

LEVERAGING LINKEDIN

STEP 2 - THE JOB SEEKER

Leveraging LinkedIn (Step 2 - the job seeker)

PURPOSE

This guide was created to help you best utilize and re-gear your LinkedIn profile for use as a job seeker. There are several hints and tips I'll be sharing to help you be more visible to hiring managers, human resource employees, and recruiting professionals on the LinkedIn platform. You will need to have a profile created before using this guide to elevate your LinkedIn presence. You can review the first in our series, Leveraging LinkedIn (Step 1 – the basics) to if you need to start from the beginning.

KEYWORDS & SEARCHABILITY

Think of LinkedIn like you would a search engine. Each area of your profile will help your profile be ranked higher when being searched in LinkedIn. For example, keywords that sit in your about/summary section will help people find you when they are searching for your specific skills, abilities, and experience.

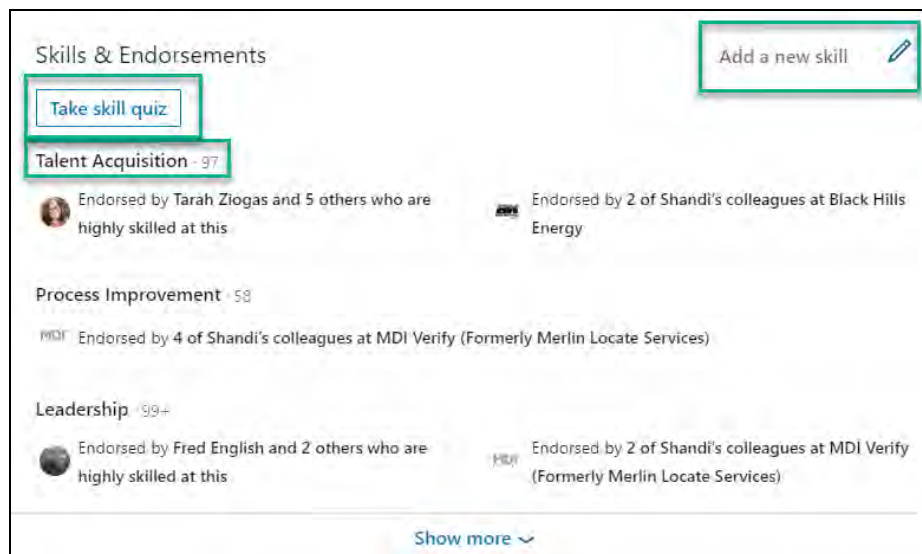
1. Use target job descriptions to your advantage

Review some job descriptions of the positions you are interested in to focus on the keywords you see that define you and your skills. Make sure those words and phrases are sprinkled throughout your summary and experience.

2. Add skills and endorsements

Recruiters can use these data points to help narrow in on the perfect candidate for their position. This is especially helpful if you have a special computer or software skill, expertise, or industry or compliance knowledge. This is a great place for the acronyms that only you and your industry will know. You can now also take a skill quiz to earn a badge backing up your knowledge of said skill.

❗ Recruiter Tip: People can endorse you at any time. You should monitor and edit the skills that are not applicable to you and your personal brand and add in the ones that matter most.

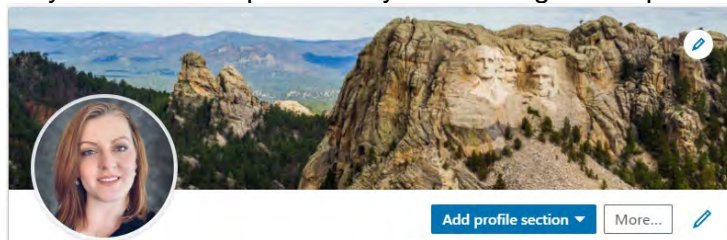


PROFILE SECTIONS

1. Photos

This is your first chance to make an impression. Your cover image also should help support your personal brand, so anything related to your field of expertise or just a great landscape image will work



great. You should also select a clear headshot for your profile photo, and it's recommended you think about how you want to look in an interview. Profiles with profile photos are 21% more likely to be viewed and 36% more likely to receive responses to your messages and posts.



2. Name and Headline

Next, enter your name and feel free to add certifications to the end of your last name if preferred since LinkedIn does not have a special field to capture these.

