

# LinkedIn Profile Makeover

WOW Virtual Event  
March 2025

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## Agenda

- **Who we are and our why**
- Begin with the end in mind
- Elements of the LinkedIn profile
- Do's and Don'ts
- Our favorite profiles
- Beyond the profile

## Our why: Liz O'Donnell

- One of the first 50,000 LinkedIn members
- Early LinkedIn employee
- 20+ year career in tech, primarily in marketing (PayPal, LinkedIn, various startups)
- Most recent FT role: co-founder & COO at Wisetack, a venture-backed fintech SaaS company
- Built teams in GTM, Customer Support, and HR
- Long time LinkedIn advocate: it's brought me opportunities and most people underutilize it



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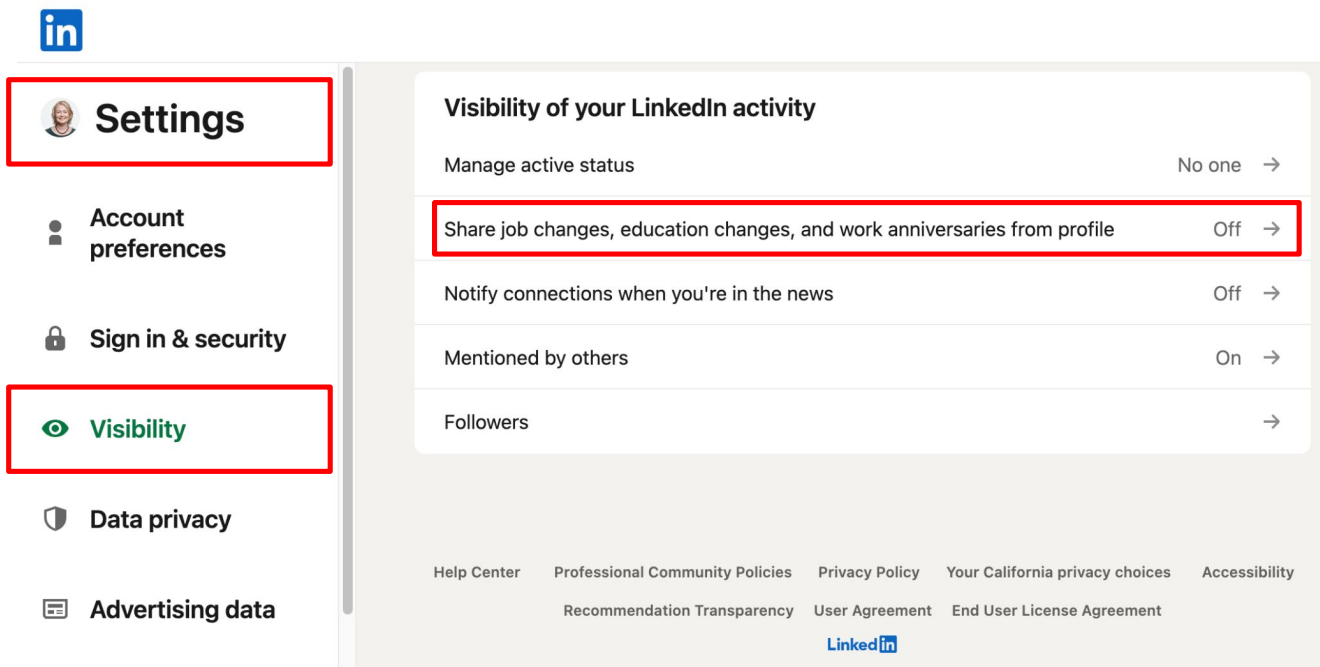
## Our why: Elena Krasnoperova

- I'm connected to 29,543 people on LinkedIn
- I've had a 25+ year career in Tech
- Last FT job: VP at Meta, leading a 1,500+ team
- I've directly hired and managed hundreds, and indirectly thousands, of people in my career
- I've seen a LOT of LinkedIn profiles
- Many of them do not serve your WHY
- And many of these mistakes are easy to fix



