

Shaping Your Futures



Presenting Yourself

Make It Happen Toolkit



Contents

This section covers how to put your best self forward, every step of the way, including:

- Making your first impression count.
- Tips on dress, body language and the way you speak.
- Boosting your online brand.
- Using linkedin to promote yourself and make quality connections.
- Cultivating your brand on facebook and other social media.
- Making networking work for you.



Making The right impression

You don't get a second chance to make a first impression - what you wear, how you communicate and how you hold yourself say a lot about who you are.

Studies show that people make eleven decisions about us in the first seven seconds of meeting us, including impressions of your education, trustworthiness, competence, level of success and professionalism.

Below are some tips to make your first impression count.

Dress for the job you want, not the job you've got

While it may sound superficial, 85% per cent of a first impression is based on your appearance. As a general rule, go classic and opt for quality clothing and accessories.

Be aware of how you communicate

While you should always be yourself in interviews, take a cue from the way the other person acts and speaks to gauge the level of formality. Practise with a friend and speak naturally without 'ums' and 'likes', mumbling, talking too fast or engaging in distracting actions.

Your online brand

Research shows that 73% of 18-34 year olds found their last job through a social network. Creating a professional online profile builds your professional presence and sets you up for career success.

Social media

If you're on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube or LinkedIn, or have a website, blog or photos on the internet, then you have an online brand. Your online presence is a key touchpoint for potential employers and recruiters, and most will look you up online before they meet you.

To predict other people's first impression of you, search your name. Think about the image you're portraying and consider whether this depicts you in a positive light. Are there any elements on your pages that you would be wary of a current or potential employer discovering?

Do

- Choose one to three areas of expertise - the personal SWOT and elevator pitch can help. Your social media content should reflect your interests and values in line with your personal brand. For example, if you think you're a bit of a political guru, it would make sense to share interesting political articles on LinkedIn.
- Keep the same name, profile picture and personality across your social profiles to create a more consistent impression.
- Be proactive in posting things that are in line with your brand to build your profile and credibility. Similarly, joining a relevant group or community will help you make valuable connections and get noticed.
- Control what other people see by changing your privacy settings.

Don't

- Share compromising photos of yourself. If potential employers come across those, this may impact upon your professional image. In fact, a recent study found that 35% of potential employers found content that made them reject a candidate.
- Post anything that may reflect poorly on you.
- Feel obligated to accept work contacts on social media if you'd rather keep your friendship professional.

LinkedIn

Nothing compares to LinkedIn for connecting with colleagues, clients and countless employers. With around 95% of Australian professionals on LinkedIn, it's hands-down the best way to build a network that can help with your career goals.

Many people use LinkedIn to look someone up before a face-to-face meeting and 94% of recruiters use it to find job applicants. You can also connect with professional groups and bodies to keep up with current trends and share insights with other professionals.

LinkedIn is also a great way to check out companies you're interested in. Plus, there's a section for jobs where you can search for roles.

Your LinkedIn profile will shape an employer's first professional impression of you, and therefore can be used to your advantage.

The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Susan Ritmer. The profile header includes her name, title 'User Experience Designer at Novella & Co.', location 'San Luis Obispo, California Area | Design', and a '500+ connections' badge. Below the header, there are buttons for 'Endorse' and 'Send InMail'. A dropdown menu is open, showing options like 'Suggest an update', 'Recommend', 'Endorse skills & expertise', 'Search for references', 'Share profile', 'Export to PDF', 'Flag as inappropriate', 'Remove connection', and 'Block or report' (which is highlighted). The 'Activity' section shows recent connection updates. The 'Background' section includes a 'Summary' with text about her professional experience. On the right side, there are sections for 'People You May Know', a recommendation for 'Novella & Co.', and a 'You & Susan' comparison chart for Skills, Views, and Connections. At the bottom right, there is a 'Susan's Network' visualization showing 93 connections, with Novella & Co. being a prominent one.

10 Tips

To presenting yourself on LinkedIn.

1. Create the perfect profile

As a job seeker, an impressive LinkedIn profile is priceless. Use this space to describe all of your experience and abilities. Take the time to make sure your profile's complete, compelling and typo-free.

2. Include a snappy summary

Your LinkedIn profile is a great opportunity to sell your skills and achievements. Write a three-sentence summary that tells people who you are, how you work and what you're passionate about. To cap it off, add a dot point list of your top five strengths below.

3. Make your talents easy to find

We know recruiters and potential employers are going to love you, but how are they going to find you? Help them out by listing your last three jobs in a simple format. Highlight your skills and include a helpful line under your name to catch their attention.

4. Boost your credibility with recommendations

A recommendation says a lot, so it's good to get these from colleagues, clients and employers. Endorsements of your skills from work mates are also important.

