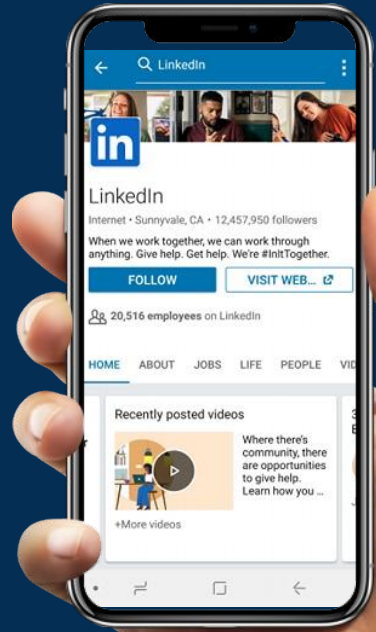


# Your Guide to LinkedIn(ing)

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Hi, I'm Shoaib (he/him).

After spending twelve months working in a media agency specialising in undergraduate recruitment, I've picked up some top insights.

And one of those is the value of using LinkedIn effectively. So, I've created this FREE Guide to LinkedIn(ing) to help share all that goodness.

Get reading, to get ahead!

*Shoaib Ahmed*  
(Marketer & Content Creator)

Connect with  
me **here**.



# How to use this guide

This guide is packed with information.

Some of it you might find really useful (and even recommend to a friend). Other pages you might breeze past and think ‘duh, that’s obvious.’

That’s why there’s a contents page.

With easy click navigation, you can pick and choose the content that is relevant to your LinkedIn goals.

Nice and simple, right?



# Contents

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# **#1 Building your profile**

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# 1

# Profile photos

Your profile photo is the first thing a potential employer or connection will notice.

**So make the first impression count.**

- ✓ Select a high-resolution image (roughly 400 by 400 pixels is an ideal benchmark).
- ✓ Aim for your headshot to make up 60% of your profile space - crop at the top of the shoulder for a good fit.
- ✓ Use an up-to date photograph that reflects how you currently look and from which you'd be easy to recognise.
- ✓ Wear suitable attire. Something neat, presentable and tidy does the trick.
- ✗ Don't use a group photo. And avoid selfies too. This isn't Instagram.
- ✗ Steer clear from filters that drastically transform the image. Natural, soft-lighting is enough for your face to stand out clearly.
- ✗ Don't have a distracting background. A plain background that doesn't clash with your attire is ideal.
- ✗ Avoid 'posing' for the camera as you would on other social sites. A nice smile will suffice.



**Profiles with a profile  
photo receive 14x more  
visits and are**

**36x**

**more likely to receive  
a direct message**

# 2

## Banner photos

Banner photos are often mistaken as ‘non-essential’ parts of your profile. But that’s just silly. Having a banner photo is actually one of the best ways to make your profile stand out.

### Things to include in your cover photo

- Your name in a **bold**, **large** and *unique* font.
- An indication of your profession, industry or sector of interest.
- A photo of you in a professional setting. If you don’t have one, use graphics or icons that symbolise your professional interests to showcase who you are.

### Boring (but useful) technical bits

LinkedIn recommends cover photos be 1536 by 768 pixels.

You can use Google Slides and Adobe Photoshop to design your own cover photo. Or use [these templates](#).

Don’t forget to leave space for the overlap of your profile photo and cover photo (example on next page).



# E An example

Speaker.  
Engineer.  
Introvert.

**DEVYN ZILLMER**  
Speaker. Engineer. Introvert.

**#MoreThan**

 devynzillmer  
 zillmerdevyn  
 Devyn Zillmer



Message

More...

“

Your LinkedIn banner is the most custom piece of real estate on your profile.

Here is where you can add color and set your profile apart from others so that when your audience arrives, they get that "wow" factor.

Be bold folks. Differentiate yourself from the norm.

*Devyn Zillmer,*  
(Engineer by Day,  
Speaker by Night)

**Follow Devyn.**  
**Click [here](#).**



# 3

## Headlines

Headlines are the 1 - 3 lines on your profile that sit underneath your name (with a 120 character limit).

It's also the line of text that appears in news feeds, alongside your name when you post or comment.

### Top tips for writing headlines

- Make it personal and unique to you! Writing 'student at x university' is boring and doesn't do anything to distinguish you from others.
- In a short but snappy way, describe your role (or the one you'd like to pursue) so similar individuals can connect with you easily.
- Include line breaks ( | ) to split up different descriptors and add emojis for personality.

