READ ME IF YOU WANT TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE SALES PROFILE ON LINKEDIN

#1
in a series of 6

LinkedIn

Why it matters

Let's clear one thing up: your LinkedIn profile isn't a résumé—it's your online reputation. In today's sales climate, it can make the difference between prospects responding and passing you over.

Since **49% of buyers** research sales reps on LinkedIn and **50%** avoid reps with incomplete profiles,[1] making a strong first impression has never been so important. And improving your personal brand isn't just to reassure skittish prospects; you'll also attract new ones, as **92% of B2B buyers** will engage with sellers known as industry thought leaders.[2]

Optimize your LinkedIn profile with these **eight steps** to generate more leads and opportunities for dialogue.

[1,2] IDC, "Social Buying Meets Social Selling: How Social Networks Improve the Purchase Experience"

Anatomy of a winning sales profile

CUSTOM URL
Pick a custom URL that is just your first or last name or first initial and last name.

PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
Upload a high-quality professional headshot that captures you at your best.

BACKGROUND PHOTO
Upload a photo that shows prospects who you are before they read a single word.

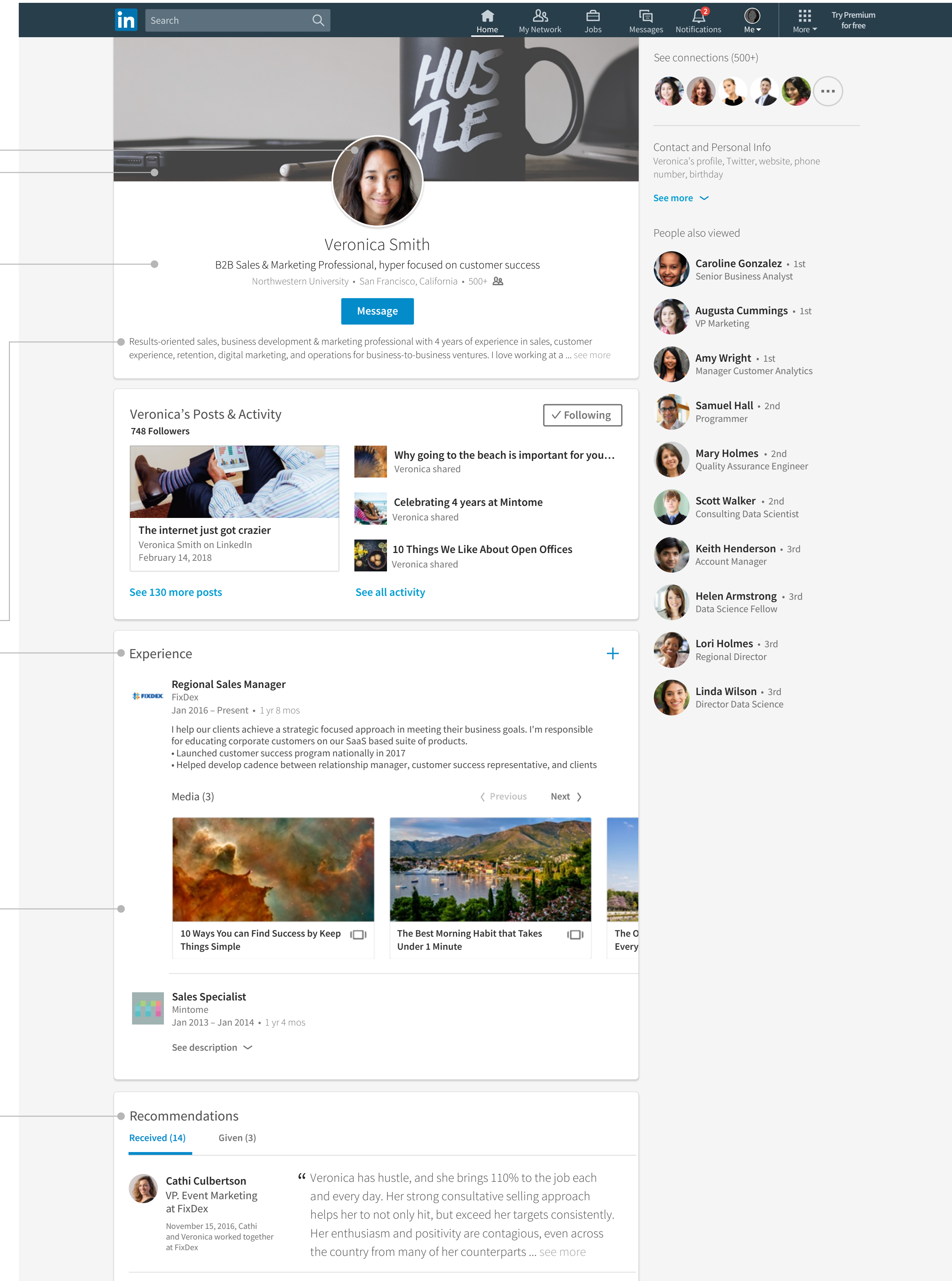
HEADLINE
Write an attention-grabbing headline that compels prospects to learn more about you.

