

A man with a beard and short brown hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a light blue and white striped button-down shirt, is sitting outdoors. He is smiling and looking down at a white tablet computer he is holding with both hands. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a building.

Building your professional brand on LinkedIn: A beginner's guide

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What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is the world's largest social network for working professionals – more than 500 million people across some 200 countries and territories use it to connect with colleagues, businesses and current and potential employees. On LinkedIn, you can cultivate a network and build a robust personal brand.

This eBook will provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to build a profile, make connections and share updates, and it's packed with tips and tricks for general use and best practice.



Chapter 1: Completing your LinkedIn profile

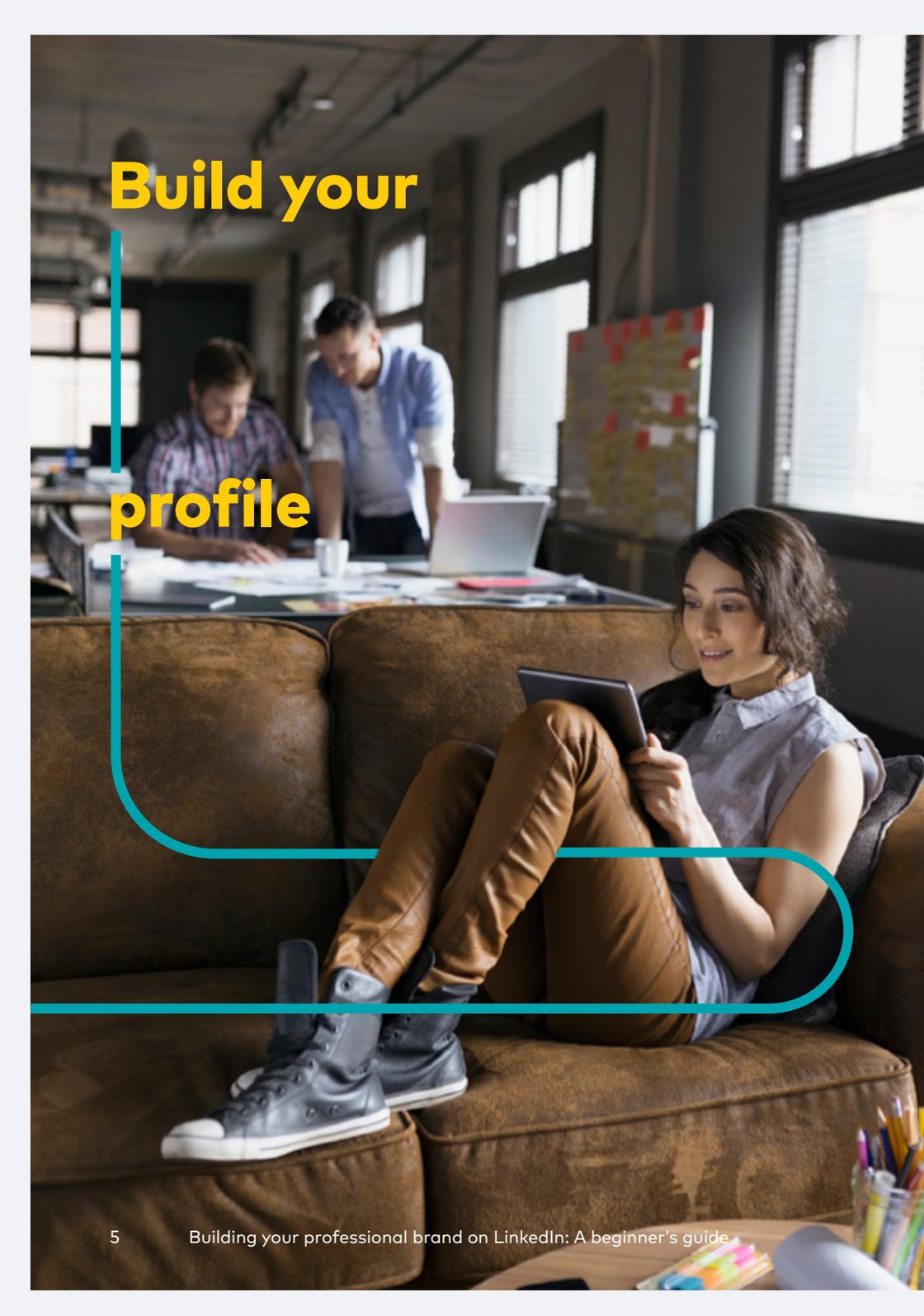
Getting started



LinkedIn is free to join and use. However, it does offer premium plans with extra features depending on whether you want to use the platform to change careers, grow your business, unlock sales opportunities or hire new talent.

