

Ellie Rich-Poole

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LinkedIn Guide

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Introduction

This guide takes you through the steps to create a great first impression using LinkedIn.

There are four parts to this guide:

1. Writing a great LinkedIn profile
2. Using LinkedIn to keep in touch with your existing connections
3. Using LinkedIn to grow your connections and be discoverable
4. The LinkedIn Challenge

But let's start with the WHY. **Why does it matter?**

These quotes resonated with me:



So, whether or not we like it, we all have a personal “brand”.

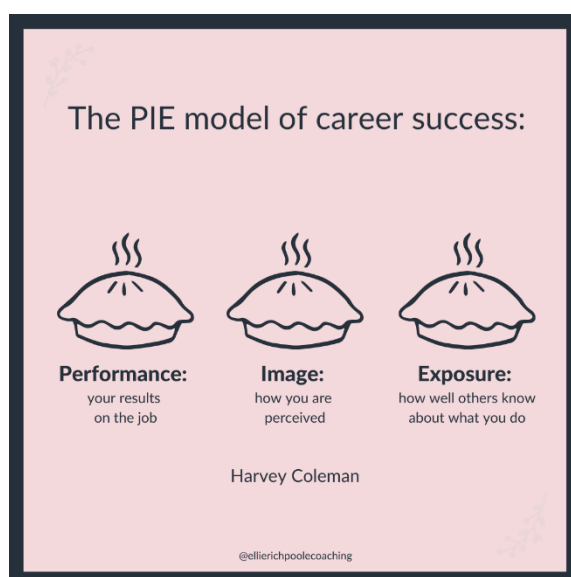
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And if we don't manage it, others will be deciding about us for themselves. So, *not* having a strong LinkedIn profile, in itself, says something.

I would also like to share with you Coleman's PIE Model of Career Success:



Coleman's research showed that there are three elements of career success:

1. **P: Performance** – achieving results in your day job

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2. **I: Image** – how you are perceived i.e. your personal brand
3. **E: Exposure** – your visibility i.e. who knows about you and what you do?

Often people focus heavily on **Performance**, which is important and the strong grounding we need to succeed. However, only 10% of career progression is down to performance and for long term career success 60% of career progression is based upon our **Exposure**, what people know about us. The other 30% is **Image**, others' perceptions of us.

LinkedIn is a great tool for managing our image and our exposure, alongside doing our day job well. If done appropriately and well, it can contribute to our career success.

Keep your LinkedIn profile up to date and use LinkedIn to be visible, have conversations, and support others. Apply the same principles as you would to present yourself in person. Consider the language you use and how you show up in the world. This guide will show you how.

If you are reading this guide because you are looking for a new role, or are soon to be, it is super important. There is a strong chance your LinkedIn Profile may be the first thing people see of "you". In some cases, even before your CV.

WHAT is your LinkedIn Profile?

LinkedIn themselves define it as "a professional landing page for you to manage your own personal brand. A great way for you to tell people who you are and what you do by displaying a general history of your professional experiences and achievements. Use your LinkedIn profile to add a personal touch that a typical resume or CV may not reflect."

The advice in this guide is particularly relevant for individuals in the corporate world and those networking in organisations at Professional, Leadership or Executive level.