SUMMARY
Use this space to differentiate yourself and showcase skills that speak to your buyer.

EXPERIENCE
Here's where you demonstrate what you can do for customers.

RICH MEDIA
Add relevant content like presentations, infographics and videos that showcase your value.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Ask for recommendations from satisfied clients because nothing speaks louder than their words.



STEP 1

Make your profile visible and easy to find

The first step in getting more profile views is to make sure your profile is visible to people searching for you.

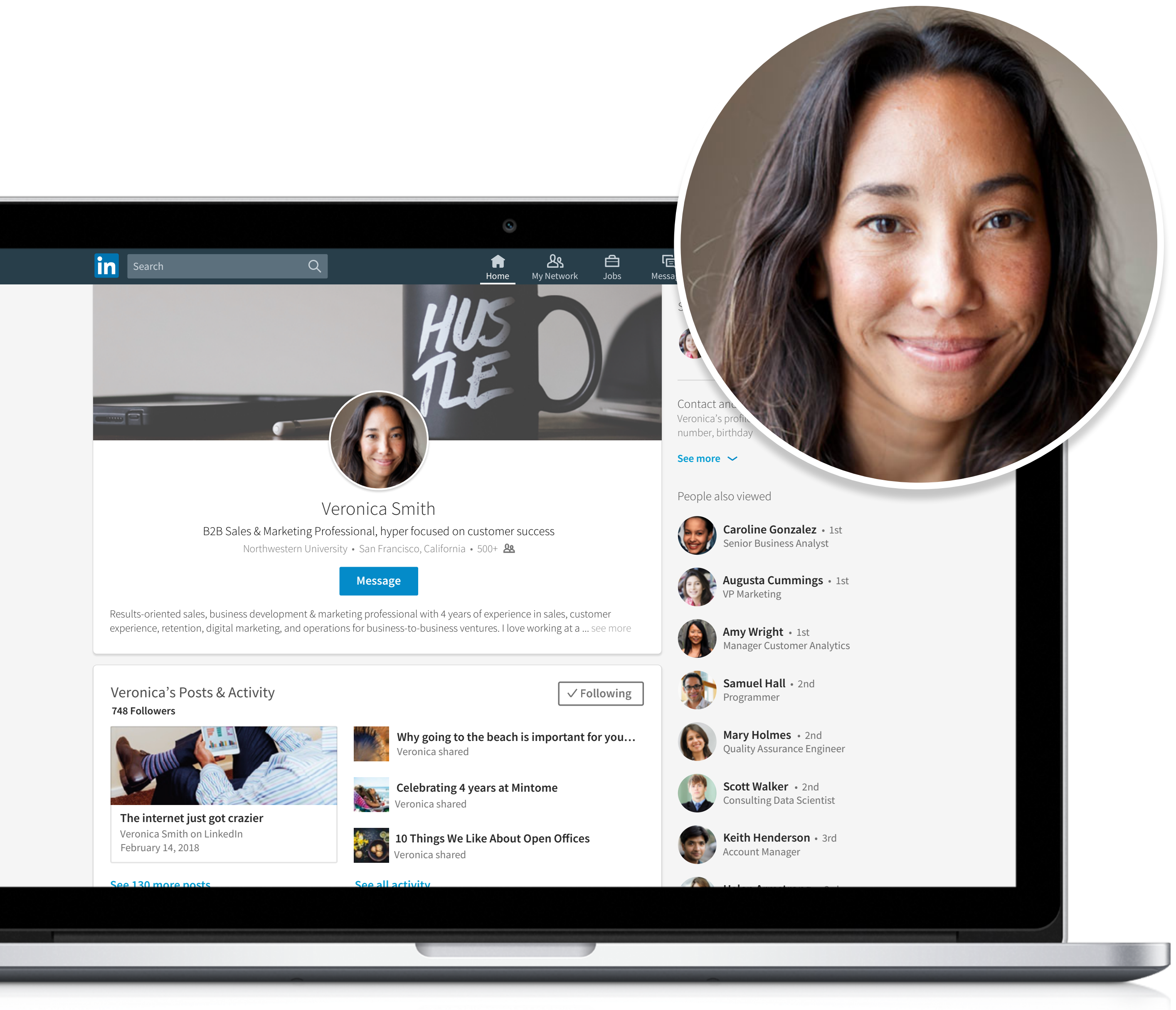
To change your settings from anonymous to public, from your profile page:

