

# The Forgotten LinkedIn Recommendation

and how to make it work for you



 **SIMPLY Stated Business**  
for better business communication

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## Table Of Contents

Introduction	3
LinkedIn Facts and Stats	4
Why Use LinkedIn Recommendations?	6
Creating a Quality Recommendation	9
The Mechanics of LinkedIn Recommendations	14
Clear & Uniquely Yours LinkedIn Recommendations	20
Hitting the Restart Button on Recommendations	23

## Introduction

Do you hate receiving a request for a LinkedIn recommendation? No, not the request from a former colleague you could not stand. We all get why that would be a problem.

I'm thinking about the request from someone you admire. Someone who you'd love to help. Perhaps you dread the request because:

- You don't know where to start.
- Writing is not your thing.
- Your past attempts were time-consuming (and not very good).

Or maybe you wonder – why bother? No one really pays any attention to them anyway. Do they?

With all the changes the networking platform has undergone, it does seem like recommendations have become the forgotten feature. But I think the LinkedIn Recommendation has value. For both you and the people you recommend.

This guide explores reasons for breathing life back into the forgotten LinkedIn recommendation and offers a pain-free approach to creating one.

So, are you ready to open your mind to the possibilities? Let's get started.

## LinkedIn Facts and Stats

Did you know that LinkedIn has nearly [740 members in 200 countries?](#)

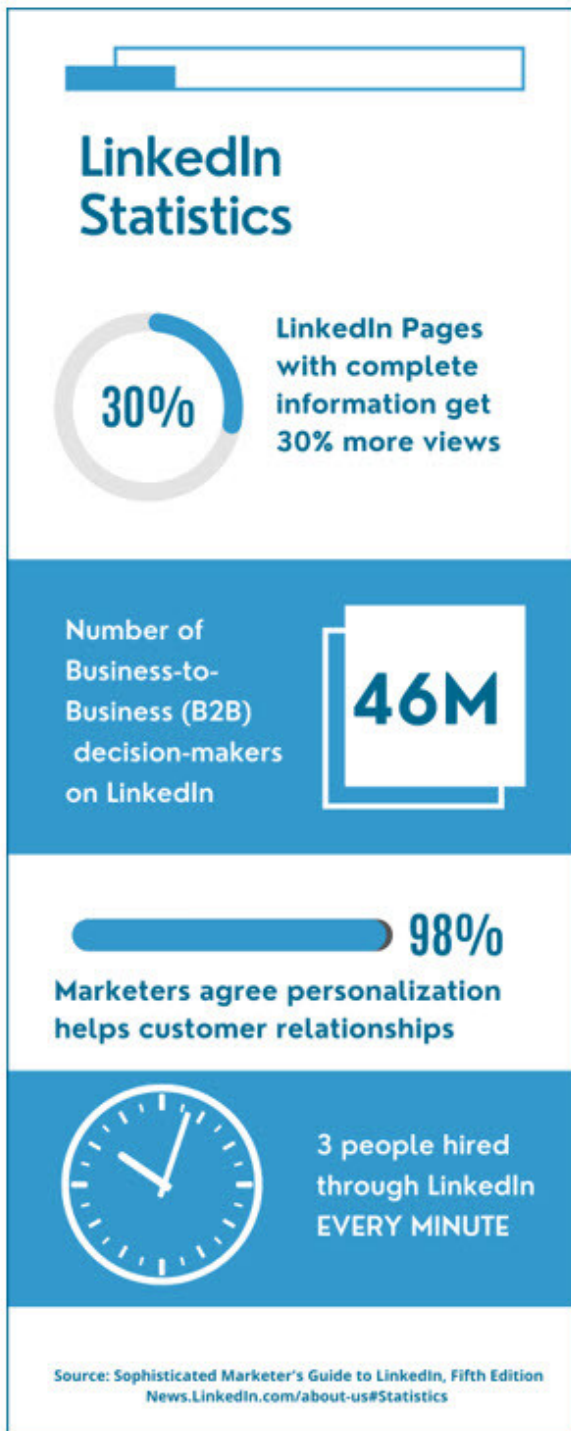
Fortunately, you will not be asked by all of them for recommendations.

