

# 5.8 Mistakes Not to Make on LinkedIn

<https://www.learnvest.com/2013/03/8-mistakes-not-to-make-on-linkedin/>

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What do you do with your LinkedIn profile?

Do you check it only every once in a while when a connection request comes through? Have you linked it to your Twitter account? Did you never quite remember to sign up in the first place?

As much as it's convenient to merge our Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Instagram accounts into one large social networking experience, LinkedIn has a special designation: professional networking.

And there *is* a difference between professional and personal networking, according to LinkedIn Career Expert Nicole Williams: "I see the same mistakes over and over!"

And, on LinkedIn, those faux pas can damage your career.

In fact, data shows that LinkedIn is especially helpful when it comes to landing higher-paying jobs—"informal recruitment" is a favorite of hiring managers aiming to fill positions up there on the payscale.

So whether you're hunting for a new job, making the most of the one you have or just looking to learn about professional possibilities, avoid these eight big LinkedIn mistakes.

## • Not Using a Picture



### Experience

**LearnVester**  
**LearnVest, Inc.**   
Privately Held, 11-50 employees, Online Media industry  
Currently holds this position

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"One of the biggest mistakes I see is no photo," Williams says. "You're seven times more likely to have your profile viewed if you have one. Like a house that's on sale, the assumption is that if there's no photo, something's wrong."

She also makes a great point: If you leave a networking event with a handful of business cards, intending to follow up on LinkedIn, it's much harder for you to remember who's who without pictures. A missing photo can easily lead to missed connections.

If you're worried about unwittingly sabotaging your career through social media, check out the [ten worst blunders you can commit](#).

## • Putting Up the Wrong Picture



"No dog, no husband, no baby!" Williams says, adding that your photo is meant to show you at your professional—not personal—best. "Especially for mothers getting back into the workforce, a picture of their child doesn't convey that they're ready for a full-time job."

Another photo blunder: Misrepresenting your appearance. "I see older people who are worried about age discrimination use a photo of themselves in their 30s, but an interviewer wasn't expecting them to look so different. And instead of listening to your answers, the interviewer will think you're deceptive," Williams confides. "Unless you're getting hired for a modeling gig, people are just looking for energy, which you can communicate through great posture, open eyes and a smile."

In fact, [HSN Beauty found](#) that, when paging through LinkedIn profiles, 19% of recruiters look only at your profile picture.

## • Skipping the Summary

This is now called the "About" section (rather than "Summary").



### Summary

After graduating with a BA in personal finance from LV University, I've spent the last three years working for ABC Bank, then for LearnVest, Inc., in New York City. Personal finance has always been hobby of mine, and when I realized I could make it a career, I knew that was where I wanted to be. Being in New York City, there are opportunities to spend on (literally!) every corner, and I love using my experience learning how to live my richest life to help other LearnVesters live theirs.

Once upon a time, people were encouraged to write about their careers in an "objective" summary on a resume. That has gone out of fashion ... but not on LinkedIn. "Since you're writing online, you actually have more space than you would on a traditional paper resume. Think of the summary as a way of selling yourself—it's an opportunity to express your voice and personality," Williams explains.

Since so many people are competing for the same jobs with similar educations and qualifications, filling out the summary can give you an edge with a prospective employer. Williams recommends that you write it in the first person to give it energy and personality.

## • Eliminating Past Jobs or Volunteer Work

### Experience

#### LearnVester

LearnVest, Inc. 

Privately Held | 11-50 employees | Online Media industry

September 2011 – Present (1 year 1 month)

#### Analyst

ABC Bank

April 2009 – August 2011 (2 years 5 months)

#### Server

XYZ Restaurant

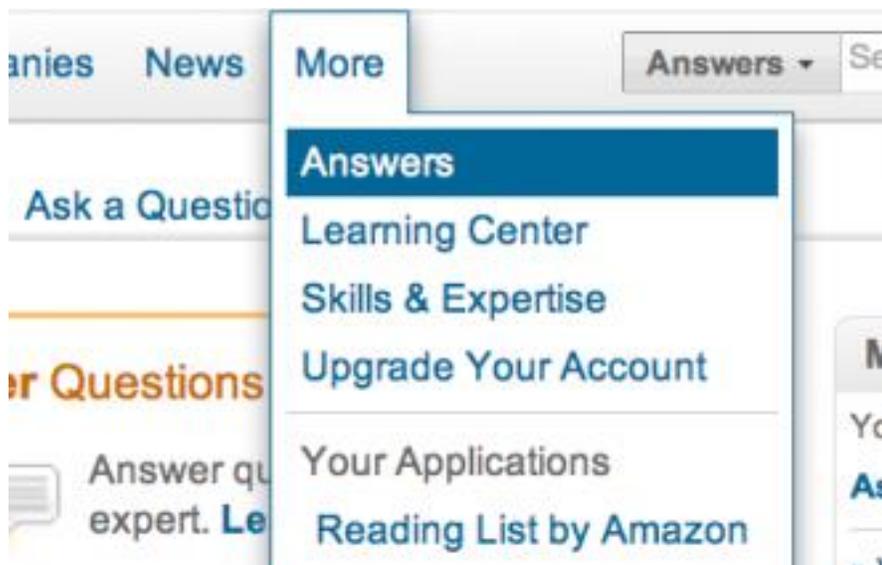
June 2008 – March 2009 (10 months) | Omaha, Nebraska

Even if you've changed fields, your latest job isn't the only important one. "Unlike a resume, where you're trying to target one page toward a specific position, you should list your entire work history on LinkedIn," Williams says. "You don't know what criteria people are looking for, so you want your profile to be as robust as possible. Maybe they're looking for a teacher with nursing experience or they're Princetonians looking for fellow alums."

She even recommends listing odd jobs from your teen years, specifically addressing your responsibilities and accomplishments. "You never know—maybe you were trained as a salesperson at The Gap in high school, and the hiring manager looking at your profile went through the same program and wants you for the skills she knows you learned," Williams explains.

The same goes for volunteer work: While LinkedIn isn't a place to describe your every hope and dream, employers know that, in this economy, volunteers can be given real responsibilities. Williams recommends listing any volunteer work the way you would a summer job, elaborating on tasks conquered and skills acquired.

## • Lurking



Many people think that just having a profile is enough, but employers probably won't simply stumble across your profile, be struck by your brilliance and offer you a job on the spot. You have to work for it.

"I always recommend joining groups related to your field or even personal interests. It comes in handy! For instance, I'm a new mom and joined a group for them. When I needed an accountant, it turned out there was one in my group who I ended up hiring because of the connection we made over being new moms," Williams says.

LinkedIn users can also follow companies and keep an eye on who's coming and going—when you see someone leave a company you want to join, it's the perfect opportunity to reach out to their HR department.