

Leggett & Platt®

STUDENT RESOURCE CAREER PREP

Get prepared for your next step.

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PREPARING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

Your LinkedIn profile is a powerful tool for job searching, networking, staying well-informed of trends, and learning about your favorite companies. How does your profile look?

A good profile will include the following:

- **Headline** – include keywords focused on current and future career goals. Focus on branding yourself for the job you want and what you have to offer.
- **Professional Photo** – A LinkedIn profile featuring a professional photo and background image is viewed 30% more than a profile without those elements. Be sure the picture is professional, clear, and does not have a distracting background.
- **Background Image** – This will enhance your professional brand or job focus. This image can be a quote, a graphic about your industry, your school, or scenery you enjoy. Feel free to be creative, as this can give someone a better idea of who you are.
- A **customized LinkedIn URL** – This will be more recognizable and easier to use. Use this on your resume. For example:

- Change this: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/YOURNAME/5/792/58a>
- To this: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/YOURNAME>

You can do this in your Profile under Edit Profile>Your Public Profile.

- **About Section / Summary** - Catchy and clear information about who you are. This is a great spot to use your elevator pitch and highlight what makes you unique! Ensure that this area uses keywords based on your industry or profession. Include industry terminology and highlight skills in leadership, teamwork, and creativity. Describe what motivates you, what you're skilled at, or what's next – however, you should strive to keep this concise!
- **Experience** - Use this area to detail your accomplishments. Match the same company name, dates, and titles included on your resume. Keep the formatting for all positions the same, either with bullets or in paragraphs.
- **Education** - Order this section with your highest degree level listed on top and use dates if they are relevant. If your education spans multiple decades, you could leave the dates off.
- **Extras** - Add any *active* licenses and certifications. Have you joined any clubs at school or in the community? Be sure to describe what you did with each organization.
- **Volunteer Experience** – Show how you use your skills to give back. Only use the relevant experience that you have been involved with either regularly or recently. Include dates so companies will know the length of your involvement.
- **Skills & Endorsements**- Make sure these skills are focused on what you are targeting in your job search. Strive for 50 skills and reorder them to display the strongest three on top.
- **Honors & Awards** – If you earned an award in or out of school, don't be shy. Let the world know about it!

- **Recommendations** – At least 2-3 recommendations. Let's hear how great you are firsthand! The best way to ask for a recommendation is to return the favor. You can ask your peers, professors, academic advisors, coaches, or anyone else that knows you well and can speak to your skillset.
- **Projects** – Whether you led a team assignment in school or built an app on your own, talk about what you did and how you did it.
- **Groups** – Target 50 groups. Start with alums and former employee groups, industry and job-specific groups, technical groups, associations/organizations, and local area groups.
- **Follow!** Companies, organizations, and individuals. Follow every company you apply to, local companies, companies you want to work for, schools you've attended, industry influencers, and accomplished leaders. Target 50-100.
- **Connections** – Start with at least 50 but aim to reach 250 within the first few weeks of joining and 500 as soon as possible. When you have 500+ connections, your visibility greatly increases.

RESUME TIPS

Your resume is a marketing tool to promote yourself as the best candidate for a job. A strong resume will open communication between you and a potential employer. This is your chance to sell yourself throughout the process and successfully land your next job!

Developing Your Resume

The core components of an effective resume include:

1. Objective title
2. Summary statement
3. Key skills
4. Work history
5. Education

The Purpose of a Resume

A resume provides a glimpse into your professional background to see if you're a qualified candidate for a job. It takes a hiring manager seven seconds, on average, to determine if a resume is qualified. Your resume must set you apart from your competition. It should:

- *Briefly* state your knowledge, skills, experience, and achievements related to the position you're applying for. Highlight what you worked on and use action words to describe your role in that experience (i.e., led, partnered, collaborated, etc.). Position yourself as someone who can add immediate value.
- *Focus on the essential details! Demonstrate your value* and how you contributed to the overall goals of your previous positions.
- *Be engaging* and make the reader want to continue reading your resume. Use active language when describing your responsibilities.
- Be *clear and straightforward*. Don't repeat any information.
- *Quantify your achievements* wherever possible (e.g., team sizes, sales goals, timelines, etc.)

