READY SET EXEC

The Executive Edge: LinkedIn For leaders

A practical playbook to position yourself, grow your network, and attract the right opportunities on LinkedIn.

Presented by
Ready Set Exec

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READY SET EXEC

Why LinkedIn Matters at the Executive Level:

LinkedIn is no longer just a résumé site. For executives, it's your digital reputation, your visibility engine, and your business card, all in one.

Whether you're exploring a new opportunity, expanding your board presence, or simply staying top of mind in your industry, a strong LinkedIn presence builds credibility and opens doors. Recruiters are searching. Investors are browsing. Colleagues are watching. What they see is up to you.

What This Guide Helps You Do:

This isn't a generic how-to. It's designed specifically for senior leaders who want their LinkedIn presence to reflect their real-world impact.

In this guide, you'll learn how to:

- Build a clean, optimized profile that attracts attention for the right reasons
- Position your experience and leadership brand clearly
- Grow your network with purpose
- Post content that drives visibility without playing the algorithm game
- Use LinkedIn like a strategic tool and not just a digital CV

PROFILE FOUNDATIONS

Set Up With Intention

Start with the basics — but don't treat them like a checklist. Every element of your LinkedIn profile should reinforce your brand as a leader.

Essentials to Cover

Use your real name (no initials or nickname handles)
Use a personal, non-work email so you don't lose access during transitions
Turn on 2FA (two-factor authentication) for security
Add a professional headshot — no selfies, cropped photos, or party pics
Upload a custom banner behind your photo — ideally something that reflects your industry, leadership role, or personality

Pro Tip: Customize Your LinkedIn URL

In your profile settings, set a clean, custom URL using your name. This makes you easier to search and it looks sharper on resumes, business cards, or bios.

Consider Premium (Temporarily)

LinkedIn Premium lets recruiters message you directly and gives visibility into who's viewing your profile. If you're actively exploring opportunities or consulting, it's often worth it.

Tune Your Visibility Settings

- Enable "open to work" but keep it visible only to recruiters
- Select preferred work types (full-time, contract, board roles, etc.)
- Add up to three job titles you're open to — using search-friendly language
- If consulting, use the custom profile button for booking links or your website

THE STORY

Tell the Right Story

Your LinkedIn profile isn't your résumé — it's your narrative. It should explain not just what you've done, but why it matters.

The "About" Section: Your Elevator Pitch

Think of this as your 30-second value proposition. It's the most human part of your profile — and the first thing recruiters or board members actually read.

What it should include:

- Your Unique Value Proposition (UVP) — What business problem do you solve?
- What You're Known For — Big wins, specific strengths, or leadership style
- What You're Looking For — If you're open to opportunities, say so
- Why It Matters — Tie your experience back to impact, not just roles

Tip: Avoid writing this like a biography. Instead, speak directly to the decision-maker reading it.

Optimize Your Work Experience

Don't just list job titles. Show proof.

Use this format for each role:

- Market-Recognized Job Title (Company Title in brackets, if different)
- One-line summary of the company (industry, size, market)
- 3–4 Bullet Points focused on measurable wins (KPI-based)
- Short description of responsibilities, with keywords tied to your goals

Headlines That Pull People In

Your headline appears in search results, DMs, and comments — it's your hook. Don't waste it on just a job title.

Examples:

"VP, Sales"
"Driving Revenue Growth for B2B SaaS Companies | GTM Strategy | Team Builder"

"Chief Marketing Officer"
"CMO | Scaling Brands Through Storytelling + Demand Gen | $100M+ ARR Experience"

Tips:

- Front-load the most important keywords
- Keep it under ~120 characters for mobile visibility
- Avoid buzzwords like "dynamic," "seasoned," or "results-driven"

DISCOVERABILITY

Be Discoverable

If no one can find you, your story doesn't matter. This section is about making sure the right people see you — when it matters most.

