

LinkedIn for graduate students: how to market yourself on the net

Posted by [Chen Guttman](#) on [09/03/2013](#) in [Branding](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Marketing](#), [PhD](#), [Tips](#)



<https://benchwise.wordpress.com/2013/03/09/linkedin-for-graduate-students-how-to-market-yourself-on-the-net/>

You might be a first year graduate student or a post-doc looking for its next challenge in the academy or in the industry. Whatever goals you have, your career path will rely heavily on your qualifications and experience but not just that; smart marketing/self branding can get you farther than your dry qualification can. Of course, if you have spent enough time in the scientific niche you already know what makes a successful scientist: observations skills, innovative mind, a bit of luck and... healthy marketing capabilities. Scientists sell their ideas every day, whether over a podium or through the flickering computer screens so they might as well harness these capabilities to sell themselves as a brand. I suggest that whether you've just started your graduate school or on the last sentence of your dissertation, do yourself a BIG favor, and build your marketing strategy.

Building a marketing strategy

Where to start? And why do you need a marketing plan/strategy anyways? Well, you'd be surprised how a well prepared strategy with aims, steps and contingency plans can be good to your success in marketing yourself. When you commit yourself to something in writing and deadlines you will find yourself making it happen more than pushing it aside.

The first thing you need to do is to write your career objective(s). What do you plan to do after completing your studies? Pursue a tenure track? Work in the biotech industry? It might sound irrelevant to some of you to think about a career path right now, yet those that have a clear vision of their objectives can be much more focused on their goals, navigate their studies accordingly and have more chances of achieving their goals.

Now that you have a certain objective (which you can adapt as you progress), its time to lay out the steps that are required for achieving your goals. Let's say you plan to get a tenure track (TT). Awesome! So, you'd probably need to achieve the following aims (simplified):

- Write several papers (or one Nature/Cell/Science not necessarily in this order)
- Collaborate with external labs, if possible.
- Be in good terms with your PI (always a smart move!)
- Talk and meet with profs in your department, especially if you plan on coming back for a TT.
- Participate in at least one conference/yr and make the effort to get an oral presentation slot.
- Be active in your department as much as possible and give help whenever it is possible.

And the list goes on...this is of course a suggestion which can and should be further elaborated and detailed (for example, which figures you'd need for your planned paper). You'd find [Labguru](#) a great companion for doing just that and achieve your goals.

Using LinkedIn for self marketing

One aspect of the marketing step which can aid you in establishing yourself as a professional in your field is a [LinkedIn](#) profile. At over 200M users worldwide, LinkedIn is the biggest social network focused on promoting professional connections. That's already one good reason to setup an account and join the vast professionals that connect and share insights, thoughts and tips. Additional reason includes the ability to have an upgraded version of your CV online and available for Human Resource (HR) and recruiters to search and find you. However, appearing on Google searches your LinkedIn profile should be flawless written and used to the best practice so it would not "back-fire" on you. One point to remember is that LinkedIn should be joined as soon as you can and updated regularly, especially when you approach the time of job seeking.

The basics of a LinkedIn profile

The LinkedIn profile has gone through some cosmetic and modular changers since it has been online and today it is composed of several major sections:

- Activity – this section is the update/status section much like Facebook and Twitter. Every connection, post or comment will appear here.
- Background – this is the heart of a LinkedIn profile, containing your education, experience, publications, patents and much more.
- Connections – The number of people you know from first degree. The more, the better coverage you have of your professional connection. Remember, connections can be easily picked from your email lists, yet connections with strong emphasis in your field can help you build a solid brand.
- Recommendations – a great way to recommend a fellow or get recommendations.
- Professional groups – it is wise to follow several groups in your field, not just for job opportunities but also for knowledge sharing and know-how tips.

While recruiters and HR personnel have different opinions about what optimally should be written in each section, one thing unites all of them – be honest. Don't write expertise/knowledge that you wish you had or plan to have (but not yet achieved!).

Background section

Before elaborating on each section, you should note that you can change the order of these sections such that you can put more emphasis on a certain section in comparison to another. Below is the section listing according to [my LinkedIn](#) profile.

