

# E-Guide for Creating an Impressive LinkedIn Profile



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Career Counselor,  
Bestselling Author



**2024 Edition**

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*60 Seconds & You're Hired!*

# Contents

About Robin Ryan.....	1
Your Profile.....	2
Is Your LinkedIn Profile Impressive? Take This Test to Find Out .....	3
LinkedIn Photo Tips to Look Your Best .....	9
Add a LinkedIn Background Photo to Distinguish Yourself .....	13
How to Write a LinkedIn HEADLINE That Gets You Noticed .....	18
Write a Powerful LinkedIn “About” Section.....	23
Use This New LinkedIn Feature to Make Your Top Skills Standout .....	28
How To Write an Impressive LinkedIn Work Experience Section .....	31
How to Complete the Skills Section.....	35
An Easy Way to Get Impressive LinkedIn Recommendations .....	36
Summary .....	40
Career Services from Robin Ryan .....	41

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## About Robin Ryan

The *Los Angeles Times* calls her “**America’s Top Career Expert.**” **Robin Ryan** has appeared on more than 3000 TV and radio shows, including Oprah and Dr. Phil. She is the bestselling author of eight books, including *60 Seconds & You’re Hired!* and *Winning Resumes*. Robin currently writes a career column for *Forbes.com*.



She has a busy career counseling practice helping clients with **resume writing, LinkedIn profile writing, interview coaching, job search, salary negotiation, and new college graduate career coaching**. Learn more at: [RobinRyan.com](https://RobinRyan.com).

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## Your Profile

LinkedIn is the hottest career development tool out there if you know how to create a winning profile. I've written over 2400 LinkedIn profiles for my clients and have seen the importance of how a strong LinkedIn presence is in managing their careers. LinkedIn's value has substantially increased over the past several years.

I've been fortunate to be able to share my expertise with LinkedIn profiles (and resumes, interviews, and other job search topics) gained from working with clients and independent research as a Forbes.com columnist. My e-guide is based on articles I first



*A strong LinkedIn profile is the hottest career development tool out there.*

published in Forbes. For this latest edition I have updated and added content to have the most current information on creating and improving your LinkedIn profile.

In this e-guide I outline everything you need to do to develop a profile so that you stand out – whether you are looking to be discovered for a job and/or make a good impression with a colleague, someone you want to hire, or a client. The order of this guide is reflective of how you build your profile from top to bottom. So, if you are looking for one section, you can check the table of contents for the section you want and go straight to that one.

Before you dive in, please complete the following short quiz to see what changes are essential for you to make.

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## Is Your LinkedIn Profile Impressive? Take This Test to Find Out

People are checking you out on LinkedIn. Will you be embarrassed by what they find? Are you aware that 95% of recruiters use LinkedIn to find job candidates? Did you know that many hiring managers check you out on LinkedIn before or after they talk to you? Prospective employees check you out too. Colleagues, clients, and prospects often look you up on LinkedIn. What will they find?

Is your current LinkedIn Profile impressive? Answer these questions about your profile to find out.

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### How many connections do you have?

- 500+
- 300-500
- 200-300
- 100-200
- Less than 100

**Answer:** LinkedIn says you need between 300-500 connections to have an effective network. The site says that connections should be people you know, have worked with, went to college with, or are friends with. For some individuals, it might be more strategic to accept everyone if you want to position yourself as a thought leader, top executive, or expert.

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### How old is your LinkedIn profile photo?

- New, less than 6 months old
- Taken in last 2 years

- 3-5 years old
- Older than 5 years
- Don't have one

**Answer:** LinkedIn says you receive 21 times more views with a photo. The picture needs to be recent, not more than 2 years old.

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### **Is your LinkedIn photo high quality and smiling?**

- Professional-looking photo
- Personal photo with me in it
- I just put up what I had on my phone
- Photo but not smiling
- No picture

**Answer:** Use a high-quality, high-resolution headshot with a plain background, where you look smiling and engaging.

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### **Do you have a custom background photo behind your picture?**

- Yes
- No
- Didn't know I could do that

**Answer:** You will stand out and distinguish yourself if you use a background photo to customize your LinkedIn page.

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### **Is your current job title your headline?**

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** This happens by default. The headline is the most searched part of LinkedIn; therefore, you must carefully select the appropriate keywords including any prospective job titles and any special credentials like MBA or CPA. You can also add your industry, and even a tagline about your top ability or your product or service.

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### **Is your “About” section written in first person?**

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** First person is the correct writing approach. LinkedIn wants you to talk about your personality, your strengths, and how you work with others. If you are unemployed, note the job title you seek and the best way for employers to connect with you. If you are selling a service or product, outline what it is and why or how it helps others.

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### **Does your work experience list only the job and company but no descriptions?**

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** You need a job description for the positions listed. Exception: For older jobs more than 15 years ago you can skip the description, keeping job title, company, and employment dates only.

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### **Does your work experience list accomplishments?**

- Yes



- No

**Answer:** Your work descriptions should include 3 to 4 job accomplishments featuring the biggest results you achieved in that particular position.

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## Have you updated the Skills section to include current skills?

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** This section needs to be current and reflect the skills you have acquired in the last few years and not focus on early career skills you no longer use, e.g., Team Leader versus Team Player.

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## How many recommendations have you received?

- 10+
- 8-10
- 5-7
- 3-5
- 1-2
- none

**Answer:** Employers find these extremely influential; therefore, more is better. Check how old yours are. Recent ones are often missing. The goal is to have 5-8 in total with at least one or two written in the last 2 years.

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## Do you post articles?

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** By posting 1-2 times per week, you dramatically improve your visibility on the LinkedIn algorithm (how the site runs). Commenting, though, is not as effective as posting. You should respond to any comments or questions from your post.

