that will help paint a picture of who you are in professional terms. Describe your successes and
achievements. Quantify them where you can, but also be personal. Authenticity is a key ingredient when
creating a memorable profile, so provide photographs, articles, video, and anything that might add
interest and make your profile stand out. Make it keyword rich, but avoid buzzwords or acronyms that
won’t mean anything to other people. Also stay away from common clichés, like “detail oriented team
player”; instead, use stories to present your strengths. Use the entire section to promote yourself!
Think of it as a way to make a great online impression, so don’t skimp, and don’t undervalue the
opportunity you have here to make yourself memorable.

Slide 10: Keywords enable you to be found by recruiters for your targeted industry. Do your research to
determine the sought after skills and qualities, and be sure your summary emphasizes these. You want
to be sure to relate them to your actual skills and accomplishments as well, again by telling your
personal story. You want your summary to emphasize what you have to offer, and how that translates
to value for a potential employer. Value here is your distinctive style and unique attributes – what sets
you apart from the competition. The more keyword-rich your profile is, the more you will show up in
search results.

Slide 11: Here’s a good example that encompasses these elements. You’ll see that Lindsey has a title
that highlights her niche strengths and is loaded with keywords for her target market. So instead of
titling herself Marketing Manager, she becomes a vibrant candidate who knows who she is and what she
wants. People searching for these skills will find her easily. She has added posts that she’s written, to
strengthen her authority, and give people a fuller picture of who she is.

Slide 12: Her summary is loaded with targeted keywords, she appears authentic and reachable, and has
successfully presented and supported her value to any potential employer.
Slide 13: And that’s what you’re looking for, to be found, both by humans (HR managers, hiring managers and recruiters), as well as search engines. SEO – search engine optimization, is a tool many recruiters use to source candidates, and of course it looks for those important keywords. Again, keep your target audience in mind as you develop your title and summary.

Think about what else can differentiate you – add rich media that shows, rather than tells. You can include many types of media, including videos, links to websites, presentations you’ve done, articles you’ve written, and there are many apps for LinkedIn that help you showcase your accomplishments.

Slide 14: Moving on to other sections of your profile. You want to get endorsements from people who can speak to the skills you want to emphasize. LinkedIn randomly adds skills it thinks you might want to showcase, and asks your contacts to endorse you. Instead, take control and add your own skills, and actively seek endorsements for those key skills for your targeted field and job. Monitor and manage your endorsements – you can move, add and demote any at any time that aren’t relevant to your goals.

Slide 15: Your top 10 endorsements show, with those contacts who have endorsed you.

Slide 16: Endorsements are quick agreements by your contacts that you possess certain skills. Recommendations on the other hand are more in depth, thought out additions that match a skill to an accomplishment, supporting your strength in that area. You’ll want to make targeted requests for each skill and experience that you want to emphasize, so that prospective employers can see your history of success in those areas. Be selective, and be specific on what you’d like them to focus on – not the precise wording, but the project, job, or activity. You can get recommendations for any experience you’ve had, including volunteer activities or group memberships – any chance you’ve had to demonstrate that particular skill.

Slide 17: Describe and highlight your work experience, under the Work Experience section, focusing on your accomplishments, achievements and successes. Again, be sure your descriptions are keyword-rich. Provide measurable and quantifiable results, or if you can’t quantify a result, qualify it. In other words, how do we know you were successful at that job? It does help also to get a recommendation for each job you’ve had; this supports what you’re saying about yourself.

Slide 18: List all your education information, for all colleges. Also include any specialized training and certifications you’ve received that directly relate to your targeted industry and job. These add value to your qualifications. However, it’s not necessary to list dates; in some cases, this could draw unwanted attention to your age. If you’re an experienced job seeker, think about removing any outdated information; again, you want to emphasize your current skills that are valuable to your targeted profession.