**LinkedIn has expanded from its job-seeking platform** into a marketing magnet for businesses of all shapes and sizes. Whether you are looking for a job, a job candidate, or a marketing opportunity, LinkedIn may be a viable option for you.

So, how does a LinkedIn Recommendation help with job searches and marketing? Review the graphic (on the next page) from:

[The Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to LinkedIn](#)  
[LinkedIn's pressroom page for statistics](#)

What it shows is a lot of opportunity, especially for members who add a complete and personalized profile.



A complete profile shows you believe in your business.

How often are decision-makers all in one place?

Let your personality shine in your recommendations.

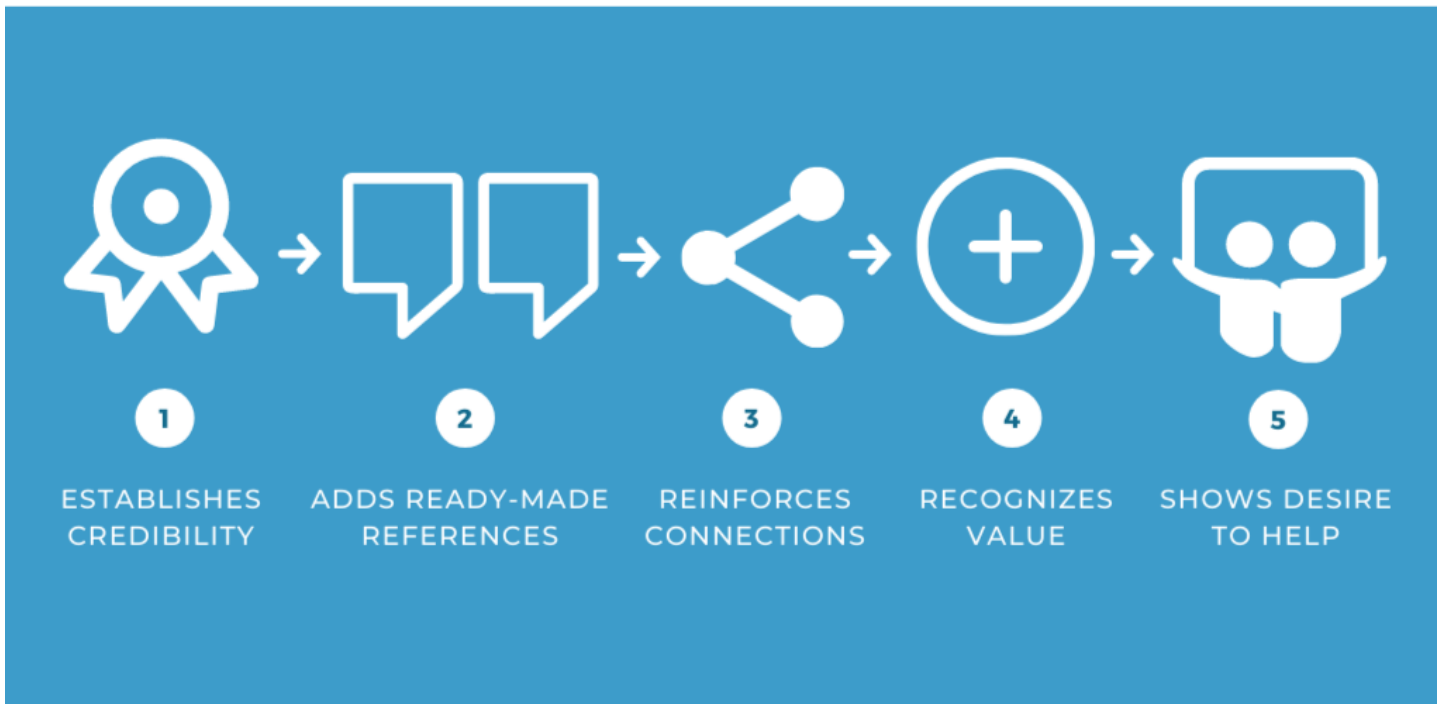
Their connections become your connections.