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## Do You have an “Open for Work” tag around your photo?

- Yes
- No
- What is that?

**Answer:** This is a feature that LinkedIn has said using it does increase responses from recruiters, yet those I’ve talked to say it has no impact at all. A few recruiters saw it only as a sign that you wouldn’t ghost them if they reached out to you but not anything that would initially get their attention. Many people don’t like it, and think it makes them look desperate. Most career counselors are ambivalent about recommending it. I advise new college graduates and people with less than 5 years of experience to turn this tag on. Never use this tag if you are still employed as your employer might stumble upon it.

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## Is your resume featured on your profile?

- Yes
- No

**Answer:** Not recommended and it's not safe either. Your goal is to get employers to talk to you. Remove your resume if it is part of your profile.

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You have likely found out that your profile needs improvement. Take the time to create one that really paints a terrific picture of you and your accomplishments.

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## LinkedIn Photo Tips to Look Your Best

“It’s astounding how many people have a really poor photo of themselves on LinkedIn. It is so unprofessional,” said Sophia, an HR specialist I had a recent discussion with. “I see so many people who pick any old picture to put up. I guess they don’t see themselves like we view that image. It should be the best picture of themselves.



*I don't advise a professional photoshoot, but you can get the perfect LinkedIn portrait with a smartphone or help from a photo hobbyist friend with a fancy camera.*

Instead, many come from a group shot or are dressed inappropriately, looking old or immature, and often from some sporting event or party. Many LinkedIn photos are blurry or have poor resolution. Some people do not have an image at all. You won’t impress anyone—employers, bosses, clients, and prospective customers—if you give off the wrong impression because you posted a lousy photo of yourself,” this HR specialist stated, who has reviewed hundreds of LinkedIn profiles.

There are some pretty terrible pictures on LinkedIn. It sends the wrong message to anyone who views your profile and doesn’t work as part of your career management. Age Discrimination

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*A terrible picture on LinkedIn... sends the wrong message to anyone who views your profile...*

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Age discrimination is something people do worry about. “The last thing I want to do is look old on LinkedIn,” stated Mike, a 61-year-old

manager who asked me to help him improve his LinkedIn profile. He had no photo and said, "If I post a picture, how do I hide that I'm old? I know employers discriminate against older workers, and my balding, white hair is a dead giveaway that I am an old guy," he said.

Mike is not the only one worried about age discrimination and looking old. Barbara was a 57-year-old tech sales rep who had the same concern and insisted many employers weren't calling her because of her age. She wanted to hire someone to Photoshop her picture, so she'd looked 15 years younger. I insisted that would not be a solution. As soon as she got to the interview, they would notice an instant difference.

Although age discrimination is real with some recruiters and companies out there doing it, just concede you cannot satisfy everyone. Not having a picture makes you look like a tech dinosaur. Recruiters and connections will think you have a "dead" profile if you don't even have a photo, so it's a must-have in my book.

## **Photo Recommendations**

Should you invest in a professional photoshoot? I don't advise my clients to invest in a professional photoshoot as it is an expensive option. However, with the capabilities we have on smartphones or friends who love photography with fancy cameras, you can get a perfect photo.

If you are choosing from ones you already have, be very selective. It needs to be recent enough so that people recognize you when they see you in an interview or meeting

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*Your profile photo should be less than two years old.*

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situation, so less than two years old. For many readers, that means they need a NEW picture.

Here are my LinkedIn photo recommendations. Your goal is to post a smiling, warm, engaging picture of yourself.

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*Your goal is to have an engaging picture of yourself.*

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**HEADSHOT ONLY:** Nothing else should be in the picture but your head, neck, and possibly the top of your shoulders. Don't use faraway shots where we can't see your face. Look straight at the camera or turn your head slightly toward the LinkedIn profile so that the direction is to the right when others are viewing it. Skip side view shots. People want to see you, so look at the camera.

**BE IN FOCUS:** Don't use a filter or mess around in Photoshop to soften the image too much. You want a sharp picture where we see your eyes. If you wear glasses, watch out for glare on the lens. You want to ensure that your eyes are visible with that bit of sparkle in them you get when you are happy and smiling.

**ATTIRE:** To convey the right professional image, choose your outfit carefully.

For men, the formal business suit and tie are not seen much on LinkedIn, so unless that is your daily work attire, relax the dress a bit. Options to choose from: just a collared dress shirt works well for most men, plain colored (no stripes), or wear a dress shirt and tie. Another option is a dress shirt open collar with suit jacket as this works very well for a classy, more formal look. No casual shirts, Hawaiian or golf looks, and certainly no t-shirts.

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*To convey the right professional image, choose your outfit carefully.*

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For women: Plain solid color outfit works best. Wear a solid color you look great in. A dress, jacket, sweater, or blouse is fine. Avoid wearing

anything sleeveless or too revealing. No prints, plaids, or stripes as they are too distracting. Makeup applied well will help you look your best. Test the lipstick to ensure it is not too stark, e.g., no reds. Softer pinks and corals are better choices.

**SMILE:** You must come across as friendly, warm, and engaging. Show some enthusiasm for life. We need to see a twinkle in your eye—a zest for life. A warm, friendly smile will make you look accessible and encourage others to want to connect with you.

**LIGHTING:** Everyone looks better in good lighting. Warning: Your picture will make you look older and less attractive without great lighting. Indoor light, especially home or office lighting, can be the worst selection as it is often harsh and uneven. The natural light you get by facing a window from a few feet away usually works well. Ensure you balance the lighting, so your face is fully lit from all sides. Try taking your photo outside. Professional photographers recommend that the best time to take a picture is on an overcast day.