- Click the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage
- In the **Account** section, select **Settings & Privacy**
- In the **Privacy** section, click **Edit your public profile**
- Under **Edit Visibility**, turn **On** your profile's public visibility

On the same page, take this opportunity to personalize the URL for your profile. Make your custom URL your first and last name, or first initial and last name, so prospects can easily find you.

A public profile means that people who search for you on LinkedIn can see your full profile information. If your profile is set to private, people will only see a snippet of it.

PRO TIP
Add your LinkedIn URL to your email signature so that potential customers can click to learn more about you.



Upload a professional photo

STEP 2

Did you know that you can make your profile seven times more likely to be found in searches by adding a profile photo?[3] However, it's essential that you convey the right impression with your choice of photo. Think of how you dress and act when you meet a client in real life. Your profile photo should be professional, friendly and representative of the way you'd appear in a face-to-face sales setting so it leaves a favorable first impression with potential buyers.

It's best to upload a profile photo that is:

- High-resolution and cropped to 400x400 pixels to fit the space
- A close-cropped photo that shows more of your face
- In front of a neutral background or relevant work setting
- Of only you – no friends, children or pets

[3] LinkedIn, 6 of the Most Powerful LinkedIn Stats for Sales Professionals

STEP 3

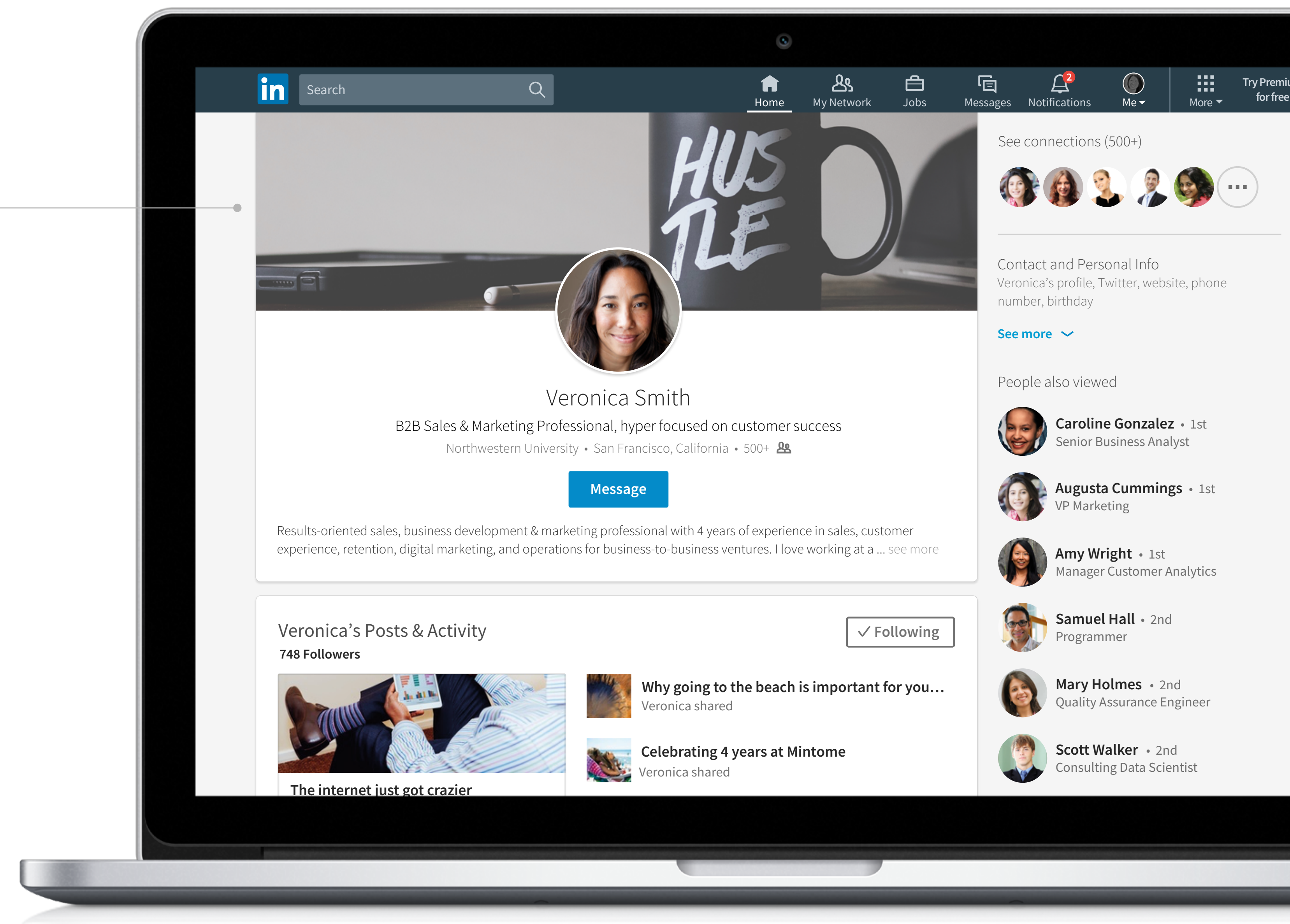
Upload a background photo

Along with your profile photo, your background photo is usually the first thing people notice when they look at your LinkedIn profile. A carefully chosen image can tell potential customers who you are, what you do, and what you're about, all before they read a single line of text.

For example, a background photo that highlights your public speaking experience can establish your thought leadership and credibility.

It's best to upload a high quality photo that is:

- Cropped to 4000x4000 pixels to fit the space
- Not covered by your profile photo and headline



PRO TIP
To boost rankings on Google, include words in your summary that your prospects use when searching. You can base these on your own discussions with customers or your marketing team's insights.

Write a compelling headline

STEP 4

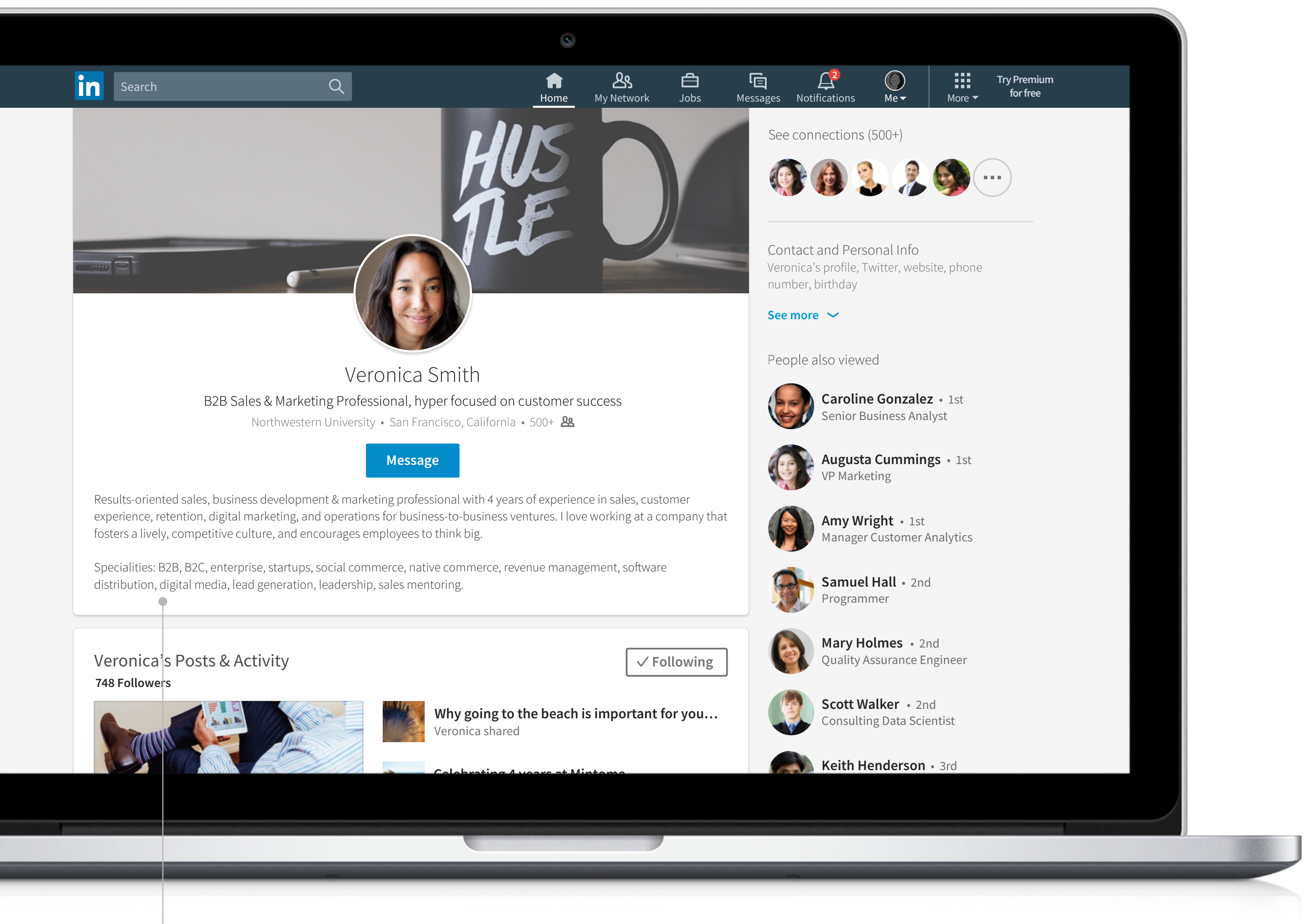
The default LinkedIn headline is automatically pulled from your work history, and lists your current position and company. While this information may be useful for prospects, your job title alone doesn't tell a very compelling story.