## Why Use LinkedIn Recommendations?

Individuals who ask for a recommendation hope to benefit from their request. But if you give a recommendation, you benefit as well. How? The following graphic offers ideas.

## Benefits of LinkedIn Recommendations

TO THE SENDER AND THE RECIPIENT



## 1. Establishes Credibility

Imagine you are a potential customer or an employer looking to hire someone. You check out the LinkedIn profiles of two individuals.

Both list several areas of expertise you are looking for. But one profile includes five recommendations. Those making the recommendations identify traits that are perfect for what you are looking for.

Which would you pursue first? Probably the one with the recommendations, right? The recommendations outshine an individual's own words in a profile.

Recommendations lend credibility.

## 2. Adds Ready-Made References

Most job applications include a section for references. But what if you are a small business or entrepreneur? LinkedIn Recommendations are the equivalent of a good reference you would provide an employer.

On the other hand, if you are looking for a job, recommendations offer a good screening tool for recruiters and human resources. The feature helps potential candidates stand out from hundreds or thousands of other jobseekers.



## 3. Reinforces Connections

Who doesn't love a compliment? Well-written recommendations demonstrate your appreciation of the individual's skills and expertise, which solidifies your professional relationship.

**TIP:** Write a recommendation for a respected professional even before being asked.

**Have you ever received an unsolicited recommendation?** Felt good, didn't it? We all forget to thank people for a job well done. Sending a recommendation before being asked creates a feel-good moment. And that pays dividends.

## 4. Recognizes Value

Prove you know how to define value and to grasp what is important in business relationships. By weaving value into your recommendations, both you and the individual benefit.

Consider what you know about the person requesting the recommendation.

- What value does that person consistently exhibit?
- How is that important to a business relationship?
- What examples or stories can you share?

## 5. Shows Desire to Help

Your LinkedIn profile includes recommendations you have received and given. When you give recommendations, it shows you are willing to help others and are interested in their success. That's a positive characteristic to those reviewing your profile.

## The Added Benefit of Quid Pro Quo

Besides making you feel good, delivering LinkedIn recommendations has an added benefit – often the person reciprocates.

**Ideally, the person will offer to return the favor.** However, you may ask *if* the timing is right. But make sure that person does not feel backed into a corner. He or she should have first-hand experience with your professional services and feel comfortable being asked for a recommendation.

Give connections time to know your work.

Are you beginning to see the benefits? The degree of benefit depends on how well-written and helpful the recommendation is. The next section examines what makes a high-quality LinkedIn Recommendation.

## Creating a Quality Recommendation

To reap the rewards from a LinkedIn Recommendation, it needs to be a good one. You need one with substance – not only words of praise.

The following graphic shares the elements of a good LinkedIn Recommendation.

## Characteristics of a Great LinkedIn Recommendation



**Explain how you know the person**

**Include specifics**

e.g., Knowledge, skills, attitude



**Be brief**

LinkedIn's maximum of 3,000 characters (about 500 words) may be too much

**Most important:  
Be sincere!**



## Explain How You Know the Person

When I wrote my first recommendation, the categories for describing how you knew the person were broader (Colleague, Service Provider, Business Partner, or Student).

The current process (as of March 2021) replaced those categories with the following.

- You have a choice of business relationships (e.g., you managed the person or reported to that person)
- Then you choose from one of the positions held by the individual

In addition to selecting from the above options, I suggest you also include how long you have known the individual and in what capacity. For example:

*"My company hired Scott as our social media consultant. I have worked closely with Scott in that role for the last five years..."*

This guide offers additional tips in the "Mechanics" and "Simple, Clear & Uniquely Yours..." sections.

## Include Specifics

Writing, "Scott's great," is like someone posting, "Great post," in a blog comment. Nice, but it does not add much value. Specifics, such as the following, help identify the value Scott brings to a business relationship.

- Attitude (dedicated)
- Knowledge (social media expert)
- Skills (attention to detail)

## Match Knowledge and Skills

If you're struggling with identifying specifics, check out Scott's profile. It provides insight into what's important to Scott and helps you develop his recommendation.