To create an account, head to LinkedIn and complete the form on the homepage, using your name and email. Given it's a professional network, use your real name.

After verifying your account, you'll be asked to answer a few questions regarding your location, whether you're a student, and your current job title and employer. That's it – you're on LinkedIn. Now what?



Build your profile

Allocate a few hours to complete your LinkedIn profile. The more detailed and considered it is, the better it will work for you.

Your profile's key sections are:

- Profile photo
- Headline
- Summary
- Experience
- Education
- Volunteer experience
- Skills and endorsements
- Accomplishments
- Interests

Profile photo

While it's not a requirement to add a photo to LinkedIn, profiles with a photo receive 14 times more profile views than those without.

When choosing a photo, make sure it's a professional, high-quality headshot. As a general rule, steer clear of avatars, logos, group shots (yes, even when you've edited the other people out), and photos of anything that isn't you. That means no baby photos or pictures of your cat. If you can't find a suitable photo, ask someone to take one.

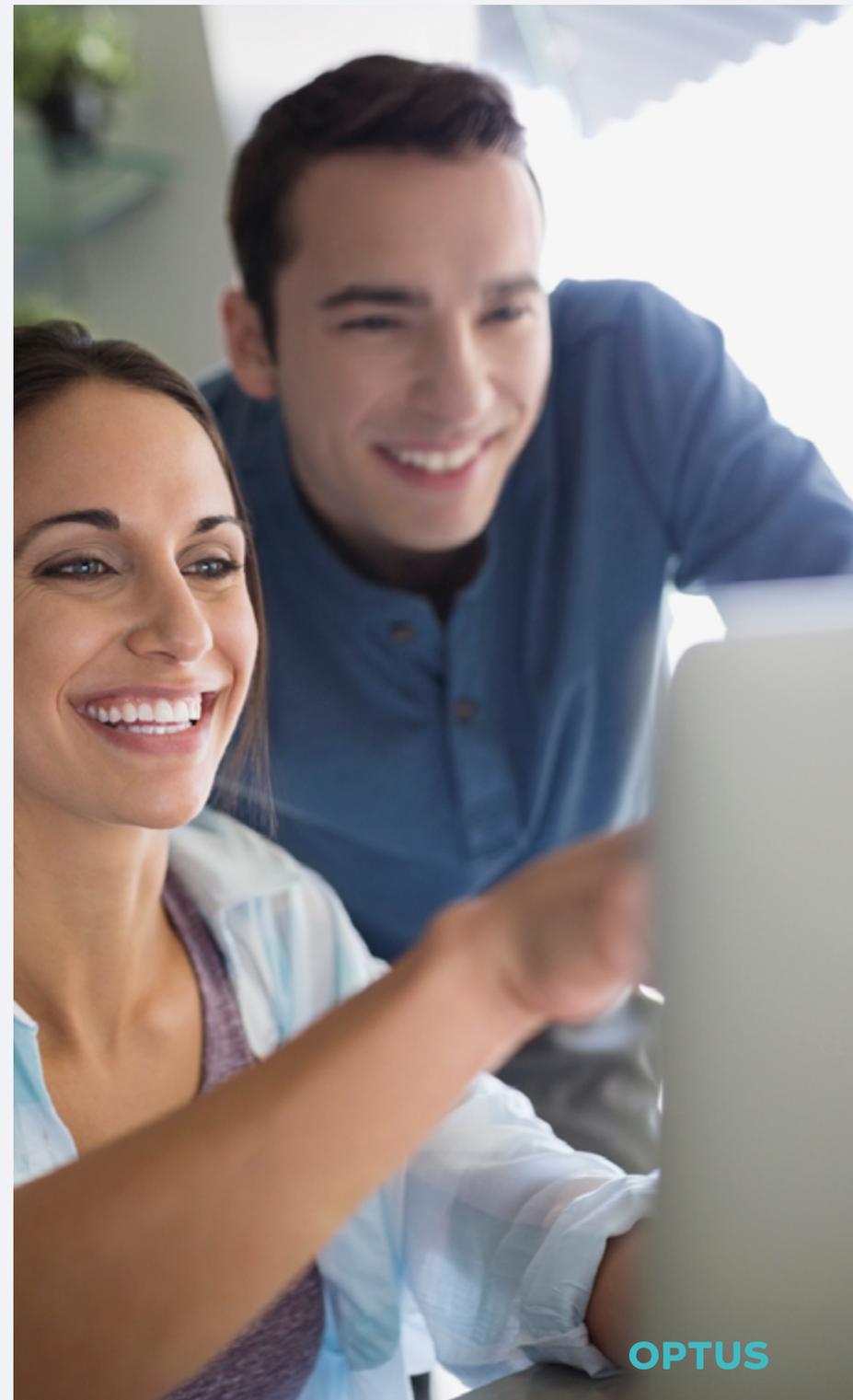


Headline

Your headline sits beneath your profile photo and should clearly explain what you do and who you do it for. Taking into consideration what prospective customers, clients or recruiters might be searching for on LinkedIn is important. For example, if you own a business and use 'business owner' as your headline, don't expect anyone to be able to find your profile organically. If your business is a financial consultancy, however, try using something like 'Expert Financial Advisor & Business Finance Consultant'.

Summary

Your summary is an overview of your career to date. This will touch on things like your work experience, skills, career highlights, education, specialties, goals, motivations and future ambitions. While it can be tempting to include a lot of detail in your summary, keep it concise and no longer than a few paragraphs.



Experience

This section is like the resume of your profile, providing an overview of your work history to date.

For each position you've held, include:

- Your title
- The organisation and its location
- How long you worked there
- A description of the role
- Links to applicable media or examples of projects you were involved in, including videos, articles or websites



Education

This section outlines your professional qualifications, such as diplomas, degrees or industry courses.

For each, you can include:

- The type of qualification
- Your major/field of study
- The institute you received it from
- When you studied
- Grades, awards or relevant activities or societies, such as student groups or international study programs



Volunteer experience

Here you can showcase the causes you care about. If you volunteer (or have in the past) for a community organisation or charity, include when it was, the organisation it was for and what the role involved.

Skills and endorsements

This is a list of your professional skills, both those central to your job and those developed in other pursuits. It doesn't have to be an exhaustive list, but should cover the core skills needed to do your job. As you start making connections, you'll find they might endorse you for the skills listed on your profile.

