



## Does your LinkedIn profile need work?

Some thoughts from Carilyn Oxley

As a seasoned headhunter with 20 years in this business under my belt, I have seen many full placement lifecycles. I placed good talent into entry level roles in my early days and watching that talent rise through the ranks has been satisfying as you can imagine. Today, some of my best clients are those long gone rookies who head up organisations.

A lot has changed in the market and a lot has changed in the search industry over this time, but there are some things that haven't changed at all and one of them is the challenges that face an executive looking to make a career move. Where do they go? Who do they approach for confidential assistance? Some practical advice on going down the **LinkedIn** avenue ...

**LinkedIn** is a fabulous tool for professionals looking to move. It is a way to display passive visibility to a global marketplace. We know that organisations are increasingly using **LinkedIn** as a primary tool to test the market for talent before they contact their headhunter. We know of instances where the CEO does preliminary **LinkedIn** searches himself! Knowing this, it is very important that your **LinkedIn** profile does you justice.

Because **LinkedIn** is just a search engine at the end of the day, the hits you get and approaches you get as a consequence of the hits depend on the content of your profile.

All too often our **LinkedIn** profiles are hastily put together, a précis of our CV (also hastily put together for some of us) and provide factual information about our past experience and qualifications. I imagine you are all nodding and wondering what is wrong with that. Well, it is important to have this information on your profile, but it is not going to progress your chances of being shortlisted for that plum job that you seek.

Try this ... for a minute, believe you are the CEO / chairman of the organisation that you wish to work for next. Run a search on **LinkedIn** for the role that you are looking to secure. Does your profile come up on the first page? If not, we have lots of work to do.

Firstly, analyse who did come up on the first page of the search. What do they have in their profiles that you don't? Remembering that this is just a sophisticated search engine, the words that these professional have used are the words that you need to build into your profile. Without misstating your experience of course.

Very often, our CV's are filled with the jargon of our industry and more often of our company. It doesn't always mean much to outsiders. This includes titles, products, divisions or business segments and services. It is therefore important to critically look at what you have written and ask yourself if someone outside of your company and maybe outside of your industry (if you are trying to make a move away from a particular industry) will have a good understanding of what your magic is.

Now my next point is a bit more difficult to explain so bear with me. Have you highlighted the skill or expertise that is scarce in the market? Have you differentiated yourself from those that you are competing with for this ideal role? All too often we take our job specification, KPI's or other documents issued to us by our employer and include most of this detail in our CV and this then finds its way onto our **LinkedIn** profile. Take a step back from this and critically ask yourself the following:

- What makes me good at my role?
- Why have I succeeded where others haven't?
- What contribution do I make that would be missed when I leave?
- What do I know that my competitors don't know?
- What new markets, new services, new products, or new innovations have I designed, driven or led?

Keep going, there are many more questions like this. The answers to these questions should be central to your **LinkedIn** profile.

I hope this has assisted you, please share this link with friends and colleagues whom you believe will benefit from the information.

**Carilyn Oxley**  
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