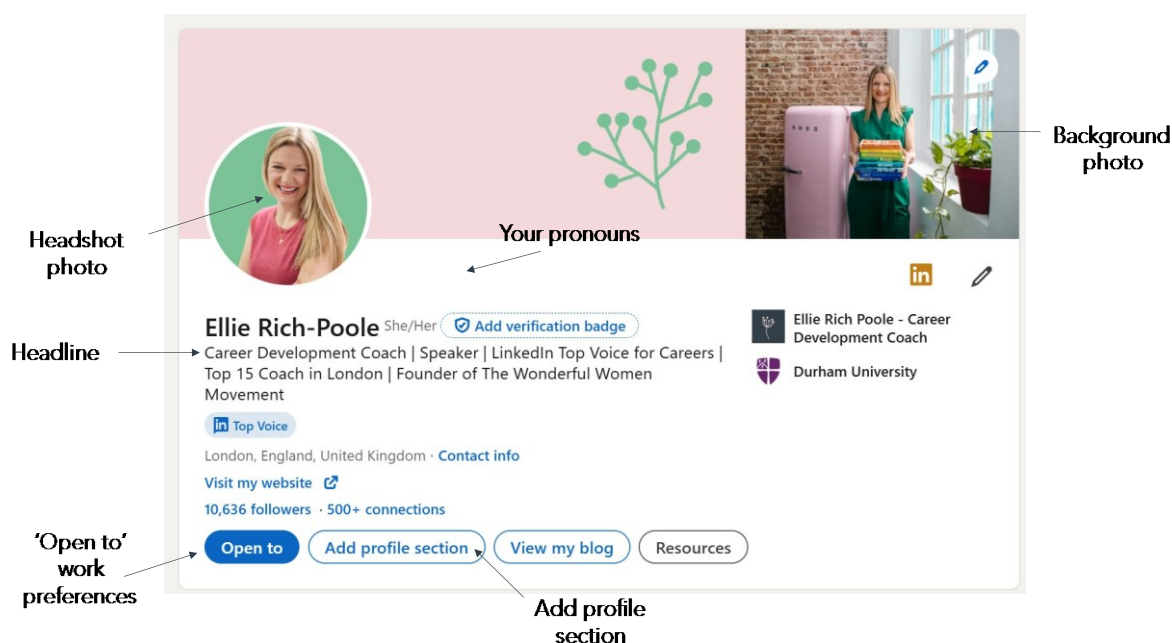
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1. Writing a great LinkedIn profile



TIP!: Whilst editing your profile, make sure you turn off the “sharing profile changes with your network” facility (instructions [here](#)), otherwise your connections may get notified when you have updated your profile and you start getting congratulations messages which is awkward. Yes. I have been there.



- ❑ **Add a Headshot Photo.** Your profile will be easier to find, come up higher in searches and look more credible. The look you should aim for is “professional and approachable”. I generally advise against wedding photos, bikini photos and photos of you with a huge beer (unless you work for a beer company). Authentic is fine, unprofessional is not. Make sure it captures you on a ‘typical’ workday, appropriate for the sector you work in. If your dress code is smart casual, don’t have a photo of you in a tie, etc.
- ❑ **Change the generic blue grey Background Photo.** Don’t keep the automatically generated background. This shows people you are active and that you have invested time in your profile. Ensure the image is a ‘landscape’ photo which works in a long thin horizontal space. If you are in a role you might wish to choose an image related to your current organisation, or if you have spoken at a professional event you might want to use that, or something else relevant to your field of expertise. You may prefer to choose

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something that captures a non-work interest or passion. As long as it is appropriate for a professional setting, it's totally up to you.

- ❑ **Have a strong Headline** that accurately describes what you do. There are more interesting ways to do this than just using your job title which is what LinkedIn historically auto populated the field with. Use words that people are likely to search on. If you are immediately available and actively looking for your next role you may wish to make this known, using something along the lines of 'HR Director – exploring new opportunities'. An option could be to include your additional responsibilities too e.g. CEO | Founder | Trustee | Sponsor of Gender Network.
- ❑ **Include your pronouns.** You can now add your gender pronouns to your profile and let others know of your preferred pronouns when they refer to you. This is an optional feature, and if you choose to display your gender pronouns, you'll be able to control who sees them.
- ❑ **Include an engaging summary in the 'About' section.** This is a great space to give a brief overview of who you are, what you do and what is important to you. It is essentially your elevator pitch. You could also include bullet points of your specialist skills / areas of expertise. This section isn't automatically on your profile so you may have to edit and add it, if it isn't currently visible.
- ❑ **Write simply and concisely.** Imagine you are talking to someone at a networking event and telling them who you are and what you do. Speak in the first person. Avoid competencies. Also avoid using company specific jargon or acronyms in terms of job titles and how you describe your role. Keep it as accessible as possible so people have the best chance of finding you. Read what you've written out loud to a colleague and if it sounds awkward, shorten / reword it.
- ❑ **Ensure your 'Work History' section is up to date and complete.** Make sure your dates accurately reflect when / if your previous jobs have ended, so it doesn't look like you have several roles concurrently if this isn't the case.
- ❑ **Add multi-media.** This could be presentations, videos, links to articles you have published. It brings your profile to life and showcases things you have done. These can be included at various points including within the role you did them, or in the 'Featured' section at the top.