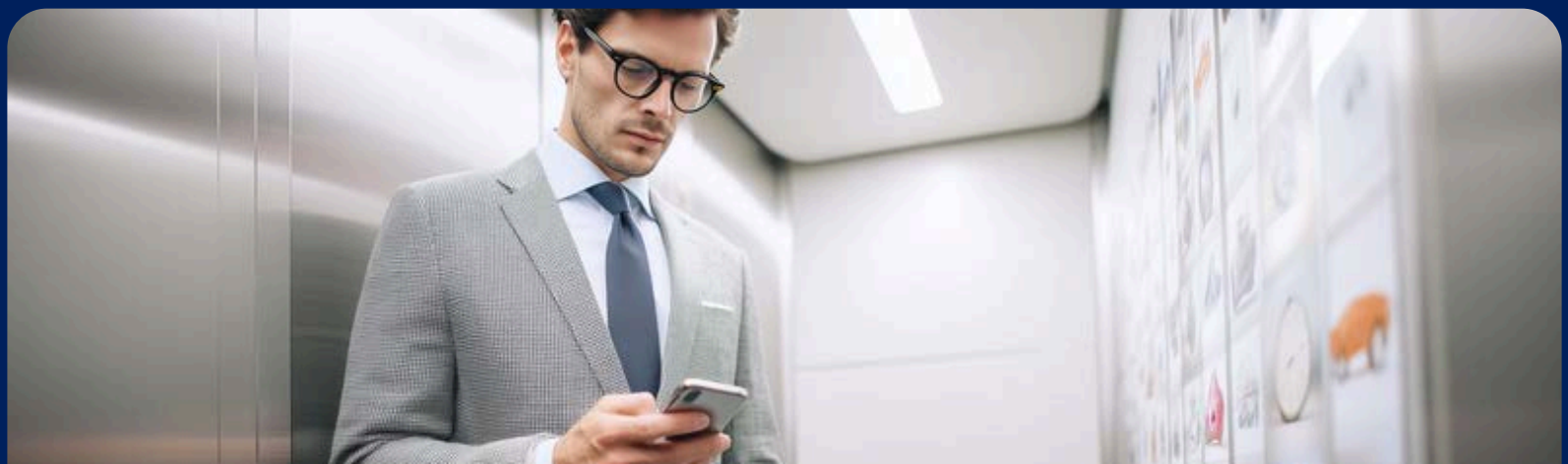
Keywords = Visibility

LinkedIn is a search engine. Recruiters use it like Google — which means you need to optimize your profile like a landing page.

Here's how:

- Identify the top 2–3 roles or titles you want (e.g., "Chief Revenue Officer," "VP of Growth," "Head of GTM")
- Use a tool like ChatGPT or LinkedIn job descriptions to pull relevant keywords tied to those roles
- Sprinkle those keywords across:
- Your About section
- Your Headlines
- Your Experience descriptions
- Your Skills list

Use the language companies search for — not just the internal titles you held.



Skills Section: Choose Wisely

You get 50 skills. Use them.

Tips:

Prioritize leadership, technical, and functional skills based on your target role
Use specific tools/technologies only if relevant at the exec level (e.g., Salesforce, HubSpot, Tableau)
Include strategic-level skills (e.g., “Board Reporting,” “Global Expansion,” “P&L Ownership”)

