

7 Ways to Optimize Your Professional Profile

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Jesse Gant is co-founder of Recmnd.Me, an easy way for professionals to recommend each other, and a tool for employers and recruiters looking to quickly hire the best talent. Gant has more than 15 years of experience building social online analytics and video at companies like Omniture.

Companies spend a lot of money every year making sure they are found online. And there are countless articles explaining the ins and outs of online marketing for a corporate brand. But what about your personal brand? How should you optimize your personal brand so you're easily discovered?

The great news is that it's the easiest brand to work with since, for the most part, you get to decide how it's portrayed. Here are some tips to help you optimize your online profiles like you would a business website.

1. Keep it Up to Date

Change jobs? Post it. Change job title? Post it? Add something on the side? Post it. In other words, post often. Another great way to keep things current is to add new peer recommendations on a consistent basis. This is an excellent way to keep the content on your online profiles fresh. The best way to do it? Aim to get a new recommendation every month. If you get several recommendations at once, spread them out.

2. Refresh Your Keywords and Specialties

What terms are used on job search websites to describe what you do? Find those terms and use them intermittently in the same way any good website does. But be smart about it. Be sure when you add keywords or phrases that you do it organically. Overusing keywords can look bad. Also, it's important when using keywords or phrases to be specific. The more specific about what type of work you do the more it will help you get found by the right potential employers.

3. Be Everywhere

This isn't the first time you've heard it, but it's clear search and social media are now officially joined at the hip. That's why you should create multiple online profiles. Websites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Facebook, and a personal blog that are all connected via links, help your personal search rankings. Keep your messaging consistent as well since you don't want to come off as someone with multiple personalities.

Also, remember that keeping social media “social” is still the best way to benefit from it. That means you need to get involved by participating in discussions, commenting on blogs and offering recommendations. In case you’re still wondering if being more social across multiple platforms will help, consider this. In 2011, 89% of companies used social media for recruiting.

4. Get the Recognition You Deserve

Post awards, accolades, and significant accomplishments. It’s OK to brag a little on these platforms as long as you keep it honest. Yes, it’s generally better to have someone else brag about you, but all legitimate recognitions should be included in your profiles no matter who’s pointing them out.

5. Diversify Your Professional and Peer Recommendations

If all of your recommendations are from co-workers at your current job or from college friends, it won’t help you as much with recruiters. You should be seeking recommendations from more than one group for one simple reason: It adds to your credibility.

6. Request Personal and Professional Recommendations

This article is a great primer for recommendations. The two major lessons you’ll learn: Ask for specific recommendations, and say thank you. Good recommendations can be tough to secure, but they’re worth it. And being appreciative can get you a lot more than you realize.

7. Get Involved in Groups on LinkedIn and Other Job Forums

Find the groups that relate to your career focus or community and get involved. Alumni and professional groups on LinkedIn are a great place to start. As you get involved, you’ll notice that it’s an excellent forum for networking with company executives and even recruiters.