

**BUILD A  
WINNING**

**Linked**



**PROFILE**



**SHIREEN MOTARA**

FAST TRACK YOUR SUCCESS

How to Create a Winning LinkedIn Profile

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**How to Create a Winning LinkedIn Profile**

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How to Create a Winning LinkedIn Profile

Author: Shireen Motara

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## CHAPTER 1: Who We Are

Tara Transform works to support social change in order to build a world that offers accessible and equitable opportunities to all, especially marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Our vision is to become the go-to partner to achieve SMME growth, sustainable NPOs and thriving, successful women leaders.

**Through Coaching and Consulting we work with clients to understand their limiting beliefs and challenges; and build their capacity and resilience to find lasting solutions.**

### Value Proposition

We know that you cannot serve from an empty vessel. Therefore, our approach recognises that self-love and self-care are the foundations necessary to build success. This is reflected in how we work – listening to understand and offering solutions that build long term success and sustainability.

Our working values allow us to build long term relationships with our clients by:

- Acting with courage, challenging the status quo and finding new ways to grow
- Connecting with transparency, dignity and respect.
- Delivering excellence in every task
- Collaborating for maximum impact

### Our Leadership



Shireen Motara is a lawyer and social entrepreneur, highly respected for her work in the area of social justice, women's rights, sustainability and governance. She founded Tara Transform to respond to structural inequalities facing entrepreneurs, non-profit organisations and women leaders.

**She is a Certified Coach who focuses on using deep technical expertise and human development skills to work with entrepreneurs, women leaders, and the non-profit sector to improve impact and achieve exponential growth.**

Shireen has served on boards since 1999 and uses her expertise to strengthen the governance of organisations and enterprises that work on the African continent. **She is passionate about advancing women into leadership roles and supporting entrepreneurs to become successful businesses that contribute to create sustainable jobs and a thriving economy.**

## Our Services

*The strategic thrust of our work is  
guided by Social Justice and Equality.*

Our unique value proposition is that we have significant experience in addressing structural inequality using our technical and personal development experience.

We have a specific focus on Women as Business Owners and Leaders because we recognise that women make a significant contribution to the economy and the society.

Our support to companies focuses on developing and implementing effective enterprise development programmes which create responsive and sustainable opportunities for youth and women entrepreneurs.

### **ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT**

We advise corporate clients on implementing effective enterprise and supply chain development programmes. Companies are able to access our networks of women entrepreneurs who are ready for the next level of support.

We also assess enterprise development programmes and propose solutions that are responsive to the needs of women entrepreneurs and which can result in maximum impact for the business.

### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

We provide support to women entrepreneurs so that they can access enterprise and supply chain development opportunities that will grow their businesses.

We do this through coaching, training and access to networks.

We support our corporate clients to identify and work with women entrepreneurs as part of their enterprise development programmes.

### **BUSINESS TRAINING AND TOOLKITS**

Through our experience and using extensive research, we develop practical training and toolkits that respond to the development needs of our clients.

Our toolkits include:

- Goal setting and planning
- Financial management
- Human Resources
- Marketing and Social Media
- Fundraising



We can also help customers design and develop their own toolkits and written products, including e-books.

## **WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

We work with profit and non-profit organisations to develop and implement policies and practices that promote the advancement of women.

Our services include advisory, gender audits, research, materials development, capacity building, mentoring and coaching.

We have worked with major clients including UN Women, UNIDO, Irish Aid, GIZ, regional organisations, corporates' and government to review and develop responsive women's rights strategies and programmes.

## **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

We work with clients to strengthen organisational and governance systems and practices. Through the 50% Alliance, we provide capacity building and access to board opportunities to women leaders.

Our work includes review and development of policies, board effectiveness, organisational strategy and operational systems.

We use one on one and group coaching to build effective leaders and cohesive management teams.

## **FUNDRAISING AND SUSTAINABILITY**

We support non-profits to build effective sustainability strategies and fundraising plans. Through mentoring and training we help clients build a culture that integrates fundraising and resource mobilisation into their daily practice.

We have various packages available that range from assessing the organisation's capacity to fundraise; revising current funding practices, conducting donor scans, drafting concept notes and budgets; and developing fund-raising strategies and plans.