5. Ready, set, connect

Good at networking? Expand your circle of influence and add to your credibility. Aiming for around 350 connections helps recruiters find you more easily.

10 Tips

To presenting yourself on LinkedIn.

6. Become an active LinkedIn group member

Check out different groups and see what the discussions are about. Start contributing and become noticed.

7. Keywords are key

A good thing to keep in mind when finessing your LinkedIn profile is to think about how recruiters will search for the best candidates. Try to include relevant keywords whilst staying concise.

8. Check out who's been viewing your profile

The more advanced version of LinkedIn gives you access to extra tools that will improve your chances of success. You can check out who's been looking at your profile and those of your peers. You can also introduce yourself to anyone who seems like a good contact.

9. Showcase your best work

The world needs talent like yours, so make sure it's part of your LinkedIn profile. You can add links to your portfolio, and use videos and slideshows to highlight what you can do.

10. Get a head start with job alerts

You can get the most out of LinkedIn by setting up job alerts and using the LinkedIn app to apply as soon as suitable jobs come up. After all, a quick response can make all the difference.

Completing your LinkedIn profile

Step 1 – Build your profile

After joining LinkedIn, you can add (and edit) the information you want people to see by completing the following sections:

- **Headline** – this is crucial in describing who you are and in getting people to read your profile, and should include relevant keywords.
- **Headshot** – a professional-looking photo is essential.
- **Summary** – use this section to present your elevator pitch. A great summary makes people want to read through the rest of your profile.
- **Experience** – include all your past experience. Be sure to follow the same guidelines as your resumé, and include relevant information in an easy-to-read format.
- **Skills** – Listing your skills enables potential employers to evaluate your competencies through endorsements from colleagues. The more specific your skills are and the more keywords you use, the more likely you are to be discovered.
- **Recommendations** – these are like referees, but are available for all to see on your profile. Recommendations can be from anyone willing to go public with their praise, such as your previous managers, colleagues and clients. Don't be afraid to ask people for recommendations – a good time is just after you've impressed them with your work – and let them know the skills or achievements you'd like them to highlight.
- **Contact details** – make sure these are up-to-date and include all your details so people can get in touch.
- **Know your settings** – everyone on LinkedIn can see your profile unless you set it to 'private'. You can also make your profile 'public' so that anyone can view it – even people who aren't members.

Completing your LinkedIn profile

Step 2 – Customise your URL

You can customise your LinkedIn URL so it's a more personal expression of your brand. To do this, click the 'Me' icon at the top of your homepage, go to 'View profile', click 'Edit your public profile', click the 'Edit' icon and type the last part of your new custom URL.

Step 3 – Make quality connections

You can connect with other members by sending an invitation or by accepting one. To expand your network even more, you can also connect with your friends' connections, which is valuable for linking up with more senior people in your industry.

Step 4 – Recommendations and introductions

Recommendations written by your connections provide credibility to your professional skills. It can be the difference between a forgettable profile and a memorable one. Don't be shy, as asking for recommendations is common practice. If people see recommendations from your previous employers, clients and colleagues, they'll know you're good at what you do. There's a LinkedIn feature that lets you send a message to the person you'd like a recommendation from, which won't be published until you've accepted it.

Step 5 – Privacy and confidentiality

You can make your LinkedIn profile either 'public' or 'private'. When it's public, anyone can view it just by doing a search, even people who don't have a LinkedIn account. When it's 'private', people have limited access to your information, and they also won't be able to see if you visit their page. For the best of both worlds, you can even have your profile on 'public' while using the 'private' setting to view other profiles.

You can change your privacy settings by clicking on 'Manage public profile'. Select 'Edit' and choose the option you want, based on what you're comfortable with people seeing.

Completing your LinkedIn profile

The do's and don'ts of LinkedIn

Do

- Keep your profile up-to-date.
- Join groups and follow companies that are a good fit.
- Personalise your page by including information in line with your brand.
- Add your LinkedIn URL to your email signature so employers can connect with you.
- Recommend other people who do great work, and hopefully they'll return the favour.

Don't

- Make connections just for the sake of it. The best way to use LinkedIn is for quality connections and introductions.
- Publicise too much personal information, although it's fine to show some personality and what it's like to work with you.
- Rely on LinkedIn as your only means of networking or source of information.
- Ignore the 'Summary' part of your profile, which highlights your strengths in a few punchy sentences. Your elevator pitch can help.

Facebook

What's Facebook got to do with personal branding?

Although unexpected, Facebook is becoming a more professional network that includes details about your work and education.