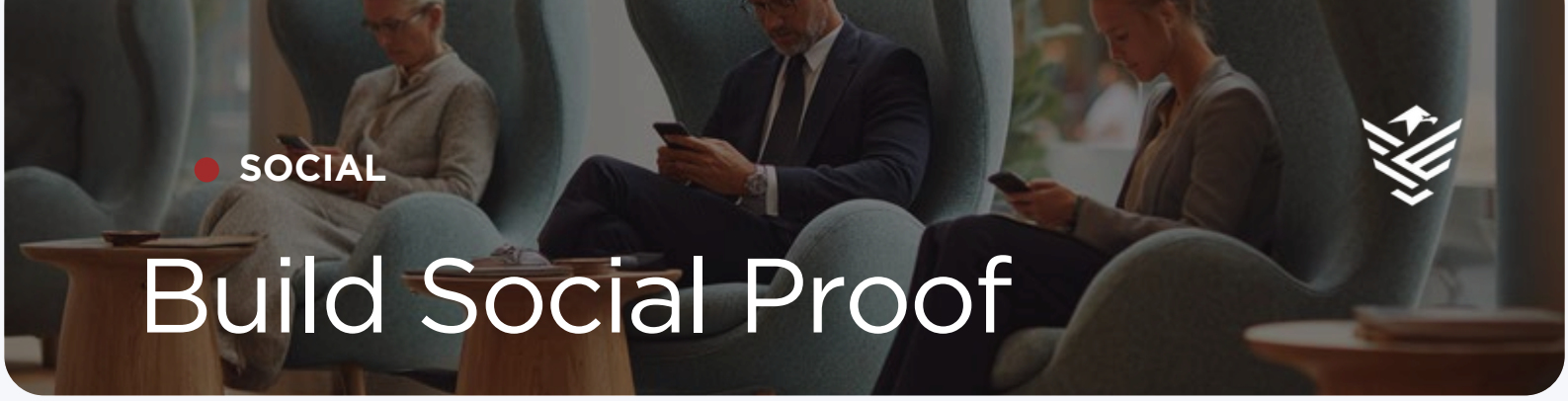
Job Titles and Industries Matter

LinkedIn’s algorithm uses your listed job titles and selected industry to determine:

- Who sees your content
- What jobs appear in your feed
- How often you’re shown to recruiters

Make sure:

- Your titles reflect market language (e.g., “Head of Talent Acquisition” vs. “People Ninja”)
- You’ve selected an accurate industry in your profile settings
- You’ve filled in work preferences if you’re open to new roles (e.g., locations, remote/on-site, contract/full-time)



SOCIAL

Build Social Proof

Anyone can claim leadership — but what others say about you makes it real.

Recommendations: Your Reputation, Verified

A few targeted recommendations can instantly elevate your profile. The key is who they're from and what they say.

Focus on getting recs from:

- Direct reports who can speak to your leadership
- Peers or cross-functional collaborators
- Customers, partners, or board members (if applicable)

Ask them to highlight:

- Specific impact you had on business outcomes
- Your leadership style
- Why you're different from others in similar roles

Connect first, then request a recommendation — and make it easy by offering a prompt or reminder of shared work.

Endorsements: Quick Trust Builders

While less powerful than recommendations, skill endorsements add legitimacy — especially when they're coming from other respected professionals in your field.

- Endorse others first — many will reciprocate
- Focus on your top 10–15 skills (LinkedIn displays these most visibly)
- Pin the most relevant ones to your profile

Authority Signals Beyond Your Resume

LinkedIn also reads your network size, industry connections, and content engagement as signs of influence.

Boost your authority by:

- Connecting with peers, past colleagues, and leaders in your space
- Engaging with content from industry influencers
- Commenting insightfully on posts, not just liking

● **CONTENT AND VISIBILITY**

Content That Builds Visibility and Trust

You don’t need to post daily — you need to post with purpose.

Know Your Audience

Before you post anything, ask:

Who do I want to reach?

- If you’re job-seeking: Think decision-makers, executive recruiters, and potential board members
- If you’re consulting: Think potential clients or referral partners
- If you’re staying visible: Think peers, investors, and industry influencers

Define your **Ideal Viewer Profile (IVP)** and write to them.

What to Post

You don’t need viral hits. You need relevance + consistency.

Types of content that work well for executives:

- Insights from past leadership experiences
- Short lessons tied to business results
- Strategic takes on industry news
- Frameworks, philosophies, or principles you lead by
- Wins or milestones (especially those that showcase your team)
- Thoughtful reposts with your take on them

Avoid fluffy leadership clichés — focus on clarity and specificity.

