



## Creating a Board Ready LinkedIn Profile

Recruitment for Board positions is extremely competitive. A sophisticated approach to your social media profiles is necessary. Do not just make superficial edits. Take a thoughtful approach. If done with meaning, creating a Board focused LinkedIn profile will not only create an effective marketing tool, but will also help you to define your skills, improve your network, and identify areas of development. This Worksheet is not a LinkedIn primer. We assume that you already have the basics of a professional LinkedIn profile, including a professional photo.

### Identifying Board Relevant Skills and Expertise

To demonstrate that you are a Board ready candidate, you must advertise in your LinkedIn profile any skills that you have that are relevant in a Board room. In a normal LinkedIn profile, you would include those skills relevant to your functional expertise. These are still important, but you must go beyond such expertise descriptors and think critically about what skills you will bring into the board room. This is how you begin to define your personal Board profile.

The following is a list of common skills needed by effective Board members – it is not exhaustive. **Do not overreach.** Include only the skills and experience you possess. Review this list carefully and edit your LinkedIn profile in two ways. First, include any of these applicable skills and/or terms in the *Summary* section of your profile. Second, where possible, include these skills in the *Skills and Endorsement* section of your profile. Finally, make a separate list of any skills that you do not have. These are possible areas of development for you and should be considered when you are assessing additional training, education and/or experience.

Risk Management	Corporate Governance
Compliance	Fiduciary Responsibility
Audit	Strategy/Strategic Planning
Diversity	Ethics
Finance	Labor
Government Relations	Public Policy
Capital and Investment	Sarbanes-Oxley
Mergers and Acquisition	Influence
Executive	Leadership
Regulatory	Business Models
Revenue and Customer Acquisition	Strategic/Crisis Communications
Fundraising	Capital Formation
Reporting	Critical Thinker
Negotiation	Functional Expertise (IT, HR, Legal, Sales etc.)
Six Sigma	Global or International
Quality Assurance	Project Management
Board or Advisory Board	Committee
Change Management	Executive Committee
Business Process Improvement	Advocacy



### **Manage Your Endorsements/Recommendations and Build Your Network**

Once you have edited your profile to include all of your Board relevant skills, look next at the *Endorsements* and *Recommendations* sections of your LinkedIn profile. Begin by reviewing your existing endorsements. Endorsements are your online job references and should be treated just as seriously. To be credible, you should only be endorsed by people who have worked with you and have reason to be aware of your skills and expertise. Accordingly, remove any endorsements from family members, friends, strangers etc.

Next, look at all of your skills and assess the remaining endorsements. Are they from high level, credible sources? Are they coming from within your particular industry of interest? Would you feel comfortable having this person serve as a reference? Are there enough endorsements and recommendations for each skill? Are there reference sources from leaders from within your community? Once you have answered these questions, you are ready to begin the process of asking for endorsements and recommendations. Take your time and make each contact meaningful. Tell the people you contact about your desire to seek a Board of Directors position. Every call you make will not only strengthen your LinkedIn profile, but it will also build your network. Recommendations and endorsements from executive level people, leaders from your industry and/or within your community, and other Board members will be particularly persuasive.

### **Use LinkedIn Share and Groups to Be Active In Your Industry and Community**

Your skills and expertise are important for obtaining a Board position, but it is your involvement in and commitment to your industry, sector and community that will set you apart as a Board candidate. LinkedIn is an effective tool for involvement. Review your profile and make sure you are following companies, organizations and channels that reflect relevant involvement in your industry, profession, sector and community. Use LinkedIn Share to offer helpful and relevant information, share industry based articles and content, and interact with other people. Do not forget to join LinkedIn groups that are relevant to your industry and/or community. And, don't just join these groups, but be active in them. Be targeted and thoughtful with all of your choices. Your LinkedIn profile should reflect the industry specific knowledge, skills, experience and values you will bring to your Board seat.

### **Conduct Searches to Test Your New Profile**

Once you have created your Board ready LinkedIn Profile, conduct some sample searches seeking Board members in your industry and see how your profile compares. Be prepared to edit your profile to include additional skills and/or other relevant groups. Reviewing the profiles of current Board members can also help you identify where you may need additional experience and training. As you continue to build skills, do not forget to manage and edit your LinkedIn profile to keep it current and meaningful.