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- ❑ **Ask for Recommendations** from relevant colleagues and clients. It is valuable when someone endorses your work, rather than relying on your own opinion. Ideally include people at a mix of levels – some more senior, some who have reported to you, key stakeholders etc.
- ❑ **Don't copy and paste your CV onto your LinkedIn profile.** They should not be the same. Your LinkedIn profile should be succinct – an overview of who you are, what you do, and the value you add. It should also be slightly less formal.
- ❑ **Ensure your contact details are included.** Although good researchers and recruiters will always find good candidates, help them out.
- ❑ **Ensure you include relevant key words in your profile.** This could be within your job titles, your 'About' summary, or within the detail of individual roles. This helps you come higher up in searches, much like with a Google search.
- ❑ **Complete the 'Skills & Endorsements' section.** This will help you be found for the areas you want to be associated with. You can highlight up to three as your 'Top Skills'. This also helps with being discoverable.
- ❑ **Include any relevant Education and Qualifications.** This is important to some employers. *Relevant* is the point to note here. If you have 20 years of work experience you don't need to list your dissertation title, unless particularly relevant to your field of work today.
- ❑ **Select additional sections for your profile as required.** When you are in edit mode you can click and drag sections in and out and move the order of some. So for example, if you speak a number of languages, drag that section in and populate it. If you don't, leave it out. Play around with it so it works for you and highlights things in a way you want to.



TIP!: Get feedback

When you have drafted your LinkedIn Profile, ask for feedback from someone who knows you in a professional setting. People often forget some of the best things they have delivered. Also ask someone to proof-read it for you and flag any typos or errors you have missed.

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2. Using LinkedIn to keep in touch with existing connections

Well done, you now have a great looking LinkedIn Profile!

That is a good start, but it is only the beginning. Many people get to this point and then stop and think that jobs or business will come to them. Occasionally, if you are lucky, they might. But normally that's not how it works. Think of it as a little bit like joining a gym. A great start but now you have to do the work.

Step two is to USE LinkedIn, regularly. There are a range of different ways to do this and it's about finding what works for you.

❑ As a starting point **use the Private Message facility** to catch up with your existing connections, such as previous colleagues and industry contacts. Trusted former colleagues who know and rate you are an often-under-used pool of support when you are on the job market. Don't be afraid to drop people a line. Most of us would always be willing to help out a contact. Be clear about what you are looking for. Ensure when you catch up with people in your network you tell them simply what roles you are looking for, so they can keep you in mind if they see an advert or are contacted for referrals.

Please return the favour when you are settled in your next role. Networking should be two-way, so look at how you can help them, not just what you need from them.

Private messages are a great starting point if you aren't a regular and confident user of LinkedIn because it isn't in the public domain.

❑ As you get braver, you should **engage with your connections' content**. As you scroll through the newsfeed of posts from your connections, if you comment on something, your **Name and Headline** will be visible and seen by others next to your headshot photo. This is a great reminder of you and another reason to have an impactful headline. (Don't just "like" things, add a comment).

❑ The option exists to 'repost' others' posts, although at the time of writing the algorithm actually seems to give greater visibility if you comment on their post instead. If you do repost, I suggest selecting the option to 'share with your thoughts' where you can add your own comment and value.

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- ❑ Then the next step is to **post your own content and to start conversations**. This could be by posting status updates and sharing quality content to your network such as sharing articles.
- ❑ **Hashtags are on the decline** and not such a 'thing' on LinkedIn now. Don't scatter them throughout your post, which makes it hard to read. Put them at the bottom, and no more than 3 per post. Users can still 'follow' hashtags so it may show your content with someone new, if they follow one of the hashtags you have used.



TIP!: Remember everything you post on the newsfeed is in the public domain so write accordingly.