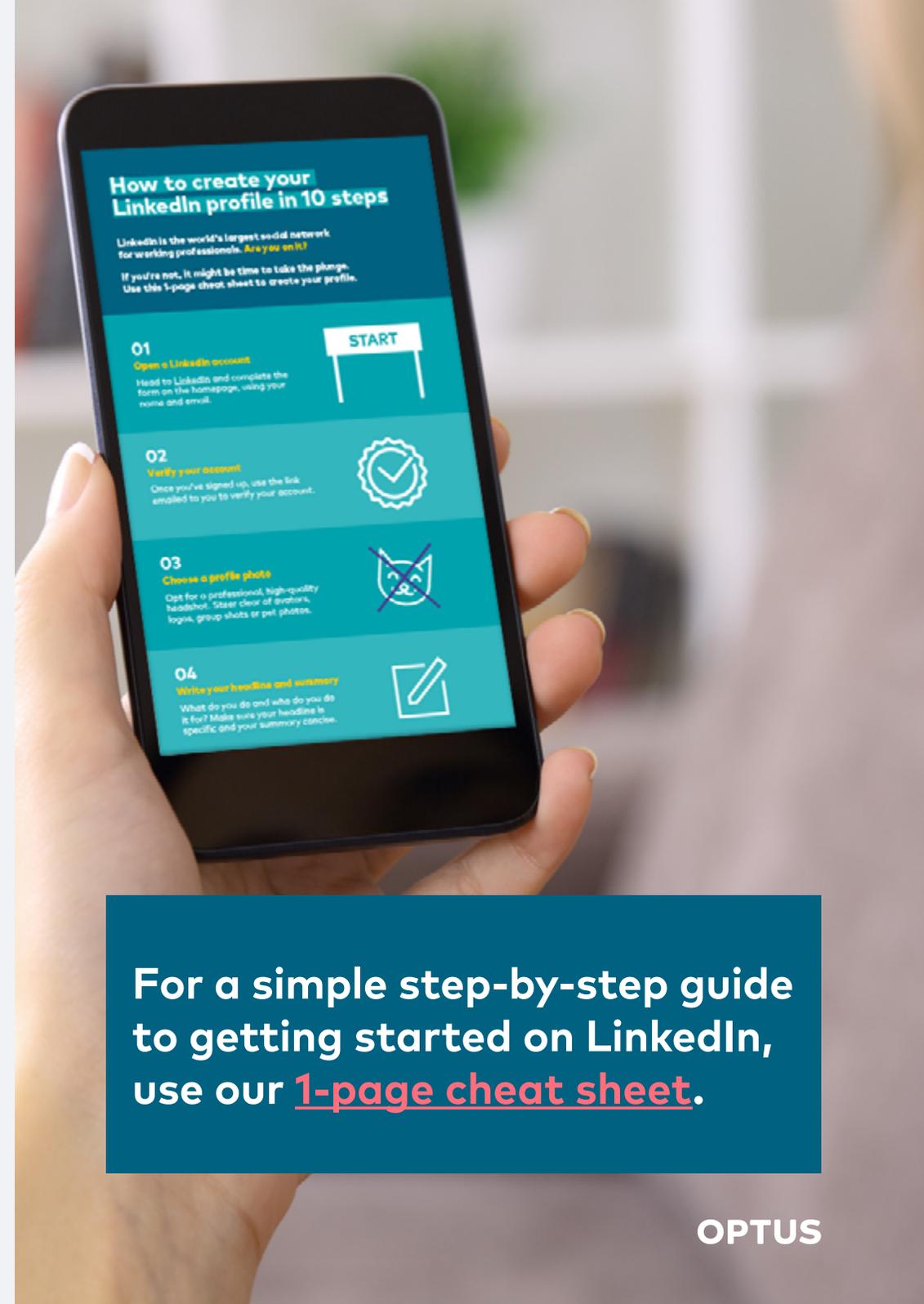


Accomplishments

Under accomplishments, you can file additional skills you have beyond those already outlined, for example, awards, published works, languages spoken or certifications.

Interests

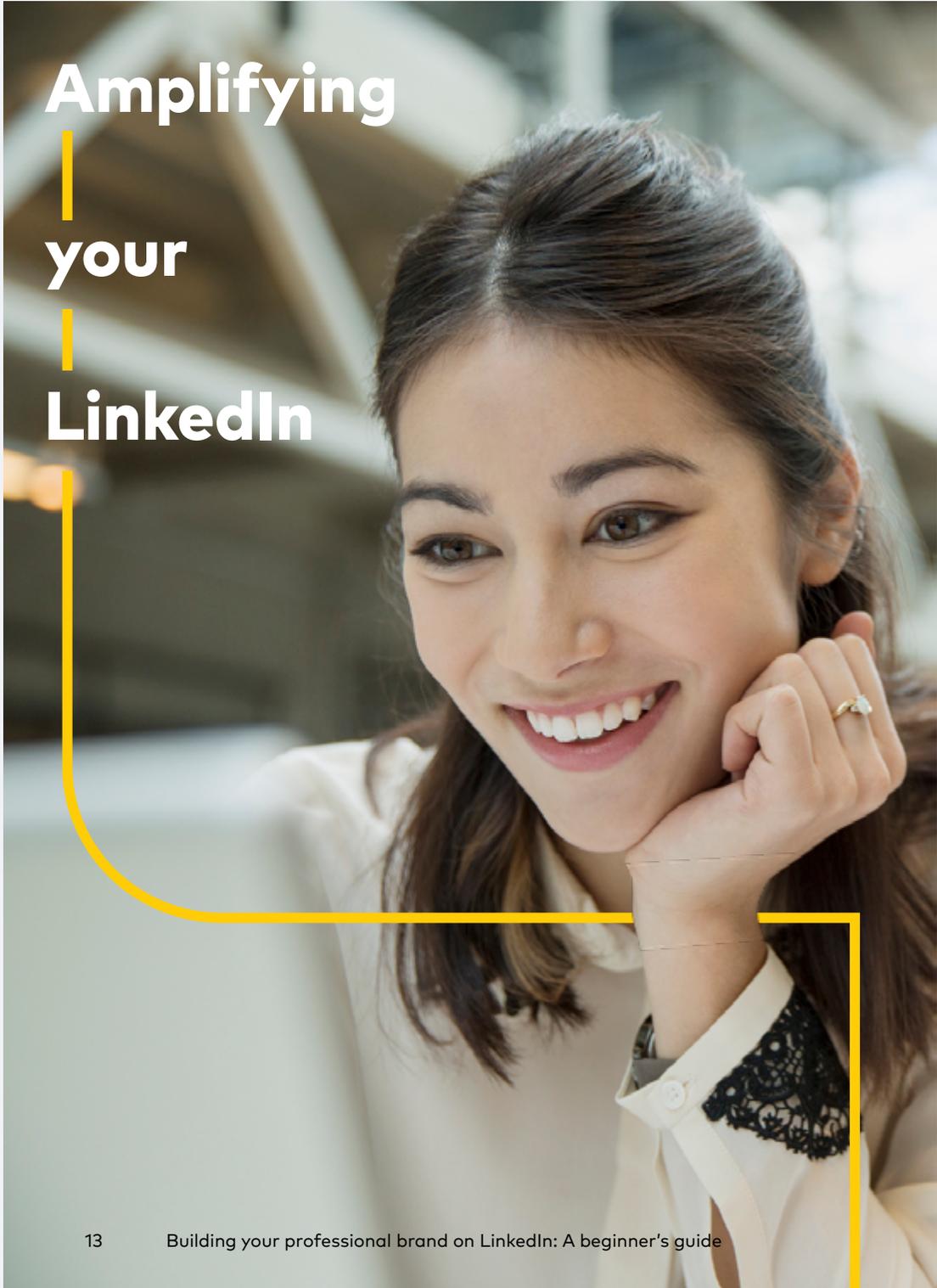
Here, you can follow Influencers (global business and thought leaders chosen by LinkedIn), companies, industry-based groups and schools. For example, if you work in IT and technology, you might want to follow Scott Farquhar, Founder and Owner of collaboration software company Atlassian. Your interests appear on your profile and influence what content appears in your feed.