## **Contact Us**

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## CHAPTER 2: Introduction – Why a LinkedIn Profile Matters

*LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community. The goal of the site is to allow registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally.*

As a professional Coach and entrepreneur seeking to work with corporates, I realised that the most suitable platform to connect with my target market is on LinkedIn. Initially I created a profile with my basic information and then unleashed my “profile” on the world. Yes! The World! Did you know LinkedIn has 500 million users – that’s half a billion people!

**Over the years I have realised that in order to be noticed by my target market, I must pay deeper attention to my profile as well as how and what I communicate on the social media platform. I then decided to do research on what a good LinkedIn profile should look like and how I can build better visibility on the platform. This research has resulted in this e-book because I realised there are a number of people out there who may sit with the same challenge I had.**

### The Basics

If you have not as yet signed up to LinkedIn, here’s how to:

1. Guide on how to sign in: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/2964/signing-up-to-join-linkedin?lang=en>
2. Navigate to the [LinkedIn sign up page](#).
3. Type your first and last name, email address, and a password you'll use.
  - **Note:** You must [use your true name](#) when creating a profile. Company names and pseudonyms are not allowed, as we explain in our [User Agreement](#).
4. Click *Join now*.
5. Complete any additional steps as prompted.

Here is a video that guides you on creating a profile:

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=how+to+sign+up+to+linked+in&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#kpvallbx=1>



## CHAPTER 3: Before You Create Your Profile

There are number of matters to consider before you create your profile. Here we guide you on what information to collect and other issues to consider:

### Remember!

- **LinkedIn profiles that have a picture are 11 times more likely to be viewed.**
- **Users who list their education appear in searches up to 17 times more often than those who don't.**
- **Location, Location, Location! Filling out this field with where you want to work or be located will make you appear in 23 times more searches.**
- **A professional looking picture is a must-have. Profiles with a photo get up to 21 tomes more views and up to 36 times more messages.**
- **Check your spelling and grammar!**
- **Be positive in your profile, comments and posts. What you say reflects on you!**
- **Stay away from jargon and buzzwords!**
- **Fill out as much as possible of your profile. This is an opportunity to add interesting information you may not be able to add on your CV.**
- **Relevance is key! Add the experience that relates to your future professional goals.**

### Content

Collect the following information to ensure that you have everything you need at hand:

- **Your CV** or resume with your employment history
- Any current versions of your **bio or summary profile**
- **A high quality (preferably professional) photograph or two for your profile picture.** Make sure that the photo is recent and looks like you today, not 10 years ago! Make sure your face takes up at east 60% of the photo. Wear what you would like to wear to work. And...Smile!
- **Background photo.** This is the other visual element at the top of your profile page. It grabs people's attention, sets the context and shows a little more about what matters to you. The right background photo helps your page stand out and stay memorable. LinkedIn advises users to use an image (PNG, JPG or GIF) with a resolution of 1400x425.
- Any **written references or recommendations** you received previously

### Information to Compile

- **Who is your target market?** Be clear about who you would like to attract through your profile – is it a potential employer, colleagues in the same profession or new business opportunities? This is critical because your entire profile needs to be aligned to attracting your target market.

- **The 10 skills you want to be known for.** You may have many more skills but a list of too many skills looks unwieldy and may create the impression that you are not focused. Include hard and soft skills. An example of a hard skill is research and a soft skill could be relationship building.
- **Keywords** that will bring up your profile when searches are conducted on LinkedIn search. The right keywords will ensure that you become visible to your target market. Review profiles of people that are in your industry and write down the keywords that show up regularly. Incorporate these into your profile. Use those keywords in your headline, summary and profile. **Using the right keywords is the difference between being found and staying invisible.**

## Your Voice

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*Whatever voice you choose, keep it consistent throughout your profile.*

---

Before creating your profile you need to be clear on your voice. Your LinkedIn profile allows you to add some personality to your professional story. After all, you are a human being not a robot! Therefore, don't copy your CV word for word.

Most commentators suggest writing your profile in the first person ("I'm a coach trusted by entrepreneurs and women leaders"), but other styles can work too. If, for example, you are in sales and marketing then you may want to use the second person ("If you want to know how we can significantly grow your business profile, contact us now"). This may assist you to engage potential clients. Alternatively, say you are an executive with a long list of accomplishments, then you may feel more comfortable writing about your success in the third person ("Shireen Motara is an accomplished coach who has won several awards for the difference she has made to the visibility of women leaders").