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You will be making changes to your LinkedIn profile today  
- let's make them silent

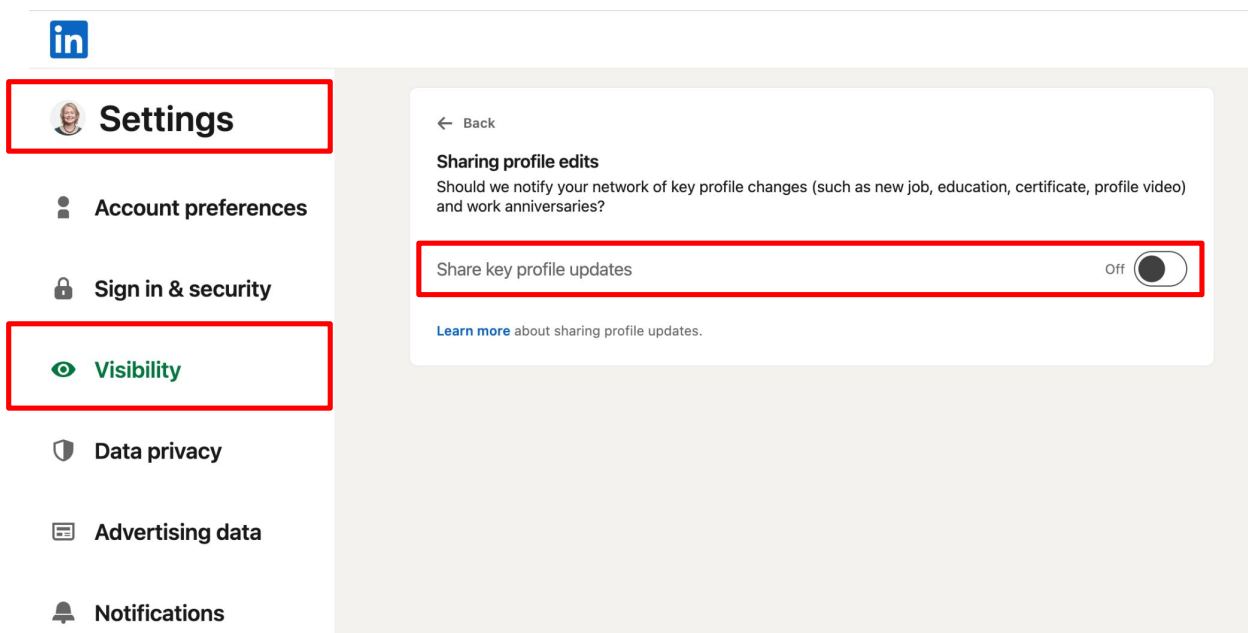


The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Settings' page with the 'Visibility' section selected. The 'Visibility of your LinkedIn activity' section is expanded, showing several settings. The setting 'Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile' is highlighted with a red box and is currently set to 'Off'. Other settings include 'Manage active status' (No one), 'Notify connections when you're in the news' (Off), 'Mentioned by others' (On), and 'Followers'.

Setting	Value
Manage active status	No one →
Share job changes, education changes, and work anniversaries from profile	Off →
Notify connections when you're in the news	Off →
Mentioned by others	On →
Followers	→

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You will be making changes to your LinkedIn profile today  
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The screenshot shows the LinkedIn 'Settings' page with the 'Visibility' section selected. The 'Sharing profile edits' section is expanded, showing a toggle switch for 'Share key profile updates' which is currently turned off. The text below the toggle asks 'Should we notify your network of key profile changes (such as new job, education, certificate, profile video) and work anniversaries?'. A 'Learn more' link is provided below the toggle.