### Some examples

Example one (describe your role... rather than just saying it)  
**I help struggling businesses recruit the top talent they need to get back on track**

Example two (personal and packed with detail)  
**Proud Owner of Sustevo, the UK's #1 Sustainable Fashion Brand | Designer | Brand Curator | Female Entrepreneur**

Example three (tell your story in a few words)  
**I transformed my love for baking into a multi-million £££ business**

Example four (share your interests and your future goals)  
**Aspiring Changemaker | Passionate about Diversity & Inclusion | Sociology Student**

# 4

# Summary / about

The summary or about section is an open-ended space (2,000 characters) dedicated for you to give a written overview of your professional journey.

But don't write an essay. Nobody comes to LinkedIn for that. Instead, get creative.

## Things to include

- An interesting hook (make the first sentence original and avoid clichés).
- A story of your professional journey. What interests you about your industry? What are your biggest achievements? What drives you? What are your career goals?
- An actionable next step for your reader e.g. 'Let's connect and learn from each other.'
- Bullet points (or suitable emojis) to organise short lists.
- White space (avoid clunky chunks of text). Stick to 2-3 lines max per paragraph to create an easy-to-follow summary that will look like less of a chore for your reader.
- Statistics that show off your achievements are a good shout. Like a REALLY good shout.



A keyword search is the most common way for a recruiter to find candidates for relevant roles.

So, *pump up the keywords.*

Having relevant keywords in your summary increases your visibility.

*Not sure what keywords to add?*

View job descriptions for roles of interest and pick out key skills and competencies from them that you can evidence.

**TOP**  
**TIP!**

# 5

# Featured content

This tool allows you to 'feature' some key pieces of content that you're most proud of. Use this tool to stick content to your profile for high visibility.

## Types of content that you can feature



**Media (photos,  
PDFs, docs)**



**External  
links**



**LinkedIn  
articles**



**LinkedIn Posts**

# 6

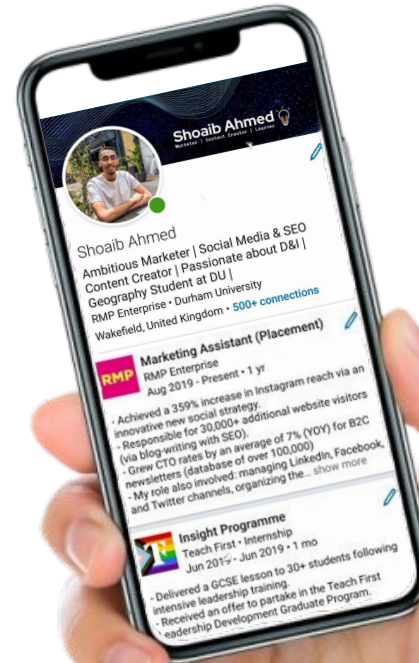
# Main body

## #1 Experience

Use this space to add work experience (including title of your role, company and start & end dates).

## Don't forget to

- Add 3-5 bullet points highlighting your key achievements and responsibilities.
- Front load achievements (with action words)  
Instead of ... 'In my first 6 months, I increased sale conversions by 14% (£8,500 additional revenue)  
Try ... 'Achieved a 14% increase in sale conversions (£8,500 additional revenue), within my first 6 months
- Upload supporting documents to evidence your successes (e.g. PDFs, articles).



# 6

## Main body

### #2 Education

Add your education history. Make sure to include accurate dates and names (you don't need to go any earlier than secondary school).

List your grades and academic certifications with a summary of subject grades beneath each school.

You do not need to list all the modules for each subject **unless** the industry you want to pursue requires specific technical competencies that you have demonstrated in your modules.

### #3 Volunteer experience

Just like the #1 experience section. Have a re-read.

### #4 Licenses/ certifications

Certifications demonstrate a competency that might not be directly related to your education and work history.

Here you can add certificates (with expiration dates and full titles) that an employer might be interested in.

### #5 Accomplishments

Just like on a CV, you can add lots of optional additional information to your LinkedIn profile including: *publications, patents, courses, projects, honors & awards, test scores, languages and organisations.*





Looking for something to spruce up your LinkedIn profile?