For a simple step-by-step guide to getting started on LinkedIn, use our [1-page cheat sheet](#).

Chapter 2: Amplifying your LinkedIn

Amplifying your LinkedIn



Optimise your LinkedIn profile to increase your visibility and be easily found online.

Here's how:

Make your profile 'public'

This means it appears in search engines and can be viewed by non-members (people who aren't on LinkedIn). Beyond basic information, including your name, industry, location and your number of connections, you can also turn sections on or off (such as your headline, education or work experience) for greater control of what people can see. You can do this under 'Privacy' in your account settings.

Make your profile photo 'public'

This will help potential connections put a face to your name. To do this, click on your profile photo and choose 'public' under the 'Visibility' tab.

Customise your LinkedIn URL

If your profile is public, create a custom LinkedIn URL. Using your full name is preferred, but if it's not available try adding your middle name.

Add your Twitter to your LinkedIn profile

Doing this means you can display your Twitter handle on your profile and share LinkedIn posts, such as articles or job opportunities, on Twitter. Go to the 'Partners and Services' section of your account settings to add your handle.

Make your profile 'All Star'

LinkedIn has a profile strength meter that classifies profiles on how complete they are. Populate as many sections as possible to achieve LinkedIn's highest 'All Star' status.

Ask for recommendations

Recommendations are personal testimonials from a connection, for example, a manager or client. If you have a strong working relationship with a connection you think would be happy to recommend you, send them a personal message via LinkedIn to ask. While not everyone will, send a note of thanks to those that do.

Chapter 3:

LinkedIn applications

LinkedIn applications

LinkedIn has a range of third-party plug-in applications that you can install to add another dimension to your profile.

It's worth noting that when you add an application, you're allowing the application developer to access profile information about you and your connections to make the experience more personalised and social. Learn more about LinkedIn applications data use [here](#).

You might consider adding:



Dux-Soup:

This clever browser add-on simplifies LinkedIn lead generation and business development activity. It lets you automate profile visits, increasing your chances of being seen, and export lead data direct to your CRM or an Excel file, with details such as name, job title, company name, email, phone number, date of contact, message info and more.



WordPress:

Stream your blog posts direct to your LinkedIn profile with the WordPress app. You can display your avatar on your profile and even filter content if you don't want to share everything you write.