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## Begin with the end in mind

***Question: How do you want to be found?***

### **Your profile IS**

- A product marketing exercise where the product is YOU
- A chance for you to control the narrative and shape perception about who you are

### **Your profile IS NOT**

- A chronological retelling of every job you've ever had
- A focus on the past instead of the future

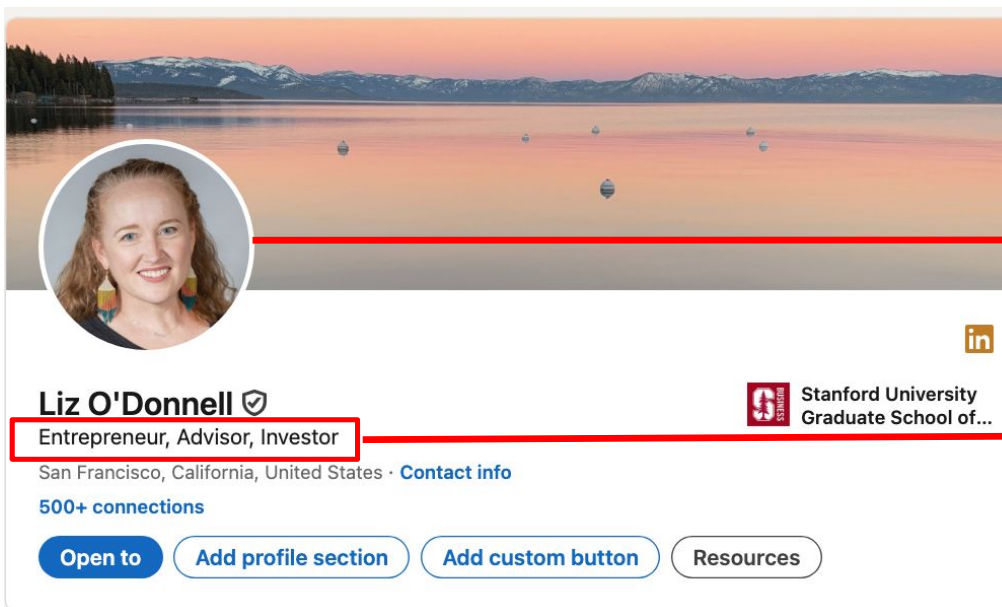
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## Elements of a LinkedIn profile: Header sections



**Cover Photo:** Use to express current focus (e.g. company, school, book) or keep generic

**Profile Photo:** Professional, high quality

**Headline:** Your product marketing tagline. Also appears in search results both on & off LinkedIn.

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# Elements of a LinkedIn profile: About section

**About**

Entrepreneur, advisor, and operator with good left-brain/right-brain balance and many years of experience growing and monetizing highly successful online services in new markets.

Relentlessly curious. Definitely pro-Calendly.

I've lived and worked in North America, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Africa. I've been in fintech since before "fintech" was a word, and I love the industry because there are so many inefficient legacy systems that need replacing.

I'm a co-founder of Wisetack, where I served as COO for 5 years. I currently advise and invest in select companies where I believe in the team and the mission and where I think I could be helpful. My focus is largely on fintech, but includes other domains, with a particular interest in B2B SaaS.

Domain-wise, marketing is my specialty, but my more hard-won knowledge is in building from 0-2, scaling product/revenue growth, operations, and organizations. Very much a servant leader, and focused on building both a people-first and a performance-based culture.

I'm always happy to speak to entrepreneurs who are looking for advice, coaching, or who simply need to vent. I have opinions on company-building :)

As an English major turned MBA, I'm happy that both of those degrees now value the power of a good story.

## About section:

- Opportunity to shape your narrative. Connect the threads for your audience (or they will fill in the blanks for you.)
- What drives you? Give people insight to the why behind the what.
- Don't be afraid to show personality
- Write in first person – NOT third person

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# Elements of a LinkedIn profile: Experience section

## Experience section:

- Write at least a few sentences about every role
- Quantify when possible
- Write for humans, but use keywords that you want to be found for
- Include media (news articles, blog posts, website), where applicable

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## Elements of a LinkedIn profile - Other sections

- **Education:** Include degree & any honors. Other info is optional. Consider leaving off year.
- **Volunteering:** Optional but helpful to the degree it showcases professional skills.
- **Skills:** This section used to be more important but LinkedIn is prioritizing it less now. Suggest picking top 5 skills but don't overoptimize this..
- **Languages:** Optional to list anything with "limited working proficiency" or above.
- **Interests:** People and companies you follow will show up here
- **Causes:** Optional, but can serve as a talking point
- **Recommendations:** Opinions vary on this, but I'm a firm believer in recommendations. Suggest getting at least 3.