*How about a certificate?*

Look at these websites that offer FREE, virtual (and certified) courses across many subject areas

- [Coursera](#)
- [Google Digital Garage](#)
- [Hubspot Academy](#)
- [Inside Sherpa](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Udemy](#)

**TOP**  
**TIP!**

# Work Ready Virtual Experience

Developing soft skills virtually

CLICK  
to find  
out  
more



★ RATEMY**PLACEMENT**



# 7

# Skills

LinkedIn lets you add a whopping 50 skills onto your profile. Your connections can then endorse your skills - a great way to show recruiters that you're a good match for their roles.

**Discover some top industry skills below**

<b>Accounting</b>	Budgeting, communication, data analysis, financial reporting, Microsoft Excel, pivot tables, statistics, time management	<b>Consulting</b>	Active listening, commercial awareness, customer oriented, emotional intelligence, fast learner, integrity, problem solver
<b>Business</b>	Analytical thinker, budgeting, collaboration, leadership, Microsoft (Powerpoint, Word, Excel), networking, organisation	<b>Creative &amp; Design</b>	Advertising, Adobe (Lightbox, Indesign, Illustrator, Photoshop), branding, ideation, logo design, photography, typography, UX

# 7

# Skills

<b>IT &amp; Software Engineer</b>	AI, cloud computing, data mining, encryption, javascript, programming, python, problem solving, SQL, tech support, UI/UX, troubleshooting	<b>Property &amp; Real Estate</b>	Budgeting, civil engineering, communication, customer service, interpersonal skills, land law, problem-solver, project management, real estate
<b>Legal &amp; Law</b>	Corporate law, legal writing, litigation, logical reasoning, management, contract negotiation, oral communication	<b>Science &amp; Research</b>	Biotechnology, cell biology, data (analysis/ collection), laboratory skills, research, scientific writing, statistical analysis
<b>Marketing</b>	Branding, copywriting, customer service, email marketing, Google Ads, PPC, public relations, SEO, social media, video editing	<b>Teaching &amp; Education</b>	Active listening, communication, conflict resolution, creativity, empathy, emotional intelligence, enthusiasm, organisation



**Listing 5+ skills in your profile will get you up to**

**17x**

**more profile views**

# 8

# Recommendations

A recommendation is a written statement (a bit like a reference) that you can write for others.

*And yes, you've guessed it.*

You can also receive recommendations from others (and then stamp them on your profile).

Recommendations are designed to support your character and skills, so that recruiters can see what those in your network have to say about you.

How to get recommendations?

Ask. That's really it.  
Colleagues, peers, managers... whoever you think has a strong grasp of your skills and ability is a great candidate to write you a recommendation.

## Finding this guide useful?

Don't be boring.  
Recommend it to  
a friend.



“

As a former graduate recruiter, seeing the kind words written by employers and colleagues helped me understand an individual's skill set and work ethic.

Depending on the recommendation, I was also more excited to telephone interview certain candidates and felt I'd been given a good first impression.

*Giorgia McDonald,*  
Career Coach

**Follow Giorgia.**  
**Click [here](#).**



# **#2 Growing your network**

---



# 1

# Getting started

Networking isn't just about attending corporate dinners or grabbing a coffee with a colleague.

In fact, the opportunity to network exists in every single human interaction that you have.

## The basics to know about networking

- First impressions count. And, 55% of first impressions are *visual*. Remember what I said about a quality profile/banner photo?
- The secret to sourcing and maintaining connections lies in the valuing of the person and *not* their position.
- When networking stay true to yourself. Authenticity is what people really value.
- A solid network is built on mutualism, so you should always emphasise what you can offer in return for someone's expertise.
- Networking should begin before direct one-to-one contact with someone (i.e. in engagement with their content/ posts).
- Don't just contact a connection when you need something. Nobody likes a leech.



**85%**

**of jobs are filled  
through networking**

## 2

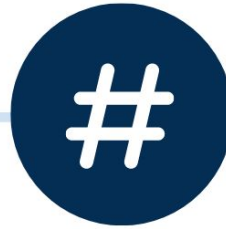
# Sourcing contacts



**Connect with your friends and family.** They may not work in your industry, but by engaging with your content they can help improve your visibility.



**Connect with colleagues.** They'll have experience on LinkedIn and insights into online communities in your sector! You'll share similar professional interests, so consider the types of content and the people they engage with.



**Find thought leaders in your field.** Do this by searching for hashtags relevant to your field, engaging with content and then connecting with their authors. Hashtag searches are a great way to find content creators.

## 2

# Sourcing contacts



**Like and comment on posts** in your newsfeed or under hashtags. You can also engage with comments left by others on posts to expand your network.



