

LinkedIn vs. Resumes

What's the difference? Why do you need both?

LinkedIn

A good LinkedIn profile is a **dynamic** entity that's **all about you**. It's **social**, it's **interactive**, and it **grows** (somewhat) organically with your career. LinkedIn represents the **big picture** of you. Here, you can show your professional goals as well as your background. **LinkedIn is as much about your present and future as it is about your past.**

Profiles can—and should—be **multidimensional**. Pictures, posts, links to portfolios and personal websites all help round out your profile and add to your legitimacy. Here **space is nearly limitless** and the most successful profiles take advantage of each of the sections LinkedIn offers.

LinkedIn profiles are **part of your whole career**, not just your job search. You might be contacted about opportunities without specifically looking for them, but having an updated profile isn't an indication that you're job searching.

With LinkedIn, you have the opportunity to put yourself in front of your audience as often as you want—through posts, updates, and even from the simple network-strengthening exercises of giving endorsements to your contacts.

Resumes

A good resume is a **static document** about you, specific to a single position. Resumes are **targeted**. They're **short** and **structured**: you have a single page, maybe two, to tell your story and prove yourself. Space is limited so everything is relevant and to the point. As a result, resumes are **formal** in design and wording.

Resumes allow you to **put your best self forward—for that position**. Since resumes are traditionally re-worked for each job, you can **tailor** your experience to appeal directly to that company. But a resume is just a document. It may contain links to websites, profiles, or more information, but ultimately, it has to serve its function as a **standalone** document.

Resumes are only really used when searching for a job. They're an **active part of the job search process**: you create your resume, you send it out. You initiate the contact. But, once you've submitted your resume, it's out of your hands and any further contact is up to the company.

How do you create a strong LinkedIn profile? Not by copying your resume, that's for sure.

Use your real name. It may go against social media custom or concerns about privacy, but if employers can't find you, your profile is worthless.

Upload a picture. Use a well-lit, clear picture where you look confident. No friends, just you. Ideally use a headshot where you're dressed professionally.

Write yourself a headline. Use keywords that encapsulate your current position as well as your career trajectory. Your headline should be searchable, so use keywords and avoid unusual phrasing here.

Write a summery. Tell your story. Talk about your goals and background, but show the human side of you. Add links to websites or portfolios. Show your personality—this can be informal so be funny if you want, but keep everything appropriate and positive.

LinkedIn allows for 2000 words here, but be kind to your readers and keep it short—max out your summery at around 300 words.

Join groups—and participate. Look for alumnae groups and niche sections of your industry that you're involved in. Stick to groups you're interested in so you keep on top of them and actively contribute.

Find contacts. LinkedIn works on the idea that most people get jobs not from their closest friends, but from their wider circles of connections—don't be shy about reaching out to industry professionals, COM alums, and acquaintances. Always include a personal message in the contact invitation.

Add your work history. There's no space limit, so you can include every one of your past positions if you choose. You only have one profile though, for the world and all of its various companies to see—keep things positive and use keywords. Be strategic with phrasing though—excessive terminology may be off-putting to some recruiters.

Like with resumes, prove your experience with specific examples and keep it short—web readers much prefer shorter bursts of text. However, LinkedIn is social and more informal than resumes: the resume-specific third person speech without pronouns can be off-putting. Use of more colloquial (though still professional) speech and first and second person (I, me, you, we) is appropriate.

Engage, interact. LinkedIn is designed to be social, so make it so. Write recommendations, endorse contacts, post articles, comment in groups. Ask for recommendations—especially from former supervisors. As with a traditional recommendation, feel free to specify certain skills or traits you want them to highlight. The more you engage, the more your name comes up essentially marketing your name.