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Progress > Perfection

**Do NOT wait until you have “the perfect words” in order to make changes.**

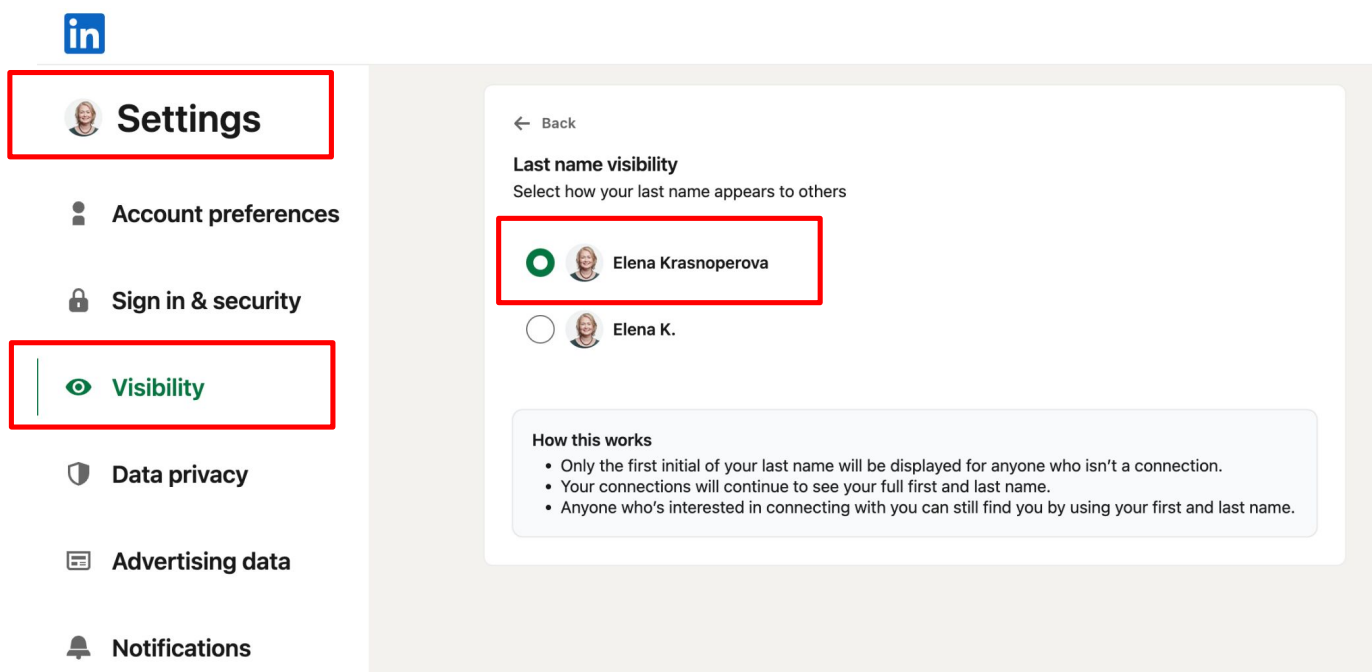
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## Rule #1: Make your last name visible to everyone



The image shows a screenshot of the LinkedIn 'Settings' page. On the left sidebar, the 'Settings' menu is highlighted with a red box, and the 'Visibility' option is also highlighted with a red box. The main content area shows the 'Last name visibility' settings. The 'Last name visibility' section is titled 'Last name visibility' and includes the instruction 'Select how your last name appears to others'. There are two radio button options: 'Elena Krasnoperova' (which is selected and highlighted with a red box) and 'Elena K.'. Below this, there is a 'How this works' section with three bullet points: 'Only the first initial of your last name will be displayed for anyone who isn't a connection.', 'Your connections will continue to see your full first and last name.', and 'Anyone who's interested in connecting with you can still find you by using your first and last name.'