**Conduct a google search on company websites** to source connections relevant to your goals e.g. connecting with a HR specialist at a firm, before applying for a job, shows them that you're a serious candidate.



**Add your LinkedIn details in your email signature** to make it easier for your existing networks outside of LinkedIn to connect with you. If you don't promote yourself, then you can't expect others to.



Commenting on content is one of the most effective ways to increase grow your network.

But, don't just add 'great message' to a post and think that's enough.

Leave a *meaningful* comment that shows your thoughts and opinions on the topic at hand and contributes to the conversation.

It's a great way to build rapport with the author, who you can then connect with.

**TOP**  
**TIP!**

# 3

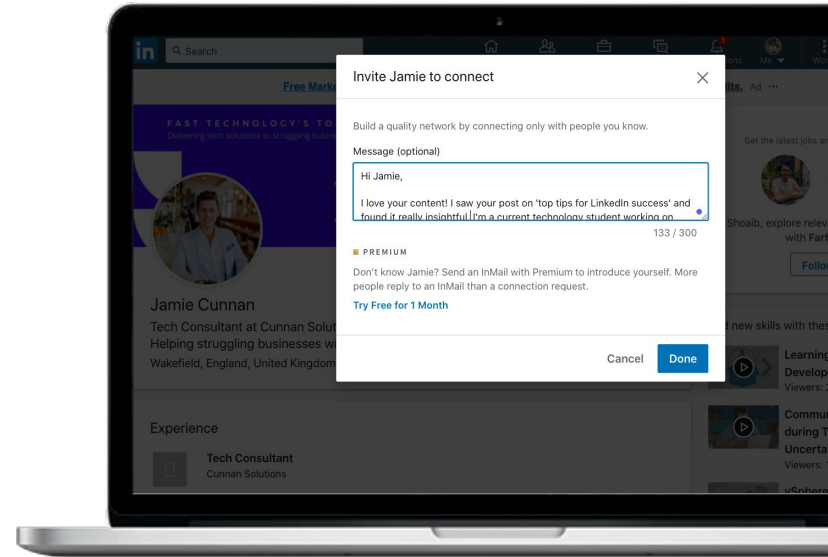
# Adding connections

You've identified individuals of interest that you'd like to have in your network. Great.

The next step is to convert those into connections. Enter... *personalised connection requests*.

## Personalised connection requests

- These are connection requests that take advantage of the optional 'note' LinkedIn allows you to attach when sending a connection request to a new profile.
- They have a max length of 300 characters.
- Sending a personalised connection request is the most effective way to connect with new individuals.



# 3

## Adding connections

There is no single template for sending personalised connection requests. And that's because they're personal to the individual. \*Duh.\*

But there are **3 things you should include** in a request, in whatever form is appropriate.

- 1 Engagement with their content** (show the potential connection that you've not just seen, but have *engaged* with their work).
- 2 An introduction to you and how you can enrich their network** (remember that a connection should be mutually beneficial).
- 3 A call-to-action that encourages further discussion** (this can be as simple as saying 'let's connect!' or 'let's grab a coffee').

### Style tips for sending personalised connection requests

- Don't send a clunky paragraph. Break up lines with white space for an easier read.
- Always directly address the connection (be extra careful to spell their name correctly).
- Never send generic copy and paste connection requests. Instead, make it personable.

E

# An example

Hi Jo,

I just read your article - 'How Women can Transform the Tech Sector.'



Active engagement with authors content

I found it inspiring, especially the section on disrupting stereotypes.

I'm also a keen advocate for more females in STEM roles and would love for us to share our experiences as women in tech with one another.



An introduction with mutual interests/ benefits to connecting.

Let's connect!



Jess L.

Short, clear, call to action to drive networking further



“

In a world of digital busyness, you need to stand out by being personal and creative.

To have the best possible chance of hearing back from someone, send a personalized note of how you heard of the person, what inspires you about them and what you're hoping to offer or learn.

This first impression can mean ALL the difference. Make it count.

Need someone to practice on? Send me a personalized connection invitation on LinkedIn and I'll provide some feedback.

*Joel Hansen,*  
(TEDx Speaker, Personal  
Branding Advisor)

**Follow Joel.**  
**Click [here](#).**



# 4

# Nurturing networks

You're gaining new connections. That's great. But a connection is just that... a connection.

What you *really* want is a meaningful connection built on trust, support and mutual benefit.