## Building a Visual Profile

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*Build a visual profile and you will immediately stand out*

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In this age of information load, creating a visual profile may be just the thing the doctor ordered. The LinkedIn feature called "Professional Portfolio" allows you to share photos, presentations, videos, links, PDFs and more. Use it to your advantage and show off your creative work.

## HOW TO USE LINKEDIN'S PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

On your LinkedIn profile, and next to any module or position on your personal profile you'll see a section at the bottom called "Media". Click this to either upload a file or add a link to your work. Below is what it looks like on your profile:

Media

Add or link to external documents, photos, sites, videos, and presentations.



[? Supported formats](#)

## CHAPTER 4: Creating Your Profile

In this section on creating your profile I break it down for you. Areas covered will include:

- Headline
- Summary
- Experience
- Work history
- Skills
- Endorsements
- Recommendations
- Other profile areas to consider

### Headline

.....

*Use the headline to tell everyone on LinkedIn why you're somebody they need to connect with.*

.....

Your headline is often the first thing visible to your potential network (aside from your picture). It should be clear, interesting and include your keywords (see above section on information to compile). You have only 120 characters to make a good impression!

By default LinkedIn populates your headline with your job title and current company, but you don't have to leave it that way. Use the headline to speak directly to your target audience.

**Say more about how you see your role, why you do what you do, and what makes you tick.** Remember what I said earlier about showing some of your personality? Here is an opportunity to do just that!

### Summary

.....

*The first thing to say about the LinkedIn summary is to make sure that you have one!*

.....

Ever heard of the "elevator pitch"? Well this is your opportunity to create one. Your summary is your opportunity to tell your own story. Don't just list your skills and job titles. Try to bring to life why

those skills matter and the difference they can make to the people you work with. Here you have 2000 characters allowing you to reveal more about who you are. **This is your most personal piece for marketing your brand – use it wisely!**

Invest some time in compiling a number of drafts of your summary and share with friends or colleagues for feedback. Think about your target audience and then paint a picture (using words) of how you can make that person's life easier / better. Here are some tips to get it just right:

- Include about 70-80% professional and 20-30% personal information.
- Write in the first person.
- Weave together your accomplishments and accolades with your values, passions, strengths, etc.
- Include all your relevant keywords.
- Add a “dose” of your personal point of view to make it reflect who you are. Please, please - Don't be rude or attack others.

Did you know you can also add media files or video to enhance your summary? If you are a speaker or presenter, consider adding an introduction video. Otherwise add one or two useful documents or presentations which will enhance your summary and profile. Don't overdo it!

## Experience

.....

*This is an opportunity to showcase yourself as a well-rounded individual.*

.....

This section provides guidance on completing the bulk of your LinkedIn profile. You can add or remove sections on your profile.

### WORK HISTORY

I always stressed about adding all my jobs to my profile. However, this is not necessary. You don't need to list every single job you ever had. Instead, **you can only include jobs that are relevant to your current career goals.**

If your volunteer experience directly relates to your job search, add it to the job history. In this way it's visible in the relevant section and not at the bottom.

Don't feel compelled to stick to the normal CV format. LinkedIn now creates the space for you to add all the things you are involved in under one title, even if they have overlapping dates.

### EDUCATION

As previously mentioned, make sure that you add all your educational information – including short courses. This section allows you to be found through the alumni feature.

## SKILLS / ENDORSEMENTS

In this section you add the 10 skills you collated before starting to create your profile. Ensure that they are relevant to your future professional goals, and include hard and soft skills. Also remember to regularly update your skills in line with your growth and goals.

Endorsements from other members confirm your skills and increase your credibility. How do you get endorsements? Go through your network and identify connections that you feel genuinely deserve an endorsement from you. That's often the trigger for others to endorse you. You can also reach out to connections to request endorsements, but make sure that these endorsements are relevant and in the areas you are looking for.

### Managing Endorsements

Once endorsements start coming up, you may notice that they skew your profile in a way that does not reflect you or your goals. Proactively manage your endorsements list using the edit feature in the Skills section of your profile. Here you can choose which to show and which to hide.

## COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

To create a full profile that reflects all your professional activities and interests, LinkedIn provides a number of options, including:

- **Volunteer experience** – I use this section to add my board experience and the volunteer work I do with non-profits .
- **Accomplishments, including certifications, courses, publications, languages, projects, and awards.** If you have relevant information here, add it. I have used this section to highlight the short courses I attended, some significant projects I have led and to add an award I have won that is relevant for my profile.
- **Publications** – I want to highlight this section. If you have published anything – media articles, journal pieces or papers, etc., add it here. This has the benefit of showing that you have written in your area of expertise and that you have good writing skills.

## Recommendations

Endorsements are great but recommendations are even better. They are a personal testimonial written to illustrate the experience of working with you.

Recommendations are a sort of LinkedIn reference where a past client or boss (or even a colleague) highlights how great you are at what you do. Reach out to past colleagues, managers and associates and ask for a recommendation. **Take the time to think about who you would really value a recommendation from and personalise the request.** There is a drop down menu in the Recommendations section of your profile that makes it easy to specific connections and request a recommendation.

Golden Rule – this is a mutually beneficial game! Consider giving recommendations to colleagues or others you have worked with and who you believe deserves a recommendation.



## CHAPTER 5: Building Your Visibility

Truth be told, you can have a dynamite profile but if you are not actively engaging and building your visibility then you may as well not have one. This section provides some tips on how to use LinkedIn to build your visibility and engagement with the ultimate purpose of being noticed.

### It's a Social Network. Be Social!

LinkedIn can be a powerful networking tool if you let it. I mean, why would you go through all the trouble of creating a rock star profile but then not use it? Through the platform you can connect to existing and past colleagues and networks by sending them an invitation to connect. Make it personal – don't just use the default LinkedIn message. Using a personal touch will increase the odds that your invitation will be accepted. Refer to an occasion where you have met, or a group that you have in common, or something this person may have said that you found useful.

### Build Your Network

As with any other social media platform, you need to be connected to others in order to engage on LinkedIn. Therefore, the first step after creating your profile is to identify and invite "connections". An easy way to do this is to synch your profile with your email address book. This enables LinkedIn to suggest people you can connect with. This is an amazing way of growing your network fast!

Here's how to do it:

**In your profile, click on the Networks icon. On the Networks page, you will see the Connections block to the left of the screen. Click on More Options and it will take you to screen to synch your contacts.**

One of the biggest mistakes people make on LinkedIn is failing to reach out to connect with people you want to know but don't yet. That's the point of networking, getting to know new people as well. Recently I did this by searching for people involved in CSI (a sector that I work in) and sending them invitations. Most of them accepted! So drop all the ifs and buts and invite a stranger to connect.

**Remember to get into the habit of following up meetings and conversations with LinkedIn connection requests. It will show you are serious about connecting and keep your network active.**

### Build Great Business Relationships

When someone accepts your request to connect, don't start harassing them with your sales pitch. It is the easiest way to lose connections. **Start slow - like, share or comment on their posts.** Work anniversaries and starting new jobs open the door for further communication. Subtlety and patience pays! Build a relationship and trust before you start asking for favours.

### Give Recommendations and Endorsements

**Give and people are likely to give back to you.** This is an opportunity to help your fellow professionals, and you gain recognition as someone who actively supports others. Ensure that you provide accurate information or endorse for skills that you can vouch for.

## Ask for Recommendations

Getting a good recommendation is priceless! If you know people who would gladly recommend your work, ask them to do so on LinkedIn. Don't take (LinkedIn) shortcuts here. The best approach is to ask in person or write an email sincerely expressing what their email would mean to you.

## Share Relevant Content from Your LinkedIn Feed

An easy way to build visibility is to share content from your feed without necessarily having to write content. This allows you to have an active network and add value to your connections. **Make a start by keeping a close eye on your LinkedIn feed, and sharing content that you find genuinely interesting or informative – and that aligns with your viewpoint.** Remember this is not Facebook, your professional reputation is at stake.

## Add Comments

Sharing is great, but remember it is just the starting point. At some point you have to make you and your voice visible to your target audience. When you add comments to your shares or other content shared by connections, you can give yourself greater prominence.

You do not always have to agree with a shared point of view. A comment that explains why you differ from the prevailing view can start to establish your opinion and thought-leadership. It could also draw more comments which then helps to raise your profile on LinkedIn. **Make sure you are saying something which you're happy for people to associate with you.**

## Share Media and Marketing Collateral

The marketing collateral and other products that you develop for yourself, your clients or employers can add an extra dimension to your profile. **Sharing case studies, presentations, research papers or articles can show what your business or job is all about.** It helps people understand what makes you tick, and demonstrates your passion and commitment.