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## Rule #2: Make your name clear and findable

### Do's

- If you have changed your last name (e.g., when you got married), include your maiden name (maybe in parenthesis)
- If you go by a nickname, include it (maybe in parenthesis)

### Don'ts

- Don't include too many acronyms after your last name - at most one that is widely recognized and searched for (e.g., MD, Ph.D.)
- Don't include emojis in your name field (unless you have a good reason)

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## Rule #3: Include a professional headshot

### Do's

- Do have a photo!
- Ideal: a professional headshot
- Well-lit, well-composed, picture of you (and only you!)
- Smile a Duchenne smile
- Be careful with AI headshot tools

### Don'ts

- Don't leave it blank!
- Don't show an image of you with your dog, your spouse, in your wedding dress, in the Himalayas, etc.
- Don't use a distracting background, poorly cropped, poorly lit, or a selfie
- Don't use a cartoon or avatar
- Don't use an old, outdated photo

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## Rule #4: Don't include "Open to work" banner

### Do's

- Do confidentially inform recruiters that you are open to work (there's a setting for that)
- Do follow the companies that you're potentially interested in joining - it's a cue recruiters look for
- Do tell select people in your network that you're looking for a job, and ask them for help
- Make sure to have an entry in your current job field - even if it is a consulting project or volunteer activity - vs. having an obvious gap

### Don'ts

- Don't include "open to work" banner in your image - it's a turnoff for hiring managers
- Exception is if you are a recent graduate and it's expected that you'll be looking for a job

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## Rule #5: Use the background photo to your advantage

### Do's

- Do use the space to create a custom image that promotes your website, your book, your role as a speaker, etc.
- At the very least, use the space to showcase your location (e.g., SF)

### Don'ts

- Don't leave it blank

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## Rule #6: Have an awesome headline

### Do's

- Headline is the MOST important part of the algorithm (and the first thing humans see)
- Include keywords that recruiters look for
- Make the first thing listed be the job you want (if you are looking for a job) or the job for which you want to be known
- What's particularly impressive about you - establish credibility
- If you have your own business, try "I help [customer segment X] solve [problem Y]"

### Don'ts

- Don't let it be the default (current job title) unless you want to
- Don't make the headline be about your company, make it about YOU
- Don't include too many acronyms, and spell out unfamiliar acronyms
- Don't include emojis (unless you have a good reason)

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## Rule #7: Have an awesome "About" section

### Do's

- About section is the 2nd most important part of the algorithm => include keywords in the text
- Answer the question, "What is your unique value proposition"
- Put the most important part above the fold, in the first two lines - many don't read past that
- Make it less formal and more conversational than a resume or bio
- End it with something personal (e.g., hobbies)
- List top 5 skills at the end of the About section

### Don'ts

- Don't write about yourself in 3rd person - this is not a board bio or resume
- Don't tell your entire life story
- Don't use cliches or buzzwords

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## Rule #8: Be strategic about age and motherhood - if you are looking for a full-time job

### Do's

- Be aware of the age bias and be strategic about showing it (many of us mention 20+ years of experience)
- Be aware of the motherhood penalty in the workplace and be strategic about whether and how you reveal being a Mom, especially if you have young kids
- Ask AI to review your LinkedIn profile to see what age and motherhood cues are visible

### Don'ts

- Don't include years of graduation in Education section - they are optional
- Don't go into too much detail about work or education from decades ago
- Be careful about putting PTA and other parenting activities in work or volunteer experience

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## Rule #9: Optimize your LinkedIn profile for both humans and machines/algorithms

### Do's

- Use keywords strategically to help recruiters find you
- Use LinkedIn profile to showcase what's unique and special about you
- Be clear and concise
- Proofread every word

### Don'ts

- Don't keyword-spam
- Don't use too many acronyms
- Don't use jargon, cliches, or buzzwords

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## Rule #10: Showcase your work experience

### Do's

- List all full-time jobs in which you worked for at least 1 year (except possibly old ones)
- Use past tense for jobs you're no longer working in, present tense for current job(s)
- If company is not well-known, explain
- Focus on your accomplishments and impact - e.g., "Developed forecasting model that led to a 10% reduction in inventory costs"
- Use "add media" to include photos, videos, links to articles, etc.

