

3 Questions for Creating a Professional Bio

Many find the task of creating a professional bio daunting. It doesn't have to be. Ask these three questions and you have the framework for an effective bio.

1. Who are you? This information forms the base of your building blocks.

Start by making a list to answer the following questions.

- What positions have you held? (e.g., salesperson, public speaker, manager)
- What are past and present business titles? (e.g., CEO, Vice President, Account Executive)
- What companies have you worked for? (current and past)

2. What credibility do you have? This is the “prove it” stage for establishing your credibility.

Create a list, including —

- Accomplishments – e.g., awards, recognition
- Experience – years in your industry, education, associations

3. What makes you unique? Here you get to sing your praises. What makes you or your business any different from all the rest?

Start by listing the following.

- Attributes – e.g., creative, decisive, innovative
- Success stories – e.g., case studies, inventions, testimonials
- Personal interests – e.g., family, sports enthusiast, marathon runner

Now, you simply add up 1+2+3 and tell your story. Like any good story, there is a beginning, middle and end. Follow this layout for your bio.

Beginning – Take something from each building block for your opening to your bio. This is the grabber – what message do you want readers to remember?

Middle - Build the middle portion of your bio with your previous experience – i.e. former companies/positions – and your education. Add in your accomplishments.

End - Wrap up with a dash of your unique and personal information.

Sample Bio

Using the 3 Questions Method

There are different types of professional bios.

- **Longer bios** – think your LinkedIn® profile
- **Mid-size bios** – e.g., profiles for public speaking
- **Mini-bios** – e.g., Twitter profiles or publication bios

Create a longer bio first, then edit for the mid to mini-bios. The following are excerpts from a professional bio.

1. Who are you?

Passion is life-altering. It drives great leaders to make a difference in the lives of others. Mary Smith is such a leader.

Open with your “grabber” – what you want readers to remember.

2. What credibility do you have?

*A youth development specialist, Mary has **over 20 years experience** in helping young people realize their full potential...*

*Mary went back to school and **earned a degree in criminal justice**. It was the start of a lifelong commitment to education and training, culminating with a **master's degree in family studies and human services**...*

3. What makes you unique?

*From her early days as the **owner of a martial arts studio**, Mary connected with the children and teens enrolled in her classes. Hours after the last class, Mary could be found listening and counseling students about their problems. **Living in a rural community**, at-risk youth had few resources beyond private agencies. Mary knew she discovered her passion...*

*Mary has a **fourth-degree black belt in Taekwondo**, enjoys reading, hiking, and family vacations.*

Sample Bio

Converting the Long Format to Mid- or Mini-size

Once you have your longer professional bio, you can select gems from its format to create a mid- or mini-size bio.

For example, let's say Mary Smith was asked to speak at a conference. Her longer bio format (which you can view at the blog post, [Creating a Better Professional Bio](#)) would probably exceed the conference's guidelines for bio length.

It's an easy fix when you have perfected your longer version.

All Mary has to do is grab key points from her longer bio to create a mid-and mini-size bio, as illustrated below.

Mid-size bio: *Mary always knew she wanted to help others. When the young teens of her rural community enrolled in Mary's martial arts studio, it became more than the study of Taekwondo. Mary was a trusted resource for youth struggling with mental and emotional stresses. Mary pursued a degree in criminal justice and earned a master's degree in family studies and human services. As a youth developmental specialist for the past 20 years, Mary is making a difference in young people's lives. She works tirelessly to help our children dream and grow so they reach their full potential as healthy adults.*

See how Mary weaved in answers to the 3 questions?

1. **Who are you?** *trusted resource for youth, youth developmental specialist*
2. **What credibility do you have?** *a degree in criminal justice, a master's degree in family studies and human services, 20 years experience*
3. **What makes you unique?** *Her start as an owner of a martial arts studio, her education and training*

Mini-size bio: *For over 20 years, Mary Smith has excelled as a youth development specialist with a degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in family studies and human services.*