## Ways to develop more meaningful connections



**Engage with content from connections**



**Drop in for virtual coffee or tea catch-ups**



**Support your connections' projects**



**Offer your expertise to help others**



Create an excel spreadsheet with key information for your connections (example below).

Colour code priority connections who are key to your career objectives and that you'd like to develop strong relationships with.

This is a great way to help you plan your nurturing strategy.

Connection	Job title	Company	Date of last message	Projects worked on together
Meghan Chist	Sales Consultant	Lotus Inc.	19/07/20	N/A
Dionne Barry	Marketing Exec	Juicebox	25/07/20	Social collaboration/ FB ads
Tyler Manning	CEO	Sitori	26/07/20	Podcast (Recruitz)
Nelly Bhient	Lead Recruiter	Distanco	26/07/20	N/A
-	-	-	-	-

# TOP TIP!



Networking is such a buzzword.

A trap that most people fall into is networking transactionally i.e. connecting with people in exchange for something.

Instead, develop unconditional relationships because this promotes key drivers such as value, support, interaction and authenticity.

People can support you in a multitude of ways, not just the ways you know.

*Anil Ram,*  
(Career Consultant)

**Follow Anil.**  
**Click [here](#).**



# **#3 Creating solid content**

---



**Out of LinkedIn's global  
user base only**



**0.5%**

**share content weekly.**

# 1

# What is content?

'Content' might describe how you feel after demolishing a slice of lemon sponge.

But the content that matters here, is that which refers to an offering to an audience.

Content is both the message itself that you wish to send, and the way in which you send it. It's a *package* delivered to your audience to:

- **Educate** - provide them with specialist knowledge on a certain subject area.
- **Empower** - help them to feel better about their skills, their abilities and their person.
- **Inspire** - encourage people to take a progressive action or next step.
- **Advise** - offer a potential solution on how to overcome a problem they may have.

## Feeling content with this guide?

Follow #ShoaibShares on LinkedIn for more career support.



“

Understanding your audience is the most undervalued part of any content strategy.

You need to be practical with your content. It should educate, resonate, entertain, empower and ultimately convert your audience.

Marketing, at its core, is about getting human beings to think or do certain things. So it makes sense to understand those humans first.

*Sam Winsbury,*  
(Personal Branding Expert  
& Podcast Host)

**Follow Sam.**  
**Click [here](#).**





# 2

## Content ideas

The most successful LinkedIn users are ones who create and share content regularly. Stuck for ideas?

### 18 content ideas to get started

- **Achievements:** certificates, hitting targets, exam results, awards - highlight why you'd be a great asset to any business.
- **How-to-posts:** found an easy or more efficient way of doing something? Share these nifty hacks with others.
- **Introduce yourself:** tell people who you are, your motivations and your goals.
- **Specialist advice:** if you've good knowledge of a complex topic, break it down to help non-experts understand it.
- **Key learnings:** if you've completed work experience, training or an online course, share your key takeaways points.
- **Your struggles:** sharing the barriers to your success and how you overcame them is a great way to inspire others.
- **Engage in conversations:** share industry news with your own commentary or views.
- **Resource sharing:** thank individuals who have supported you in your career and signpost useful resources for others.

# 2

## Content ideas

- **Inspirations:** highlight what drives you in your professional and personal life. A book? A businessperson? A celebrity?
- **Answer a question:** if your audience have common questions and you have the answers - then share your knowledge.
- **Top 10 lists:** this could quite literally be anything of value e.g. your top favourite 10 books, podcasts, lessons learnt etc.
- **Dwell on mistakes:** share your mistakes and how you learnt from them, so that others don't make the same errors.
- **Win of the week:** highlight something you've done that you're proud of and could be useful if shared with others.
- **Hack sharing:** share little tricks and tips that others may not know about, but that could save your network a lot of time.
- **Routines:** let people know how you spend your time in ways to maximise your chances of success.
- **Application tips:** secured your dream job? Ask your recruiter why they hired you and share these tips to support others.
- **Trends and change:** research emerging trends and shifts in your industry and provide a unique commentary.
- **Job updates:** if you've recently secured a new job or have been promoted - let your network know and celebrate with them.



Source: [Omnnicore](#)



**6 / 10**

**Users actively look  
for industry insights**

# 3

## Content sharing tools



Text



Articles



Text + photos



Text + videos



Infographic



Text-based lists



Documents



Polls

# 3

# Content sharing tools

The different tools for sharing content each have specific advantages.

That means you could break down an overall idea into smaller content ideas that can be shared in different formats and through various media.