**BACKGROUND:** It's essential that you have a plain background behind you. So many photos on LinkedIn have a busy background and look so distracting. Nothing should take away from YOU.

Let the world see the best you possible. Your connections and recruiters all want to see your warm, inviting face when they get to your profile page. So be sure that is what they find.

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## Add a LinkedIn Background Photo to Distinguish Yourself

Want to look tech-savvy and cool on LinkedIn? Then you need to have a background photo that shows up behind your personal photograph. Sarah is my career client and a baby boomer. As I was writing her LinkedIn Profile, she mentioned something I frequently hear. “I didn’t realize you could change the background. I just thought this is how it is supposed to look.” Once I showed her some options, she picked an abstract picture that is now part of her page. Her response was, “This is awesome. Who knew?” Most people don’t. Almost everyone has the LinkedIn default background for their profile, and they don’t realize it can—and should—be customized. You likely haven’t even noticed it.

Go to your LinkedIn page and check out the graphic behind your picture. This is what it looks like now:



Put some thought into what your background should look like. What is the right image? You want a background that will enhance your personal brand and attract employers, show your city skyline, or promote your company. Changing your background makes your

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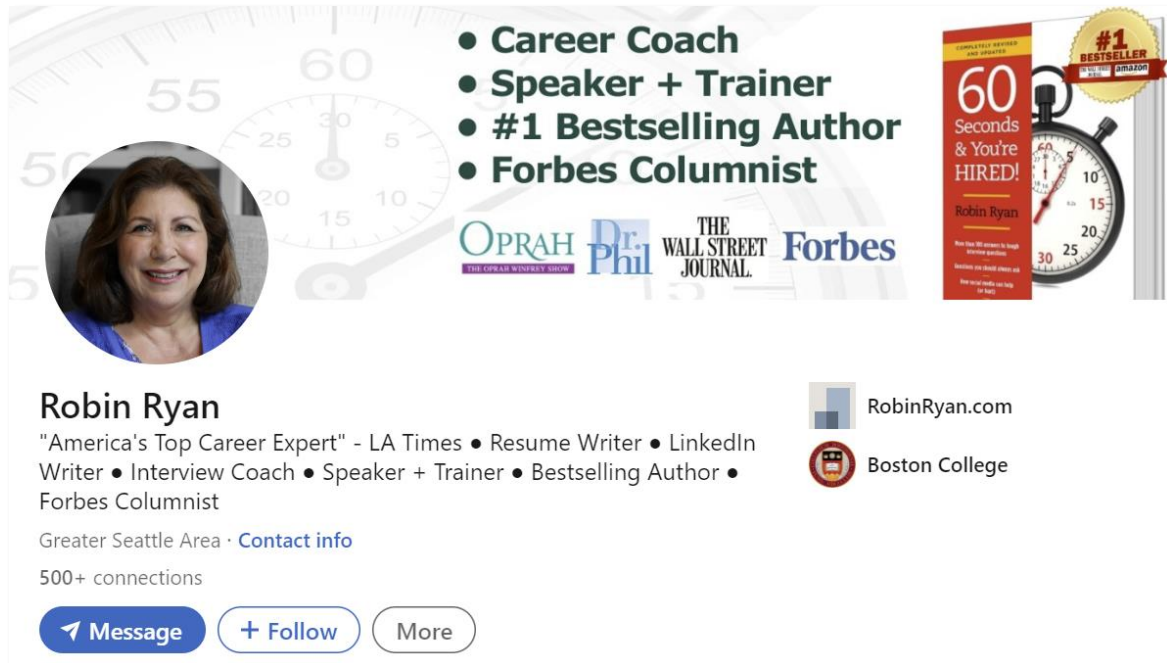
*You want a background that will enhance your personal brand.*

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page much more engaging. It pulls in anyone who comes to your page. And if you are over 50, it makes you look very tech-savvy.

Here is an example of a customized branding background from my profile. It's similar to what a consultant, business owner, or company executive might create to promote their services or company.



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Boston College

Some job hunters might want to identify their location in their background photo. Here's one that my clients have used of San Francisco.



Pretty cool, isn't it? Today, 59% of people use smartphones when they view LinkedIn. Keep that in mind when you are trying to create something customized. Note where your personal photo resides on both a desktop and cell phone so that the image you select looks the way you want it to once you have added the background picture. Since cell phone images are small, words or a lot of text don't show up well, so be careful how much text you add and keep the text size large.

Here are some tips to help you choose and put up the perfect background photo on your page.

## **Define the Goal of Your Photo**

Think of the background as an accent. It is there for a cool effect or to reflect your career field, business, location, or whatever you want to emphasize.

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*Think of the background as an accent.*

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As you review potential backgrounds, what is the image going to say about you? This photo is a branding image. For consultants and companies, they will want to hire a graphic artist and have something custom-made. It needs to be reflective of who your company is and what you sell. You might use a logo, but only if it will be clear and recognized.

Your company product could make a great background image. For example, Rich Christiano owns a Christian film production and distribution company called ChristianMovies.com. He says, "I'm not technically savvy at all. Robin, you told me how I could improve my branding on the background page of my LinkedIn profile, suggesting that I use the photo from my new movie and put it there. I had the images, so I went online and read about how to do it. I sized the picture and posted it myself."

You could use your book cover in the background design like I did since that is your professional business card for an author. For consultants, you want something that sells your services. For many

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*What is the background image going to say about you?*

---

professionals and job hunters, you'll want to choose a complimentary photo that resonates with you. It could be a nature photo or a scenic location. Maybe it's an abstract shot or some scene you like. For example, a client from Denver chose a background of snowy mountains. A Software Engineer uses a photo that displayed colorful wiring. For my client Mary, an HR Director, we chose an image that represented the diversity of the employees she works with daily. Karen used a water photo featuring dolphins simply because she liked it.

