

Updating Your LinkedIn Profile

Young Lawyers Edition

By Aaron P. Sohaski



LinkedIn is one of the most powerful social networking tools available for lawyers, thanks to its unique concentration of professionals prepared for networking. According to the American Bar Association's 2015 *Legal Technology Survey Report*, 95 percent of lawyers asked to use LinkedIn for professional purposes.

This far exceeds the closest competitor, Facebook, which was used by only 35 percent of respondents. Colleagues and potential clients are turning to LinkedIn as a source of information on lawyers and firms, making it a crucial place to curate the most flattering professional profile possible.

The following tips can help you position your firm's brand in the legal community, increase your visibility, and expand your personal reach. Think of it this way: the more you network, the more likely you are to receive referrals and create an environment of thriving professional connections. LinkedIn helps you create this with minimal financial investment.

Include a current, professionally taken photo

LinkedIn offers primarily text-based profiles, which is why yours should feature a professionally taken head shot. Ideally, the photo should show you in professional attire with a simple background and a friendly look. Try not to overprocess your profile; simplicity is ideal.

Write a compelling tagline

After your photo, your profile's tagline is the second thing people see when searching a name or a company on LinkedIn. Write a brief, professional statement that leaves your



audience wanting to know more. The goal of the tagline is to entice visitors to view your full profile, so keep that in mind.

Ensure that your experience is relevant to your current practice

If you've changed practice areas or had a varied professional history before focusing on law, be sure to curate your previous experience. Pick and choose career highlights that led to your current practice, and make sure that everything appearing in your professional history reflects your present experience and goals.

Invest time in writing your summary

A properly written summary is key to showcasing yourself as a confident legal professional. Since you're creating a high-level synopsis of yourself as a lawyer, consider including wins, values, passions, and validation points.

Keep your summary clear and concise to ensure that your audience finishes reading it. Include pertinent milestones, since others will fill in the blanks if you don't do it for them. Minimize the use of buzzwords to prevent your summary from seeming insincere. If you're not confident in writing your own summary, hire a writer with biography experience to draft one for you.

Write concise, meaningful descriptions of your professional experience

It's important to make your descriptions readable, so avoid lengthy paragraphs. Summarize in a concise manner your position and responsibilities, and quantify results from your time in that position.

For those who have had similar positions, avoid copying and pasting descriptions; it's important to show as much professional growth as possible. Include links to firm pages, especially for your current firm, ensuring that its profile is up to date and includes contact information for inquiries.

Be careful about labeling yourself as a specialist

In many jurisdictions, you're not permitted by law to label yourself as a specialist. Certain states have specific protocols for becoming a specialist within an area of law, and advertising rules surrounding specialization extend to social media accounts.

Lawyers are responsible for meeting advertising requirements in their jurisdictions, so you can't allow other LinkedIn users to label you as a specialist, no matter how tempting it may be. Keep an eye on the language of your profile recommendations as well as skills and endorsements.

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Import professional contacts from your email

This is a fast and easy way to find connections you've already made. Once you give permission, LinkedIn will search your email account for addresses associated with accounts on its platform, and you have the option of importing each contact at that time. Be sure to avoid adding client contacts to ensure professionalism.

Join relevant groups and bar associations

LinkedIn groups can be used as networking opportunities, sources for peer knowledge, and a way to keep updated on legal trends. Since groups are specialized communities, try to give as much as you take; you'll get more from interacting with your fellow group members no matter the topic of discussion.

Add your blog posts and other published articles to your profile

When you add articles or blog posts to your LinkedIn profile, you take advantage of a multitude of benefits. They add another dimension to your account, shine another spotlight on your expertise, and show professional focus.

Install the LinkedIn app on your phone

It's all about mobility. With the LinkedIn app, you can respond to InMail and comments in a timely manner while on the go. You never know what kind of connection will come from a LinkedIn conversation, so take the app with you wherever you go. ■



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