### Don'ts

- Don't just copy-and-paste your entire resume
- Don't go into detail about jobs from many years ago - and consider omitting early jobs if not relevant to overcome age bias
- Don't include confidential information (e.g., revenue for private companies)
- Use the most impressive (but truthful) titles - if you are VP or a Senior Director, say so
- Avoid using "Head of X" job titles unless that was truly your title (common at startups)

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## Rule #11: Study LinkedIn profiles of others

### Do's

- Look up people you know who have the job you want to have or do what you do (e.g., fractional exec) and examine their profiles
- Search profiles by desired job title (e.g., VP of Sales). LinkedIn will show you the top results, which gives you insights about the algorithm
- Bookmark good profiles you come across
- "Good artists copy, great artists steal"

### Don'ts

- Don't strive for perfection - use the 80-20 rule instead, and keep iterating

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## Rule #12: Use AI to help you optimize your profile

### Do's

- Provide specific, detailed prompts
- State your goals and what you want to optimize your profile for (e.g., get a new job, find clients)
- Feed it your resume, bio, current LinkedIn profile, profiles of people you admire, etc.
- Iterate on the answer

### Don'ts

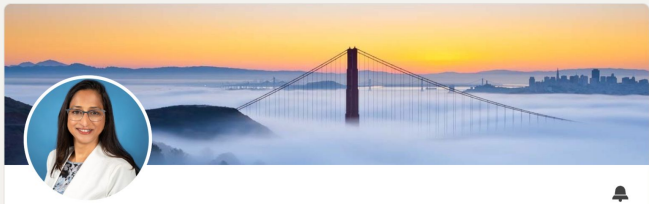
- Don't mechanically use what it produces on first iteration

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**Sonali Sambhus** (She/Her) · 1st  
CTO | Board Member | Fractional Advisor | Operating Partner | Ex-SVP Square

San Francisco Bay Area · [Contact info](#)

500+ connections

Jenny Kay Pollock, Joanne Fedeyko, and 315 other mutual connections

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### About

I help CEOs, boards, and leadership teams drive business growth and profitability through technology & product expertise.

Over 25 years, I've successfully led technology, and product orgs, transforming them into customer-focused, high-performance teams that deliver exceptional customer traction with innovation and operating efficiency while driving business growth, from B2B SaaS, FinTech, PropTech, and AI Native Products. My teams have delivered significant revenue impacts, including \$1B+ at Square, \$150M+ at Realtor.com, and my own startup which had an exit.

As a public company board director, I have transformed companies from pre-IPO to operational maturity and profitable growth, including at the \$400M+ at AvidXChange. I offer startup advisory and interim Chief Technology Officer services. I coach, diagnose, bridge gaps, bring strategic alignment, and leverage my deep network in board and venture communities for business growth and fundraising. I also serve as an operating partner, supporting venture firms and startups.

I am passionate about everything I do. My unique blend of technical depth and breadth, product vision, customer obsession, and business acumen, all coupled with pragmatism, enables me to deliver outcomes.

Outside of work, I am a parent of 2 awesome teenagers. Plus, Yoga is my daily happy pill and on the weekends, I usually go hiking. I aim to complete 5 major hikes in 5 continents, in 5 years and have just finished my first one in the Grand Canyon/North America.

**Top skills**  
CTO · Board Level · FinTech · Software as a Service (SaaS) · Advisory Boards

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/sonali-sambhus/>



**Deborah Liu** · 1st  
Tech executive, advisor, board member

[Top Voice](#)

Palo Alto, California, United States · [Contact info](#)

100,403 followers

Varun Bhartia, Heather Gordon Friedland, and 602 other mutual connections

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### Highlights

**BCG** You both worked at Boston Consulting Group (BCG), PayPal, and eBay  
You both worked at Boston Consulting Group (BCG) from February 1999 to May 2000

[Ask about experience](#)

### About

Silicon Valley leader focused on innovation and growth in consumer technology products. Over 20 years of experience leading teams of product managers and engineers at Facebook, PayPal, and eBay. Proven leadership in understanding markets and customer needs and delivering features to profitably meet those needs, including the creation of multiple billion dollar businesses. Experience delivering strategies to enter new markets and building out teams to deliver against those opportunities.

