

5 Common LinkedIn Mistakes

LinkedIn is gaining more and more importance in the job search and career development. But just signing up for a free profile isn't enough; you need to invest time optimizing your profile and getting involved in LinkedIn in order to benefit from it. And, of course, you need to avoid five of the most common [LinkedIn mistakes](#).

1. Incomplete Profile

LinkedIn routinely reports complete profiles turn up more in searches, receive significantly more views, and generate more interest from other users. And, of course, that's the whole point of LinkedIn! So an incomplete profile undermines your purpose in being there.

Make a commitment to yourself to get your profile complete this week. And remember LinkedIn periodically changes how it measures "completeness," so you'll need to make checking your profile's completeness part of your routine. Even quarterly will suffice for many people.

2. No Photo Or Inappropriate Photo

LinkedIn is a professional networking site, and so your photo should reflect your general industry and your personal professionalism. As lawyers, we're part of a generally conservative profession, so a business or business casual photo is usually better than a casual one. And there are certainly limits to how casual you want to be on LinkedIn!

This is no place for a cleavage shot, or the photo from that party boat in Jamaica, or you dressed as a clown for your nephew's third birthday. Get a recent high quality photo that reflects the image you want to project. How do you want prospective employers, recruiters, and leaders in the industry to view you?

3. Tying Yourself To Your Current Employer

Whether its using your work e-mail address to sign up for your account or using a headline like "Legal Intern at Acme Law Partners, LLP," tying yourself too closely

to your employer is a mistake. Your [LinkedIn profile](#) should be a way to attract opportunities to you, not just reinforce that you're an instrument of your employer. Focus your LinkedIn profile on *your* accomplishments, what *you* offer, and how *you* can benefit clients and employers.

4. Lying Or Misleading

This should go without saying, but don't use your LinkedIn profile to lie or otherwise mislead people. Lying or misleading might advance short-term goals of generating interest in you, but those lies and misrepresentations will be uncovered. The only question is when, and how much damage you have done to yourself. Go ahead and put your best foot forward, but everything on your LinkedIn profile should be true and survive a background check.

If you're tempted to lie because you're feeling insecure about something in your background, then the best thing to do is to identify that insecurity and do something about it. If your technical skills are lacking, then improve them. If your education is lacking, then improve it—or find a way to counterbalance it. Lying or misleading will only hurt you in the long-run.

5. Not Enough Connections

LinkedIn is a [networking](#) site. Therefore, it can only work for you if you build a network. Don't stop after you've connected with your classmates and friends at work. You need to expand your network beyond 150 people—and higher up the hierarchy to include possible mentors, experienced recruiters, mid-level and senior attorneys who make hiring decisions and can influence the hiring process and your career development—if you're going to start finding and attracting opportunities.