LinkedIn is the place to not only find others but also to be found as a job seeker. And that is why you need a LinkedIn Profile that not only helps you get found but also will entice people to contact you once they view your profile. I see many people making fundamental mistakes as job seekers that actually work against them in this aspect. If you’re going to spend time putting together a LinkedIn profile, I assume you want to maximize your chances of being contacted by the right people, right?

With that in mind, I have created an easy-to-understand list of a few things to check for with my reasoning. Just like any website owner, you want your LinkedIn profile to stick out and be found! As a job applicant, you want the same thing, so read on.

Enjoy my LinkedIn Profile Tips!

1. Not Displaying Your Personal Photo

It all really comes down to having social media credibility or not. There are too many fake profiles on LinkedIn, so you want to show that you are real. If you have taken the time to complete your LinkedIn profile, why wouldn’t you display your photo? It just raises too many potential questions. And company logos or photos of pets obviously have no value here.

2. LinkedIn Profile Headline is Not Branded Enough

See that space underneath your name? That is your “Professional” or Profile Headline. It will appear in search results next to your name, as well as next to any questions you ask or answer. It is, in essence, your elevator speech in a few words. Are you just putting your title and company name here? Don’t! This is the place where you need to appeal to anyone who finds you in a search result to reach out and look at your profile. Your Profile Headline is the single most important piece of real estate on your LinkedIn Profile, and you need to brand it as such. This really ties into personal branding as a job applicant.

3. LinkedIn Status Update is Not Appealing

This is that “What are you working on?” box that I refer to as a “Status Update.” Assuming someone finds you and looks at your profile, chances are they are going to be looking at what you write here simply because that it appears just underneath your Headline Profile. What do you write here? Many people in transition note that they are looking for a job here. What do you use your LinkedIn Status
Update for? It is part of your branding exercise, and it should be something appealing that will both inform the reader of your latest activities as well as hopefully add to, not subtract from, your LinkedIn Brand.

4. Don't List Enough Companies You Worked At Or Schools Attended

One of the ways you are found on LinkedIn is through searches on company names or schools. If you are only listing your current company and/or not even displaying your college, you are missing out on potentially being found. Check this out: I did my Junior year of college abroad in Beijing nearly 20 years ago. I had been out of touch with all of the 15 or so Americans that were there that year. Two of those 15 have found me on LinkedIn! And another high school friend who I lost touch with found me this week on LinkedIn. They would not have found me had I not listed my Junior year abroad school and high school name on my profile. Companies are even more important in that there are potentially more colleagues that may be trying to find you or recruiters trying to network with you! You may be missing out!

5. Not Having Three LinkedIn Recommendations

This is the same as not having your personal photo on your LinkedIn profile. Why? When you sign up for LinkedIn and first fill out your profile, LinkedIn recommends that you write three LinkedIn Recommendations. You need to do this in order to get your LinkedIn Profile to 100% Completion. Job postings on LinkedIn similarly require three LinkedIn Recommendations. These recommendations can only work in your favor, so why don’t you have at least three of them?

6. Too Few Connections

This is a topic for debate, but too many people have too few connections on their LinkedIn Profile, and thus are not getting found. The idea is simple: when you do a search you will see results from your network. And vice-versa. So the more connections you have the more search results you will appear in pure and simple. Combining this is the fact that Windmill Networking is about finding value in online networking with people that you don’t know. So what are you waiting for?

7. Not Listing Three Websites

LinkedIn gives you the ability to list three websites on your profile. Are you taking advantage of it? Do you have a Twitter profile or other social networking profile that you want to advertise? Company website? A blog that you enjoy reading? Anything that you would want associated with yourself should be listed here. You will be adding to the search engine optimization of your own websites just by the fact that you list them here!

8. Not Claiming Your Personal URL

When you sign up to LinkedIn you are provided a public URL which you can then include on your email signature or wherever else you want to lead people to your LinkedIn Profile from. You can customize
this when you edit your profile. Claiming your name here is one of the first things you should have done on LinkedIn. For instance, I can memorize my LinkedIn Profile URL, which is www.linkedin.com/in/nealschaffer, because I customized the last text to “nealschaffer.” If you have a common name, make sure you claim your LinkedIn URL before others do! As a job applicant you can definitely stand out with this little tool.

9. No Branded Summary Rich with Keywords

Assuming that someone finds you in a search result, likes your Profile Headline, and isn’t scared away by your Status Update, the next most important part of your profile will be your Summary. This is the chance to fully brand yourself as a job seeker and ensure that any keywords that you want associated with yourself are found here. You also want to write something compelling, just as you would in the Executive Summary of your resume. This is your stage to tell the world who you are and what you can do! Utilize it to your fullest advantage!

10. No Job Descriptions

Even if you’ve listed positions at companies that you previously held, it means nothing if you don’t have any job descriptions. Job descriptions provide you the perfect opportunity to pepper your profile with keywords that will help you get found. Why aren’t you taking advantage of this?

