

**When LinkedIn tells you that your profile is 100% complete, don't believe them.**

**Here are the top 10 things to avoid to get your LinkedIn profile optimized and ready to go:**

### **1. Don't put anything in the name field other than your name**

Thinking they will stand out from the crowd, some people add email addresses, phone numbers and group affiliations into the name field (when editing Basic Information on LinkedIn). They think that: John A. Smith (Johnasmith@gmail.com) LION will get them more hits than a simple: John Smith.

The problem is that LinkedIn will categorize you incorrectly, which means you'll be harder to find when someone types your name in. It also means you will be harder to find in the contacts list, especially if you have 500+ contacts. Harder to find means less business.

Keep your name clean: John Smith. You'll have plenty of other opportunities to put your contact information in your profile (headline, summary, or contact me sections to name a few). And in those other sections you can always use CAPITALIZATION and special characters to make YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION jump out at the reader.

Ladies- LinkedIn finally has a field for your maiden name. They took far too long to resolve this issue, but now both your old colleagues and your new friends can find you!

### **2. Don't create your LinkedIn profile in LinkedIn**

Create your LinkedIn profile in a Word file, then cut and paste it into LinkedIn. This will help prevent spelling and grammatical errors, make it easier to get word counts, and later you can be easily copy it into other social media platforms to keep your branding consistent. It will also save you a boatload of time.

And if for some reason LinkedIn ever suspends or shuts down your profile, or you simply want to try out another legal networking site, having a fully formed profile already in a Word document is a huge time saver.

### **3. Don't use boudoir shots or your business logo for your LinkedIn photo**

This is a BUSINESS NETWORKING site. Keep your photo professional. Head shot only, so they can see your trustworthy eyes and kind smile. And for those of you with new babies, yes your kids are adorable, but you can show them off on Facebook.

### **4. Don't Ignore the Update function**

Similar to Twitter and Facebook, the LinkedIn update can be a powerful tool to keep you top of mind. You will show up on your connection's homepage and even their email,

especially if your connections don't know they can turn this off. And a few a week is just fine. I recommend people Tweet hourly, update Facebook daily, and update LinkedIn one or two times a week.

Like the other updates, you can post links to interesting articles, let people know about upcoming legal events or promote speaking engagements.

### **5. Don't leave your public profile unedited**

How useful or memorable is this public profile URL: [Linkedin.com/in/23h9il/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/23h9il/)? How about this one? <http://www.linkedin.com/in/legalmarketingexpert>

Your public profile can be a powerful way to optimize your brand, raise your Google rankings, increase connections and position yourself as an expert. Many people simply miss the fact that you can customize your public profile URL. You can use your name, your company name or your personal brand. Just remember it has to be all lowercase, one word and no special characters.

### **6. Don't ignore your website link and make sure to customize it**

First of all, if you have a website, blog site, or even another social media address, make sure you have it in your LinkedIn profile. You can include THREE sites, so use them all! Every time someone jumps from a mega site to your website, your Google rating climbs just a bit higher.

Higher rating = more hits = more clients! And really, isn't that the reason we are on LinkedIn in the first place?

### **7. Don't populate the Experience section with a simple copy of your resume**

Hey, you can now use box.net to upload your resume into LinkedIn. So while you certainly want to use Experience to list your current and previous jobs, really take advantage of this section by filling it with all that stuff you wish you had room for in your resume. Did you work for/with any Fortune 500 companies? Did your legal advice save the day?

You can always use this space to showcase wins, different companies you have helped, seminars or workshops you have presented or a mini-shot of your personal website. And fill it with keywords to increase your chances of showing up in searches too!

### **8. Don't limit the Education section to just your traditional education**

Certainly you are going to want to list all the degrees you have managed to accumulate. If you have a PhD from Harvard, by all means, let us know. But you can also use this section (once again, using that magic tool called other ) to list certifications, licenses and

other nifty specialties that make you stand out in a crowd. Once again, use your keywords!

### **9. Don't ignore the Summary section**

The Summary section is probably one of the most useful and overlooked tools on LinkedIn. You have 2000 characters – that's 2/3 of a page – to tell people who you are, how to contact you and why they should hire your firm. This is also an EXCELLENT place to capitalize those things to which you want to you want to DRAW attention.

And for the search engine spiders, use your keywords. The more you say something about yourself, the more true it is on LinkedIn.

Remember to use white space (it only takes a character to break that clump into nice readable paragraphs,) CAPITALIZATION, special characters and key words. And as mentioned before – CREATE YOUR SUMMARY IN A WORD DOCUMENT FIRST.

### **10. Don't forget to use the applications**

LinkedIn finally has some pretty nifty internal and open source applications to make your LinkedIn profile even more effective. Some of my favorites are:

- \* Events
- \* WordPress
- \* Slideshare.com
- \* Box.net
- \* TripIt.

*Check them out and utilize them!*