Your headline is very important when you are searching for a position. You should tell us what your expertise or functional specialty is – what type of job you are looking for. As an example, you can see my normal headline below. If I was a job seeker, I might use something like: **Recruiting, Human Resources, and Operations Leader seeking new opportunity. Branding and diversity expert.**

Shandi (Boydston) Carton, SPHR, AIRS-CDR 
** Connecting Talent with Black Hills Energy  People
Helper  Brand Ambassador  LinkedIn Advocate
Rapid City, South Dakota · 500+ connections · [Contact info](#)

You have 120 characters so make it click-worthy and convey the most important benefits you can offer connections or clients or the most important aspects of you and your skills.

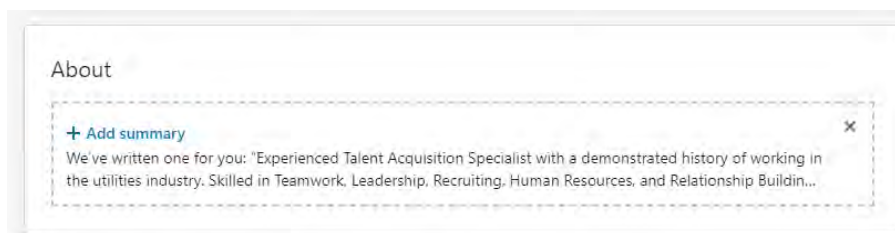
① Recruiter Tip: Add in wording like “seeking new opportunity, job seeker, or something else to help with visibility for potential employers. Also, if you want access to a list of Unicode icons like you see in my headline above, check out my profile and look under my volunteer experience section.

3. Summary

The summary is a great section to show off your experiences, skills and achievements. You can talk about relevant, industry-specific work experiences you have, especially those that relate to the job you are looking for.

This is also a great section for you to add some personality. Remember, you are more than the functional job you can do, and your soft skills also define the type of employee or team member you will be. Don't be afraid to speak in the first person and speak directly to the hiring manager/recruiter reading your summary.

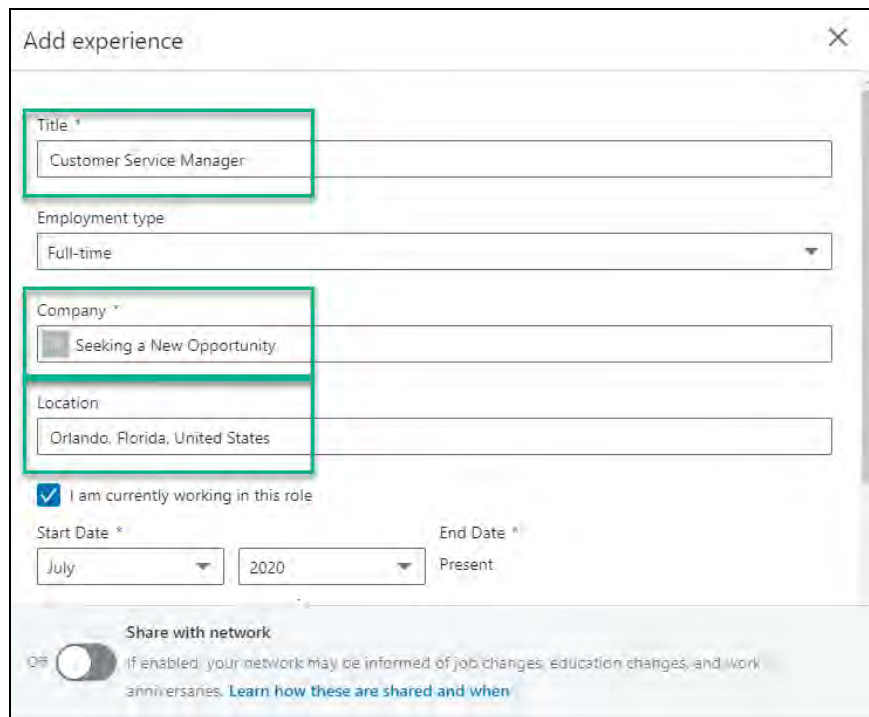
① Recruiter Tip: LinkedIn will even help you get started with a recommendation.



