

# Please Change Your LinkedIn Headline Now.. Here's Why and How

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As an Executive Recruiter, I generally scroll through hundreds of LinkedIn headlines and profiles every day. My estimate is that more than 95% of LinkedIn members just use their job title and company as their LinkedIn headline. C'mon, you can do better than that!

If your LinkedIn headline is like most, it's actually making you look much less impressive than you really are. Here are the 4 deadliest LinkedIn headline errors I see over and over:

1. Your LinkedIn headline is cheesy. Phrases like "Social Media Superstar" or "Strategic Visionary" or "Magical Marketer" mean absolutely nothing and are not impressive or intriguing.
2. Your LinkedIn headline is confusing. If someone is confused about what you do, you will not be asked for clarification. Whether you are an entrepreneur, a job-seeker, or a happily employed professional, be clear in explaining how you make other people/organizations better. Only include your exact job title if people will understand what it means. Many of the people at my recruiting firm use their real job titles (i.e. "Associate Principal" or "Engagement Manager"). Why don't they just refer to themselves as an "Executive Recruiter?" That's what they are. Unless you work for a consulting firm, do you have any idea what an "Engagement Manager" does? If you have more than one role or job, try to create a central theme (if it makes sense) or focus on the one role/expertise that you want to be known for. Avoid positioning yourself as a jack of all trades or you will look like a master of none.
3. Your LinkedIn headline is boring. Show us why you are special and unique. Provide *indisputable evidence* for your value and credibility by highlighting an impressive achievement, honor, award, industry recognition, etc. Only include the name of your employer in your LinkedIn headline if you work for a very well-known, well-respected brand, only include your college's name in your LinkedIn headline if you attend(ed) a very well-respected school, and only include letters after your name if they are affiliated with a very well-respected degree or certification.
4. Your LinkedIn headline is desperate. If you are out of work or looking for something new, don't say that you are unemployed or "seeking new opportunities." No matter why you are looking for something new, this looks desperate and undermines your value. Highlight your past achievements and future value

instead. You should not be sitting back waiting for recruiters or hiring managers to find you anyway. You should be proactively seeking opportunities on your own.

Now that we have discussed what NOT to do, here is "The Ultimate LinkedIn Headline Formula" and an easy 4-step process ("what-who-how-proof") that you can follow to create a much more powerful, attention-grabbing LinkedIn headline:

- **Step 1: Say WHAT you are.**
- **Step 2: Say WHO you help.**
- **Step 3: Say HOW you make their life/work better.**
- **Step 4: Give PROOF that you are credible.**

Here are some examples:

- Executive Recruiter/Speaker/Author/who helps you create a better career. Featured on Fox/CBS/CNN  
(Note: this was my LinkedIn headline when this article was published.)
- Fundraising consultant who helps major non-profits raise more money. Clients include the Red Cross and YMCA.
- Personal Trainer who helps high school athletes get stronger and faster. Certified by the American Council on Exercise.

With each of these headlines, you immediately know what the person does, who they help, how they help them, and why they are credible. (Note: You can use the 4-step formula whether you are happily employed or looking for a new role.)

Your LinkedIn headline is valuable real estate and may be the only part of your profile that a recruiter or hiring manager actually looks at. Don't do what everyone else does and just use your title/employer for your LinkedIn headline. BORING. Use your LinkedIn headline to show undeniable proof that you are credible and unique in a good way.

*For students and recent grads with limited experience:* You can fill in the "proof" part of "The Ultimate LinkedIn Headline" formula by highlighting a strong GPA, leadership positions, technical skills, etc.