- Look at his current profile summary and any specialties.
- Match the skills from your experience working with Scott to those listed.
- Blend the knowledge and skills you've observed into your recommendation.

## Be Brief

Think about the last time you searched for information online. Maybe it was for a product review, or you were in a position to hire someone. Most of us appreciate a review (or recommendation) that gets to the point – quickly. And one that is easy to scan.

*Brevity is still king, so keep recommendations on point and brief.*

- Make it long enough to convey enthusiasm for the task.
- But not so long that readers click away.

LinkedIn allows 3,000 characters (approximately 500 words), but personally, I would keep it under 1,000 (approximately 200 words).

On the flip side, length does not matter much if you present a well-written recommendation that locks in readers.

## Be Sincere

Finally, the number one attribute of a quality recommendation is sincerity. Readers know the difference between lip service and authenticity.

You can find a gazillion templates for writing a recommendation. But if you don't make the template your own, it sounds fake (even if you believe it's true).

If you're not feeling it, don't write it.

If you are struggling, you may need to put the writing aside. Grab this guide or any other resource you find helpful. Try using the tips and suggestions to center you on the points you want to make.

Another trick that may help – imagine you are talking with a colleague. They ask you what you think about the person you are writing the recommendation about. What would you say?

*“Scott’s great! I worked with him on a couple of social media projects. He’s super creative and works his tail off. When you ask for something, Scott gets right on it.”*

What do the above comments reveal?

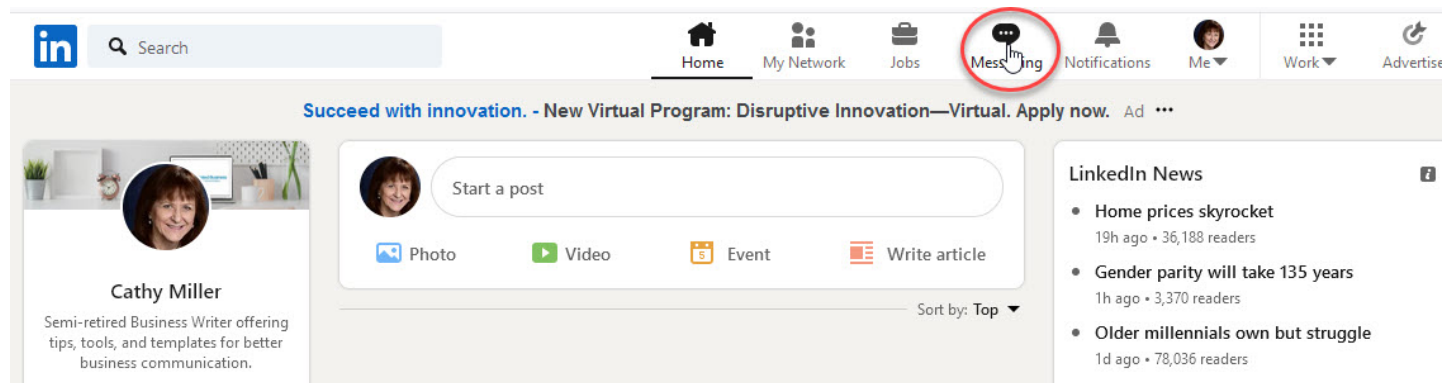
- Scott’s creativity, dedication, and reliability
- You have first-hand knowledge of that
- And your comments ring true as credible

## The Mechanics of LinkedIn Recommendations

The following guides you through the mechanics of giving LinkedIn Recommendations. Whether you initiate the recommendation yourself or respond to a request, you have a few options to get started.