4. Current position

If you have a current job, you should enter that information. If you are an unemployed job seeker, add a fake job to help hiring managers and recruiters find you. I've seen this done many ways, but my top recommendation is to list your current company as **Seeking a New Opportunity** and put the **job title** you are seeking in the Title field. If you are an employed job seeker, this is a highly visible option and not recommended unless your company knows you are actively searching.

① *Recruiter Tip: Many recruiting professionals exclusively use the “current title” search field to search for candidates, so make it easy to find you!*

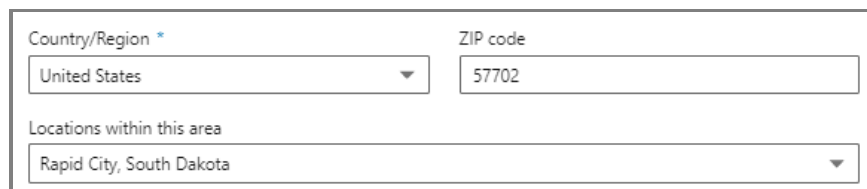


The screenshot shows a form titled "Add experience" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The form contains the following fields and options:

- Title ***: A text input field containing "Customer Service Manager".
- Employment type**: A dropdown menu with "Full-time" selected.
- Company ***: A text input field containing "Seeking a New Opportunity".
- Location**: A text input field containing "Orlando, Florida, United States".
- I am currently working in this role**: A checked checkbox.
- Start Date ***: A date selector showing "July" and "2020".
- End Date ***: A date selector showing "Present".
- Share with network**: A toggle switch that is currently turned off.
- (If enabled, your network may be informed of job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries. [Learn how these are shared and when](#))

5. Location

Some users pick their hometown for the region or you can pick the place you want to relocate to. Do you live in a smaller town next to a large city that you are willing to work in? If so, make sure that you put the closest large city in your location.



The screenshot shows a form for location selection with the following fields:

- Country/Region ***: A dropdown menu with "United States" selected.
- ZIP code**: A text input field containing "57702".
- Locations within this area**: A dropdown menu with "Rapid City, South Dakota" selected.

6. Contact information

This area is very flexible, meaning you can add information to represent your company, or your personal interests, or both! You can create custom titles for your links, making it easy for your contacts to know what you are sharing. Share as much or as little as you need for your personal reasons.

① *Recruiter Tip: Remember to always be cautious online, so don't share anything that can be used against you by hackers or other malicious people.*

The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Add website' form. It includes a 'Profile URL' field with the text 'linkedin.com/in/shandib' and a small icon. Below it is a 'Website URL' section with a text input field containing 'https://careers.blackhillsenergy.com/' and a dropdown menu currently set to 'Other'. Underneath is a 'Type (Other)' text input field containing 'Careers Website'. A 'Remove website' link is located at the bottom right of the form.

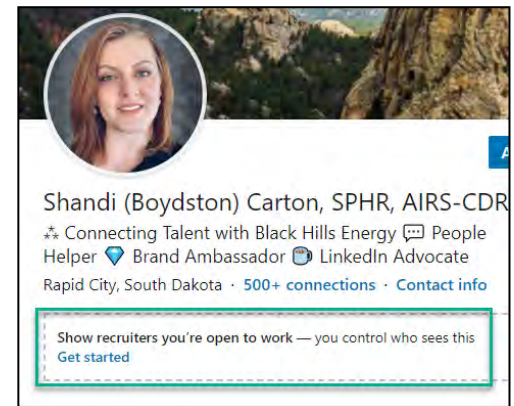
7. Professional Recommendations

LinkedIn recommendations are public testimonials meant to validate your ability, character and work history. Be strategic with who you ask and make sure they can speak to the specific value you offer.

JOB SEEKING TOOLS

#OpentoWork Feature

When you are ready to search for a new job, there is a special feature you can activate inside LinkedIn, from the “view my profile” page. You can set the options below that will show recruiters or hiring managers what you are seeking in a new role. Remember that these are recommendations or guidelines, so you may still get messages for roles that don't fit what you define below. That's a good problem to have right?



1. Job titles

You can select up to five job titles of positions you are seeking.