Specialties: product management, product marketing management, consumer web products, business strategy

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/deborahliu/>

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**Carrie (Fisher) Kerpen** (She/Her) · 1st  
Founder of The Whisper Group. Built and sold one of the world's first social media agencies. Turned a lifestyle business into a life-changing asset and helping other female founders do the same.

Port Washington, New York, United States · [Contact info](#)

11,485 followers · 500+ connections

Jake Dunlap, Julie Castro Abrams, and 192 other mutual connections

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### About

I'm on a mission to get as much money in the hands of women as possible.

Together with my husband, I built one of the world's first social media agencies. Years later, we sold that agency for 8-figures.

In that process, I suspected the experience for me as a female founder was different from that of my male peers.

I got to work researching, and discovered that there is a big, fat, exit gap.

Women are capturing 0.8% of exit value in this country.

I'm here to change that.

I've launched The Whisper Group, which stands to be the #1 exit-readiness advisory firm dedicated exclusively to women-owned businesses.

My podcast, The Exit Whisperer, interviews female founders who have exited.

And coming soon, The Whisper Collective will be the only community comprised exclusively of exited female founders.

My job will be done when we close the exit gap.

Until then, I'll continue writing, speaking, and helping female founders every step of the way.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/carriekerpen/>



**Adriana Landaverde** (She/Her) · 1st  
I help early-stage Founders build & scale high-growth products | Fractional CPO and Advisor | 3x successful exits | Stanford MBA

Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain · [Contact info](#)

4,204 followers · 500+ connections

Patricia Bothwell, Nir Eyal, and 142 other mutual connections

### About

Fractional Product Leadership & Advisory | Helping Startups Build & Scale High-Growth Products

I'm Adriana, Founder of Fabrica Consulting, where we help early-stage startups accelerate their path to product-market fit, revenue growth, and scale. We partner with Founders, CEOs, CTOs, and CPOs, as well as Seed & Series A venture capital firms, to provide Fractional Product Leadership, Consulting and Advisory services that drive real business impact.

How We Help Startups Succeed:

- ✓ Aligning tech with revenue opportunities—ensuring product and business goals are in sync.
- ✓ Accelerating product-market fit (PMF)—helping startups refine and validate their value proposition.
- ✓ Empowering non-product founders—maximizing tech ROI by implementing best product practices early on.
- ✓ Amplifying commercial potential—unlocking new growth channels and monetization strategies.

With 15+ years of experience as a strategic and commercially-minded global Product Leader, I've worked with startups and scale-ups across Silicon Valley, Europe, the UK, and Latin America. I've contributed to three successful startup exits:

- Trulia (IPO & acquired by Zillow)
- Nutmeg (acquired by JP Morgan)
- Tiny Prints (acquired by Shutterstock)

Since 2008, I've been driving product innovation across PropTech, FinTech, Travel, SaaS, Marketplaces, and eCommerce. My strength lies in recognizing patterns across industries, understanding core business fundamentals, and helping startups navigate complexity to achieve sustainable growth, complemented by the strategic and leadership insights I gained through my MBA from Stanford University.

Beyond my consulting work, I'm passionate about educating and mentoring. I give talks on product management, financial empowerment, and entrepreneurship, bringing a unique blend of practical experience and insights from my Stanford MBA.

Born and raised in El Salvador, I embrace diverse perspectives and foster a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Always happy to connect—whether to exchange ideas, explore opportunities, or discuss all things product and growth! 🚀

**Top skills**  
Product Leadership · Product Strategy · Product-led Growth

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**Gabrielle Bufrem** · 2nd  
 I coach product leaders and founders to build products and teams people love that drive real business results.