Resume Sections Explained

- **OBJECTIVE TITLE:** What role are you going after? Place a job title here to give the reader a direction of what you want to do. Refrain from using outdated language, i.e., "Seeking opportunities to utilize my skills..."
- **SUMMARY STATEMENT:** Use this statement to show your value. Summarize your years of experience, background, and strengths here. You can use bullet points to clearly identify them. It is important to keep the summary brief but impactful.
- **KEY SKILLS:** Next on your resume should be your Key Skills. This shows readers what you are capable of. Tailor these to the position you are applying for. **Tip:** *Look at the job description and pull key skills out. If you have them, put them in this section!* It will help move your resume past the applicant tracking system and into the hands of a hiring manager.

- **WORK HISTORY:** For each position in your work history, be sure to include a) the company name, b) the job title, c) the dates of employment, d) responsibilities, and e) achievements. Keep this area clear and concise. Draw attention to the most important details of the job and quantify your responsibilities and achievements wherever possible. Being able to show the length of time a project took to complete, how many people you managed, and other examples of your leadership and contributions is essential to keeping a reader engaged and setting you apart from other candidates. Action words are key!
- **EDUCATION:** List any post-secondary education on your resume that you have completed. You can also list relevant professional development such as certifications, training, and workshops you've attended. *Tip: Listing graduation dates is generally only necessary for recent graduates with little work experience.*

Other sections, based on your industry, to include as well:

- Technical skills
- Leadership
- Patents
- Publications
- Affiliations (i.e., sports, campus organizations, industry groups, etc.)

Resume Standards & Best Practices

Keep these guidelines in mind as you continue to evolve and refine your resume.

LENGTH & PAGE LAYOUT:

- Keep your resume to one full page (avoid quarter or half pages).
- The margins of a resume should be even and no less than .5" all around.

FONT:

- Use a standard font such as Arial, Calibri, Garamond, Tahoma, Times New Roman, or Verdana.
- Font size should be at least 10 pt. and at most 11.5 pt.

LANGUAGE:

- Include active language and high-impact words throughout.
- Write in first person or third person; don't use personal pronouns (I, me, my)
- Keep the tense in the present for current positions and in the past for prior positions

CONTENT & STYLE:

- Never include sensitive information such as date of birth or social security number.
- Pictures are not advised, but if you choose to include one it needs to be professional (consider using your professional LinkedIn photo).

- Include an email address you check regularly and do not use an address that is not professional (i.e., contains nicknames, multiple numbers, inappropriate language, etc.). If needed, create a new email address that you use specifically for professional interactions.
- It is generally recommended to detail only the past 10-15 years of experience on a resume.
- Keep statements clear and concise and avoid using long lists of bullets as it tends to lose the readers' interest.
- Do not use text boxes or tables to list information because they can confuse applicant tracking systems (ATS) and prevent your resume from getting reviewed.

Resume Checklist

Before sending your resume, review this checklist to ensure it is ready!

- Is your contact information clearly provided on your resume?
 - Name, phone number, and professional email address
 - LinkedIn profile (if included) is a vanity URL, i.e., LinkedIn.com/in/mynamehere
- Is the resume compatible with ATS software?
 - No information is placed in a header
 - There are no tables or text boxes used on the resume
- Is your resume format set up according to best practices?
 - All section headings and formatting are consistent
 - Standard font type and size
 - Full pages (no quarter or half pages)
- Is there a professional title and summary clearly placed at the top of the resume?
- Does the resume display key skills/keywords?
 - If applicable, is there a section that lists technical skills in the resume?
- Does the resume avoid using company-specific jargon (it's still okay to use industry-standard verbiage)?
- Does the resume use action words (i.e., created, led, achieved)?
- Is the resume free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors?
- Is the resume accomplishments-focused?

Advice on Cover Letters

A cover letter is also part of your first impression. Often, employers will read the cover letter before your resume. If they are not impressed by the letter's contents, you can be eliminated before they read the rest of your application. However, many cover letters are read and thrown away, so you don't want to include vital information that you don't include on your resume. The purpose of the cover letter is to entice this person to read and review your resume.