## **Background Photo Size**

You must pay attention to this requirement, or you'll end up with a weird, distorted background. The desktop size, known as the official size, is 1584 x 336 pixels. Now a lot of that will get cropped off on smaller screens when people are using their smartphones. A safer, more practical size is likely 1000 x 120 pixels. So, your background picture is an extended narrow photo. Make sure it has good resolution. It's great to use something you have taken yourself. Your state or city tourism bureau may have scenic photos you can download and use, so look at those websites if you want something local.

## **Finding Free Photos to Use**

If you Google "LinkedIn background photo," you'll find numerous options. A few websites have already taken gorgeous photographs and cropped them to the right background size, making it super easy for you to download the picture you want. They have different categories

like landscapes, sports, nature, abstracts, etc., so you are likely to find one that appeals to you. Two of these sites are Unsplash.com and LinkedInBackground.com.

**WARNING:** Be very careful when you are downloading photos from this type of site. Often there are a lot of malware and computer viruses placed on free Internet sites, so when you download a photo, you can get more than you bargained for. I know because that happened to me.

The steps on how to add your background on LinkedIn:

1. Click on the ME icon on your LinkedIn page.
2. Click view profile.
3. Click update background at the top of the profile.
4. Select a picture from your computer to upload and click upload photo.
5. Click save.

It's easy to do. Now that you have it completed, you have a very cool-looking background that makes you stand out and look more tech-savvy than most other people out there on LinkedIn.

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## How to Write a LinkedIn HEADLINE That Gets You Noticed

Every career counseling client I've worked with seems to have made the same mistake in the crucial headline section. If you search your friends and connections, you'll

notice that almost everyone makes this same error on LinkedIn. They do not understand the importance of keywords in their headline.

Most tell me they didn't realize they could change the headline or that they should change it — big

mistake. If you look under your name, LinkedIn by default lists your current job title, and that is your headline. Unless you are Oprah and the world knows who you are without any words under your name, your job title isn't the only thing you want in your headline. You may not even want that title listed at all if it doesn't have the right keywords in it. Let's discuss what should be in this crucial section.

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*...almost everyone makes the same error on LinkedIn. They do not understand the importance of keywords in their headline.*

---

### Personal Brand

You must pay close attention to your personal branding and how you want to be known on LinkedIn.

The headline is how you attract recruiters, hiring managers, HR, connections, and potential clients. It

is the most searched section on LinkedIn's platform. This is your big advertisement to market yourself to the world. It needs to be well thought out, concise, and strategically written. It also offers the words

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*The headline is the most searched section on LinkedIn.*

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that would attract someone to check you out in the search—that is, if they find you at all.

The goal is to be discovered by telling people who you are, what you do, or what kind of client or job you seek. The headline has a limit of 120 characters, so you

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*Your goal is to be discovered with your headline.*

---

need to utilize this marketing space as effectively as possible. I've included examples that follow: one for business owners and consultants and the other for job hunters.

## **Job Hunters Examples**

Whether you are a job hunter or an individual who is happy with your current position, you still want to be found. You need to add the most effective keywords about your role plus some industries or even a particular degree skill that you might have appealing to employers, such as MBA, LEAN expert, SCRUM master, or PMP.

In the examples that follow, these clients needed to determine what they wanted and advertise the right words so recruiters could find them.

### **Mary wants a promotion**

Healthcare Consultant | Vice President Pharmacy | Vice President Healthcare | VP of Pharmacy

Mary was a career counseling client who was stuck at the director level and kept getting passed over. Finally, at 57, she needed to make a move and needed help with LinkedIn. She said, "I never realized you could optimize your headline. Certainly, I never thought of using it to target where I want to go." She was worried that her boss would look

at her profile, so no mention of job hunting was made on her page. The headline was doing that advertising to recruiters for her. We developed all the job titles and areas anyone might look for her. This headline attracted the appropriate recruiters to contact her. You need to do the same thing. If you are job hunting, you select the job title you want and any unique keywords. If anyone from your organization or a colleague were to mention that this was not your actual job title, say, "right, my actual job title is in the professional experience section," and leave the new headline alone.

### **Tom wants a new job**

Sales Software Engineer | Technical Sales Account Executive |  
Technical Software Sales | SaaS | remote

Tom was a career counseling client who needed to make a change. He traveled a lot for his current job and wanted to be able to cut that travel down. He lived in a small city, and the job opportunities had been slim, so he focused on remote work and listed it on his LinkedIn profile.

### **Examples for Consultants and Business Owners**

If you own a business, you must distinguish yourself and your services or products for potential customers to find you amongst the 900+ million users on this website. If you operate only in the US, there are 200 million individuals on LinkedIn. Your goal is to set yourself apart from the competition and ensure you reach as many prospects as possible. A compelling headline is step one in accomplishing that goal. You want to use the headline space to say what you do and attract the niche market you work in.

Henry DeVries

CEO of Publishing Company | Best-Selling Author | Ghostwriter |  
Columnist at Forbes.com

From Henry's headline, you know exactly what he does. He is using good self-marketing advertising and stressing he is a CEO, author, and writer. He is also pointing out that he is a ghostwriter, something that is unique and interesting. Last, we learn that he owns a publishing company.

Here's another example:

Bill was a career counseling client looking to reach a specific audience. He needed help to define who he was on LinkedIn. He works in a small arena. Initially, he had the default job title noting he was CEO and founder of his company, but that didn't help him attract clients. This headline targets what he does and whom he can help. If you are a consultant or small business owner, you need to do the same. You must determine who your client is and use the headline to attract that type of customer.