## Get Credit for Your Thought Leadership with Publications

Are you an avid writer? Have you contributed to other publications? The Publications section allows you to link your profile to these assets. Apparently, the Publications section is one of the most under-used elements in LinkedIn profiles. **Use it to make you stand out from the crowd and draw attention to your existing thought leadership content.**

## Follow Influencers

The benefit of this is that you get interesting content in your feed which you can then share with others. **It's another quick win way to be visible.** It can also help to give context to your profile and demonstrate your passion for what you do.

## Publish Content to Start Conversations

Once you are comfortable sharing posts in your feed and commenting on others' posts, you may want to consider publishing long form content. First assess the response you get on your shares and comments. What stands out? Are there specific areas that pop up regularly? **Use these to build on**

**your content and build on the issues your connections are talking about.** Importantly, once you go this route, you must also be ready to respond to comments on your posts.

Alternatively, if you have an active blog – share this! Remember, it must be professional or work related.

## Join LinkedIn Groups

This is a great way of meeting people in your industry or areas of interest. These groups can be a valuable resource when you have a problem you don't know how to solve. Ask for help and help others in return. It will do wonders for your visibility!

### To browse groups recommended for you by LinkedIn:

1. Click the **Work** icon in the top right of your LinkedIn homepage and select **Groups** from the menu that appears.
2. Click **Discover** at the top of the page to view suggested groups.
3. You can then request membership by clicking the **Ask to join** button under the group description.

## Create a Custom URL

This is an easy and memorable way for people to connect with you. You can also use it on your business cards and email signature. I have one and it's a million times better than having a URL with lots and lots of numbers and letters that don't make sense!

### To change your public profile URL:

1. Click the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage.
2. Click **View profile**.
3. On your profile page, click **Edit public profile & URL** on the right rail.
4. Under **Edit URL** in the right rail, click the **Edit** icon next to your public profile URL.
  - It'll be an address that looks like **www.linkedin.com/in/yourname**.
5. Type the last part of your new custom URL in the text box.
6. Click **Save**.
7. Voila! You have your own LinkedIn URL that you can share and which is easy to remember.

## Personalise Your Website Address

Under your Contact information on your profile, LinkedIn gives you the option to link to website or blog. By default the text that shows in your profile is "Website" or "Blog" – boring don't you think? Well you can change this and use your actual brand name, as follows:

1. Go to **View Profile**
2. Under your Contact info, go to **Website**
3. Select the **Other** option
4. Add your own website and title

## CHAPTER 6: Managing Your Profile

In this section I share some tips on managing your profile.

### Keep It Organised

With all the information required to populate your LinkedIn profile, it can get really big, really fast. To manage this, keep information clear, concise and to the point. Using bullets can really help to only highlight the most important information. Please stay away from writing long drawn out paragraphs of information – leave this for your thesis!

### Use LinkedIn Search to Find People

Struggling to remember so and so that you met at a conference? LinkedIn search can help you find the right people. You can start by searching by company, sector, or name - if you eventually remember it.

LinkedIn also has an advanced search facility which allows you to find people by job title, university, relationship, location, industry, current/past company, profile language and non-profit interests. Wow! How amazing is that! In addition, if you are a Premium (that is, paid) member, you have even more options.

### View Profiles Incognito

Whenever you view someone's profile, LinkedIn will share your name and your headline. But sometimes you want to go incognito (that is, be anonymous) when you view some profiles. Well, it is possible. Follow these steps:

#### To change your browsing mode:

1. Click the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage.
2. Select **Settings & Privacy** from the dropdown.
3. Click the **Privacy** tab at the top of the page.
4. Under the **How others see your LinkedIn activity** section, click Change next to Profile viewing options.
5. Select the mode you'd like to browse in.

### Don't Overdo Status Updates

The primary way of being visible on LinkedIn is through status updates. They provide you with the opportunity to highlight your work, share an article or book you have read, reflect on an event you attended, or share relevant quotes and thoughts.

The common advice is to post at least once a day at a minimum - mainly during office hours since this is a business network (I don't necessarily agree with this and I post whenever I have something to share). Every update is an opportunity to strengthen or forge a connection. However, don't bombard your feed with unnecessary posts. **The suggestion is to have no more than three or four updates per day. Use your intuition, if it feels like it's too much, it probably is.** And, make sure its relevant and professional.