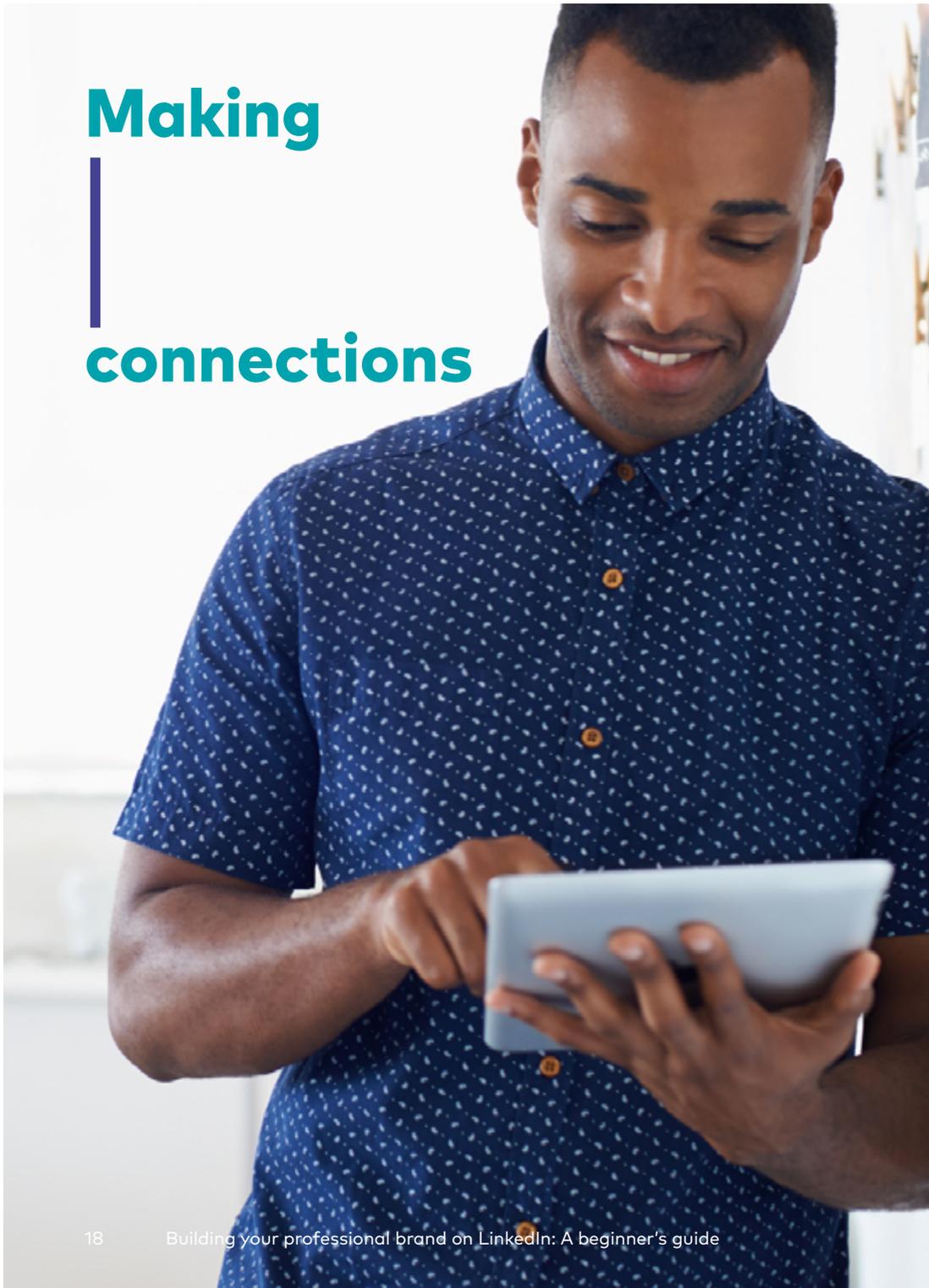


Evernote:

Convert a business card into a new connection simply by taking a photo of the card with Evernote. It will instantly transcribe and store the new contacts information and automatically take you to their LinkedIn profile.

Chapter 4: How to grow your network

Making connections



Now your profile is ready, you need to build out your network. Start with people you know, including current and former colleagues and clients, friends, family, industry peers, fellow students and collaborators.

Building a network isn't a numbers game. It's more important to create a network you know or align with and can share, learn from and engage with.

There are a few different ways to connect. You can:



Use LinkedIn's search function (and filters) to find people. Click on their profile and press 'Connect'.



