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LinkedIn for Job Seekers (not Influencers)

How to use LinkedIn for actual hiring outcomes — without becoming a content creator.

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01 Introduction

> *LinkedIn is a search engine for recruiters before it is a feed for you. Your job is to be findable for the right query — not to win the algorithm.*

Most LinkedIn advice is written for content creators chasing a follower count. This is not that. This guide is for professionals who want hiring outcomes — discovery by recruiters, warm introductions to hiring managers, faster shortlisting at firms that already use LinkedIn as their default sourcing tool.

The discipline is small but specific. Most candidates have a LinkedIn profile that's 60% functional. The 40% gap is what separates "found by recruiters for the role you want" from "found by recruiters for the role you used to have".

01 How recruiters actually use LinkedIn

Recruiter mode is a search query, not a feed.

Recruiters at most large firms have access to LinkedIn Recruiter — a paid product that's distinct from the consumer feed. They use it as a search engine. They build a query like:

> *role title: "Senior Product Manager" AND industry: SaaS AND location: London (remote OK) AND skills: ("B2B" OR "enterprise") AND years experience: 6-10*

That query returns a ranked list of profiles. The recruiter scans the top 30. Their decision to message you depends on three things: whether your profile matches the query (the search result), whether your headline is specific (the snippet), and whether your most recent role's bullets demonstrate fit (the click-through).

Optimising for the algorithm — high engagement on posts — does not move the needle on this query. Specificity in your profile fields does. Most candidates spend their LinkedIn time on the wrong axis.

02 The headline: 220 characters that decide your discoverability

The single most over-looked field on the platform.

The headline appears next to your name everywhere — in search results, in the feed, in messages, in connection invitations. It is the most-read 220 characters of any profile. Most candidates use it for their current job title. That's the worst possible use.

The right structure: **What you do | What you specialise in | What you want next**.

- *Bad:* "Senior Product Manager at Acme"
- *Better:* "Senior Product Manager · B2B SaaS · ex-Stripe, ex-Atlassian"
- *Best:* "Senior PM, B2B SaaS · 9 yrs shipping enterprise products · open to Director roles in fintech / payments"

The "open to" phrasing is critical. It tells recruiters you'll respond to messages. It also gives them the exact search terms to find you on. "Open to Director roles in fintech / payments" surfaces you for every recruiter who searches "Director", "fintech", or "payments".

03 The "About" section: a recruiter pitch, not a manifesto

300-400 words, written in your voice, optimised for skim.

The "About" section is where most candidates either skip it entirely or write a five-paragraph essay. Both lose. The right format:

1. **One-sentence positioning** (~25 words): what you do, who for, what outcome.
2. **Three bullets**: most relevant outcomes, each with a number.
3. **One paragraph** (~80 words): the throughline of your career — why these moves connect, where you're heading.
4. **One sentence**: explicit "open to" — what kinds of conversations you'd welcome.
5. **Contact line**: best way to reach you outside LinkedIn.

Total: 300-400 words. Skimmable in 30 seconds. Specific enough that a recruiter knows whether you're worth a 15-minute call after that 30 seconds.

04 Experience entries: the right level of detail

Three to five bullets, each with a number. Same as the CV.

The mistake candidates make on the Experience section is to either copy-paste their CV bullets verbatim, or to leave the bullets blank and rely on the role title.

The right level of detail: 3-5 bullets per recent role, each leading with a verb and ending with a number. Same discipline as the CV. The bullets are scanned by recruiters when they click through from the search query, and they are also indexed by LinkedIn's search algorithm — which means specific verbs and quantified outcomes appear in more searches.

For older roles (5+ years ago), shorter is fine — one or two bullets, the most signal-bearing achievements only.

05 The "Skills" section: pick 5 carefully

A quiet but real ranking signal in recruiter searches.

You can list up to 50 skills. Most candidates list 30-40 generic ones (Microsoft Office, Communication, Teamwork). This dilutes your signal and is filtered out by sophisticated recruiters.