① *Recruiter Tip: Make sure to use the most known job titles, not the special version you had at a prior company. “Number Ninja” sounds cool, but it will not be what we use to find you.*

2. Job locations

You can select up to five locations where you are willing to work or relocate to. You can also leave these blank or just pick the United States if you are open to hearing about options from any location.

3. Job types

You can also define the best type of job for you. Note you can now select remote as an option as well.

4. Choose who sees when you are open

You will want to be careful with this setting as it may be sensitive if you are currently working. You can activate the new #OpentoWork photo frame to highlight your job seeking to all LinkedIn users, or you can have a more limited recruiter only mode that will help keep your job seeking activities private.

Using Boolean modifiers when searching for jobs

This is not some made up word! Boolean is a long-used tool for recruiters to help us search for information and often people using search engines.

From the jobs tab in LinkedIn, try building a search for yourself using a Boolean search string. See the below items for guidance and examples [directly from LinkedIn](#).

1. NOT searches: Type the word NOT (capital letters) immediately before a search term to exclude it from your search results. For example, "programmer NOT manager."
2. OR searches: Type the word OR (capital letters) to see results that include one or more items in a list. This typically broadens your search results. For example, "sales OR marketing OR advertising."
3. AND searches: Type the word AND (capital letters) to see results that include all items in a list. This typically limits your search results. For example, "accountant AND finance AND CPA."
4. Parenthetical searches: You can use parentheses to refine your search with multiple terms. For example, "account AND finance NOT (manager OR executive)."
5. Quoted searches: Keep in mind that you can also use quotation marks to search for an exact phrase such as "product manager" or "cross-functional collaboration."

Searching for jobs

From the jobs tab, you can search, save, and apply for jobs. You can also set up as many job alerts as you want. You can even turn on the job recommendations option to have an email delivered to you with recommendations. LinkedIn even looks at your profile and makes recommendations for you based on your qualifications. Of course, this works better if you have a completed profile.

Receiving and responding to messages

If and when you receive a message about a job recommendation, it's a good idea to answer yes or no. Anytime you can provide feedback that will help you in the long run. Recruiters don't know you're your current salary, or generally how the job levels in your current or past company compare to the new company. Try not to get offended if you receive a message that is not a great option for you. If the pay, location, job fit is not a match, you can share that detail and not hurt anyone's feelings. Transparency is critical so recruiters can make better recommendations and more effectively help you in the future.

① *Recruiter Tip: We are generally working hard to help you and our company at the same time. We can add notes or tag your profile to be able to better match you in the future, even if it's months or years from now.*

BUILDING AND LEVERAGING YOUR NETWORK

The next thing to think about is how you can leverage your network to help recommend you, build legitimacy with recommendations, and help share and interact with your posts and articles to help you gain visibility.

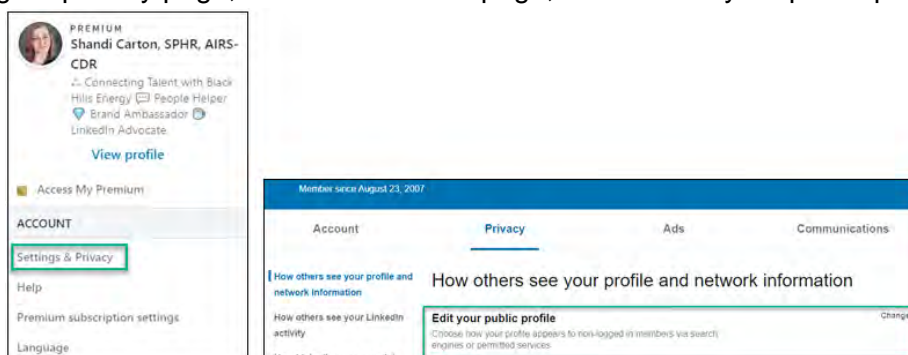
1. **Research the companies you're interested in and follow them.** Make a list of the companies you'd like to work for and follow them on LinkedIn. This will help you stay in the know about company news, learn about their culture and what it's like to work there, and find new positions as they become available.
 - **Use the Advanced Search.** You can find out who of your connections (or their connections) are associated with a company. If they work there, you may be able to ask questions about the company culture. If they are a client or service provider, you can ask what it's like to do business with them.
 - **Ask for an introduction.** You can ask any 1st degree connection to make an introduction to someone they're connected to within the organization.
2. **Look for college or university alumni.** You can follow your alumni college and then from the school's page, you can use the alumni search tab to filter by attendance years, locations, companies, and even how you are connected.