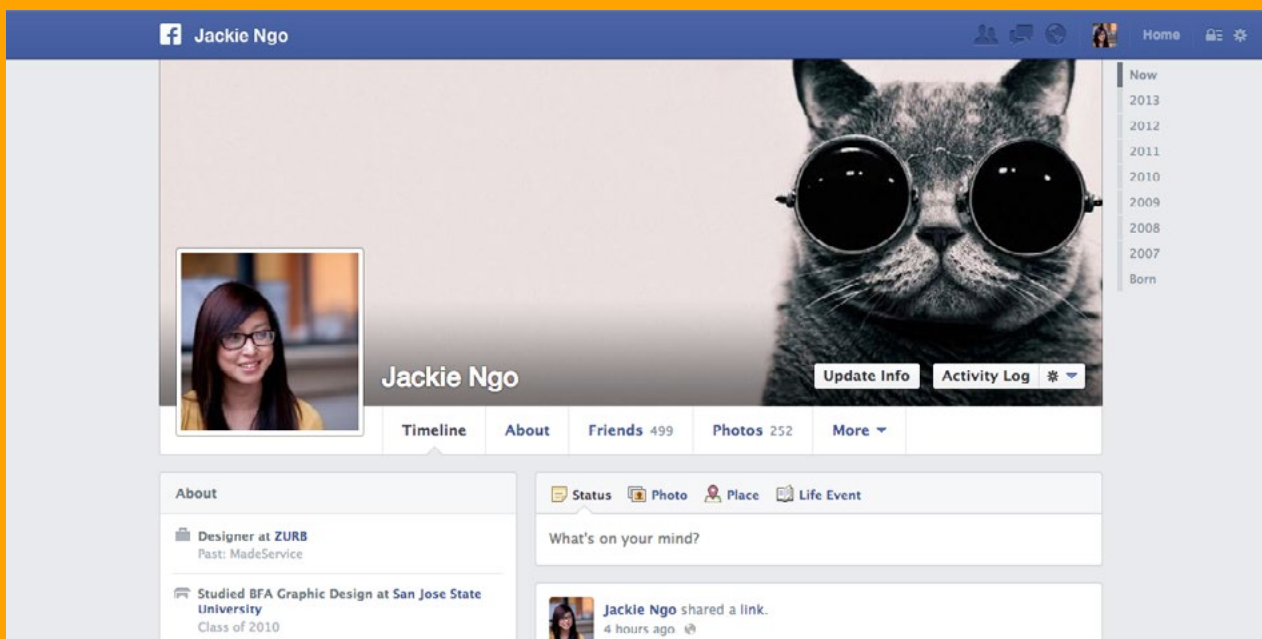
As anyone can access your Facebook page, it's no surprise that 35% of employers rejected candidates based on what they found. The main reasons are inappropriate photos or content, posts about drinking or drugs, or speaking badly of an employer, co-worker or client.

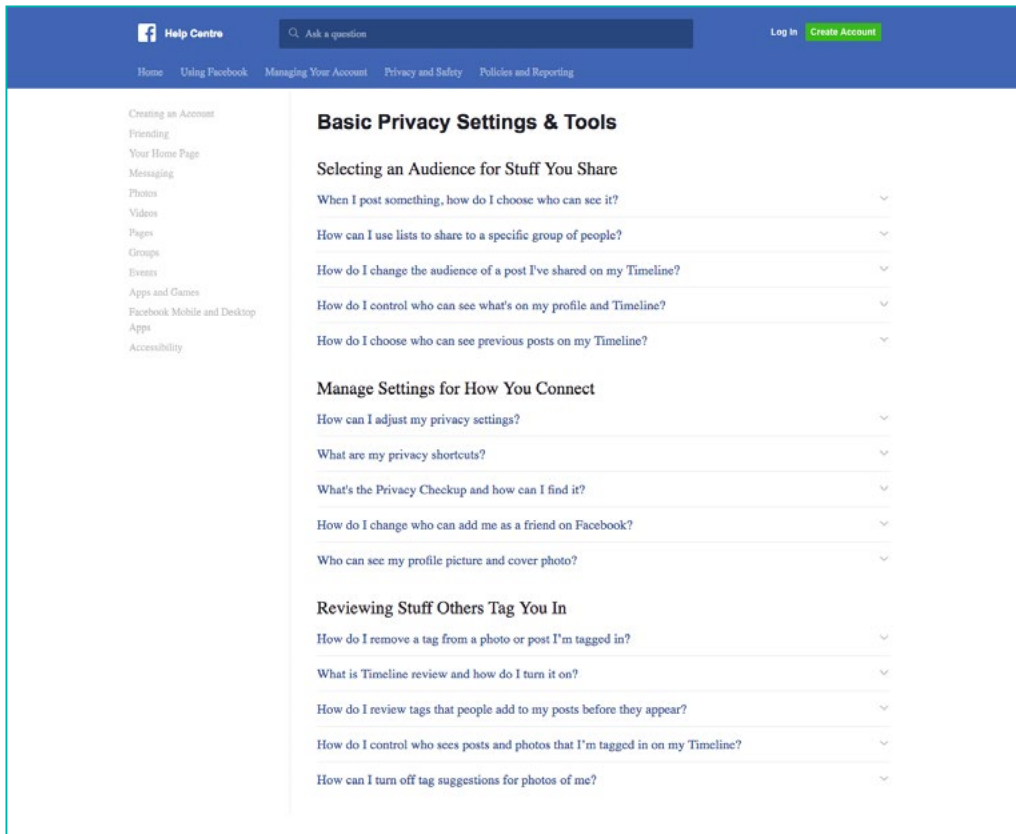
On a positive note, 18% of managers found things that made them hire the candidate. The biggest positives include the person's fit with the company, support for professional qualifications or the candidate's creativity.

