



ON THE CLOCK CALLUM BORCHERS

Building a strong LinkedIn profile is like hitting the gym or drinking more water. You know you should do it, but forming habits that are right for you isn't easy. Connection requests on Mondays, kettlebell swings on Tuesdays?

Like health guidelines, online best practices evolve. For example, the "skills" sections of LinkedIn profiles are becoming more important because recruiters increasingly filter job candidates by things they can do, not titles.

If you haven't hunted for a job in a while, you might be surprised by how integral LinkedIn has become. In the social-media age, it's often the first place that recruiters contact prospects and a key channel for networking and referrals. Many job applications now ask for profile links so hiring managers can check you out.

Even if you're not actively looking for a new role, an effective LinkedIn presence has become essential in most fields. It can lead to unexpected opportunities. And if you're ever hit with a layoff, it's better to have a sharp profile at the ready than to attempt an emergency makeover.

For on-the-ground insight into what works right now, I spoke with people who recently used the platform to help land jobs. Here's how they got hired.

Kevin Myhan: Mr. Visible

Myhan had a bare-bones profile until he was laid off from a customer-success role in December. The severance package from his former company included a job coach who advised him to beef up his LinkedIn presence. It paid off, and he joined medical-equipment maker Stago as a corporate partnership executive in April.

Post and post some more: Myhan committed to posting every week during his unemployment. Sometimes he'd share his response to a question he'd been asked in a job interview. Other times he'd repost someone else's musings about key performance indicators and add his own take.

The idea was to be visible in users' feeds and give people a sense of his work style. A former co-worker saw one of his posts and told a manager at her new company that Myhan would be a fit for an upcoming opening. The manager messaged Myhan and arranged a video call before the job was posted. He still had to go through an online application portal later, but he had a head start.

Key adjustments: Myhan added 56 skills, including conflict reso-



Giving Your LinkedIn A Makeover Is Vital

Updating your approach to the platform will pay off as it can lead to unexpected opportunities and if you're ever hit with a layoff

lution, team building and event planning. He used AI assistant Claude to crib these from the desired skills listed in job postings for the kinds of roles he was targeting.

He also sought recommendations to add to his profile, including one from the former chief executive of the company that laid him off. She wrote that she "was impressed with how he turned around a very upset large strategic account relationship."

Gwen Gutierrez: Targeted Job Hunter

A lot of people take a spray-and-pray approach to job hunting, using LinkedIn's "easy apply" feature. Gutierrez can count on her fingers the number of jobs she applied to before landing at pet-supply company Chewy in May as a program manager.

Use your network: Gutierrez identified a handful of companies she'd be eager to work for and monitored the openings they posted on LinkedIn. When she saw an opportunity at Chewy, she messaged a former colleague who works there to ask for a referral. Tying the request to a specific role is key, she believes.

"Don't message somebody and say, 'Oh, will you give me a referral and let me know which jobs I should apply for?'" she says. "They're not your agent. As the job seeker, you find the exact job that you want to apply to and ask for a referral for that."

Key adjustments: Gutierrez was aiming for program-management roles similar to ones she'd held in the past, so she stripped unrelated experience from her work history. She had dabbled in art education, but found including that

background seemed to confuse LinkedIn's algorithm. It sometimes fed her art-teacher openings she wasn't interested in.

Jeff Conrad: The Experimenter

Conrad spent 18 years at Microsoft, an eternity in the tech sector. A layoff last summer thrust him into the unfamiliar position of using LinkedIn for a job search. With a solid severance package, he could afford to be selective and experiment with profile changes. He joined Boeing as a senior artificial-intelligence project management specialist in May.

Explain your impact: Conrad cold-applied to Boeing—no referral, no recruiter outreach—after LinkedIn flagged the position as a potential fit. He paid for LinkedIn's premium service, which gave him

◀ Clockwise from top left: Jeff Conrad, Kavolshaia Howze, Kevin Myhan and Gwen Gutierrez

insight into who viewed his profile. Seeing that Boeing employees were scoping him out gave Conrad confidence that he was in the running.

By then he had worked to translate his record at Microsoft into plain English, helping profile viewers understand his responsibilities and impact. A lot of companies use titles and jargon that mean little to outsiders, he says, so it is important to simplify terms.

Key adjustments: Conrad also used multiple AI tools to revise, and revise again, the "about" section of his profile. He treated it like his first impression on recruiters and hiring managers, and was determined to get it right.

"Once in a while I would even have a former colleague take a look to get human input," he says.

Then he relied on data to determine what works. After making a change, he'd watch his LinkedIn metrics for a few days. Did his profile views go up or down?

Kavolshaia Howze: Queen of Patience

Even people with well-crafted profiles can have a hard time finding work, especially in struggling industries. Howze, a multimedia news producer, was looking for a full-time role for about three years before joining Verite News New Orleans as a managing editor in June.

Determination pays off: Howze's profile is as much a portfolio as it is a résumé. It features videos she produced and a link to her personal website with additional work samples. A long job search can be discouraging, but she says it is important to maintain a robust profile nevertheless. She got on her new employer's radar through a referral, and her page was ready for its close-up when the time came.

"It definitely gave the hiring manager and my future co-workers a really good glimpse into what I can do," she says.

Key adjustments: Howze watched YouTube videos about how to enhance her profile and paid a consultant for further help with the design. This includes a polished headshot and banner containing her contact info. Notably, she found and screened this person through Upwork. The internet is full of scammers selling bogus LinkedIn-optimization services, so be careful.

Now that she has a new job, Howze hopes LinkedIn can help one more time: She's using it to promote a GoFundMe campaign to cover the cost of relocating to another state.

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JEFF CONRAD, MICHAEL JACKSON PHOTOGRAPHY; KEVIN MYHAN, GWEN GUTIERREZ