William Chase

Serving healthcare clients who need help working with Veterans Affairs  
and Dept. of Defense | DoD Access | VA Access | Consultant

## **Specific Format to Follow**

When you develop your headline, notice the one thing used to break apart the titles, specialties, or taglines. That is the vertical line symbol: |. That symbol tells the search engines to keep those words together. So, when you select your keywords for your headline, you need to separate them by the "|."

**CAUTION:** When you add a new job to your work experience, a checked box automatically changes your headline to now list this new



job title. Be sure to *uncheck* it so the new headline you have created does not get erased when you add a new job to your work history.

To summarize, your LinkedIn headline is one of the most visible sections of your LinkedIn profile. You will appear in more LinkedIn searches by using strategic keywords in your headline. After you improve it, more people will find you.

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*You will appear in more LinkedIn searches by using strategic keywords in your headline.*

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You can attract recruiters, potential clients, and more connections simply by making improvements to your headline. Don't let the LinkedIn default headline remain on your page after your name. Customize it!

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## Write a Powerful LinkedIn “About” Section

The trickiest part of creating your LinkedIn profile is writing your “About” section. It is NOT just copied from your resume. No, it’s much more complex than that, which is why Nita, John, and Rodney came to me for some help.

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*The trickiest part of creating your LinkedIn profile is writing your “About” section.*

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Nita was a consultant who worked in the healthcare field. She needed her LinkedIn profile to be updated as she had created it seven years ago. It had no real branding. She had recently been told by a colleague she was missing out on marketing opportunities by not updating it.

John had been a 16-year veteran employee working for a Fortune 100 company who was laid off. He needed a new job. He was a graphic designer with a great deal of communication and marketing

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*Your “About” section is NOT just copied from your resume.*

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experience. He had gone back to college for a year and added more computer and tech skills to his resume. Finally, John was ready to work and needed help with his LinkedIn profile and had no idea what to say in the “About” section, so he just stated one line about his job.

Rodney was a director who received an email saying that the senior leadership needed to go onto LinkedIn and update their profiles and summaries. Each person must write about how they liked their job and say some positive things about the company culture. He told me, “Hey Robin, I’m terrific at running my department, but creating glowing

phrases about my best skills and this culture—isn't that what the communications department needs to do? I should only have to post it. I suggested that to my boss and got a 'do it yourself' response back.”

Everyone has a reason for needing to write or update the “About” section. The three people I've mentioned cover most people's situations. To make this even more stressful, people can only see the first few sentences when they come to your page before they need to hit “show more,” so those sentences need to pull the reader in and grab their attention. No pressure, right?

Let's take this writing project step-by-step to make it easier for you to create a more effective “About” section.

## Opening Three Sentences

It must be immediately evident to any reader what value you offer. So that means it's easily discernible to the recruiter, prospective client, another colleague, or even your employees if you are the boss.

---

*It must be immediately evident to any reader what value you offer.*

---

They want to know who you are, what is unique about you, and they want to know that quickly in a friendly voice. So, you need to mix your credentials and strengths with your accomplishments and make this personalized and friendly. “About” tells the world who you are and advertises your personal brand.

The first three sentences follow you when you post on LinkedIn. It's all someone sees when they read “About” as they come to your profile page. That is unless they hit the “show more” tab on your profile.

These need to be powerful sentences that sell you and pull the reader in to want to “see more” about you.

## **Write in First Person**

Contrary to what you may have done in the past, this area is no longer advertisements written like they came off a press release, a job description, or copied word for word from a resume. That is the initial challenge, as writing in the first person means using “I” to write about yourself, and this is hard. Plus, you also need to display a bit of your personality. Many people treat this part of their profile as a biography or a company ad. That is a mistake. To be effective, you need to write it more like a self-marketing pitch that is genuine and authentic.

## **Target Your Reader**

Think about this section as if you were having a conversation with a colleague, a recruiter, or a prospective client. How would you talk to them and introduce yourself?

What would you want them to know? What would be the essential points they should be told about you, your skills, accomplishments, or unique talents?

---

*Write as if you are having a conversation with the reader.*

---

You want to have your personality come out here too. Hiring managers and recruiters are looking at prospective fits, and so you want to shine. You may have some unique background, advanced degree, or something a boss or client has said about you that you wish to emphasize. Focus the reader quickly because they'll go away if you don't capture their interest right away.

## Know Who Your Audience Is

For example:

- Recruiters are looking for good-fit candidates.
- Prospective clients are looking at your background and expertise.
- Executives should be representing your company well and looking like an impressive leader in your field.
- Everyone else must look good to colleagues and whoever comes to check you out.

## Write, Edit, Rewrite

Start out breaking this assignment into a few pieces. First, write out the top three selling points that you want people to know about you on LinkedIn. These don't have to be fancy marketing sentences. Just note your best attributes and the top things you are best at on the job. You are likely going to lead with these. You can polish them up later, but this is an excellent way to get started.

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*Edit it and rewrite it.  
Polish it up.*

---

Next, outline your most significant professional accomplishments. What makes you stand out from others in your field? This can be one or two things. You have the "Experience" section to note the significant aspects of your work. This "About" part is to highlight a few things. Now try to write down a couple of things about your personality. What is it about you that you want others to know? If you are a manager, it's wise to credit your team as a key part of your success. Discuss how you support and coach team members. Everyone wants to work for a good boss, so this is a great point to make.

After you have taken the time to compile these pieces, try crafting the first draft. Then leave it alone for one day. Go back and read it when it's cold. Edit it and rewrite it. Polish it up.

## Call to Action or Nice Conclusion

Now you need to write the ending.

This needs to have the next action step you want the person to take.