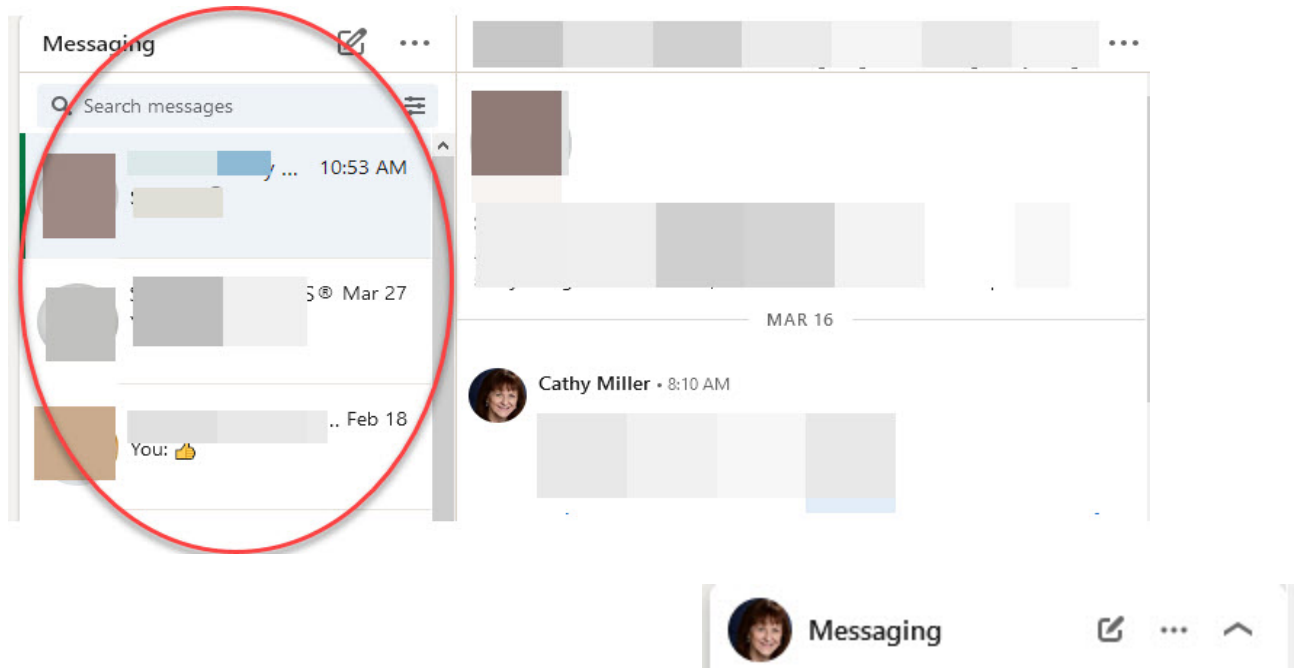
### Response to a Request

For one sent by a connection, the request will appear in your messages. Click the Messaging icon at the top of your Home Page.



## The Forgotten LinkedIn Recommendation

The request will be on the left side of your Messaging window. Or you can access it in the Messaging window on the lower right side.



Select the request message. It will say something like:

*Write Scott Parker a recommendation*

The message will have a link you can click on that directs you to the request. You can either click on:

- *Write recommendation – or –*
- *Ignore*



## Initiating the Recommendation Yourself

You may receive a request for a recommendation from outside LinkedIn or wish to create one without being asked. The following is how you do that.

For illustrative purposes, I will use a recent recommendation I created for one of my connections.