Slide 19: To round out your profile, think about what makes you unique, and can further support your skills and value for your targeted industry and job. How else have you demonstrated your skills? Here are some suggestions for additions to your profile. And remember that LinkedIn allows you to add rich media, so if you have a recorded presentation you’ve done related to your field, add that link. If you’ve written an article, add it. Add links to groups you’ve held leadership roles in, and talk about your volunteer experience. Whatever sets you apart and further supports your value is good to add to your LinkedIn profile.
Slide 20: Groups help recruiters see that you’re connected and active in groups that are relevant to your field. This also demonstrates your passion. Join and be an active participant in groups – here are some suggestions; start and contribute to discussions, share articles of interest, and connect with other members of the groups (more about this in our future webinar on using LinkedIn for networking). You also want to find and follow companies in your targeted field, and the key influencers for your field. Again, this demonstrates your passion and interest, and will help bring you to the attention of recruiters.

Slide 21: Once you have your profile completed, be sure to keep it fresh and updated. When you add or update something, you’ll be brought to the front in any SEO searches. Things to consider include updating your group memberships – we’ll talk more about groups later, adding regular status updates to emphasize new activities you’re doing, articles you’ve written or would like to share, etc. Be sure these are relevant updates, and not just empty words that waste people’s time. Add any new skills and experiences, and of course continue to manage your endorsements and secure recommendations that support your skills.

Slide 22: Once you have a solid profile, your goal is to become as influential as you can. You need to know yourself, your niche, and your audience, to you can target all your activity accordingly. Always post your relevant updates, so people in your field will find you. And do look for the influencers in your field and connect with them. You can again use the advanced people search and relevant keywords. If you’re connected with the people who the industry leaders, you’ll benefit from their knowledge, resources and contacts.

Slide 23: Finally, check to see who has viewed your profile, and follow up as appropriate. If a prospective networking contact has checked your profile you can send a connection request – personalized of course. If a recruiter or HR manager has viewed your profile, this means you have come up in one of their keyword searches. You can follow up with your resume, or a note letting them know you’re interested in a further discussion about potential opportunities. This is one more way to actively manage your LinkedIn account.

Slide 24: LinkedIn is the primary professional social media platform, but you can expand your presence across other platforms that will further support and reinforce your brand value. Twitter and Facebook are two of the more common platforms.

Twitter allows you to build credibility. As an extension of your resume, you can build a profile that highlights qualifications and career goals. Here are a few tips for your Twitter profile:

Use your real name as your Twitter username

Upload a professional headshot (same for all networking sites)

Write a professional, targeted bio – only have 160 characters

Use industry keywords – so when recruiters search, they’ll find you

Create a custom background (Twitter tools): promote your other websites, add text/photos to support your skills

This website has good information to help you brand yourself through Twitter

Then use Twitter to gain followers – add value
Tweet helpful links – tip, article, website for field/industry

Link to relevant, interesting info for your industry – become an industry expert

Answer relevant questions – give help to people using your expertise (Twitter search tools)

Engage your community – ask questions, reply, ask for feedback

As with other social networking sites, it’s helpful to develop an organized strategy, focusing on a few key elements, for using Facebook as a job search resource. First, since Facebook is generally known as a social networking site, it’s necessary to make your profile professional, and to monitor your Facebook page regularly, to ensure all information on your page says professional. Make sure you have a professional photo, and keep social pictures off your page. You’ll want to include things that will showcase your expertise, including your resume (Facebook has an application that lets you post your LinkedIn profile or resume on Facebook – just visit the applications section and do a keyword search on “resumes”.) Also post any other things you’ve done on the Internet, like blogs, articles you’ve written, professional associations to which you belong, and anything else that represents your professional brand.

Facebook allows you to organize your connections by category, so you should make lists that are meaningful to you, like family contacts, friends, referrals, professional association contacts, and company or business contacts. This will allow you to easily share relevant information and updates with the appropriate contacts. Again, it will be necessary to check your privacy settings and monitor your page frequently, to make sure other people aren’t posting inappropriate things, including pictures.

In addition to making “friends” with individual contacts, Facebook lets you become a fan of companies through their Facebook pages. Doing this lets you get information and updates on your targeted companies, see job postings, and even community events sponsored by the company that you may be able to attend. This is a good way to stay up to date on companies that interest you.

We’ll elaborate more on using Twitter and Facebook in your job search in week 4 of the Intensive program.

Slide 25: That’s it for this presentation. I’d encourage you to create or polish your LinkedIn profile, and to create profiles on Twitter and Facebook as well. Remember our office is available to review your profiles, and it helps to have someone in your industry review them also, to see if they are a good representation for your industry or field. As always, let me know if you have any questions.