- Photo – although not as important as the headline, this is the first thing visitors will see and can have a major influence over their first impressions. If you can, put a professional headshot photo of yourself. A professional photographer will make sure a) you have the right facial expression and b) that the photo's settings are optimal (lighting, background, clothing etc.). If you can't afford it, dress and prepare yourself for a potential interview and ask someone to take a headshot photo of you.
- Headline/title – this is the first thing that appears on Google searches after your name, is the place to start your branding. Here you should state your profession and your current affiliation. Since most of the readers are grad students (or yet to be fully employed), you should add "PhD student" before your professional title so HR personnel will know you're not yet available for recruitment. You can, however, drop that section from your headline once you start looking for a job.
- Education – here list all your academic titles while elaborating in each section what was on your project's title & description and any academic achievement (not just published papers).
- Experience – this is a tricky bit and depends on your career choice. If you're a grad student aiming at TT then put all your studies experience, teaching experience, organizational activities and so forth. If you are aiming at a biotech position, then you should put any past biotech experience you have (even if it was short!). Those without any prior biotech experience should put their current studies with a strong emphasis of how your transferable

skills such as mentoring undergrad, leading an independent research project, working as part of a multinational team, writing reports etc.

- Honors & awards – list every academic competitive achievement, whether it is best poster award or the Dean’s prize. The more the better.
- Publications & patents– this is a proof of your academic achievements and should be listed toward the first sections if you are planning on pursuing a TT. In the industry, however, publications are signs of accomplishments yet past experience in the biotech is far more sought for. One additional point – currently, the system doesn’t allow for rearrangement of author listing, meaning that each paper you add to the listing will show you as first author. To resolve this citing issue, it is advisable to add the following sentence at the beginning of the article’s “description”: “[correct author order listing]:” and then list the correct order as it appears in the article.
- Courses – this is not as obligatory as the previous sections. But, if the courses you took have a direct connection with your profession, then you might want to demonstrate you have been qualified academically. Furthermore, the title of the course might improve Search engine optimization and will put your profile first when someone searches for a certain expertise.
- Skills & expertise – Here list only those skills and expertise that you are not just familiar with but have also experience with. Your contact might endorse some of them as an apparent proof of your proficiency. This is simply because people can endorse you even if they have less knowledge of your exact expertise.
- Languages – here the more the better, especially if you have native/bilingual proficiency.
- Additional info – another place to add keywords related to your profession as well as a place to put links to your personal website or any other project you have been involved with.

Beyond the “Background” section you can add additional modules such as patents, Volunteer Experience & Causes, Organizations you’ve worked for and special project which you are proud of AND can demonstrate your skills and capabilities.

Want to pump up your profile with icons? well, LinkedIn doesnt support rich text layout for the time being. However, you can add symbols! Go ahead and visit this webpage of [Unicode characters](#). I would use these cautiously, as this is still a professional profile and not a circus!

Today you can also add live links to youtube, articles on the web or images which can describe your thesis, projects and academic achievements. All of these will help you build a strong brand of yourself.

How to Identify *Exactly* the Right Keywords for Your LinkedIn Profile

By [Susan P. Joyce](#)

<https://www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/indeed-jobtrends-research.shtml>

Using the right keywords in your LinkedIn Profile is essential to your visibility in LinkedIn.

Although critical to having your Profile appear in LinkedIn search results, keywords can be very easy to do wrong if done too quickly or carelessly. Or without the analysis described in this article.

Seemingly trivial word choices, like using the job title "Administrative Assistant" or "Admin Assistant" in your LinkedIn profile (if that job is your goal), can be the difference between being found by an employer or recruiter and being completely invisible.

When you are optimizing the keywords for your LinkedIn Profile, include the terms used most often by your target employers. If you don't have any specific target employers or if you simply want as much visibility in LinkedIn search results as possible, use the keywords that employers use most often in their job descriptions. Those are the terms that are most likely to be used by a recruiter or sourcer searching LinkedIn for qualified job candidates.

Using the *Right* Keywords Is Critical

Employers and recruiters use online searches to find qualified job candidates in LinkedIn (and also in Google, Applicant Tracking Systems, job boards, etc.).

Don't think that you already know the terms that most employers use to find job candidates for their openings.

That's a dangerous assumption, and, with [Indeed's JobTrends](#), you can do better than simply guessing.

Advertisement

Quiz:

For example, assume a job seeker has experience helping a business or a brand use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media to generate interest and become more visible to the right users.

Should they describe themselves in their LinkedIn Professional Headline as a:

- Social Media Specialist
- Social Media Analyst
- Social Networking Specialist

The term they use to describe their experience is significant, even though they look the same.

If they use the "wrong" term -- the term most employers *don't* use -- they will appear in many fewer searches. So, their visibility will be more limited.

