UMBREX

LinkedIn Best Practices for Independent Professionals

Profile element	Recommendation	Action items
Subscription type	You probably want to have at a minimum a Premium Business subscription. If you are regularly using LinkedIn to identify potential clients, get Sales Navigator. The search functionality is far more powerful than the basic subscription.	
Photo	Get a professional headshot. The photo creates the first impression and is the single most important element of your bio. You wouldn’t wear cutoff blue jeans to a job interview, so don’t use some low-res, out of focus selfie or a wedding photo for your profile pic.	
Background photo	If you’ve got one, a photo of you speaking up on stage to a crowd or on TV is great for the background photo. Or a photo that represents something about you or your practice. Or an image that crisply communicates what your firm does. Or a photo of copies of your book.	

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Name	Proper capitalization. No degrees or certifications other than M.D. or PhD If applicable, consider including maiden name in parentheses. If you go by a nickname, include that so that people can find you, e.g., William (Bill) Clinton will turn up if you search on William Clinton or Bill Clinton If you always go by a nickname, then just use the name you go by, e.g., Will Bachman	
Headline	Not recommended: “Independent consultant” Or “President, J. Smith Consulting” Headline can be a ‘fishing line’ that captures the attention of a potential client. E.g., Belinda Li: "Helping mission-driven organizations fuel financially sustainable growth for greater social impact." Odin Mühlenbein: "I help leaders in the social sector develop strategies for social system change"	
Location	Do include current main home base. (E.g., not Other or United States.) Use the nearest metro area if you live in a suburb that is less likely to be recognized. So “Greater New York City” is better than “Astoria, NY”	

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Contact info	Update the email so that it is one you check regularly. Add the website of your consulting practice. Add up two two other URLs pointing to thought leadership or other info about you Add your phone number Add your other social media links (e.g., Twitter)	
Connections	If you haven't already, connect to everyone you know so that your connections are 500+. Someone with, e.g., 127 connections has less credibility	
Summary	The first three lines are the most critical - those are the only ones that people will read without clicking "See more." Use the summary to explain what type of clients you work with and what type of problems you work on. Consider including a **call to action**, e.g., to schedule a lean operational diagnostic of your factory, email me at name@company.com	
Summary attachments	If you have any PDF or other documents that adds more details - add as attachments. E.g., if you have an overview document of your consulting practice.	
Articles	If you have published thought leadership elsewhere, consider reposting it as an article on LinkedIn. Articles tend to get low engagement, less than posts, so they are not likely to bring people to your profile. But if someone checks your profile, articles on your area of expertise can demonstrate credibility.	

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Posts	Consider posting regularly, 3-5 times per week, to maintain visibility with your network. This will help you stay top of mind. The goal is not to sell with the post, but to ENGAGE people in a conversation. 5 types of posts that tend to generate better engagement are: 1. Observational and debateable 2. Tips and tricks 3. Just very helpful 4. A personal story 5. Something cool Source: https://linkedinformed.com/episode242/	
Other activity (likes)	Nothing wrong with 'Liking" someone else's post, but if you can think of a way to engage in a conversation, a "Comment" is better. Try asking a question of the author.	
Experience	DO NOT just state your job responsibilities. Explain Situation you faced, What you did, Impact of your actions. Use any keywords that clients or staffing firms might be looking for. DO add an experience section for your current consulting practice. If you haven't given your practice a name, you can say company = Independent consultant. But better if you give your practice a name. DO put an end date on your last job. If you still show up as VP at IBM, you may miss out on independent consulting opportunities as it is not clear that you are available for projects	

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Company page	DO create a company page for your consulting practice. Otherwise, when people click on your company, they just get a LinkedIn search that shows lots of other people working at companies with similar names	
Experience attachments	Add any collateral, or references, or sample work product, or white papers.	
Education	Provide some details in the description section for each educational experience. If you got a Masters or Doctorate - provide details on your areas of research and any publications. List any (respectable) activities you participated in and any leadership roles	
Skills	LinkedIn will suggest a bunch. DO add to your profile any specific, rare skills you have that clients might search for. LinkedIn Sales Navigator or Recruiter subscribers can search for skills	
Recommendations received	If you develop a good relationship with a client, and they ask if there is anything they can do - ask for a recommendation on LinkedIn. It is a public, visible reference.	
Recommendations given	Don’t go crazy and write 100 recommendations, but writing one or two dozen recommendations with specific comments shows you are a generous person	
Interests	This is actually the groups that you belong to.	

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Privacy settings	If you have a professional photo, make it visible to Public. When someone outside your network searches and finds you, you want them to be able to see your picture. Gives you credibility. Consider adjusting your settings to allow anyone (not just first degree connections) to send you a message without them needing to use an InMail credit. You'll get some unwanted messages, but you may also get a message from a potential client Allow people to see that you have checked their profile. That allows the other person to get curious and check your profile in turn.	