NetworKING Professional Networking Guide

THE LINKEDIN OPTIMISATION MANUAL

A step-by-step guide for the average person to attract real opportunities

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PART 1: HOW RECRUITERS ACTUALLY USE LINKEDIN

Before optimisation, you must understand the recruiter's workflow:

1. **Search using keywords**
2. **Scan headline (2–3 seconds)**
3. **Scan current role + summary**
4. **Decide: Message or skip**

If your value is not clear in 5 seconds, you are skipped.

Your profile is not a résumé.

It is a searchable landing page.

PART 2: STEP-BY-STEP PROFILE OPTIMISATION

STEP 1: PROFILE PHOTO (NON-NEGOTIABLE)

Recruiter filter:

No photo = low effort → skipped.

What works:

- **Neutral background**
- **Natural lighting**
- **Face takes up ~60% of frame**
- **Relaxed, confident expression**
- **Professional but approachable**

Avoid:

- **Group photos**
- **Sunglasses**
- **Over-edited images**
- **Selfies**

Impact: Increases profile views by up to 10x.

STEP 2: HEADLINE (THE MOST IMPORTANT FIELD)

Your headline is not your job title.

It is your value proposition.

Formula:

Who you help + how + outcome

Examples:

- **"Computer Science Student | Building Scalable Web Applications | Python, React"**
- **"Aspiring Commercial Lawyer | Contract Drafting, Research, Client Support"**
- **"Data Analyst | Turning Raw Data into Business Decisions | SQL, Power BI"**

Rules:

- **Use keywords recruiters search**
- **Be specific**
- **Avoid vague terms ("passionate", "motivated")**

STEP 3: LOCATION & OPEN-TO-WORK SETTINGS

Recruiters filter by:

- **Location**
- **Availability**
- **Visa status**

Make sure:

- **Location is accurate**
- **"Open to work" is on (visible to recruiters)**
- **Preferences are set correctly**

This affects whether you appear in searches.

STEP 4: ABOUT SECTION (YOUR 30-SECOND PITCH)

This is where most people fail.

Structure (copy this):

Paragraph 1 – Who you are

- Current status
- Direction you're moving in

Paragraph 2 – What you actually do

- Skills
- Tools
- Types of problems you work on

Paragraph 3 – Proof

- Projects
- Experience
- Measurable outcomes (even small ones)

Paragraph 4 – Call to action

- What you're open to
- How to contact you

Example:

I'm a final-year economics student focused on data-driven analysis and financial modelling.

I work primarily with Excel, Python, and SQL to analyse trends, build forecasts, and support decision-making.

Recently, I completed a project analysing market demand using real-world datasets, improving forecast accuracy by 15%.

Currently open to internships and graduate roles. Happy to connect or chat.

STEP 5: EXPERIENCE (WRITE IT LIKE A RECRUITER READS IT)

Recruiters do not read paragraphs.

They scan bullet points.

Each role should include:

- What you did

- **How you did it**
- **Why it mattered**

Formula:

Action verb + skill/tool + outcome

Example:

- **Analysed customer data using Excel and SQL to identify trends**
- **Built weekly reports used by senior team**
- **Reduced reporting time by 30%**

Even unpaid or academic experience counts if written properly.

STEP 6: EDUCATION (OPTIMISE FOR SEARCH)

Include:

- **Degree**
- **Field**
- **Institution**
- **Relevant modules**
- **Projects (brief)**

Example:

BSc Computer Science

Relevant modules: Algorithms, Databases, Software Engineering

Final project: Built a full-stack web app using React and Node.js

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STEP 7: SKILLS (THIS AFFECTS SEARCH RANKING)

LinkedIn is keyword-driven.

Best practice:

- **15–25 skills**
- **Prioritise hard skills**
- **Match job descriptions**

Examples:

- **Python**
- **Financial Modelling**
- **Contract Drafting**
- **Data Analysis**

- **React.js**

Get endorsements if possible—but relevance matters more than volume.

STEP 8: PROJECTS & FEATURED SECTION (UNDERUSED ADVANTAGE)

Add:
- **GitHub links**
- **Google Docs**
- **Case studies**
- **Portfolio websites**

This instantly separates you from 90% of candidates.

PART 3: HOW TO ACTUALLY GET NOTICED

STEP 9: ACTIVITY SIGNALS (BOOST VISIBILITY)

You do not need to be an influencer.

Do this weekly:
- **Comment thoughtfully on 2–3 posts**
- **Share one insight or learning**
- **Engage with people in your target field**

Recruiters notice consistent activity, not virality.

STEP 10: CONNECTION STRATEGY (QUALITY > QUANTITY)

Connect with:
- **Recruiters in your field**
- **People 1–3 years ahead of you**
- **Hiring managers**

Message template:

Hi [Name], I'm exploring opportunities in [field] and would love to connect.

Simple. No pitch.

STEP 11: DIRECT MESSAGING (WHEN DONE RIGHT)

Only message when:

- **Profile is optimised**
- **Ask is clear and reasonable**

Example:

Hi [Name], I saw you recruit for [role]. I've recently worked on [X] and would love to ask if my profile aligns with what you look for.

Short. Respectful. Specific.

PART 4: COMMON MISTAKES THAT KILL PROFILES

- **Empty headline**
- **No keywords**
- **Long paragraphs**
- **Generic claims**
- **No proof**
- **Overconfidence without substance**

Recruiters filter aggressively.

PART 5: MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST (MONTHLY)

- **Update skills**
- **Refresh headline if direction changes**
- **Add new experience/projects**
- **Remove outdated info**
- **Stay lightly active**

FINAL RECRUITER TRUTH

If your LinkedIn profile is strong, you don't chase opportunities—
opportunities start finding you.

Most people are overlooked not because they lack ability, but because their profile doesn't communicate value.