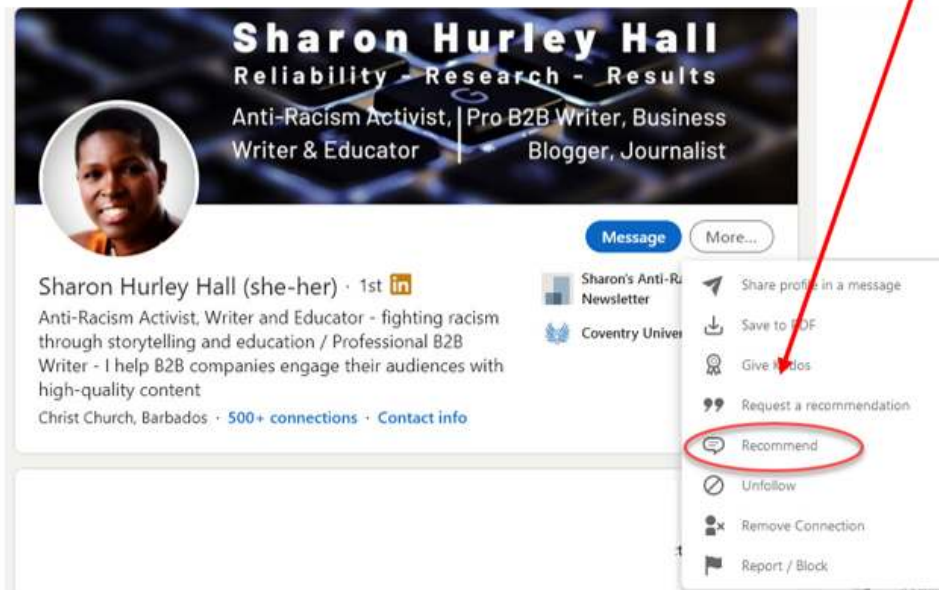
[Sharon Hurley Hall](#) expanded her creative services into new areas. As a result, Sharon posted a request for recommendations from those who were familiar with her new endeavor. I was happy to oblige.

## The Individual's Profile

You initiate a recommendation through a person's profile.

Click on the  button on your connection's profile.

A dropdown menu appears where you can select *Recommend* (as illustrated below).



## The Forgotten LinkedIn Recommendation

The first step asks you how you know the person you are recommending. If you fly solo like I do, the options are not great. Sharon is a professional writer who I “met” online when I first started my business.

In this scenario, I selected, *You worked with Sharon but at different companies*.

### Write Sharon a recommendation ✕

The recommendation will appear on Sharon Hurley Hall (she-her)'s profile.

How do you know Sharon?

Relationship

Select relationship ▼

- Select relationship
- You managed Sharon directly
- You reported directly to Sharon
- You were senior to Sharon
- Sharon was senior to you
- You worked with Sharon in the same group
- You worked with Sharon but in different groups
- You worked with Sharon but at different companies**
- Sharon was a client of yours
- You were a client of Sharon's
- You taught Sharon
- You mentored Sharon
- You and Sharon studied together

We each have our own business so it's an accurate statement. In any event, readers focus more on the written recommendation, which contains the information on your relationship with that person.

# The Forgotten LinkedIn Recommendation

The next step of the process identifies the position the individual held at the time of your first meeting. At least that's how I interpret it.

As I noted previously, Sharon expanded her creative services. But I first met Sharon in her blogger/content marketing role. So, I selected that position and explained in my recommendation how I knew Sharon before and since her journey into Anti-Racism Activist, Writer & Educator.

**Write Sharon a recommendation** ✕

The recommendation will appear on Sharon Hurley Hall (she-her)'s profile.

How do you know Sharon?

Relationship

Select relationship

Position at the time

Select Sharon's position at the time

- Select Sharon's position at the time
- Anti-Racism Activist, Writer & Educator at Sharon's Anti-Racism Newsletter
- Professional Writer, Blogger, Content Marketer, Journalist at Sharon Hurley Hall, Writer
- Anti-Racism Educator at Beyond School
- Co-host, The Introvert Sisters Podcast at The Introvert Sisters Podcast
- Technical Writer at Awesome Motive
- Blog Content Manager at Park Ride Fly USA
- Journalism Professor (Senior Lecturer) at Coventry University
- Student at Coventry University (MA)
- Student at Coventry University (MA)


By giving that backstory, it strengthens my assessment of Sharon as a writer and educator.

# The Forgotten LinkedIn Recommendation

The final step is writing your recommendation. Below is the final version of my recommendation for Sharon. In the next section are tips for creating a LinkedIn Recommendation you actually like.

Write Sharon a recommendation ✕

The recommendation will appear on Sharon Hurley Hall (she-her)'s profile.

 **Sharon Hurley Hall (she-her)**  
You worked with Sharon but at different companies

Write your recommendation here...

Send



**Cathy Miller**

Semi-retired Business Writer offering tips, tools, and templates for better business communication.