With friend requests from colleagues, customers and managers becoming the norm, Facebook is no longer just a way of connecting with friends and family. So how can you brand yourself well on Facebook, just like LinkedIn?

Professional details

With Facebook now showing your professional information, include your company's name and what you do, not who you are. For instance, write 'managing large-scale IT projects in the Public sector' over simply describing yourself as a 'consultant'. And don't forget to include your school and university to complete the picture and extend your connections.





Keep your profile picture professional

Your Facebook profile shot is probably the most important photo on social media, as everyone can see it, regardless of your privacy settings. Ensure your picture is appropriate and enhances your personal brand.

Know your privacy settings

If there's anything on Facebook that you don't want the world to see, there are a range of ways to restrict your photos, videos and posts, including setting up different access for different groups of people.

Other ways to promote yourself on Facebook

1. Smart status updates: It can be beneficial to post something thought-provoking and consistent with your personal brand. Examples might include a video or article related to your industry or an inspiring story about someone like Richard Branson.
2. Like and follow relevant pages: Keep in mind that what you like reflects your interests, values and personality, which an employer may look at when deciding if you're a good fit for the job.

Branchout

Branch Out lets you do professional networking on the Facebook platform by importing your LinkedIn profile. One handy feature is that you can search for contacts based on a company.

Twitter

Another way to promote your personal brand is using Twitter. Twitter is used to follow people you like or find inspiring, and get followers who want to hear from you and your personal brand.

Twitter is mainly for people who really want to make a statement, gain attention as entrepreneurial thinkers, or to promote their own business. Most employers don't look at Twitter to find information about you.

Why networking is worth it

With around 70-80% of jobs never being advertised, networking is your key to the hidden job market.

The purpose of networking is to:

- Create connections with like-minded people.
- Gain exposure and build your personal brand.
- Learn about relevant industries, companies and job opportunities.
- Obtain the names of additional potential connections.
- Help others.

While everyone in your network can be a potential opportunity, you should aim to build genuine relationships rather than asking for favours. However, be open about looking for work and what you're after.

Building your network

While networking may seem daunting at first, the more you do it, the better you'll get. To get started, write down a list of people you know who you'd like in your network, especially those who know other people that may lead you to opportunities. List at least 30-50 people.

Activity

Network list

Start thinking of who you can include in your network.
Former and current colleagues:

Former employers/supervisors:

Former colleagues:

Customers/clients/suppliers:

Friends, family and acquaintances:

Industry associations/clubs:

Business networking groups:

Special interest groups:

It's a LinkedIn world

Of all the networking sites available, LinkedIn is the most valuable. LinkedIn lets you connect with a huge range of contacts, organisations and groups within your industry and beyond.

It also enables you to stay informed on industry trends and share information with other professionals.

Start with people you know well and keep your networking targeted. You can then build your network by seeing who your connections are connected with, as well as which profiles they've viewed. You can also ask for recommendations, which is one of the best ways to promote yourself.

Another good tip is to join your company or uni alumni group to increase your connections and opportunities. You can also research companies, their staff and culture. Additionally, there is the option of joining various professional groups, where you can be part of discussions.

Ultimately, LinkedIn is an excellent way to broaden your connections for long-term career benefits.

Maintaining your Network

By making networking part of your daily life, the process will become a natural behaviour. Here are some tips to keep you on track:

- Know what you want to achieve.
- Build simple networking activities into your everyday routine.
- Set reminders for networking in your calendar.
- Keep notes on your conversations.
- Monitor your progress.
- Look for common ground with your connections, and think about mutually beneficial opportunities.
- Follow up on every meeting with a thank you call or email.

Remember, it takes time to build your network. Having a positive conversation with someone today doesn't mean you'll work with them tomorrow, but it may prove priceless over time. Use the table below to track your networking or grab a piece of paper and write down your answers.

Name	Email	Phone	Notes

Your next career step

If you're looking for your dream job, the Make It Happen Toolkit has everything you need to make your next move an unforgettable one.

From crafting your resume through to tackling the toughest interview, these tried-and-tested tips will empower you to move into your next role with ease.

Make sure you explore each section in this five part series.

