

# LinkedIn Guidelines

## Introduction

We don't often think of ourselves in terms of our own personal brand. Particularly as someone coming out of the military, you're probably not used to conceptualizing yourself this way.

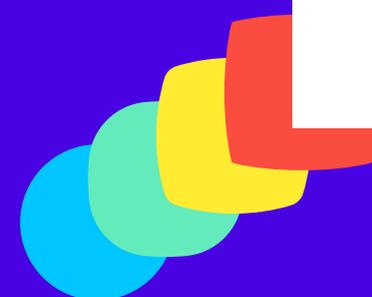
Believe it or not, though, you were already building your personal brand as a military professional. Remember when you received an award or some other accolade for a job well done? That was you separating yourself from the other members of your military community. That was you building your personal brand.

Now that you're entering the civilian sector, building your brand is an essential part of attracting the attention of potential employers. One of the most effective ways to do this is by developing a well crafted LinkedIn profile. When you build your brand, you build credibility. And, with greater credibility, you're much more likely to land jobs you want.

These guidelines will take you step-by-step through the process of creating a well-crafted and highly optimized LinkedIn profile. We suggest completing your resume and reading the Shift resume guidelines before you complete your LinkedIn profile so you can leverage the content of your resume for your LinkedIn profile.

And if you weren't already aware... LinkedIn offers a host of [veteran resources](#) to support veterans in advancing their careers. One special benefit is that veterans get access to a 1-year free [LinkedIn Premium](#) subscription. Premium allows you to conduct unlimited searches for people, message people who are not in your network, and it also gives you additional access to company profiles.

**Questions? Always feel free to reach out and send an email to [td@shift.org](mailto:td@shift.org)**

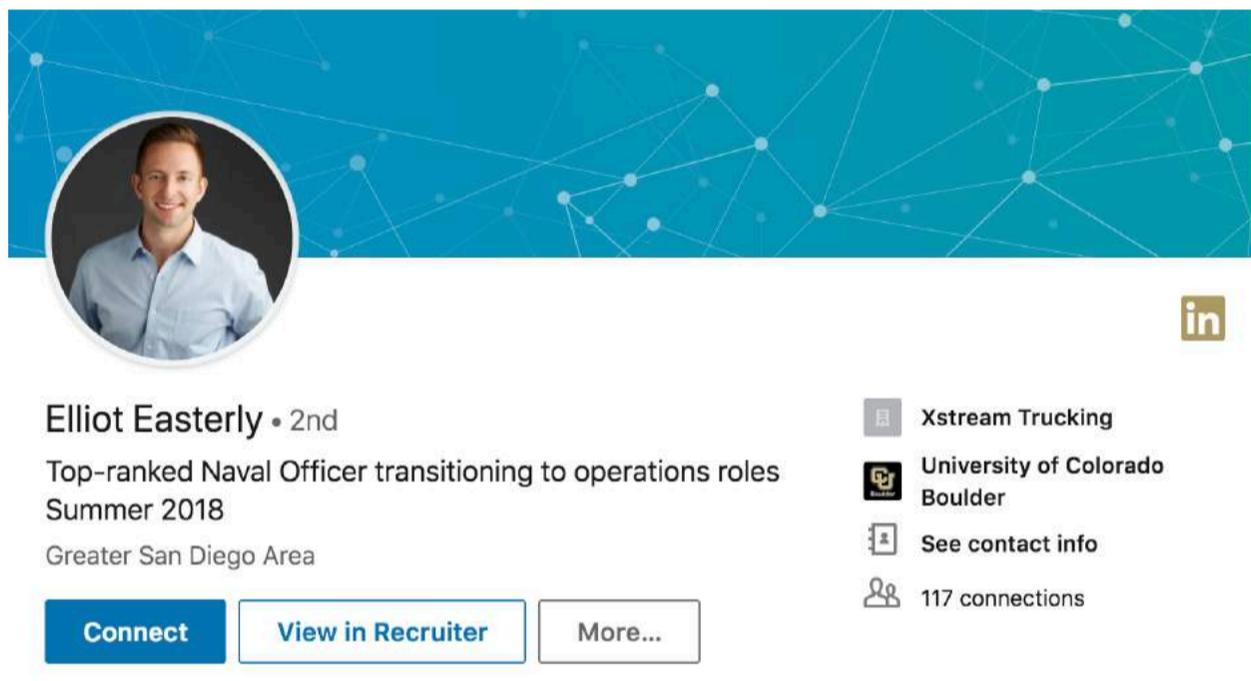


# LinkedIn Guidelines

## STEP 1 – HEADLINE AND PHOTO

Your “Headline” includes the words directly under your name on your LinkedIn profile. This is first thing your profile viewers will learn about you. LinkedIn searches are **heavily** influenced by words used in headlines, so it’s important to select these words carefully.