Did I miss any that you’d like to share? Let me know! And if you didn’t make any of the above mistakes, congratulations! Your LinkedIn Profile is in good shape

What can you do for us that no one else can - Tough Interview Questions
10 Things Employers & Recruiters Want From Job Seekers

Get a job with these 10 qualities

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Every job hunter has the same question: What do employers look for, and how can I best show I’ve got “it?”

A few days ago, I attended a panel discussion for career coaches led by three of the leading recruiters in Greater Boston. Each recruiter had the assignment of explaining their view of today’s hiring environment, what employers are looking for, and then to give a few tips for candidates. The recruiters deal with different specialties, including: Human Resources, Medical Devices, Information Technologies (IT), and Marketing. Nonetheless they agreed on one thing: Five years ago, if an employer listed a job with 8-10 bullet points of “requirements,” a candidate might have been hired if he/she only had 3-4 of them. But today, virtually every client of theirs wants “12 out of 10 requirements to be evidenced – just to get the initial phone interview.”

It comes as no surprise they all report both recruiters and companies are being inundated by resumes, as more people are chasing fewer and fewer jobs. In this environment, they report employers have come to view job boards like Monster as counter-effective. When they advertise a position, they get SO MANY responses it becomes an overwhelming task just to sort through all the extraneous resumes to find the quality people who would be of interest. Result? They are utilizing alternative methods of identifying and recruiting top talent. It is more time efficient and effective for both corporate (in-house) and contingency (third party) recruiters to scour LinkedIn and other social media sites to find candidates worth pursuing. More and more, self-submitted resumes are not responded to because they aren’t even read!

Employers are looking for the following:

1. Candidates are expected to clearly articulate their accomplishments as part of their personal brand. LinkedIn profiles must highlight an individual successes and results! Skills are important – but only insofar as candidates use them to attain results. Never lead with: “XX years of experience doing...” Each resume bullet point should tell a story: “Accomplished X by doing Y, resulting in Z.”

2. Clear branding. Know who you are, what you offer, and what you are after. Be comfortable with your own story, and have that story down pat. Convey it consistently in your resume, LinkedIn profile, on
Facebook, and increasingly on Twitter. Tip: get all those references to partying, and anything that wouldn’t well represent an employer’s brand off your own Facebook page – NOW! LinkedIn is seen as a way screen people in, and Facebook is viewed as a means to screen people out – even before an individual knows he or she might be considered.

3. Fit, fit, and fit! It’s the buzzword of the decade, but it means different things to different companies. Fit goes beyond the job requirements and speaks to an individual’s experience working in a similar type organization in size, product/service, marketplace or geography. Questions of “fit” go to the concerns. Would a given candidate be happy working as part of this company/team...and would the people here be happy to work side by side with this individual? If hired, would the person last? Commonly, employers are utilizing behavioral interviewing to determine if a candidate is a “fit.”

4. One recruiter put it this way, “The length of time [companies are taking] to fill openings is increasing. Companies are increasingly picky about who they hire. But they are hiring people who have ‘bull’s eye’ skill sets, have industry experience, and are a fit for their particular corporate culture.” More and more, you have to have all three to be hired, and candidates should adjust their job search accordingly. Recruiters are looking for the following:

1. People who can show they volunteer to do more than is required of them in the workplace

2. People who “know what they don’t know,” make no bones about it, and constantly strive to learn to fill in the gaps of their knowledge and experience.

3. People who can explain what they did in a past job that makes them valuable to a future employer.

4. People who can understand recruiters are professional service providers who deserve respect. (If you are dealing with a recruiter who doesn’t deserve your respect, move on to another one!) Understand recruiters work with candidates, but ultimately for companies.

5. People who make an effort to establish a mutually beneficial relationship, by addressing them personally, offering to help find other candidates for positions if they aren’t the right fit themselves.

5. People who recognize it is counterproductive for both themselves and the recruiter to do the “end run” around the recruiter and deal directly with the company they represent.

All of this goes to show the importance of seeing the search for a new position as a “hunt” which requires a coherent strategy and a consistent message. Getting a job is a job! For more information about what recruiters are advising job hunters, don’t hesitate to be in touch with me directly. I offer an initial free consultation to any job hunter. Happy hunting!
How College Grads Can Thrive in Phone Interviews

How job seekers can overcome phone interviews easily

Phone interviews are becoming a common way for employers to screen potential employees during the hiring process. Unlike traditional, in-person job interviews, phone interviews are usually fairly short, require less preparation, and can even be outsourced by the employer if necessary. These features make phone interviewing an effective way to narrow down the list of candidates before scheduling in-person interviews. Unfortunately, many people are not comfortable conducting a conversation of that importance over the phone. If the prospect of a phone interview makes you nervous, these tips can help turn an awkward interview into a confidence-inspiring success.

Preparation is the Name of the Game

When preparing for a phone interview, don’t forget that not all recruiters and employers schedule them ahead of time. At any moment, a recruiter could stumble across your resume or an employer could decide to call you in regards to a recent application. Your chances for success in your job search will be greatly improved if you try to always expect the unexpected (especially during a job interview).