Most companies do not require cover letters, so you can choose whether you want to write one for each employer.

CRAFTING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Your Elevator Pitch is a short introductory statement for an employer or new contact. It's used to introduce your skills and interests clearly and confidently.

Building your Elevator Pitch

You can use your Elevator Pitch when networking, on your resume or LinkedIn profile, and to answer the "tell me about yourself" question while interviewing. Here's how to create your Elevator Pitch:

- What is your profession and background? Or area of education?
- What do you do well? What are your strengths?
- What evidence shows those strengths?
- What are you excited about doing in your next job?

FILL IN THE BLANKS!

I am a _____ professional/ student specializing in _____ . My strengths include _____ and _____ , and I am excited about _____ in my next role.

EXAMPLE:

I am a third-year engineering student at Missouri S&T. My strengths include designing and concept development. I'm currently taking a Machine Dynamics class, and really enjoy gaining skills in machine learning and artificial intelligence. I am excited to leverage these skills to help businesses succeed in automation.

Exit Statement

Your Exit Statement is a clear and concise statement to explain why you left your previous employment to a potential employer.

Building Your Exit Statement

Describe the situation that caused your separation in one clear sentence. No need to overshare here! Keep it quick, professionally focused, and don't make it personal.

EXAMPLE:

I worked as an intern for ABC company and learned the foundation of accounting for a small business. During my time as an intern, I was able to network and build relationships with key employees. My internship ended, and I returned to school for the next semester.

EXAMPLE:

XYZ recently reorganized its entire company structure due to COVID-19. 200 staff were laid off during the transition. I happened to be one of those 200.

Be positive! Focus on showing your excitement for the future and how you can use the skills and experience learned in your past roles with your future employer.

EXAMPLE:

I value XYZ company and understand what they had to do to stay successful. I appreciate that I was at the same company for so many years. This change has allowed me to explore new careers, and I'm excited to be able to discuss this role with you.

What if you left on bad terms?

If it was performance-based, sometimes it's best to be honest. Own the situation and show maturity. Talk about what you learned from your mistakes and describe how this will change your approach to work in the future. Remain positive and never bad-mouth your former company. Be prepared to answer follow-up questions on this topic.

PRACTICE!

The best way to get comfortable when delivering your Elevator Pitch and Exit Statement is to practice. Make sure they flow nicely, are easy to understand, and are under one minute; and make sure you can say them with energy and enthusiasm! Start by practicing on Zoom with a friend or with your family, practice while driving in a car, put earbuds in and go for a walk (people will think you're on the phone). Then eventually start using your elevator pitch at Career Fairs and your exit statement during the interview processes that follow!

Next Steps

- Craft your Elevator Pitch and Exit Statement
- Ask for feedback and practice delivering your Elevator Pitch and Exit Statement to several people.

INTERVIEWING POINTS

Many companies are turning to behavior-based interviewing methods. Using behavioral interviewing, an interviewer will ask *prepared, specific, and structured questions* about past behaviors, and ask for examples of how you acted in previous work settings.

Here are some examples:

- Describe a decision you made that wasn't popular. How did you handle implementing it?
- Tell me about a mistake you've made in the past, and what you learned from it?
- Give an example of how you set some goals and achieved them.
- Share an example of how you were able to motivate employees or co-workers.

As you can see, because behavioral interviewing is based on the theory that past performance is the best indicator of future behavior, questions are more situational – or experienced-based. They also will include additional probing questions to help you recall specific situations.

The STAR Method

A complete answer to a behavioral-based question has four components. The STAR technique, essential for behavioral interviews and valuable in all interviews, will improve your overall interview performance in several ways. It is an excellent format for discussing what you did in a past job. It ensures that you emphasize the results of your action, and most importantly, it compels you to be very thorough when presenting your experiences.

S	T	A	R
SITUATION	TASK	ACTION	RESULT
What was the situation that you faced?	A description of the task(s) that was associated with the situation.	Specifically, what did you do or say? What role did you play?	What was the result of your behavior?