Let’s use some of our fellows as examples. Elliot effectively uses his headline to communicate the kinds of opportunities he is seeking and when he is available.



For your headline:

- Be specific and targeted - select words that signal the kinds of positions you are targeting, when you can start, etc. so recruiters and contacts know what you want and how to help
- Use civilian language, no military jargon
- Avoid vague, non-actionable keywords: “Leader | Polyglot | Visionary”
- Optional: include the word “Transitioning” to specify that you are transitioning out of military. Some veteran focused recruiters will use the word “Transitioning” when conducting candidate searches.

Other example headlines - actively seeking:

- “Top-ranked Navy SEAL transitioning to operations roles Spring 2017”
- “Accomplished Army logistics professional transitioning in Summer 2017”
- “Technical Project Manager seeking roles in FinTech”



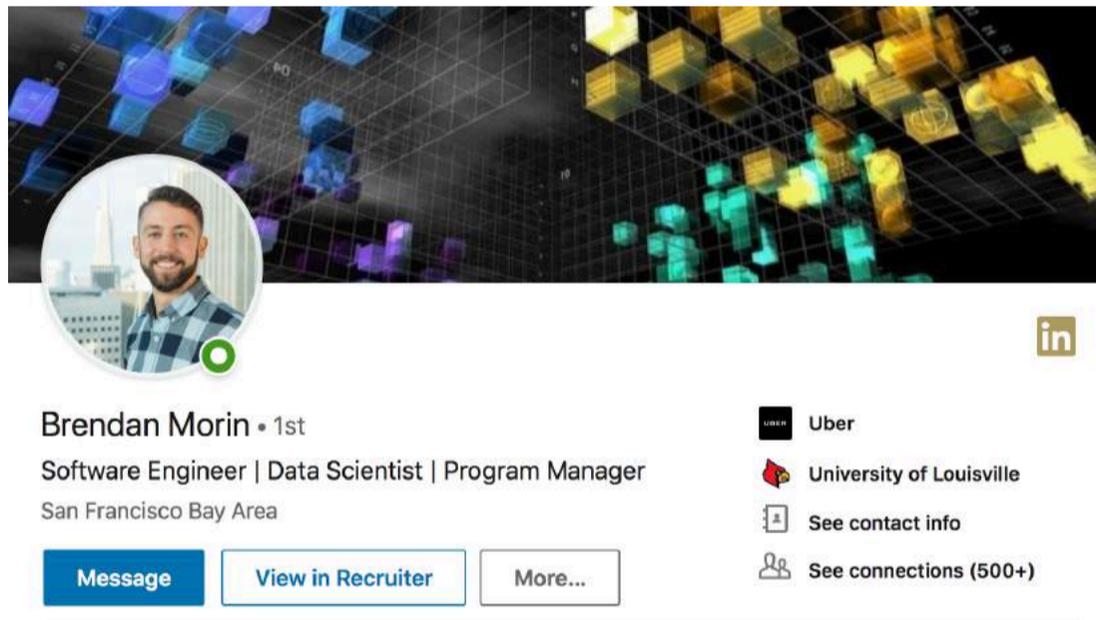
# LinkedIn Guidelines

## STEP 1 – HEADLINE AND PHOTO (continued)

For your photo:

- Professional headshot
  - High quality image, face/shoulders up, smiling (ideally)
  - Dress code: casual or business (depends on roles/industry) – for technology and media companies, business casual works (jackets not required); certain industries like finance or consulting would require a more formal photo.
  - No military photos or pictures with family members – save those for Facebook and Instagram!
  - Optional: customize background photo – notice how Brendan (below) selected a picture which ties to his interests/experience in data science.

This fellow recently completed his fellowship and is not actively seeking positions. Notice how he uses his headline to simply and clearly communicate his current position and the kinds of roles he is qualified for. If you don't want to be as forthright about the fact that you are actively seeking, this is a good alternative approach.



Other tips:

- Get to 500+ connections – this number is displayed in your headline section and is a signal that you're connected to friends and professionals. Sync your contacts to get to this number.
  - However, don't add people just to add people. You want your LinkedIn network to work for you! Add a personal note when you're sending Connections requests, so people know who you are and why you're interested in connecting.
- Customize your profile URL (find this on top right-hand side of page) – format should closely resemble: [www.linkedin.com/in/firstlastname](http://www.linkedin.com/in/firstlastname)



# LinkedIn Guidelines

## STEP 2 – SUMMARY

Your goal in this section is to clearly and concisely communicate your story (What are you doing now? What have you done before? What problems are you interested in solving down the line?) and prove to recruiters that hiring you will make their problems go away.