The **Quiz Solution** is below.

Employers and Recruiters Search for Qualified Job Candidates

To find qualified candidates, employers and recruiters search using the keywords that are important to the job they are filling. Those keywords are job titles, skills, education, certifications, locations, and much more.

To be found by those employers and recruiters, you want to use the most appropriate job title(s) for the job you want, the right terms for the skills you have, even the best way to describe your education, and more.

For a more extensive list of keywords, read [The Top 25 Keywords for Your Job Search](#). These are the keywords employers use in their searches.

In your LinkedIn profile, include the terms that employers use most often to describe the requirements so that your profile appears in their search results. Here's how...

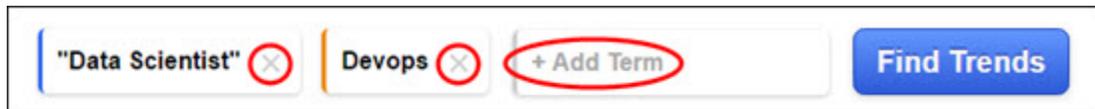
How to Discover Your Best Keywords Using Indeed.com's JobTrends

Job-Hunt sponsor [Indeed.com](#) has the largest collection of job postings in the world. To help job seekers understand how employers are describing jobs, Indeed provides an excellent (free!) tool to analyze the keywords in that enormous collection of job postings: **JobTrends**.

Assume that you hold the Project Management Professional certification, and you're trying to determine the best keywords for you to use in your LinkedIn profile. Let Indeed's JobTrends help you figure out the best terms to use.

1. Go to the [Indeed.com/jobtrends](https://www.indeed.com/jobtrends) page.

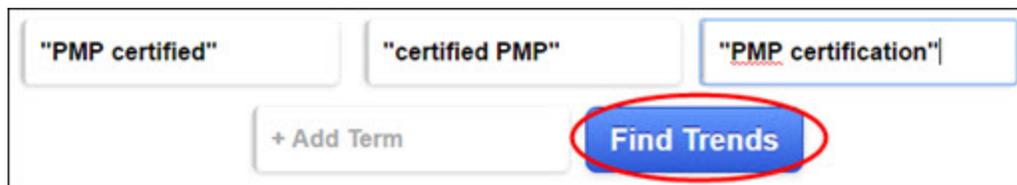
2. Type the terms you want to compare in the box at the top of the page (see below).



Click on the "x" (circled above) beside the "Data Scientist" and Devops boxes in this form. Then, type your first term into the box labeled "+ Add Term." Click the enter button to select that term, and a new Add Term box will appear so you can add another term for searching.

If a term is a phrase, be sure to enclose the phrase in quotation marks, as you see below, "like this" to show Indeed that the words need to be side-by-side in the job descriptions.

In our example below, your search would look like this: "PMP certified" , "certified PMP" , " PMP certification" --



3. Click on "Find Trends" after you have typed your keywords into the search box.

Then, wait a few moments while Indeed generates a graph for you showing you how often those terms have been used in job postings, going back several years. This historical information allows you to see how the terms are trending as well as how popular they are in the last few months.

For each Trends search term you enter, Indeed will assign a unique color to the line representing that term in the resulting graph. Realistically, you probably won't have more than three or four versions of the term. But, I tested twenty different terms, and it still worked.

4. Check the resulting graph to see which versions of your keywords are used most often in job descriptions.

In this example, the term "PMP certification" (the green line at the top) is used most often, although use seems to be gradually dropping since 2012.



Still, if you hold that certification and are interested in jobs where it would be relevant or required, including it in your LinkedIn profile is smart.

Next, most often used is "PMP certified" (the blue line). And "certified PMP" (the orange line) is used much less often than "PMP certification" (the green line). I would probably include the two top terms in my LinkedIn profile (if I held the certification), and skip the lowest one unless I had room to gracefully include it.