Here are some example posts. They do not need to be this long:



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My top 5 takeaways about securing a Board role, from the super 'Into the Boardroom Conference' last week:

- ✳ Boards want to hire people they don't know, but there is a fear of the unknown, and still 95% of Board positions aren't advertised.*
- ✳ The average person takes 2 years to get a Board role, and that's when they are proactively looking and making an effort. It is very competitive and requires tenacity and resilience.
- ✳ Get clear on your superpower - what you would bring to a Board, both in terms of skills and committees - then make sure you are landing that message.
- ✳ No-one is born 'Board ready' and there are a wide range of Board opportunities for individuals at all career stages. Start gaining Committee experience now!
- ✳ Set aside time to network - it is really important. Build your profile and get known. Just because someone knows you, doesn't mean they can explain who you are or what you want!

✳ ✳ ✳

I am a Career Development Coach. I help organisations retain and develop top talent through Executive Coaching, Workshops and Speaking. I partner with leaders during pivotal career transitions empowering them to navigate change with confidence, clarity, and impact.

This is me: [Ellie Rich-Poole](#) and this is my business page: [Ellie Rich Poole - Career Development Coach](#)

[#NED](#) [#Trustee](#) [#Board](#)




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Whether you are happy in your role, or exploring new opportunities, it's good to maintain contact with a small group of trusted headhunters.

Don't wait until you need help before getting in touch.

I had fun quizzing some of my headhunter friends about their pet peeves so you can avoid them. My personal favourites are:


- 🤔 Believing you can throw your hat in the ring for any assignment we are managing, and we should shortlist you. We are looking for the best five candidates globally for our search, not just anyone who 'could' do the role.
- 🤔 CVs containing no outputs or metrics that read like job descriptions, with bland generic adjectives (self-motivated and dynamic anyone?!)
- 🤔 Individuals not treating us respectfully. From not saying thank you when we have taken time to help you, to taking your frustrations out on us.
- 🤔 People who don't listen properly to the question then fail to tailor their answers suitably. If you are asked for one example, give one. If you are asked for a 3-minute overview, talk for 3 minutes.
- 🤔 Individuals who are in constant contact when they are looking for a position, but go AWOL once they land in role, never to be heard of again... until they message out of the blue, years later, asking for a coffee meet because they are looking for a new role!

... head to my blog to read the other 8 tips... and for links to the first two blogs in the headhunter series.










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This is me: [Ellie Rich-Poole](#) and this is my business page: [Ellie Rich Poole - Career Development Coach](#)



13 mistakes you need to avoid making with headhunters
[ellierichpoole.com](#)

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3. Using LinkedIn to grow your connections and be discoverable

Now you have got a great profile, are regularly catching up with your existing contacts, and you are sharing articles, starting conversations and actively engaging in discussions around interesting industry media.

The next step is to **make new connections** by being seen. Why is this important? Because if you want to be spotted for your dream opportunity, the more people that see you, the better.

If you write a post and you have 500 connections, the post could possibly be seen by those 500 connections (realistically it would be a lot less).

If one of them likes/comments on the post, you could be seen by your 500 connections, plus a selection of the connections of the person who liked/commented.

Imagine therefore if you had 2000 connections, and 20 of those people like/comment on your post. The increased possibility of being seen is immense. So, the more (suitable) connections you have, the better. And the more engagement you get on your posts the better.

The more you use LinkedIn, the more you will see the types of content that people find valuable and engage with. This evolves all the time as the algorithm changes, but generally, original content with a photo does well. The more comments you get the more it will be seen. LinkedIn favours people who start and continue conversations. It likes people to be social.

❑ **Make sure people can connect with you.** Check your privacy settings to ensure people can send you an invitation to connect. A candidate I was once trying to head-hunt (who turned out to be actively looking for a new role) had their privacy settings so high that no one could invite them to connect without knowing their e-mail address.

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- ❑ **Proactively connect with others on LinkedIn**, including anyone you have worked with in the past that you didn't get round to connecting with; people in your phone contacts; people you are connected with on other platforms; people in the industry you have been interacting with; people you meet at networking events or on webinars. Use it as a way to keep track of all your contacts.