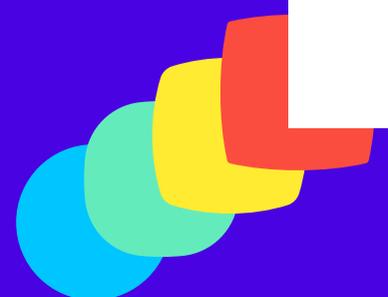
- Use either first or third person - no hard rule on this, although we like first person as it keeps it more conversational and LinkedIn is ultimately a platform for networking and connecting with others.
- Showcase your performance and mirror desired qualifications for roles you'd be interested in.
- Grab language from job descriptions that you are targeting as a way to include keywords that matter.
- Refine the language on weekly or monthly basis - keeping content fresh means you show up at top of recruiter searches more often.
- Include a list of your specialties as a tactic (essentially a keyword dump) at the bottom of your summary to guarantee your profile pops whenever those keywords are searched (example #2 below)

## EXAMPLE #1:

Transitioning Navy Lieutenant seeking new opportunities in Project or Program management in Summer 2018. I look forward to leveraging my broad technical and operational leadership experience to help a mission-driven organization succeed.

- Proven record as a consistent high performer and decision maker in stressful and ambiguous environments. Ranked #2 of 16 high-performing peers.
- Strong communicator with superior organizational skills, I enjoy building teams to tackle big problems and make lasting improvements. Led a working group that overhauled the Navy's maintenance strategy for shipboard cranes.
- Creative problem solver with extensive experience working with engineers in a highly technical environment. Identified, researched and championed alternate engineering solutions saving the Navy \$4 million.

In Example #1, notice how the fellow quantifies his accomplishments and skills to back up what s/he's saying.



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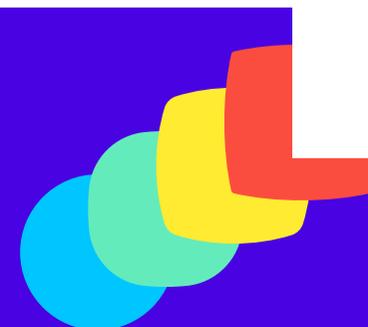
## STEP 2 – SUMMARY (continued)

### EXAMPLE #2:

I am software engineer with a data science bent. I have extensive experience leading award-winning, cross-functional teams as a program manager in the US Air Force. I enjoy bridging the gap between strategic intent and technical execution.

Specialties: API development, algorithm development and optimization, data cleaning and preprocessing, linear regression, cluster analysis, descriptive and predictive statistics, back-end software engineering, machine learning, agile software development, Python, SQL, Java, R Studio, C++, object oriented programming, process improvement, project management, strategic planning, data trend and analysis, technical program management

In Example #2, notice how the fellows highlights all relevant technical skills based on his/her intended career path.



# LinkedIn Guidelines

## STEP 3 – EXPERIENCE SECTION

- Refer to your resume to help you complete this section (e.g. list jobs in reverse chronological order, use your translated military titles, and do not include military jargon).
- **SHOW** as much as possible – include videos, articles, or anything else that will help showcase your experience without too many words; keep descriptions under each role **BRIEF** (this is not a regurgitation of your entire resume, see Example below).
- Once you've accepted a fellowship, you can break out Shift as a separate company to highlight that you were selected to participate in an elite program (use descriptive language from Example below).
  - Selected to participate in Shift Military Fellows Program, a unique opportunity which places high-potential military veterans in immersive fellowship experiences at the world's most innovative companies.
- Include a Title (e.g. Data Science Fellow) for your fellowship role (see Example below) and a few bullets on what you worked on / accomplished.

Experience



**Data Science Fellow**  
Uber  
Nov 2017 – May 2018 • 7 mos  
San Francisco Bay Area

Hybrid Data Scientist and Software Engineer for Uber Elevate and Global Programs.

- Improve "flux optimizer" clustering algorithm to determine optimal skyport network
- Develop mission simulation software backend for urban VTOL aircraft
- Construct Thrift API to enable modeling for on-demand transportation
- Design clean, high quality data streams for predictive analytics

Media (1)



Uber's Aerial Taxi Play



**Military Fellow**  
Shift.org  
Aug 2017 – May 2018 • 10 mos  
San Francisco Bay Area

Selected to participate in Shift Military Fellows Program, a unique opportunity which places high-potential military veterans in immersive fellowship experiences at the world's most innovative companies.