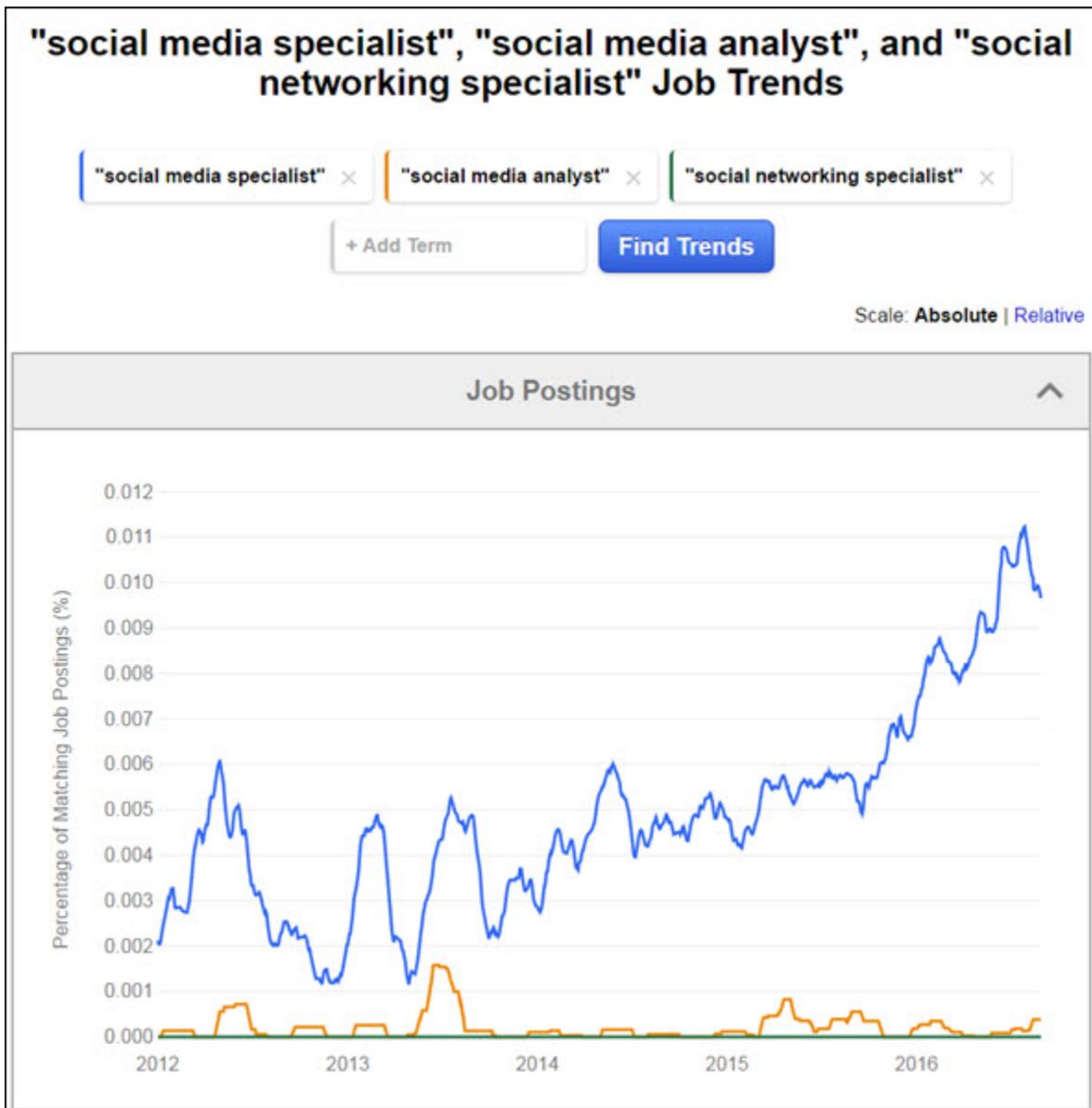
5. Add those terms to your LinkedIn profile.

Don't simply endlessly repeat the terms over and over again in your profile. But, do use them in key places in your profile, where they will be most effective, like your professional headline and summary.

For more tips, read [The Top 25 Keywords for Your Job Search](#) to discover keyword opportunities you might not be using, [Developing the Best Keywords for Your Job Search](#) for *how* to use your keywords, and then [Double \(or Triple\) Your LinkedIn Visitor Traffic with Keywords](#) for *where* to use these keywords.

Quiz Solution:

Answer to the **Quiz** at the top of this article:



Social Media Specialist (the blue line) is by far the more popular of those three terms, as measured by Indeed's JobTrends. Note that it is definitely trending upward -- a good sign for people in or considering this field. So Social Media Specialist would be the best term for this job seeker to use in his or her LinkedIn profile for the greatest visibility.

The other job titles are invisible, except for one very small blip in the second half of 2013 for "social media analyst." Click on the graph above to see the current results.