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*Your ending needs to communicate the next action step you want.*

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**Job hunter:** State you are job hunting; for example: I'm currently

open to a new job opportunity as a (name the job title you seek), so if you have something that might be a fit, email me at: (Add in your email).

**Consultant or business:** You can use a client quote or testimonial and then say send me an email (paste in your email) to discuss how I can help you with (whatever it is you do).

**Professional / executive / everyone else:** Depending on what you want in terms of new connections, you could say: "I like to connect with people in your industry." For others, end with a positive sentence about yourself or a comment that either a team member or boss might say about you.

## Get Feedback Before You Post It

Be sure to have someone read over your summary and give you feedback before you post it online. If you are a professional not looking for a job, your boss might be ideal. If you are a job hunter, get a colleague who knows your industry to offer insight. A consultant needs another colleague to look it over. Then, after you make tweaks based on their input, post it into the "About" section.

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## Use This New LinkedIn Feature to Make Your Top Skills Standout

Wouldn't it be great if LinkedIn had a particular way to advertise your top skills so they are easily noticed? That is precisely what they have done. In explaining why they have done this and are pushing to make job skills a core part of their users' experiences, LinkedIn's VP of Product Management, Hari Srinivasan, shared that [44% of recruiters apply a skills-oriented approach](#) to finding candidates.

As part of this push, LinkedIn now gives you a feature called "Top Skills." This feature is a section that highlights your best skills to increase your odds of being found by hiring employers as they search within LinkedIn or other search engines like Google. It sits right under your "About" section in the profile.

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*LinkedIn's new Top Skills section optimizes your profile for being found by employers as they search.*

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This new Top Skills section allows you to highlight your top five skills. Whether you're a job hunter or a professional wanting to enhance your profile, this new option is a valuable function. Once listed, it is easier for search engines and recruiters to uncover job candidates with a specific skill. Or if an employer says they need a candidate to have a specific skill like product development, a recruiter can add this skill into the search parameter. Optimizing your profile with these important keywords improves your chance of capturing attention.

Now, if you race to add your five skills, you will be surprised it's not there. Don't be confused; it is not the "Skills" section at the end of your profile. *The top skills box is invisible if you haven't set up this function.* To add it, open your "About" section and hit "edit." At the

bottom, you'll see a tab that says, "Add Top Skills." Click on that. Identify your top five from the drop-down menu. Not every possible skill you can think of is available, but many skills are. You must select from those.

## How to Identify Your Top Skills

Here is a quick trick. Go to the bottom of your profile to see what skills you noted there. Pick out your top five. Don't worry that the skills will be in there twice. These top ones take prominence, so be sure you select the best ones that describe your abilities.

Or you can search for a job opening with your job title. Read that and look for the critical skills the employer wants. That will enable you to uncover some critical skills you might have missed and want to highlight.

Here are two examples that I created for my career counseling clients when I was writing their LinkedIn profiles.

### About

Financial Analyst with four years of experience working for.....

#### ◆ ◆ ◆ Top skills

Financial Analysis • Data Analytics • Corporate Finance • Financial Modeling • Accounting

### About

Account Executive having sold technology products .....

#### ◆ ◆ ◆ Top skills

Customer Success • Sales • Business Development • Market Research • Merchandising

Do some self-assessment. LinkedIn [defined hard skills as competencies and measurable abilities](#). Forage, an educational



organization, defines soft skills as *non-technical skills that describe how you work and interact with others*. There are many more hard skills than soft ones. As you search for the ones you think represent your best abilities or personality traits, you can't use any that aren't found in the drop-down menu.

Here is a list of some of the more sought-after skills employers look for. Many may not relate to your type of job. So, only use the appropriate ones. Consider blending soft skills and hard skills into your five selections. Here are some examples:

**Soft Skills:**

- Leadership
- Collaboration
- Persuasion
- Communications
- Interpersonal skills
- Customer service
- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Influencing
- Time Management
- Decision Making

**Hard Skills:**

- Project Management
- Research
- Management
- Sales
- SQL
- Excel
- Photoshop
- Negotiation
- Writing
- Foreign language
- Presentation skills
- Forecasting
- Budgeting
- Facilitated
- Supervised

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## How To Write an Impressive LinkedIn Work Experience Section

Did you know that 45% of people on LinkedIn have outdated information on their profiles? Some have only job titles and company names with dates of employment listed. It's missing industry keywords and your achievements. Big mistake. It seems there are hundreds of articles written on LinkedIn headlines, the about section, photo tips, and skills, but it seems no one stressed how to create an impactful work description section.

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*Your resume is much more detailed than your LinkedIn profile.*

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Keep in mind that your resume is much more detailed than what is stated in your LinkedIn profile description section.

Begin by defining your personal brand and ensure it is apparent on your resume and carries through onto your LinkedIn profile. These should mirror each other. Have more detail on the resume but be more concise, using fewer statements on LinkedIn that only hit on your most significant accomplishments.

Above all else, avoid using long, generic work descriptions. If you are a job hunter, this is a crucial section to advertise the results you have achieved in past positions. A

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*Avoid using long, generic work descriptions.*

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common mistake is to describe what the company does and not what you have done in your role there. The same is true for anyone wanting to polish their profile. You could be self-employed, an executive, a sales manager, a business owner, someone interested in attracting

talented workers, or a consultant promoting your services. Readers want to quickly learn about the results and outcomes you have made.

Here are some writing tips to make your profile complete and impress anyone looking at it.

**Relevancy matters.** Develop this section keeping in mind the types of jobs you are applying for or performing now. Make sure your experience supports that. You will shrink older job descriptions and make the most recent ones lengthier. Unfortunately, LinkedIn doesn't allow you to cram together three different job types but works more effectively to support one specific role. Edit carefully to emphasize the most relevant experience and accomplishments that target the next role you seek.