Import your address book of contacts from your professional email. Double-check they're all people you know and want to connect with.



Use LinkedIn's 'People you may know' tool, located under the 'My network' tab. Some people you find here might have a second-degree connection with you (meaning you have a shared connection).

When you choose to connect with someone, customise the invitation by adding your own personal note. LinkedIn will give you this option when you press the 'Connect' button.

Another way to make connections outside your network is via LinkedIn Groups. Here, you can engage in conversations and connect with like-minded people. Search for groups that relate to your industry or interests.

Chapter 5: How to use LinkedIn



How to

Use

LinkedIn

Now you're set up and you have connections, how do you navigate LinkedIn's key features? Let's break it down:

News feed

Your news feed brings together content from people and companies you follow, posts from connections and conversations happening in Groups. LinkedIn's algorithm works to customise this based on your industry, your job and what you engage with.

You can further tailor your news feed by following or unfollowing people and companies, and sorting content by the most recent or most popular. Go to 'Sort' at the top of your news feed to do this.

You can also turn on email notifications – under 'Communications' in your account settings – for things like new connection invites or messages.

Profile viewing options

When you check out another person's LinkedIn profile, LinkedIn notifies them. You'll also receive a notification when someone visits your profile – even if they ask to connect. You can choose how you appear when searching. This could be just:

- Your name and headline
- Your job title, industry and location
- Anonymous

Sharing content and publishing posts

Looking for work? Read an insightful article you want to share? Share it in a post. Go to the top of your homepage to post, then use the 'Post settings' to choose who can see it. For example, you might only want connections to see it, rather than making it public.

To write an article, use LinkedIn publishing by selecting 'Write an article'. This handy tool lets you create content just for LinkedIn. You can even add an image and headline, and save it as a draft until you're ready to publish.

Endorsements and recommendations

You can endorse other LinkedIn members for skills and personally recommend them. Simply go to their profile and select the skills you'd like to endorse them for.

A recommendation is a higher form of endorsement; it involves writing a personal referral. Go to your connection's profile, click on the three dots on the right-hand side of their profile and choose 'Recommend'.

LinkedIn hacks

Hashtags: You can use hashtags in your profile summary, on your posts, in your articles, on your company page and even when you're commenting on someone else's post. Adding a hashtag helps people find you or your content and highlights where engagement is happening.

URLs in posts: LinkedIn penalises you when you add a URL to your post – for no other reason than they don't want users to leave the platform. How do they penalise you? They will limit circulation of the post by showing it to less people. So if you need to add a link, do it in the first comment beneath the post.

Profile headlines: Get up to 220 characters when you edit your profile headline on your mobile. Do it on desktop and you'll only get 120 characters. That's one way to stand out!

LinkedIn profile badges: Create a clickable LinkedIn profile badge and add it anywhere people can see it. Your email signature, your blog, your website ... everywhere. Get one by heading to 'Edit your public profile', clicking 'Create a public profile badge' at the bottom right and following the directions.

Chapter 6: LinkedIn best practice



What's LinkedIn best practice?
Follow these all-important tips for a better
LinkedIn experience.

Be yourself

Whether you're writing an article or reaching out to a potential connection, be genuine. While it is a professional network, you're still a person and people are more interested in finding out things about you that they can't find out on your website or CV.

Add a note to 'cold' connection requests

If you want to make a connection with someone on LinkedIn you don't personally know, give context to your invitation by adding a personal note. Let them know who you are and why you'd like to connect.

Carefully consider LinkedIn recommendation requests

Before you ask for a recommendation, ask yourself: Have you worked with them? Do they know you well enough to give you a recommendation? How familiar are they with your work? You should make a request if you've answered 'yes' to these questions.

Share the right content

You don't need to share all your content on LinkedIn. Remember, it's a professional network, so keep it classy.

Mind your manners

Take the same approach you would in the real world. Thank anyone who endorses you or compliments your posts. Don't attack those whose opinion or comment you don't agree with. Always be polite, respectful and professional.



Conclusion

LinkedIn is more than just another social media platform. It's a virtual Rolodex that allows you to connect with anyone, uncover new business, find a job, prepare for a meeting and give your personal reputation a major boost.

While building your LinkedIn profile and regularly using the platform can take time and some getting used to, it could change the way you present yourself to colleagues, clients and your industry online, and transform the way you do business.



Yes