Resumes *Must* Be Customized to *Each* Opportunity

This research is helpful for your resumes, too. But the research is used in a slightly different way. While your LinkedIn profile will make you visible to the world (on LinkedIn), your resume is typically submitted for specific opportunities.

Resumes need to be customized to each opportunity so they can be found in the applicant tracking systems and resume databases most employers use today. This means that you must include the terms the employer used. Then, add a bit more, based on your research.

If an employer used "certified PMP" in a job posting I was applying for, I would use "certified PMP" in the resume I submitted. In addition, I would try to fit in "Project Management Professional" too, since it is so popular.

Often you can combine two terms in one phrase, so that it looks like you are being careful and completely clear, like this:

"Certified PMP (Project Management Professional)"

That phrase covers the term used in the job posting plus the term that Indeed's JobTrends shows us is used most often by employers in their job postings.

LinkedIn profile headlines – cool things to say (that aren't your job title)

Jul 4, 2016 | LinkedIn and Your Career, Professional Branding | [2 comments](#)



Recently a grad student asked me how to write a headline or tagline for her LinkedIn profile that didn't sound hopelessly vague or nondescript. Her valid concern was that as a student she didn't really have a job title to point to, or an extensive "work persona." I thought about it, realized I had no clue what to suggest, and promised to get back to her after doing some research post-webinar.

What I discovered was that although almost no one takes advantage of this profile feature, it's actually pretty easy to do once you've figured out the basic approach. Whether you're an LIS student, recent graduate, or established professional, the following steps should help you develop a terrific headline.

How the Headline Field Works (If You Ignore It)

When you create your LinkedIn profile, if you don't fill in the Headline content box, LinkedIn will automatically default to either your current title and employer. So, for example, if you were an outreach librarian at a public library in Philadelphia and simply went with the default headline, yours would read:

Outreach Librarian, Free Library of Philadelphia

If you're a student and you note that in your Experience section, it will pick up "Student" or "Graduate Student" or "MLIS student" (however you've indicated your status), and the name of the institution you're attending. For example, your headline would read:

MLIS Student, Drexel University

Not much there to grab someone's attention. Happily, you've got 120 characters (including spaces) within which to provide a much more compelling, engaging, and informative headline.

Instead, Tell Your Story – Briefly

How do you differentiate yourself for potential employers within that 120-character parameter? A really simple approach is to simply identify your area of professional expertise (rather than your job title); for example:

- Content strategist
- Digital archives specialist
- Outreach librarian

If you're a student or recent grad looking for a job, you can modify your area of interest with modifiers like "aspiring," "in training," e.g., "aspiring content strategist" or "digital archives specialist in training."

Or, you could create a headline that goes a step further in showcasing your unique strengths to potential employers. The following four steps will help you do that.

#1 Be specific. Can you provide more detail about being an outreach librarian? For example, are you an “Outreach Librarian Known for Successful Information Literacy Programs among Immigrant Communities?”

Or perhaps you’re a “Multilingual Outreach Librarian Specializing in Cultural Storytelling and Building Cross-Community Relationships.”

Or maybe you’re an “Outreach Librarian Exploring Senior Support Services,” which indicates that this is an area of interest for you, but not necessarily one where you’ve had actual experience.

Do you want to build your opportunities within a specific type of library, or an industry, or type of organization (for example, government, start-up, nonprofit)? If so, make sure to mention that differentiator in your headline.

Key take-away: once you’ve started building your career, you want to make sure that your headline showcases what makes you unique both in terms of your specializations and your value to the right employer.

For students/recent grads. If you’re a student, you have two options. Option one is to focus on the path of expertise you’re pursuing in grad school (most useful if you’re early on in your program and not yet job-hunting). At this point, assume you’re just starting to build your professional visibility.

Your headline might be along the lines of:

- MMLIS Student Exploring Connections among Libraries, Technology, and User Experience
- Info Science Grad Student Focused on Data Librarianship, Data Management, and Data Preservation
- Music Librarianship Grad Student Doing Deep Dive into Digital Music Archives
- Info Pro In-Training With Passion for Business Research, Competitive Intelligence, and Market Forecasting
- Future Digital Assets Manager, Researching Application of DAM in Public Relations and Content Marketing Industries

What each of these headlines provides is a very clear indication of your interests (especially useful information for those looking for potential internship candidates or project volunteers). Also, it starts to position you for greater visibility on these topics. And if you decide halfway through your program that you’re changing career direction? Simply change your headline to reflect your new passion.