New York, New York, United States · [Contact info](#)  
 9,084 followers · 500+ connections

Ha Nguyen, Tommy Giglio, and 40 other mutual connections

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### About

you know what great looks like in product, but getting there feels hard and nebulous. I partner with product leaders to turn theory into practice through:

- crafting a compelling product vision describing where the product is going in 3-5 years
- developing a product strategy that guides the team what to focus on, what to say no to, and how to communicate the next steps to your team
- coaching / developing / hiring their team (since you're nothing without your team)
- working with people by managing up and managing across

in a nutshell: i help my clients go from theory to execution given the constraints and nuances of their organization!

before becoming a full-time coach, I built products across 9 verticals in both start-ups and enterprises across north america, europe, and asia.

i have coached and trained hundreds of Product Managers from startups to Fortune 500 companies. i am also a public speaker and have given talks at conferences around the world all about product leadership, decision-making, and product strategy.

i am originally from brazil. i speak four languages fluently (portuguese, english, french, and spanish), i love to cook & travel, and i currently live in new york city.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gabriellebufrem/>

**G3 Gabrielle Bufrem Product Coaching**  
 Brown University

### Services

i coach companies, product leaders, and ambitious product managers that are solving big problems on how to build products customers love that drive real business results.

Career Development Coaching · Leadership Development · Executive Coaching · Public Speaking · Training

[Request services](#)

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### Featured

Link

[explore how to work together](#)  
 Gabrielle Bufrem.

Link

[Work with me — Gabrielle Bufrem](#)  
 gabrielle bufrem

**Gabrielle Bufrem** · 2nd  
 I coach product leaders and founders t...  
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These are the 3 most important artifacts and practices in product, and yet there's a lot of confusion around them: ...more

👍👍👍 21 · 4 comments

**Gabrielle Bufrem** · 2nd  
 I coach product leaders and founders t...  
[View my newsletter](#)  
 5d · 🌐

I was off LinkedIn for International Women's Day, so this one is coming in late. ...more

👍👍👍 37 · 11 comments

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# Beyond the profile: Posting on LinkedIn

- If you expect to find your next opportunity through a recruiter, posting is *optional*
- For many other use cases, posting is *important*
  - Business development
  - Hiring
  - Consulting assignments
  - Even boards
- Quality > quantity
  - Consistency > any specific frequency

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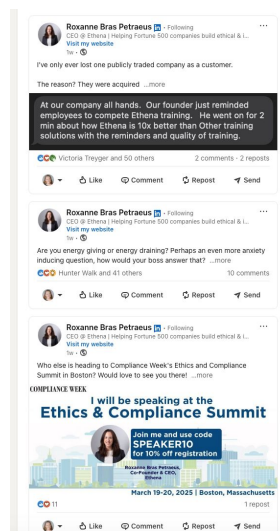
## Examples of posts for different role types

### SALES/BIZ DEV



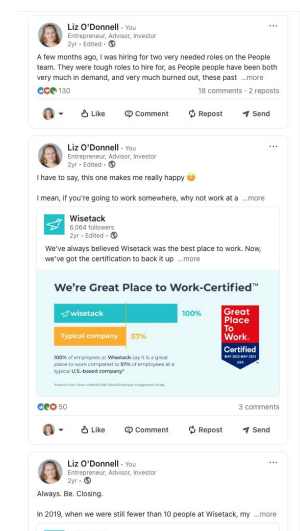
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/hannguyen-spero/recent-activity/all/>

### ENTREPRENEUR



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/roxanne-bras-petraeus-2292b8109/recent-activity/all/>

### HIRING



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/lizodonnell/recent-activity/all/>

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## Tips for posting on LinkedIn

- Tell stories; have a voice
- Be (slightly) provocative: do you have a unique point of view? An opinion that goes against the grain?
- Go narrow rather than broad
- Use photos and videos
- Pay attention to what LinkedIn is trying to promote
- Start small - the bar is low!

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## For further reading



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