The right play: pin 5 skills that exactly match the role you want next. Skills with endorsements appear higher in recruiter search rankings; skills without endorsements barely register. Get those 5 endorsed by colleagues — including former managers if you can — and they become a meaningful ranking factor.

The remaining 45 slots are fine to fill, but treat the top 5 as the ones that actually do the work.

06 Connection strategy and the "open to work" badge

When to use the green frame; when not to.

The "open to work" green frame around your profile photo is visible to everyone who visits your profile, including your current employer. Most candidates either turn it on indiscriminately or never use it. Both are sub-optimal.

The right setting: **"open to recruiters only"**. This makes you appear in the recruiter-only "open to work" filter — a strong signal to LinkedIn Recruiter — without the green badge being visible to your current employer or colleagues.

For connections: prefer quality over quantity. 500+ connections is the threshold for the "500+" display. Beyond that, the value drops fast. Connect with people you've actually worked with, recruiters in your target field, and 1st-degree connections to roles you'd want.

07 Posting: when it actually helps

Most job seekers should post zero. Some should post weekly.

The honest answer most job seekers don't want to hear: posting on LinkedIn does not meaningfully accelerate hiring outcomes for the vast majority of candidates. It accelerates outcomes for two specific groups:

1. **Senior specialists** — Directors and above in technical fields who can credibly publish industry-relevant analysis. One thoughtful post a week from someone like this shifts conversations.
2. **Career changers** — pivot candidates who can use posts to demonstrate competence in the new field before they've worked in it. Counts as "public output" from the previous guide.

For everyone else, the time spent on posts is better spent on three other activities: targeted outreach to recruiters, custom applications to specific roles, and skill development that strengthens the profile fundamentals. Don't perform LinkedIn; use it.

09 Regional variants

Where the universal pattern shifts by market.

US

United States

Highest LinkedIn density of any market. Recruiter Recruiter use intense. Open-to-work badges normalised. Direct messaging recruiters from cold is acceptable when targeted.

UK

United Kingdom

High professional adoption. UK recruiters use LinkedIn Recruiter heavily for executive search. Linguistic register matters more than in US — direct DMs need warmer phrasing.

DE

Germany / DACH

XING still material in Germany alongside LinkedIn, particularly Mittelstand. Maintain both profiles in DACH. LinkedIn dominant for international roles.

CN

China

LinkedIn left China in 2023 (replaced by InCareer, then shut down 2023). Maimai is the standard locally; LinkedIn relevant only for international-facing roles.

AFRICA

African professional market

Strong adoption among educated white-collar workers. Direct connections to recruiters work. WhatsApp follow-up after LinkedIn DM is normal in many markets.

LATAM

Latin America

Strong English-speaking professional adoption. Cross-border opportunities to US/EU heavily mediated through LinkedIn. Spanish-only profile pool much smaller.

Ready to put this into practice?

LinkedIn rewards the specific. The candidate with a precise headline, a quantified Experience, and a thoughtful 'open to' line gets surfaced for the right searches. Most candidates can complete this work in two hours and feel the impact within two weeks.

LinkedIn Optimization

Specific tool for the headline, About, Experience, and Skills sections. Voice-aligned to your CV.

myjobconcierge.com/ai-tools/linkedin-optimization/

CV Gap Filler

A polished CV is the source-of-truth for a polished LinkedIn. Build the CV first; mirror to LinkedIn.

myjobconcierge.com/ai-tools/cv-diagnostics/

AI Career Coach

Strategy coaching: which roles to target, which recruiters to approach, what message to send.

myjobconcierge.com/ai-tools/career-coaching/

Career Guides Hub

CV, interviews, salary, psychometrics, remote work, career pivots — full series.

myjobconcierge.com/career-guides/

My Job Concierge

Stop searching for jobs. Let jobs come to you.

myjobconcierge.com

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