Option two is to create an aspirational headline. What type of job or work will you aspire to when you graduate? In this situation, you want your headline to signal that you’re a soon-to-be or recent grad (translation: looking for an entry-level job), that you have mastered a specific body of knowledge, and the type of organization you’d like to work for.

So your soon-to-graduate/recent grad job-hunting headline might look like one of these:

- iSchool Grad (Digital Humanities) Exploring Academic Library Opportunities Where I Can Contribute, Continue To Learn
- Librarian-To-Be Eager to Contribute Multilingual Marketing/Outreach Skills to East Coast Public Library (5/16 grad)
- Aspiring Digital Archivist Seeking Entry-Level Opportunities to Contribute in Cultural, Corporate, or Academic Organizations
- Recent MLIS Grad Eager to Use My Marketing Skills To Help Your Public Library Serve Its Community

You'll notice that each of these headlines is focused on *a desire to contribute to the organization*, rather than on what you, the job-seeker, want.

#2 Use keywords. This step complements the “be specific” approach, but takes it a step further by purposely including the keywords that potential employers are most likely to search on when seeking someone with your expertise. So, for example, rather than use the keywords “information strategist” in my own LinkedIn profile, I substituted “content strategist” when a quick keyword search turned up the fact that just about no one used this phrase but me – not good for findability!

There are a number of pretty easy ways to identify the best keywords for the type of job you'd like your headline to align with, but the best starting point is Susan Joyce's article, [How To Identify Exactly The Right Keywords For Your LinkedIn Profile](#). Joyce provides very clear instructions for how to find your optimal keywords, as well as noting why it's so important to do so.

#3 Focus on your value proposition. In the business world, a “value proposition” is the value that a product or service provides to the customer. Similarly, when you're showcasing your ability to provide value to a potential employer, you want to focus on what makes you the person they'll want to hire. If you've been working for awhile, you should have enough “wins” and/or specializations that you'll be able to include some aspect of these in your headline.

For example, what problems can you solve? What unique expertise or skills do you have that will be the solution to the challenge they're facing? One way to address this is to use the following format: I'm a [what] doing [what] with [what benefit] [for whom]

Putting some sample LIS terminology into this format might result in:

- Increasing Patron Satisfaction as User Experience Librarian for Arapahoe County Public Library
- Ensuring Successful Product Development by Providing Competitive Market and Product Research, Intelligence
- Technical Documentalist Responsible for Performance Documentation, Ensuring Consistent Production Standards For Ballet

I have to admit, this can get a bit unwieldy if your headline doesn't easily lend itself to this format with as few syllables as possible. But if you want to be visible for a specific role (as in, you're in stealth job-hunt mode), this is an effective way to encapsulate the key benefits you deliver.

For students/recent grads. If you don't yet have job experience on which to base your headline but would still like to try applying this approach to your headline, consider stating *why* you're pursuing a particular topic in grad school. For example:

- Exploring Connections Among Libraries, Technology, and User Experience to Increase Findability, User Satisfaction
- Focusing on Data Librarianship, Data Management, and Data Preservation to Ensure Value, Accessibility of Data Assets
- Researching Digital Music Archives Best-Practices to Provide State-of-the-Art Archives Management and Preservation
- Developing Expertise in Business Research, Competitive Intelligence, and Market Forecasting to Support Corporate Goals
- Researching DAM in Public Relations and Content Marketing Industries to Help Support Competitive Market Positioning

What about Injecting Some Personality?

Generally speaking, you'll want to consider the customary demeanor of your target audience when crafting your headline. If you're shooting for a job interview or the eye of a recruiter, you'll want to

align with the expectations they have for their industry or organization. This extends to specific jobs as well; what works for a YA librarian may not have the same positive outcome for an aspiring medical research librarian.

However, I personally think it's great to include a bit of your personality if you've got the space to do so. Why not say something that indicates you've got a healthy sense of humor and don't take yourself too seriously? (I tend to think that any organization that doesn't appreciate and seek out these wonderful traits isn't really a place you'd want to work anyway, but that's just me.)

A caveat here, however, is to make sure that what you see as a light-hearted and endearing headline comment is likely to be interpreted similarly by others. Check with your most professional friends for their feedback – if they hesitate for even a moment, best not to include. As always in online communications, discretion is your friend.

<http://infonista.com/2016/07/04/linkedin-profile-headlines-cool-things-to-say-that-arent-your-job-title/>