- ❑ **ALWAYS personalise invitation requests**, explaining why you want to connect. This is easier on the desktop version of LinkedIn because it gives you a prompt. If you are on the app (including the iPad version), go to the person's profile, but don't hit 'connect' which immediately fires out a non-personalised invitation. Instead hit 'more' and select 'personalise invite' where you can add a note.

- ❑ **Respond to people**. If someone comments on your post or sends a personal message, always reply and keep the conversation going.

- ❑ **Join suitable groups**. If you are looking for a role as an HR Director, ensure you are in the key HR leadership groups, and groups run by the HR search firms, or HR institutions, publications etc. If someone searches LinkedIn for 'HR Director' – the results are ordered:
 1. Their 1st connections
 2. People they are in groups with
 3. Their 2nd connections
 4. Their 3rd connections.

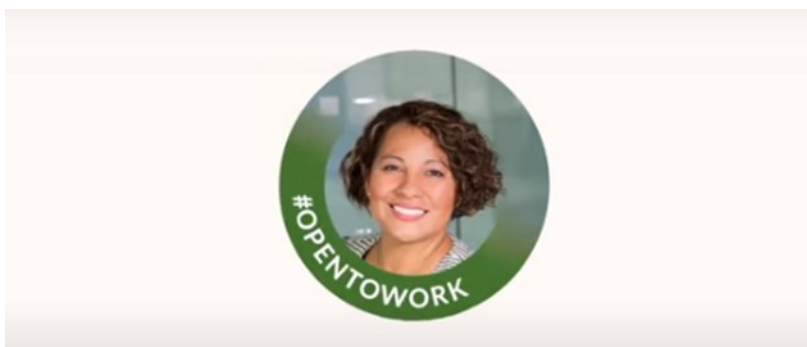
Profiles without photos go right to the bottom.

So being in a group with a relevant head-hunter is the next best thing to being connected to them.

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- ❑ **Use the 'Open to Work' facility** to set up your criteria if you are looking for a new role. You can select whether you tell recruiters only, or the wider LinkedIn community. You can also opt to have the green badge on your profile photo which make it visible at a glance.



This [video](#) gives you more information.

Ensure you are being discreet if you are currently in a role and don't want everyone to see that you are exploring new opportunities.

- ❑ **Maintain a presence on LinkedIn at all times**, not just when you are looking for a job. Networking shouldn't be an activity that you pick up when you need something from others. It should be ongoing and two-way.

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


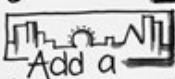
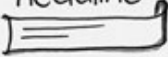













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The LinkedIn Challenge

A few years ago, I ran a live challenge with a task a day to complete on LinkedIn, each with a video showing you how to go about it and giving ideas.

The videos are all available on my [YouTube Channel](#) so you can watch back any that would be helpful to you, or you can work through the challenge whenever it works for you. Do get in touch if you are and let me know how you find it.

LinkedIn Challenge

1 <input type="checkbox"/>  Direct Message a connection	2 <input type="checkbox"/>  Update your headshot photo	3 <input type="checkbox"/> Follow someone you admire 	4 <input type="checkbox"/> 'Like' three posts 	5 <input type="checkbox"/>  Write a post - share an article
6 <input type="checkbox"/>  Add a background photo	7 <input type="checkbox"/> Check your headline 	8 <input type="checkbox"/>  Add/update your 'About' Summary	9 <input type="checkbox"/>  Give a recommendation	10 <input type="checkbox"/>  Review your connection requests
11 <input type="checkbox"/> Comment on someone's post ...	12 <input type="checkbox"/>  Follow some hashtags #TheRecruitmentCoach 	13 <input type="checkbox"/> Send a personalised connection request 	14 <input type="checkbox"/>  Check your qualifications	15 <input type="checkbox"/>  Share a photo
16 <input type="checkbox"/>  Write a post - 'tag' someone	17 <input type="checkbox"/> Check your contact details 	18 <input type="checkbox"/> Request a recommendation 	19 <input type="checkbox"/>  Add voluntary work/interests	20 <input type="checkbox"/> Check your DMS - keep in touch 

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