Media (1)

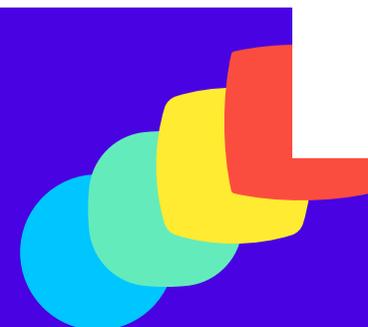


Shift Military Fellows @ Uber



**Senior Program Manager, Inspector General**  
United States Air Force  
May 2017 – Oct 2017 • 6 mos  
Colorado Springs, CO

Managed executive-level inspection program to assess program efficiency and management effectiveness across 42 subordinate units.



# LinkedIn Guidelines

## **STEP 4 – EDUCATION SECTION**

List your education in order of highest level down to lowest level, including dates of attendance. Use this section to highlight any relevant coursework that integrates more keywords into your profile and boosts your marketability.

## **STEP 5 – SKILLS & ENDORSEMENTS**

This section allows you to list key skills and seek endorsements from others on your core competencies.

## **STEP 6 – ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Showcase top awards here – no more than 3-4 total, this is not a laundry list! Remember to provide context to awards whenever possible. e.g. “#1 of 23 officers for outstanding...”

## **STEP 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS**

Requesting recommendations from others is important – this is another way to SHOW your previous performance. Recommendations from highly connected people also boost your ranking and credibility.

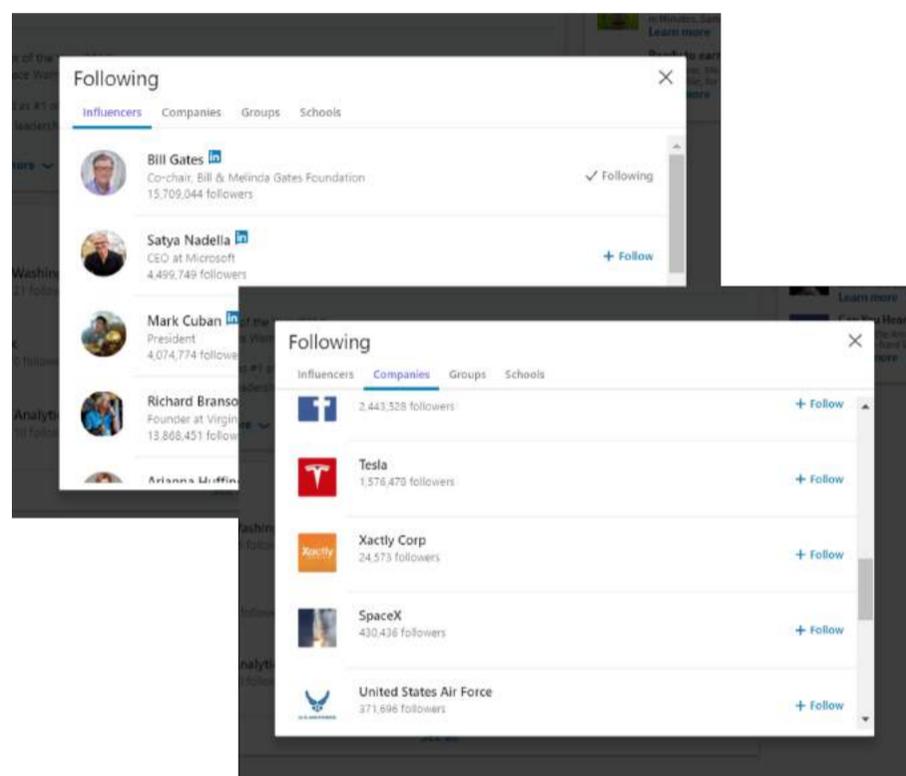


# LinkedIn Guidelines

## STEP 8 - INTERESTS

This section gives you an opportunity to signal to employers what industries and roles you are interested in. If you are only following military focused companies, then you have missed a huge change to show that you are actively pursuing other industries.

You can follow “influencers” (people in high-profile positions) and companies. See how one of our fellows is following technology influencers and companies to demonstrate interest in the technology industry.



Additionally, joining Groups on LinkedIn is also a great way to build your knowledge and image, and help you network with people who have similar backgrounds and interests. Here are a few groups we recommend joining:

- Linked-Vets: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3328410>
- Veteran Mentor Network: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/4466143/>

Don't just join veterans-related groups! Search for other interests such as:

- Software & Technology Professionals: Managers | HR | Recruiters | Blockchain | Investors: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1976445/>
- Project Manager Community - Best Group for Project Management: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/35313/>

Sales Best Practices: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/35771/>

