

Get Found, Not Filtered

*How to build a LinkedIn profile that
recruiters find, from the profile photo
to the sections almost nobody fills in.*

INTRODUCTION

Recruiters Don't Read Profiles. They Search Them.

Before a human ever reads your profile, an algorithm decides whether you show up at all. LinkedIn Recruiter ranks candidates by keyword match, profile completeness, and activity, the same way a search engine ranks pages. A well-written profile that's missing the right settings simply never enters the results.

For remote workers, there's a second, invisible filter almost nobody fixes: workplace type. Set it wrong, and you're only shown to recruiters searching within 100 miles of your listed city, no matter how many keywords you've packed into your headline. Set it right, and location stops being a filter at all.

This guide walks through both: the basics that shape a recruiter's first impression, and the sections most people leave empty, but that quietly decide whether you're findable at all.

BEFORE YOU START

Do this on desktop, not the mobile app. Several settings in this guide, especially job preferences and workplace type, are easier to find and edit from [linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com) in a browser.

STEP 1

The 3-Second Basics: Photo, Banner, Location

Recruiters decide whether to keep reading in about three seconds, before they've read a single word. A blurry photo, a stock banner, or a missing location reads as an inactive or unfinished profile, and gets skipped even if the experience below it is strong.

DO THIS

- ☐ Use a recent, front-facing photo with a plain, uncluttered background, shoulders up, no group crops.
- ☐ Replace the default banner with one that states what you do, even a plain-color banner with text beats the default.
- ☐ Fill in your location field. An empty one is treated as a red flag, not neutral.

Tip: profiles with a photo get significantly more views. If you only fix one thing today, fix this.

STEP 2

The Headline Is Search Real Estate, Not a Job Title

Your headline is the single most heavily weighted field in recruiter search, more than your most recent job title. "Freelancer" or "Open to opportunities" wastes that space. The headline should name exactly what you do, who you do it for, and the specific skill or tool a recruiter would type into the search bar.

FORMULA

- ☐ [What you do] | [Who you help / specialization] | [Remote-specific keyword]
- ☐ Weak: "Marketing Freelancer"
- ☐ Strong: "AI Content & Localization Specialist | Remote-First | Prompt Review, LLM Data Annotation"

Tip: repeat your top 2-3 keywords from the headline again inside About and Experience. Frequency, not just presence, affects ranking.

STEP 3

Open to Work: Turn It On the Discreet Way

The green #OpenToWork frame is public. A separate, recruiter-only setting shows the same signal exclusively to people using LinkedIn Recruiter, without announcing it to your network or current employer. Profiles with this enabled receive noticeably more recruiter messages, and it costs nothing to turn on.

DO THIS

- ☐ Go to your profile > "Open to" > "Job titles" and choose recruiter-only visibility if you're currently employed or want discretion.
- ☐ Add up to 5 target job titles, not just one, to widen which searches surface you.
- ☐ Set your workplace type preference explicitly (see Step 4, this is the one people skip).

STEP 4

The Remote Setting Almost Everyone Gets Wrong

This is the fix most guides skip, and it matters more than any keyword. When a recruiter filters candidates by workplace type, an "On-site" or "Hybrid" preference ties your visibility to a roughly 100-mile radius around your listed location. A "Remote" preference removes location from the equation entirely, your profile can surface in searches run from anywhere in the world.

DO THIS

- ☐ In "Open to" job preferences, set workplace type to Remote, not just Hybrid, if you want global reach.
- ☐ Don't leave this on the default. Most profiles inherit "On-site" from their current job and never update it.
- ☐ If you'd genuinely only relocate within a region, say so in About instead of restricting the setting, keep the filter itself open.

Tip: this single setting is the difference between showing up in one city's search results and showing up in all of them.

STEP 5

The About Section: Written for Search, Not Just for Humans

The first two lines are all that shows before "see more," so they need to do the same job as a headline: name what you do and who you help, immediately. The rest of the section is where your core keywords should reappear naturally, alongside specific, numbers-backed outcomes rather than a list of soft skills.

STRUCTURE

- ❑ Lines 1-2: what you do + who you help, in plain language, no jargon opener.
- ❑ Middle: 2-3 concrete outcomes with numbers ("cut onboarding time by 30%", "trained 40+ hours of model evaluation data").
- ❑ Close with a direct CTA: what kind of role or project you're looking for next.

STEP 6

Experience: Outcomes, Not Duties

"Responsible for content review" tells a recruiter nothing searchable and nothing memorable. Rewriting each bullet as action, method, and outcome does two things at once: it reads better to a human, and it repeats the keywords the algorithm is scanning for across every role, not just your most recent one.

FORMULA

- ❑ [Action verb] + [tool/method/keyword] + [measurable outcome]
- ❑ Weak: "Responsible for data annotation tasks."
- ❑ Strong: "Annotated and QA'd 10,000+ text samples for LLM fine-tuning, improving model accuracy scores by 12%."

STEP 7

Skills: Pin Your Top 3 Like Your Visibility Depends On It

Recruiter search filters run almost entirely on your top 3 pinned skills, everything below them is far less visible in results. Endorsement count and verified skill badges (from LinkedIn's short skill assessments) both push you higher within that filter, a skill with real endorsements consistently outranks the same skill with none.

DO THIS

- ☐ Reorder your Skills section so your 3 strongest, most job-relevant skills sit in the pinned top slots.
- ☐ Ask 3-5 former colleagues or clients to endorse those exact 3 skills, not a scattershot list.
- ☐ Take LinkedIn's free skill assessment for at least one core skill to earn a verified badge.

STEP 8

Featured and Recommendations: The Sections Everyone Skips

Featured sits near the top of your profile and is the only section built to show proof instead of claims, a portfolio piece, case study, or writing sample does more than another paragraph of description. Recommendations serve the same purpose from someone else's voice, which reads as more credible than anything you could write about yourself.

DO THIS

- ☐ Add 2-4 strong Featured items (a project, a document, a link), not a dozen mediocre ones, quality outranks volume here.
- ☐ Request 2-3 recommendations from people who can speak to a specific project, not a generic "great to work with."
- ☐ Give the requester a one-line reminder of the project so their recommendation is specific, not generic.

STEP 9

Custom URL and All-Star Status: The Invisible Checklist

A handful of settings don't show up as content on your profile at all, but they gate how often you appear in search in the first place. A fully complete, "All-Star" profile is shown in dramatically more searches than an incomplete one, and a clean custom URL is what makes your profile rank when someone Googles your name.

DO THIS

- ☐ Edit your public profile URL to firstname-lastname (Settings > Edit public profile & URL).
- ☐ Fill every section LinkedIn checks for All-Star status: photo, headline, About, 2+ experience entries, education, skills (5+), and 50+ connections.
- ☐ Recheck this after any big edit, adding a new role can silently drop you out of All-Star if a field gets left blank.

One Last Step: Show Up Consistently

Active profiles rank higher than dormant ones. You don't need to post daily, even a short update or a comment on someone else's post once a week keeps your profile registering as active to the algorithm, not just to the people who happen to scroll past it.

*None of this replaces doing good work.
It just makes sure the right person finds it.*

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