March 16, 2021, Cathy worked with Sharon but at different companies

When I started my business communication company in 2008, one of the first writers I encountered was Sharon Hurley Hall. I admired how well researched her articles were and her overall professionalism and skill in communicating complex topics. And what could be more complex than racism?

So, when Sharon expanded her role to include one of anti-racism activist, I quickly subscribed to her Anti-Racism Newsletter. I knew I would find the professional, educational, and skilled writing I would need to educate myself on what I needed to do in the fight against racism. And Sharon did not disappoint. What I appreciate is the action Sharon puts behind her words as evidenced by her Beyond School anti-racism workshops.

Her powerful and balanced sharing of information and resources has opened my eyes in how much there is left to do if we are ever going to create a more accepting and open environment for all. It is incumbent on each of us to learn what that means. I highly recommend Sharon as a valuable resource for doing just that. [See less](#)

## Clear & Uniquely Yours LinkedIn Recommendations

When I first wrote the post, [Writing LinkedIn Recommendations You Actually Like](#), it received a lot of traffic. The post continued to be one of my highest viewed posts.

So, I decided to provide additional tips for writing a LinkedIn Recommendation. First, I created a simple formula for writing recommendations (as illustrated below).

A SIMPLE FORMULA FOR

### WRITING LINKEDIN RECOMMENDATIONS



#### How

How do you know the person and for how long?

#### What

What skills does the person have?

#### Why

Why do you recommend the person?

Next, I created a free download to help you write simple, clear, and uniquely yours LinkedIn Recommendations. I recreated it below. However, you can also [download a copy here](#).

## LinkedIn Recommendations Download

Some people really struggle with writing a recommendation for someone. To ease your pain, here are some suggestions for creating a LinkedIn recommendation (or any recommendation) that stands out from the crowd.

Keep it simple.

1. How do you know the person?
2. **Examples:** You worked together at the same company/You or your company hired the person as an independent contractor.
3. How long have you known or worked with the person?

Keep it clear.

1. Match the person's skills you observed with what that person is doing now.
2. **Examples of transferrable skills:**
  - **Communication skills:** Good listener, articulate, communicates clearly, collaborates well at all levels, team player
  - **Leadership skills:** Builds support, inspires confidence, decisive, delegates effectively, takes ownership, calming influence
  - **Problem-solving skills:** Resourceful, creative thinker, focused
  - **Time management skills:** Organized, sets priorities, attention to detail, delivers on commitments
  - **Change management skills:** Flexible, adapts to situation, works well under pressure, embraces change

**TIP:** Use the person's profile for ideas or keywords.

Keep it uniquely yours

1. What do you like best about the person?
2. Be specific about what you like. Describe attitude, knowledge, and skills.
3. What did the person contribute to your overall results?

The following are a few examples of attitude, knowledge, and skills traits.

- **Attitude:** Dedicated, hard-working, strong work ethic, positive, optimistic, cheerful, can-do
- **Knowledge:** Graphic design, social media, marketing, industry-specific (identify industry)
- **Skills:** Choose your favorite(s) from list of skills

## Putting it Together

Here is an example using the simple steps.

*My company hired Rita Jones as an independent graphic designer. I worked with Rita on several marketing projects over the last two years and highly recommend her as an experienced and skilled graphic designer. Rita's positive approach to each assignment and her ability to translate our ideas into top-notch designs elevated our marketing efforts to a completely new level. If you want outstanding results delivered on time and within budget, Rita is a professional graphic designer you'll want to meet.*

### Hitting the Restart Button on Recommendations

Typically, LinkedIn members think about recommendations when building their profile or when they receive a request from a connection. Then they file and forget.

I used to be much better at sending unsolicited recommendations. It's a great way to strengthen your business relationships. So, you may want to consider adding the task to your marketing strategy.

And look at recommendations you received. Are the cobwebs obscuring the words? Maybe it's time to ask for more recent reviews of your work.

Like any marketing tool, LinkedIn Recommendations are only as good as the effort you put into it. I hope this guide helps you discover the value they deliver for both you and the connections you recommend.

Why not restart today?