STANDARD SETTINGS AND PRIVACY SETTINGS

Let's show you this section right up front, so you know what you can lock down and secure. I find it useful to add my content first and then revisit this page so you can see a live example of your profile changing. You are in control of who you connect with, and you can also lock down almost everything on your profile from non-connections. Take time to review the settings available for you in this area.

1. Editing your public profile settings

To get to this page, click the little circle picture icon in your top menu bar, and in the drop-down menu, click the settings & privacy page, and from the next page, click on edit your public profile.



Then, on the right side of your screen you can set visibility on any section you want.

First, be sure to set your profile photo settings. I set mine to public so everyone can see me. Just remember if you use any of the other selections it will impact how often you are viewed and contacted. Best guess as to why this happens? People connect with real people and you become a name in a long list without a face to bring life to your profile.

Next, you'll want to set the options for what you want publicly visible. As a job seeker, you should show items relevant to your job search. I recommend setting everything to visible except your courses, organizations, and groups – so the eye is drawn to the functional content in your profile. Of course, you can choose to show everything and that's fine too!

The screenshot shows the 'Your profile's public visibility' settings. At the top, a toggle switch is turned 'On'. Below this, the 'Basic (required)' section is expanded, showing 'Name, number of connections, and region' as the selected option. Under 'Profile Photo', the 'Public' option is selected. To the right, a list of profile sections is shown with 'Show' or 'Hide' toggle switches. The 'Show' options are: Background Photo, Headline, Websites, Summary, Articles & Activity, Current Experience, Past Experience, Education, Volunteer Experiences, Certifications, Honors and Awards, Organizations, Groups, and Recommendations. The 'Hide' options are: Details (under Education), Courses, and Details (under Groups).

2. Claiming your custom URL

You can claim a shorter URL for your profile, which makes it easy for you to add to your resume, business card, email signature or any other website you have a presence on.

This area is found in the edit public profile section, right at the top right-hand side of your screen.

The screenshot shows the 'Edit your custom URL' section. It includes a link icon and the text 'Edit your custom URL'. Below this, it says 'Personalize the URL for your profile.' and displays the current URL 'www.linkedin.com/in/shandihhr' with an edit icon to its right.

3. Protecting yourself online

I would be remiss if I didn't call out one more important setting you should check out. You can control who can follow you, and you can also block anyone who is bothering or harassing you. LinkedIn is a professional social media site, and they really care about protecting you and providing a great experience for their users. You can report posts and/or profiles you find offensive and they are great at investigating it promptly.

The screenshot shows the 'Blocking and hiding' settings. It has three sections: 'Followers' with a 'Change' link and the text 'Choose who can follow you and see your public updates'; 'Blocking' with a 'Change' link and the text 'See your list, and make changes if you'd like'; and 'Unfollowed' with a 'Change' link and the text 'See who you have unfollowed, and resume following if you'd like'.

4. Microsoft Word

There is a great **NEW** setting in Microsoft Word and LinkedIn that allows them to connect when you are writing a resume, with their new Resume Assistant. The bad news, you must be using the newest version of Office 365 to get this feature. You can learn more about this feature from [Microsoft directly](#).

5. Profile viewing options

This setting controls if people can see you when you visit their profile. Now there is a difference in how this tool works depending on if you have a free or paid/premium account. If you have a free account, you can only see who is viewing you, if you let others see you. Turn your visibility off, and you can no longer see how is searching and viewing you (which can be helpful when job searching). If you have a premium account, you can activate your private (or as I call it - spy mode) and you will still be able to see people viewing you.

Why does this matter? Well think of it like a soft knock on someone's door. It's a gentle way to let an employer or hiring manger know you were doing some research on their job without blasting out email messages (*that honestly most managers and HR can't keep up with on top of the regular hiring process*).

6. Share job changes, education changes and work anniversaries from profile

I recommend turning this setting on. That way when you get your new job and update your LinkedIn profile, your network can celebrate with you!

