Call me Maybe? Using LinkedIn to make sure you get the call for the job

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ABSTRACT

LinkedIn is one of the world's most popular social networking websites and is the leading networking site among professionals today. Whether you are job searching or not, it is critical that you understand the importance of a well written profile and how exactly recruiters and other hiring professionals use this information when searching for top talent. It goes well beyond the basics of your job title, employment history and whether or not you have applied to a posted position. LinkedIn is an excellent tool to help you position yourself accurately within the pharmaceutical and biotech industry and one that recruiters are now using more than ever to find top talent for their organizations.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to assist in making yourself marketable on LinkedIn to hiring professionals and to help ensure you stand out from the rest of the candidate pool. The job market is stronger than ever and the competition among SAS programmers within the pharmaceutical industry is ever increasing. LinkedIn is an excellent tool to help you position yourself accurately and one that recruiters are now using more than ever to find top talent for their organizations.

WHAT RECRUITERS LOOK FOR

As recruiters, we use LinkedIn in order to view profiles of potential candidates, stay in touch with professionals within the industry and network with people who are able to help us eventually find the right candidate for our job opening. When we run a search on LinkedIn for a specific type of skill set the first thing we look for is a complete profile. This may sound obvious but you'd be surprised how many profiles on LinkedIn are not complete. We are looking for information such as your full name, work history including company names and job titles, education details and keywords that apply to your field. You do not need to have a complete list of job duties you performed in each role but you should include the basic content listed above. LinkedIn uses a system which measure profile strength based on the completeness of a user's profile. If your profile is complete, it will show up more often in searches and will give you access to more connections.

In addition to a complete profile, you also want to make sure your profile matches your resume content. When hiring professionals are interested in a candidate they often look up the candidates profile on LinkedIn. We do this in order to further verify a candidate's experience and to see what connections we may have in common. If your profile and resume do not match this raises red flags and often causes us to disengage in the hiring process. However, if your profile and resume do match this is usually the time when hiring professionals send invitations to connect with you and also view in more detail your mutual connections. The more mutual connections you have within hiring managers, the more likely they will want to have a preliminary discussion with you about your experience and situation. Even if you are not currently looking for a new position, practicing these behaviors will open the door for opportunities in the future.

Profile completeness and mutual connections are important but we also notice other behaviors and activity on your profile. For example, are you posting negative comments in your status or on group message boards about your employer or do you have an unprofessional profile photo? This can give the hiring managers a bad a taste of the type of employee you would be for their company. On the contrary, if you have a professional profile or posted a presentation you gave at a recent user group meeting or conference, these are positive reinforcements that you are serious about the work you do and are looked upon as assets to an organization. You always want to make sure you represent yourself in a positive light on LinkedIn since it is a professional networking site.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Now that you know what hiring professionals look for there are a few things you can do to make sure you represent yourself the right way on LinkedIn. First, regularly update your profile. Things you should think about are if you recently received a promotion or job title change; completed additional education or training; or moved to a new location. Another way you can enhance your profile and keep it current is by including positive recognition. If a client, manager, or peer has recently complimented you on your performance ask them if they will write a recommendation

on your profile or endorse you for a specific skill. Every time you make a change to your profile it shows up in your connections' activity feeds. This will help ensure that you stay in front of recruiters and hiring managers. It also shows that you are an active part of your industry.

Another thing you can do is take time to look up profiles of friends and colleagues and invite them to connect. As you make more connections, your profile becomes stronger and you have access to connect to more people. This "extended network" is made up of all the connections of people you are directly connected to (known as 1st connections). Each level of connection (1st, 2nd and 3rd) allows for different communication options. For example, you are able to message and view a 1st connection's complete profile but you do not have this same ability for a 3rd connection. Increasing your connections helps in your ability to network with more people and give hiring professionals the impression that you are viewed as an expert in your field since you are well connected within the industry.

It is also important to make sure you list keywords that relate to your position. Recruiters use keywords from a hiring manager's job description to identify candidates with a specific skill. If your profile does not have these keywords, you will not come up in their search and could be overlooked. For example, if you've recently been promoted to Principal Programmer make sure that somewhere on your profile you mention the word SAS. A recruiter would not search on the term "Principal Programmer" because it could pull up programmers who support multiple languages, databases and industries. We are more likely to search on the keyword "SAS" and then identify which candidates have the necessary experience for a Principal level role.

CONCLUSION

LinkedIn is an excellent tool to help your professional career and is used by almost all hiring professionals therefore it is important that you understand how to use it properly. Having a completed and accurate profile and representing yourself professionally will help ensure that you keep yourself marketable in social media. Remember, we do not want to spend time guessing what you do so take the extra time to represent yourself properly to hiring professionals. Lastly, invite us to connect with you! Even if you are not looking for a new position now, we love to hear from professionals in the industry who want to network. You never know when the timing will be right or that perfect opportunity will come along!

REFERENCES

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