

A stack of 100 dollar bills is visible in the top left corner, partially obscured by a yellow rectangular box containing the title. To the right of the yellow box is a large, blue and white LinkedIn logo with a white border, set against a light blue background.

Leaving Lost Wages

SUMMER 2021

Reality: Is Your LinkedIn Profile Compromising Your Income Potential, Postponing Attractive Job Offers & Even Promotions?

by Russ Riendeau, Ph.D., and Tim Tolan

LinkedIn Lethargy in the Pandemic World Is Real

Consider for a moment:

Is LinkedIn Sinking In Yet? Are you in the business world right now? Yes? Good, read on. But be prepared, this may sting a little bit. Covid world has complicated traditional job search strategies and job advancement. You can't outrun a marginal LinkedIn profile and expect better outcomes in job searches, promotions and securing more business. Now is the time to change. The person that could hire you or promote you is staring at your profile and wondering...Your LinkedIn profile—whether you like it or not—is your front-page headline to the world. Whatever you write, it is an immediate reflection on the readers' perceptions to who you are. You can't run from it, fake it, hide it, explain around it. But you can remodel it. Remember, it's your professional brand. President Biden said it best, "Come on, man."

Reality Check:

Please know, the intentions of this paper are to help you take your career to the next level. The content and perspectives are researched and presented to inspire you to consider adapting to this new world of work in a pandemic. If some of the content feels very direct, it is intended to be. This is important for your career, your income and your future earnings.

Right now, someone could be looking at your LI profile. Maybe a headhunter, a HR professional or hiring manager stumbled on your profile doing a search for a new employee or reading a post you shared. Maybe they saw you are connected to their useless brother-in-law or



the CEO of a start-up company. Or they dropped a piece of chocolate on their iPad while bingeing Ozarks on Netflix and your profile popped up. Regardless, they now have an impression of you. Are they intrigued and impressed by what they are looking at?

You have a choice, our colleagues of capitalism:

- You can embrace the LinkedIn platform as a viable, brilliant tool to establish your credentials, showcase your intelligence, successes, your systems/processes and strategies.
- You can choose to demonstrate your expertise in your current job to reinforce other perceptions of you, conduct competitive intelligence to learn what's happening behind the scenes in any marketplace, secure introductions to new customers, new job opportunities, or venture into a whole new career path via the groups and knowledge you can gather—FREE- 24/7.

Or... you can tune out. Abandon LinkedIn. (This decision will be even worse.) If you don't even have a LinkedIn profile or have it switched off, you are now invisible—gone—like a dinosaur, extinct, buried under stone, perceived as naïve to the new world at work, lagging behind how to use this platform to grow your business, find a new job or support your expertise in your current role. Too dramatic of an explanation? Perhaps yet, it is a reality. You will be hard to find than a used golf pull cart in a pandemic.

A weak or neglected LinkedIn profile is sabotaging your ability to sell more or secure more clients. It's impacting your ability to secure a job interview you really want, and it could be hurting your ability to demonstrate you deserve a promotion. Your profile screams to the world,

“This is as good as I get in the business world! This is all I am willing to do to ensure I am the best prepared, best-informed professional on the planet. Watch me very carefully.”

Hiring Managers Awareness

If you are a hiring manager and don't see that candidate's LinkedIn profile as current, engaging, and in-use, think twice about pursuing. That candidate is “telling” you something, regardless of what they “say.” When you see behavior, believe it. And this behavior will appear in other scenarios in their life as well. Behavior patterns are constant. Listen to what reasons/rationales candidates give you for job changes, the research they've conducted, questions they bring to the table, and the energy on the phone or zoom. Do you believe them? Does their work make sense, and is it above the effort you'd expect? Is their annual income range in line with what top wage earners should be earning in your industry with their years of experience? Value to the marketplace in American capitalistic worlds is based on this concept. If they are not earning what they should be earning—tread carefully with an offer. There may be a kink in their processes or decision-making approaches.

This is your future—the future of now.

Since 1985, I have been in the executive search business and met my colleague, Tim Tolan, in 2005 when he started his firm. We both earn a living identifying and introducing the most qualified and prepared candidates for jobs in corporate America. We educate hiring managers (who pay the search fees) on what to look for in skills and behaviors in candidates to mitigate their risk of making a bad hire. We follow behavioral science, evidence, data, and effort—not merely gut instinct. As a behavioral scientist, I research and share information to help people advance skills, value, and expertise in this shifting pandemic world. I started in search before the internet appeared, before keyboards replaced typewriters, before carbon paper became obsolete, when neckties roamed the planet, when car phones were the size of toasters, before fax machines screeched, before FedEx really took off. Yet even today, with all the technology and potentiality of free research, instructional videos, coaching, free templates on how professionals can create an accurate and compelling LinkedIn profile, there is still a perceptible lack of focus among businesspeople to embrace and accept LinkedIn's power to secure a better and faster future.

Arguments

- “Well, if a company is so caught up in me having a strong LinkedIn profile, then maybe I don't want to work in that culture anyway.” **Wrong answer. It's an excuse.**
- “In my job, I don't need or use LinkedIn, so why bother?” **Really? Is it worth the risk of not using LinkedIn?**

Competitive Intelligence

The reality is there is no single business right now that can't benefit from the research on people, companies, trends, and research available to better enhance your communication and product offerings. The minute you or I speak with a customer, client, future boss, reference, headhunter, HR professional, investor, board member, etc., you must assume they are either staring at your LinkedIn profile on their screen or have already looked at it or will later. This is a reality. And without you even realizing it, a search professional, HR manager, or hiring manager is going to test your responses and claims as they dive into your LI profile to look for gaps in your knowledge, job history, educational pursuits, updates—even the picture you paste at the top (do you really think a photo of you grasping a large-mouth bass will influence that person's decision to advance a conversation or meeting? -- probably not). If it appears you are not utilizing LI and teaching your team to use it, you reduce your options to secure the best jobs.

