

STYBEL PEABODY & ASSOCIATES, INC.



Laurence Stybel, Ed.D., and Maryanne Peabody, MBA, founded Stybel Peabody Associates, Inc.

How to Manage the Halo Effect on LinkedIn

How job candidates and corporate leaders can make the most of this platform.

There are currently 645 million professionals around the world on LinkedIn. If you spent one minute to connect with everyone on LinkedIn, it would take 1,227 years. LinkedIn has become the go-to resource for the recruiting industry and a must-have resource for job candidates.

LinkedIn is massive and constantly changing. A profile you established 12 months ago might already be out of date.

Our purpose is to help you to keep your LinkedIn profile up to speed and make people want to read it.

First Impressions Count

The Halo Effect is well established in psychology. It refers to a tendency for positive first impressions within the first few seconds to positively influence opinions of other attributes. An initial negative first impression also has a negative influence on subsequent impressions.

The first thing you see on a LinkedIn profile is a picture. Assume that the job candidate aimed the camera upward and the candidate is not smiling. The initial impression on the photograph is that of a giant, unfriendly person. Is that the type of person you would look forward to meeting? What Halo Effect has been created?

LinkedIn experts recommend a head and shoulders photograph with you looking directly at the camera with a neutral or friendly expression. If the camera is looking down and you are looking up, your initial appearance may strike others as childlike.

You want the focus of your photograph to be on your eyes. That mysterious hand draped on your shoulder, the face of the horse you are riding, and the size of your beer belly are all distractions from your eyes. Avoid wearing dark glasses.

What Is on Your Billboard?

After a gaze at your face, people will look at the space behind your photograph. That space is called your billboard.

The default in LinkedIn is a blue rectangle with white dots connected. It symbolizes a network. Angela Pitter of Live Wire Collaborative (2020) is a consultant who helps companies and individuals with social media. She recommends using the billboard space as an opportunity to create a positive Halo Effect. If you go to LinkedIn and look at Angela's profile, you will see her billboard full of people working together and enjoying each other's company.

Suppose you use the billboard to show a photograph of a beautiful mountain range. That photograph might symbolize your love for trails or your enjoyment of hiking. It might mean you love that mountain.

Is that the most important first impression you want to make?

Focus on your value to the reader versus showing off the preferences of the writer.

For example, we provide executive outplacement services. One of our job candidates is a psychiatrist. He went to pixabay.com and found a non-copyright (free) drawing of a client reclining on a couch. Another client is a Vice President of Sales. This person's billboard is a photograph of a chart containing dollar signs moving in an upward direction.

Why Would Employees Put Their Company's Logo Behind Their Photo?

Employers can use billboards to take advantage of the Halo Effect.

We recommend you offer your employees an incentive to put your company logo behind each employee's face on LinkedIn. One incentive might be to pay for the monthly upgrade from the free version of LinkedIn to the premium version. It is currently priced at \$30 per month, or \$216 per year. This premium version of LinkedIn allows employees free downloads of educational videos to help them improve their on-the-job performance.

Sample courses include "How to Make a Presentation and Stay on Point," "What to Do When There Is too Much to Do," and "How to Use Microsoft Excel for Data Visualization."

To download the full list of free course offerings:

<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/me>

Through this simple, inexpensive mechanism, you provide useful training for employees while leveraging the Halo Effect for your company's benefit. We

are assuming your employees are positively viewed by their friends and colleagues.

Your LinkedIn Headline.

Angela Pitter says, “After glancing at your photograph and billboard, people will next read your LinkedIn headline. You are writing for two audiences: (1) people who are seeking to connect with people with specific job titles or competencies and (2) LinkedIn search engines that are programmed to identify people with specific competencies or job titles.”

Your headline should sum up your specialty or approach succinctly and compliment the professional brand you are cultivating.

Angela believes there are three things a good headline needs to accomplish:

1. Clearly identify your value proposition.
2. Specify who you can help.

We recently came upon a person who gave her headline as “Education Professional”

Who is going to be seeking an “education professional?” It is too vague and does not suggest how the person provides value. Here is a second headline:

“University Psychology Professor. Award-winning author, keynote speaker. Advisor to boards and C-suites.”

This has the advantage of being specific and showing value. Angela would make this further improvement:

"University Psychology Professor • Award-winning author and keynote speaker • Advisor to Boards and C-Suites"

Did you spot the difference?

Angela’s headline says the same thing as the previous one. Her use of the “•” between concepts makes things easier for computers programmed to search for

keywords. Remember, your LinkedIn headline is designed to appeal to two audiences: people and computers. Below is Angela Potter's headline:

"I turn executives into video creators that generate revenue on LinkedIn."

Notice that she focuses on the value for the reader rather than her activities or job title.

Larry Stybel is co-author of this blog. His headline says: "Leadership and Career Success."

Hashtags?

Ever notice hashtags on some LinkedIn messages? Examples would be: #Leadership #Finance #Coach #Profit #Executive #Customer #Brand #Loyalty #Nonprofit.

Angela says that these hashtags are designed for LinkedIn search engines to easily grab your LinkedIn profile. If you are writing about yourself, posting updates or publishing articles on LinkedIn, the use of hashtags helps computers find you.

Use a capital letter after the hashtag, e.g. #Leadership. Angela recommends using no more than three hashtags

How Much Time to Spend on LinkedIn?

It is too easy to spend too much time on LinkedIn. Below is a recommended framework we use with our job candidates:

1. If currently employed and loving the work you do, 20-30 minutes a week.
2. If currently employed and not loving the work you do, 10-15 minutes per day.
3. If currently unemployed or starting your independent consulting/freelance practice: 20-40 minutes per day.

Use the countdown feature of your mobile device to keep from spending too much time on LinkedIn. When time runs out, pick up the phone. Have a conversation with a real person.

LinkedIn is an important online social media tool to help you build new professional relationships. It is a critical distribution channel to get your resume into the hands of decision-makers who can pay for your services. But it is only one distribution channel.

You want to have a marketing campaign that diversifies distribution channels.

References

A. Pitter. (2020), Personal Conversation

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Stybel Peabody provides companies with “leadership and career success” for valued senior level talent. Core services include retained search for leaders on Boards or whose jobs touch Boards (Board members, CEOs, COOs, CFOs), leadership coaching, and executive-level outplacement for leaders

who should be networking with Board members.

The readers of *Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly* voted Stybel Peabody Associates, Inc. “Best Outplacement Firm” in 2020.

For a free 30-minute consult, contact:

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