**Start with a strong opening sentence.** The first few sentences are highlighted on your profile. After that, the reader must click the "see more" button to read the rest of this section. So, write an excellent summary using two or three sentences to give the reader an excellent overview of your experience, key accomplishments, and relevant industry expertise. Be sure you *use past tense* when you are writing throughout this section. It means you have done it, which is the right message to promote.

**Focus on your recent roles.** Don't put everything on your resume in the job experience description. Instead, offer a few highlights to get the attention of a recruiter or hiring manager. Note key accomplishments where you implemented strategic initiatives or made money, saved time, or delivered significant cost savings. Maybe you created something new or improved productivity. These are the kinds of sentences that employers and others want to know. As you progress backward in time, write smaller descriptions. If you have a long history, you don't need to include every position you have held. And

you should shorten descriptions as these older jobs are likely at a lower level than the job you seek and have now. Going back 15 years is enough because your recent experience is aligned to set you up for the next role. One caution for mature workers is to be mindful about ageism. To counteract this, it's best to not include any jobs you've held that are older than 15 years. Nothing you did before this will seem relevant and you don't want to advertise how old you are if you are over 50.

**Use action words.** Start each sentence with an action verb like directed, created, drove, headed, implemented, etc. A great formula to use as you develop your sentences is: ACTIONS = RESULTS. Specify what your ACTIONS were and conclude with what the RESULT achieved.

**Add in keywords.** Research the keywords that you should include for each job. I highly recommend you take a good look at some actual job descriptions for positions you want to go after or review the profiles of a few people in similar roles. Make a note of the essential and desirable skills required for the job and sprinkle these keywords inside your job descriptions and about sections.

**Ensure this information is correct.** Job title, company name, and dates of employment need to align perfectly with what is on your resume. This is critical so there is no confusion about your work history, and an employer can easily see your career progression.

**PROOFREAD before you post.** Check spelling and grammar and ensure you have no mistakes. Recruiters hate typos and spelling errors, and any reader notices them. So be sure you have none. Always ask someone else to proof this before it goes live.

**Update regularly.** Many people let years go by without updating their profile. Don't make that mistake. Polish it up once a year and within a few months after you begin a new role.

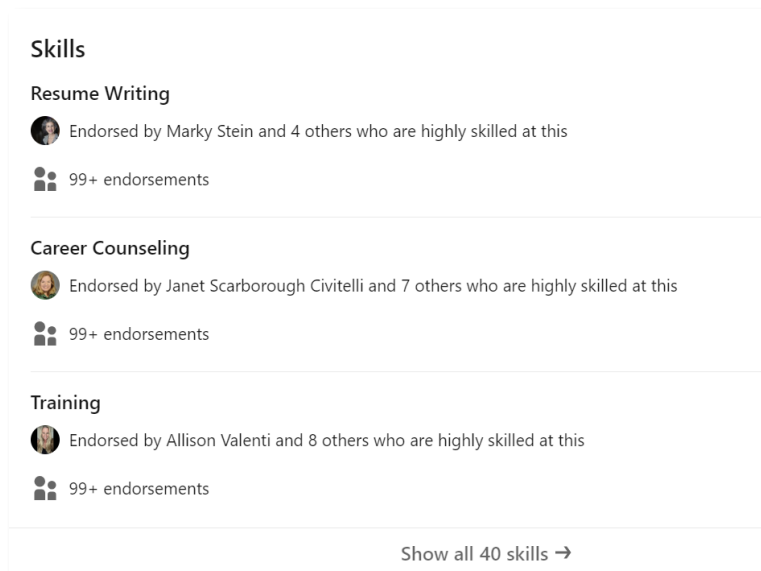
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## How to Complete the Skills Section

The “Skills” section, (not to be confused with the new top skills feature we discussed above) is often ignored. It is the easiest area to change.

Just go into this section and edit the skills you want to add to or delete from your profile.

To begin, determine what the essential skills that you want others to know about you are. For example, you might identify strategic planning, project management, budgets, or cross-functional collaboration as strengths. You can then use the edit function to add these in if they aren’t there.



*In the Skills section you can add or delete the skills you want to show and then order them.*

You can select numerous skills and change the order of those previously set by moving a skill up. This allows a particular skill to stand out more. You can also “edit” a skill, and identify and check off which job you use it in, and that skill is then added to the skills for that particular job’s work experience description.

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## An Easy Way to Get Impressive LinkedIn Recommendations

Do you want to influence people who read your profile? Those people could be hiring managers, recruiters, potential employees, or colleagues. They all read your recommendations to learn what others think about you and your work. Today, many employers can use these statements and assessments instead of formal references. That's how powerful they are.

I repeatedly hear what Susan, a director at a large tech company, said to me: "I always look very closely at LinkedIn recommendations. It can be quite enlightening. In fact, I like to see a pattern about someone with several comments, which can confirm that this is an excellent person to hire."

Most people overlook this essential section, forget about it, or have not had anyone recommend them in recent years. Do pay attention and ensure these postings make you shine when anyone reads them.

I was working with a career client named Michael, a Marketing Director who had never seen a need to be on LinkedIn until he was given a severance package and laid off. He began his job search and realized he needed a good LinkedIn profile highlighting his personal brand and accomplishments.