## Use Job Listings to Get Your Skills and Keywords Right

There are apparently more than 11 million job listings on LinkedIn. Say what? Exactly. Use this to your benefit by browsing some of the jobs you may be interested in and note down the specific skills and keywords they mention. Recruiters often use keywords for the job description they are trying to fill. Using some of these words in your skills section and keywords will make them come to you. I have seen this in the job searches my name comes up for. It works!

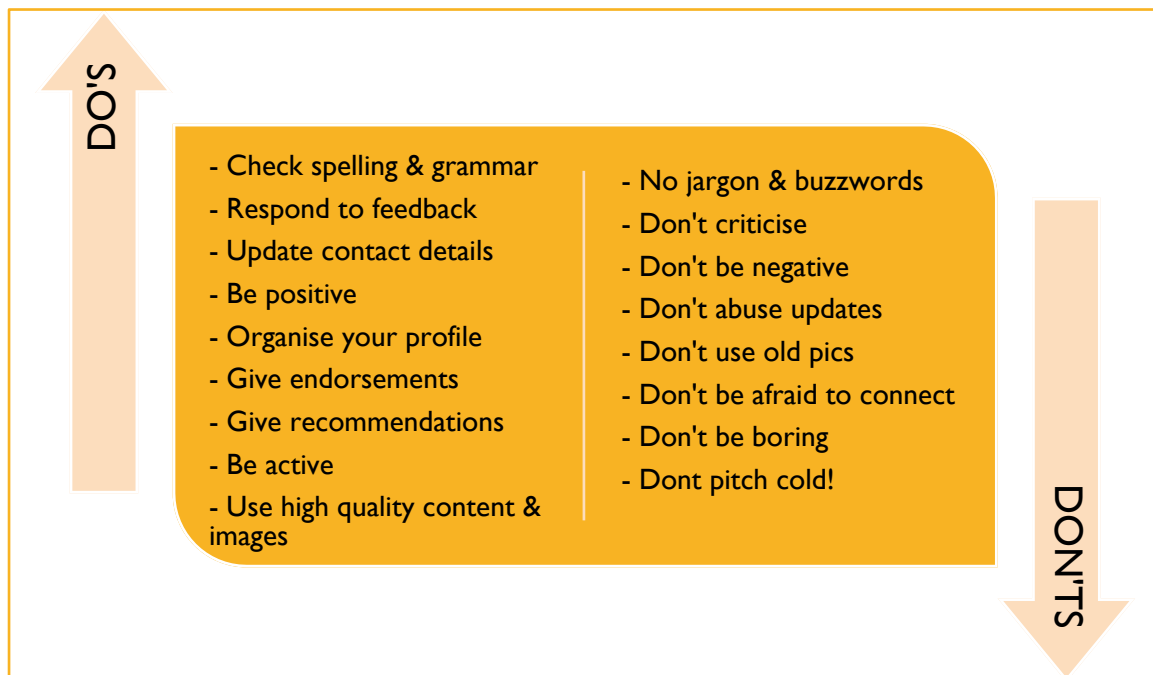
## Download Your Connections

This is an unbelievable benefit of being on LinkedIn! You can occasionally download all your connections – including full names, email addresses, job titles and companies. Here's how to do it:

1. Click the **My Network** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage.
2. Click **Your Connections number** on the left side.
3. Click **Manage Synced and Imported Contacts** on the top right.
4. Under **Advanced** actions on the bottom right, click **Export Contacts**.
5. Under the **Download Your Data** option, choose **Connections**.
6. You may be prompted to sign into your account again. Enter your password and click **Request Archive**.
7. You'll receive an email to the address associated with your LinkedIn profile within 10 minutes. The email contains a link to your privacy and settings section where you can download a zip file that includes a .csv file with your connections.
8. Done!

## CHAPTER 7: In Conclusion - Do's & Don'ts

Finally, a quick reminder of the Do's and Don'ts when creating and building your LinkedIn profile



### Still Need Help?

I can help you create a winning LinkedIn Profile that will knock your socks off! If you still need help after reading this e-book, then feel free to reach out to me. I can work with you to understand your story and create the amazing profile you have always wanted. Email [connect@tatratform.co.za](mailto:connect@tatratform.co.za)



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