Career Shift Reset

- What if you're looking to make a change out of your current occupation? You've had it and want out—now. Or you're not working currently.
 - Where are you looking to go? What industries have you targeted with your research and energy to understand what is required to get a job offer?
 - Joined and LI Groups of interest? (You can belong to up to 50 groups)
 - Does your LI profile still look like you belong in your old industry?
 - So why should someone be interested in hearing your story?
 - Why bother listening to the reasons you want to change while it appears you have done little to advance your knowledge in their industry?
 - What research is on your LI profile to show your work?
-

- What words are you using to show you understand their world?
- What Evidence appears to scream you're doing the work to prepare?
- Why is your phone number not appearing in your contact information?
- Why do your tagline and summary still use cliché phrases that are merely your opinion of whom you believe you are?
- Where are the data points--proof you are ready, researching, and committed to making the change?

Pandemic Impact Frustrates

Everyone is struggling with the confinement, stress, anxiety, degrees of depression and challenges of working, managing a family, financial strains, overall wellness, health, aging parents, the isolation, political strife, active killer shootings—you name it. The available information we have in vaccine efficacy, jobs that will shifting are limited and confusing, adding further to the concentration efforts and decisions we are making. In other words, we are distracted—very distracted—and it is tough to get someone's attention about our goals, when they are inwardly thinking about their world priorities. We need to be aware of these influencers and adapt our messages and intentions very carefully. How do you cut through the static and chatter?

Resume Profile Confusion

A cover letter will not avert a hiring manager's view of your profile that doesn't fit their job. If you can't prove your effort, a cover letter is useless. Suppose your resume shows a different experience with no alignment attempt, again. In that case, the confusion and consistency of your message as to what you want to do or why you want/deserve a promotion is hampered. Rapid job changes also are a pause that managers will scrutinize around your decision-making processes and ability to adapt, not only as wondering if there's some other social or personality challenge that could appear. Your message needs consistency and evidence of success, and learning how to overcome setbacks.

Does The Sting Resonate Yet?

Remember we mentioned this "may sting a bit"? You should already be feeling it. This is a good thing. Take it in. Absorb it. Are you arguing with yourself about your actions to this point? Are you trying to justify your actions, excuse your way out of the logic? Are you hunting for alternatives to not do the heavy lifting to adapt to this new world at work? Let this topic inspire you to take immediate steps to enhance your profile. Meet the hiring manager or HR manager or headhunter halfway--do the work, study the platform, take ownership of your career and your international profile the best way you can. You can't escape utilizing LinkedIn if you are in a job earning over \$50k a year and have accountability to a boss, a company, a product, an organization. And you don't want to abandon it. LI will earn you more in job offers, secure credibility in your current job, and allow you to secure competitive intelligence you never could find for free in the open market with a bit of effort.

Who Should Care?

There's a great series of TV commercials from *Progressive* out today about people acting like their parents. "You woke up early. No one cares." You know the ones, they are hilarious. Unfortunately, no one cares about your reasons, excuses or logic as to why you have not invested time and resources to



present your profile—with worldwide access, 24/7—in a compelling and engaging way to showcase your motives to change; your knowledge to help others; or your expertise to transition into other paths in life. You can't talk your way out of the behavior that got you here. It is your responsibility to establish your personal brand of expertise, knowledge and history. And even if you are unemployed, laid off in covid world, you need to show your maturity and awareness of why it happened and what you are doing to upgrade your skills and knowledge to insure you add more value to the marketplace. Showing your resilience with proactive activities (classes, webinars, coursework, certifications, research, books, etc.) will ensure your listeners see you as advancing your knowledge, not giving up until the pandemic dust settles.

Test This Theory

Do something now: if you are currently seeking a new job or career, skip dinner and start revising your LI profile to showcase the person you really are and can be. Do the research, read the books, hire a proven professional coach if need be, to craft and rehearse your message is what the market needs. Family advice is not what you need. Listen and watch profiles and webinars that are effective, active and take their presentation ideas to the next level. The money and time you invest will secure job offers and promotions to raise your income \$10,000-\$40,000 by simply demonstrating your value to the marketplace.

It's your choice.

Come on, Man. What other options are easier than ensuring you look your best to the world? You are good at your job; share the evidence to prove it dynamically.

About the Authors

Russ Riendeau, PhD, is senior partner and chief behavioral scientist of New Frontier Search Company, a retained search practice with over 6000 successful searches, conducted over 150,000 interviews and fortifying future millionaires with career coaching for decades. He's authored 12 books, 400 articles and white papers on talent management, career advancement strategies, sales psychology and innovation. His TEDx Talks can be seen on YouTube as well as over 50 curated articles on LinkedIn, Wall Street Journal, CEO/CIO magazine and 1000s of media sights. He can be reached at russriendeau@mail.com and www.newfrontiersearch.net.

Timothy J. Tolan is CEO and Managing Partner of The Tolan Group (TTG). Tim has been in the healthcare field for over 25 years, holding executive-level positions for public and private companies. His vast network comes from years of being a senior healthcare executive and the senior level positions he's held with ProxyMed, Inc., Healthon/WebMD, ePhysician, and CITATION Computer Systems. In addition, he spent 12 years in leadership roles in the physician practice management marketplace. TTG's broad healthcare experience allows the firm to focus on recruiting for healthcare services, health-tech, behavioral health, and substance abuse working closely with PE firms and their portfolio companies. He can be reached at ttolan@thetolangroup.com