## Advantages of different media sharing tools

- **Infographics** - for breaking complex information down for easy viewing (as images, graphs, statistics, quotes).
- **Documents** - for sharing portfolios, CV's, or large sets of data external to LinkedIn.
- **Photos** - for adding context. Multiple photos can be posted as a carousel.
- **Polls** - to seek the opinion or views of your networks (great for research purposes).
- **Text (lists)** - for practically sharing anything that can be read (in under 1300 characters). For anything lengthier, use **articles**.
- **Video** - for sharing short summaries, key takeaway points or 'how-to-tutorials.'

# E

## An example

A celebratory **post (text and photo)** thanking your team for their support over your internship

An internship **infographic** highlighting your biggest achievements (with performance statistics)

An PDF **document** containing key industry findings for research you conducted on internship

If you recently completed an internship, you could create & share original content in all these ways

A **video** highlighting the challenges that you faced during the internship and how you overcame them

An **article** to aid others based on your expertise e.g. '5 tips for preparing for a law interview'



You don't need to generate brand new ideas every time you want to share content.

*Instead, consider repurposing your content for new means.*

Start with creating long-form content e.g. a blog that covers a topic in-depth.

You can then pull out specific subtopics to use as inspiration for other, smaller content pieces.

**TOP**  
**TIP!**

# 4

## Structuring posts

It's shocking that many users on LinkedIn don't know how to structure written posts.

But it's actually not that tricky.

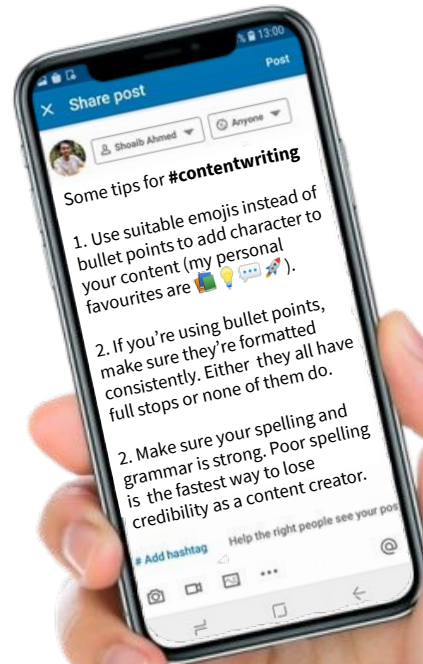
The first step is to know your audience. Think about what content they'll find relevant.

And then consider...

- How you will write your message
- Bullet lists like this are a good shout
- Don't forget to use #hashtags

Long sentences like this one are great for explaining a point, but going over 3-4 lines can appear clunky and turn the reader off.

So add a short snappy one now and again.





# 5

## Do's and Don'ts

For every piece of content you share on LinkedIn, use this page as a checklist to ensure you're optimising it's potential to perform well.

### Do's and Don'ts of LinkedIn content sharing

- ✓ Include plenty of white space by using line breaks, to break up chunky text. Make the post as accessible to the reader as you can.
- ✓ Include a call-to-action in every post. This is a short statement that directs the reader to take action e.g. 'share your thoughts in the comments' or 'drop me a DM for more info.'
- ✓ Share and promote your LinkedIn content across other social media channels, to reach a new and wider audience.
- ✗ Don't add too many hashtags to your posts. It's best to use three relevant hashtags in each post to avoid being viewed as spam.
- ✗ Don't add bad quality or poorly sized photos to a post. LinkedIn's recommended image sizes for posts are 1200 x 1200 (desktop) and 1200 x 628 (mobile).
- ✗ Don't try to cover everything in a single post. Each piece of content you share should be focused and targeted towards a single topic.



You don't have to be a graphic designer to create great visual content on LinkedIn.

Instead, use FREE downloadable templates (with preset LinkedIn dimensions) at [Canva](#).

Canva designs have hundreds of colour palettes, font styles and layout designs that you can edit to suit your content and brand.

Plus, they have infographic and banner photo templates to help you get started!

**TOP**  
**TIP!**

# **#4 Next steps & actions**

---

# Start now

It's time now to put all this into practise.

Want some extra support?

Feel free to connect with me [here](#), for more content and advice.

## Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this guide. Make sure to connect with them:

[Devyn Zillmer](#)  
[Georgia McDonald](#)  
[Joel Hansen](#)  
[Anil Ram](#)  
[Sam Winsbury](#)