Frequency & Format

Post 2–3x per week to stay visible

Use the first 140 characters as a hook — it's what shows in the preview

Mix up formats:

- Text posts for thought leadership
- Image or doc carousels for frameworks or visual examples
- Native video if you're comfortable on camera
- Use the "Featured" section to pin top-performing or strategic posts

Add a Clear CTA

Tell people what to do next:

- Follow you
- DM you for consulting
- Comment with their take
- Click a link
- Share with their network

Even a soft ask like "If this resonated, connect with me here" makes a difference.

ADVANCED STRATEGIES

Advanced LinkedIn Moves for Executives

When your presence is intentional, LinkedIn becomes more than a network — it becomes leverage.

Smart Search = Smart Networking

Use LinkedIn's advanced filters and Boolean search to strategically expand your network. You can filter by:

- Company (current or past)
- Job title (e.g., "Head of Strategy" OR "VP of Growth")
- Location or region
- Industry or service vertical
- Connections of a specific person

Boolean Tip: Use AND, OR, and quotation marks to refine searches.

Example: ("Chief Operating Officer" OR COO) AND "B2B SaaS"

Grow Your Network Intentionally

- Aim to send 10–20 strategic connection requests per week
- Personalize each message — especially if you're not selling
- Reconnect with former colleagues, partners, and peers
- Use shared groups, events, or alma maters as openers

Your goal isn't mass connections — it's meaningful access.

Follow Target Companies

Interested in working with or for a company?

- Follow their company page
- Set a job alert for relevant roles
- Engage with their posts to get visibility
- Check mutual connections and ask for warm intros when appropriate

Back Up Your Data

Every quarter (or month if you're active), download your:

- Connections
- Messages
- Posts and activity
- Profile history

Why? It protects your network — and gives you data to repurpose for consulting, outreach, or rebuilding if needed.

FINAL POLISH

Details That Signal Executive Readiness

Your profile is a reflection of your leadership. The details matter.

Run a Full Profile Audit

Before you hit “done,” review your profile top to bottom:

- Does it reflect who you are — and where you’re going?
- Is it consistent with your resume and personal brand?
- Are there gaps in work history or missing context?

Ask a trusted peer or mentor to review it. Better yet, work with a professional resume or LinkedIn coach.

Use the “Featured” Section Strategically

Highlight high-value assets like:

- Articles you’ve written or been featured in
- Videos or keynotes
- Your consulting site or personal blog
- Top-performing LinkedIn posts

Tidy Up the Details

- Avoid buzzwords like “seasoned,” “go-getter,” “visionary”
- Focus on role-relevant keywords that drive search visibility
- Link your jobs and education to the correct company/school pages
- Use LinkedIn’s new “career gap” feature to explain time off clearly
- Don’t list graduation dates older than 15 years — keep the focus forward

Show You’re Active

- Endorse a few peers’ skills (many will return the favor)
- Respond to comments on your posts
- Send thank-you messages to new connections
- Revisit your settings monthly to adjust for evolving goals

CLOSING THOUGHTS

LinkedIn isn’t just a platform. It’s your public proof of leadership.

A well-built profile doesn’t just attract attention. It builds credibility, drives conversations, and opens the door to new opportunities — whether you’re actively searching or simply staying relevant.

Remember:

- You’re not trying to impress everyone — just the right people
- Every section is an opportunity to lead with intention
- LinkedIn is where executive visibility begins — not where it ends

What Happens Next Is Up to You

Whether you post once a week or once a month…
Whether you’re pursuing board seats, C-level roles, or consulting work…
Whether you’re building toward something new or protecting what you’ve built…

The one thing you control is how clearly your story is told.

ABOUT US

About Ready Set Exec

We're not recruiters. We're growth enablers.

Ready Set Exec helps scaling organizations find senior leaders who drive real results. From C-Suite to high-impact departmental roles, we deliver not just candidates, but **confidence**. Founded by Patrick Shea and John Pezoulas, we've built teams, scaled companies, and helped over 10,000 people find roles they thrive in.

Visit readysetexec.com for more insights or follow us on LinkedIn.
If you're planning a relocation or hiring from outside your region, let's talk.