Keep Your Resume Near the Phone

Knowing that you could get a call from a recruiter or an employer at any moment, you should always keep a recent copy of your resume near the phone. That way, whether or not your phone interview is anticipated, you will have all the information you need right at your fingertips. Of
course for a job interview, your resume is not the only resource you should keep handy.

Create a log for keeping track of the resumes you send out, recording each company, position title, contact name, date the position was applied for, and qualifications for the job. If you have a chance to research the company, make a file with that information, and keep it near the phone as well. Finally, you should always have access to a notepad and pen during a phone interview, so that you can write down the interviewer’s name, key questions he or she asked, and your responses.

Practice (and a Cheat Sheet) Makes Perfect

Just like with a traditional job interview, you should try to anticipate questions the interviewer might ask. If you have come up with examples and practiced your answers ahead of time, you will sound much more intelligent and confident in the interview. Moreover, since the interviewer cannot see you, there is nothing to stop you from referring to a “cheat sheet” – notes to help you remember your practiced answers, so that you never sound like you have been taken off guard.

When you practice your answers and put together your cheat sheet, you should think about job interview questions that are traditionally asked, such as:

• Tell me about yourself.
• What are your strengths and weaknesses?
• Where do you see yourself in 1/5/10 years?
• What is your leadership style? Please give an example of a real situation. Describe a situation where you had to work with others to solve a problem.
• Give me an example of a stressful situation you have encountered on the job. How did you handle it?
• Tell me about your three greatest accomplishments in your career.
• Do you have any questions?

Many of these questions are difficult to answer on the spot. By preparing your answers ahead of time, you give yourself the opportunity to think through your answers carefully. Your notes will refresh your memory if you draw a blank, and help prevent you from freezing up during the interview.

Giving a Fabulous Phone Interview

If you’ve done your homework, the phone interview itself should be a breeze. The important thing at this point is to remember to make sure the interviewer can hear and understand you – and vice versa – as well as possible. During the phone interview, you should:

• Find a quiet place. Children, pets, televisions, and radios are all noisy distractions that should be avoided. If the phone interview is scheduled in advance, you can arrange to have a quiet room all to yourself. If you receive the phone call unexpectedly, retreat into a quiet room or suggest another time for the interview.
• **Sip water periodically.** Nervousness often causes your mouth to dry out, which can in turn change the way your voice and pronunciation sounds to the interviewer. If you know about the phone interview ahead of time, you can have a glass of water on hand, along with the other materials you have prepared.

• **Avoid eating, smoking, or chewing gum.** Excess movement of your mouth and throat will make you harder to understand, and possibly distract or even irritate the interviewer.

• **Give short answers.** Many people talk too much when they are nervous. This is especially easy to do in a **phone interview**, because you don’t have the other person’s visual cues to indicate when it’s their turn to talk. To make sure you don’t make this mistake, only talk long enough to answer the question. A moment of silence, while it might seem awkward to you, lets the interviewer know that you are done.

**Speak slowly and clearly.** Speaking too fast, whether out of nervousness or habit, will hurt your chances by making you harder to understand. Instead, make a conscious effort to slow down and enunciate clearly.

• **Stand, stretch, or pace occasionally.** Standing improves the quality of your voice by increasing airflow to your lungs. Additionally, many people find it easier to adopt a salesperson-like attitude when they are standing or moving around. As a result, changing your posture occasionally can make you sound more confident to the interviewer.

• **Smile.** Believe it or not, a smile changes the quality of your voice. If you are smiling, the interviewer will hear it in your tone!

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**Finishing Your Phone Interview on the Right Foot**

The phone interview is drawing to a close; what do you do now? These final moments are just as important as the preparation and the **interview** itself, as they can determine what comes next.

• **Thank the interviewer.** Verbally thank the interviewer for taking the time to speak with you. If you don’t remember his or her name, ask for it again and write it down, so that you can send a thank-you note as well.

**Suggest an in-person interview.** The whole point of the phone interview was to score a traditional **job interview**, so if the interviewer doesn’t mention what will happen next, you should bring it up. For example, you can say, “Thank you very much for taking the time to call me. I’d like to have the opportunity to meet in person. When will you be scheduling the next round of interviews?”

• **Reiterate your interest in the position.** You want to leave the interviewer with the impression that you are enthusiastic about the job. Let him or her know how excited you are about the prospect of
working with the company.

• **Send a thank-you note.** Just as with a traditional *job interview*, you should follow up with a polite thank-you note. You can also use the thank-you note to reiterate your interest in scheduling an in-person interview. Just be sure to send the thank-you note out promptly, as the interviewer may soon be making final decisions about who to call back!

Many people find a phone interview more nerve-wracking than a traditional *job interview*. This doesn’t have to be the case, however. While some phone interviews happen with little or no warning, in most cases you have just as much time to prepare as you would ordinarily, with the added benefit of being able to use your notes during the interview.