### Recommendations

Received    Given



**Steffan May, MBA** · 3rd

Veterinary Diagnostic Consultant

September 15, 2021, Steffan was Robin's client

Robin is insightful and detailed. She asks deep questions that open the master of her craft. I really enjoyed learning from her and gaining more k



**Susan P. Joyce** · 2nd

I help job seekers understand how to leverage current recruiter technology search \* Personal SEO Expert \* Researcher \* Writer \* Author \* USMC  
July 14, 2020, Susan P. worked with Robin but they were at different com

For several years, I have found great value reading Robin's Forbes article. Hired is a MUST read book! As a former hiring manager, Robin knows how to think, what employers are looking for, how to give hiring managers the hunter memorable in a positive way, and MANY other aspects of success

*Recommendations on LinkedIn are powerful to have. Aim to get at least five.*

However, he made a common mistake. When it came to recommendations, he had none. Michael asked, "I heard it was important to have recommendations posted on LinkedIn. I don't have any, so how would I get one?" Excellent question. What Michael didn't ask me was if there was an easy way to get these recommendations. The answer is yes. And it is equally important to shape what the person says about you.

## **Best Way to Get Excellent Recommendations**

Everyone who comes to your page pays attention to your recommendations. They come from people who have worked with you and talk about your performance and abilities.

Recommendations are pure gold, as they live forever on the profile. You want to acquire these and keep some recent ones on your profile too. Many people who set up their profile years ago have forgotten the need to update these. They are crucial to your career.

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*Recommendations are pure gold, as they live forever on the profile.*

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First, determine what you need them for. If you are looking for a job, managers or colleagues who can talk about your work are the key people to target. If you are looking for clients, then a recommendation from another client is what you seek.

### **How to get them**

The colleague must be a 1<sup>st</sup> connection in order to post a recommendation. LinkedIn's built-in tool only allows you to formally request one recommendation at a time. You don't want to get stalled waiting for someone to respond to the LinkedIn request. Here is the more effective way to get an excellent recommendation:



**Make a list of your top connections:** bosses, coworkers, or vendors who will say great things about you. You do want some that are current. The goal is to get at least five recommendations up on LinkedIn. Pick seven to eight connections to ask, since not everyone is going to follow through.

**Write a recommendation for your connection on their profile page first.** Everyone is happy to get a recommendation. The system automatically tells the connection they have a new recommendation and asks if they want to return the favor. This kind of nudges the person into writing one for you. Be sure to tell the person yourself that you posted it and ask them to return the favor.

**Send your connection an email – not LinkedIn mail.** Most people do not read LinkedIn mail very often. If you make this process very easy for your connection, they will do it. Outline in your email a few precise sentences on what you want them to discuss. If you don't, you are likely to get generic comments, if any at all. Here's what might be typical, *Ron is smart and a hard worker* but says very little else.

You want a more influential recommendation that discusses some results you delivered or a key strength you used and how the organization benefited from it.

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*You want recommendations that point to results you delivered or a key strength.*

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Try to shape your request by saying: "Sarah, could you take a couple of minutes to write me a recommendation? I'd really appreciate that. Can you mention XYZ?" Then write two to three sentences Sarah can copy and quickly paste on your LinkedIn profile adding a few words of her own. The more specific you are, the better the recommendation will be. Ask different people to write a recommendation targeting

various accomplishments and talents. This way your LinkedIn profile provides a much more rounded picture of who you are.

Just list two to three sentences that you want this connection to mention. The more specific you are, the better the recommendation will be. Alter the angle of what each person will be say so you get a more precious display showcasing different aspects about yourself. As you ask different people to write recommendations, you can request that various accomplishments and talents be stressed.

**Say thank you.** An email is nice but writing your recommendation and posting it on that person's LinkedIn page is the proper etiquette. If you receive a recommendation, return the favor.

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## Summary

LinkedIn is one of your most valuable career management tools. Do not ignore it. Use it to help yourself by presenting a polished profile that shows you in the best possible light. Settle for nothing less.



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## Career Services from Robin Ryan

If you are looking for help with your career, call on Robin Ryan. The media frequently calls on Robin to offer her expertise. She's made over 3500 media appearances, including Oprah, Dr. Phil, NBC Nightly News, CNN, and NPR. In addition, her advice has been seen on the pages of the Wall Street Journal, USA Today, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Houston Chronicle, and Money, to name a few.



**"Robin Ryan is America's Top Career Expert."**

*Los Angeles Times*

ABC NEWS SAYS, "Robin Ryan has the inside track on how to get hired." Robin spends many of her days working in her busy career counseling practice. She offers career and job search services to

clients nationwide, including **resume writing**, **LinkedIn profile writing**, **interview coaching**, **job search coaching** and **new college graduate career coaching**. Robin has had more than 30 years of direct hiring experience and has an extensive HR background.

HR Weekly named Robin Ryan as one of The 100 Most Influential People in HR for 2021.

Robin is a columnist for Forbes.com, covering a wide range of career topics.

**"Robin Ryan is America's Top Job Search Expert."**

*Boston Globe*

A #1 Wall Street Journal Bestselling Author, Robin has written eight **career books**, including:

- 60 Seconds & You're Hired!
- Winning Resumes
- Over 40 & You're Hired!
- Retirement Reinvention
- Winning Cover Letters
- What to Do with the Rest of Your Life
- Soaring on Your Strengths

A popular **trainer and speaker**, Robin's high-energy style, coupled with her informative and engaging message have had her in front of more than 1200 audiences. She's been

a keynote speaker at numerous national and regional conferences and is often in front of association members, employee groups or seen on college campuses talking to alumni and student groups. She is a frequent speaker at regional and national conferences, teaching HR professionals and recruiters how to advance their careers, along with other trending topics.

**"Robin Ryan is the foremost career authority in America today."**

*Houston Chronicle*

Robin Ryan holds a master's degree in counseling and education from Suffolk University and a bachelor's degree in sociology from Boston College. She is the former Director of Counseling Services at the University of Washington.

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Learn more about Robin's career and job search services at:

**[RobinRyan.com](https://robinryan.com)**

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