A well-crafted, attention-grabbing headline can mean the difference between a prospect checking out the rest of your profile or clicking away. Since it is one of the first parts of your profile your prospects will see, it needs to get them interested in seeing more.

The headline introduces your summary section, which is your space to showcase:

- What you do and who you do it for
- The value you offer buyers
- What differentiates you
- Proof that you can deliver on your promise
- Ways to contact you

Imagine telling a potential client what you do in terms of how you can provide value for that person and their company, and write from there.



Follow this structure to turn your summary from a simple résumé into a reputation-building asset:

PASSION
A sentence about what motivates you professionally and what that means for customers.

BACKGROUND
One or two sentences summing up your career to date.

COMPANY
One or two paragraphs about what solutions you offer, and how they've solved industry or customer problems in the past.

CALL TO ACTION
Contact details and best channels to get in touch – the same things that you'd include on your business card.

Include a personal summary

STEP 5

Your summary is the place where you can put your value on full display. A common mistake is to gear your summary toward recruiters instead of prospects. While saying that you exceeded your sales quotas for the past three years is impressive, you don't want your prospects to think you are only interested in selling to them. Use this space to differentiate yourself from other sales professionals and showcase the unique skills that speak to your ideal buyer.

Think about this as your "30-second pitch": Focus on what you do, how you help your customers, and the best way to get in touch (your call to action). Write in the first person, avoid bullet points, and make the skills and experience you talk about directly relevant to your current job. Most importantly, write with the customer in mind. For example, "I close million-dollar deals" is good for a résumé, but "I save clients millions of dollars" is better if you're not in the job market.

PRO TIP
Your writing should be professional, but that doesn't mean it has to be boring. Let your passion shine through—and if a little gentle humor or irreverence fits your personality, go for it.

STEP 6

Add your work experience

As with the summary, use the Experience section to demonstrate what you can do for customers. There's a tendency to think of work experience in résumé terms—your skills, accomplishments, and day-to-day tasks for each job. But you're not out to impress a potential employer, so it's a good idea to keep your work history relevant to the solutions you have provided for clients.

The key is to balance a buyer focus with your personality so your profile is distinct from other sales professionals. Possible ways you can convey this include describing how you:

- Have helped multiple customers achieve a significant business goal
- Help others come together to solve tough problems
- Call upon a trusted team and process to assist with the entire buyer experience
- Remain involved with buyers at every stage – even after the purchase
- Spend time when you're not helping buyers, including charitable organizations you support

Try scheduling a monthly or bi-monthly reminder to re-evaluate your headline and summary as even small changes can impact your lead generation efforts.

PRO TIP

Ditch work history that isn't part of your professional career. Unless summers as a lifeguard or working concessions at a theater helped shape you into the salesperson you are today, it's best to leave them off your work experience.

Add rich media

STEP 7

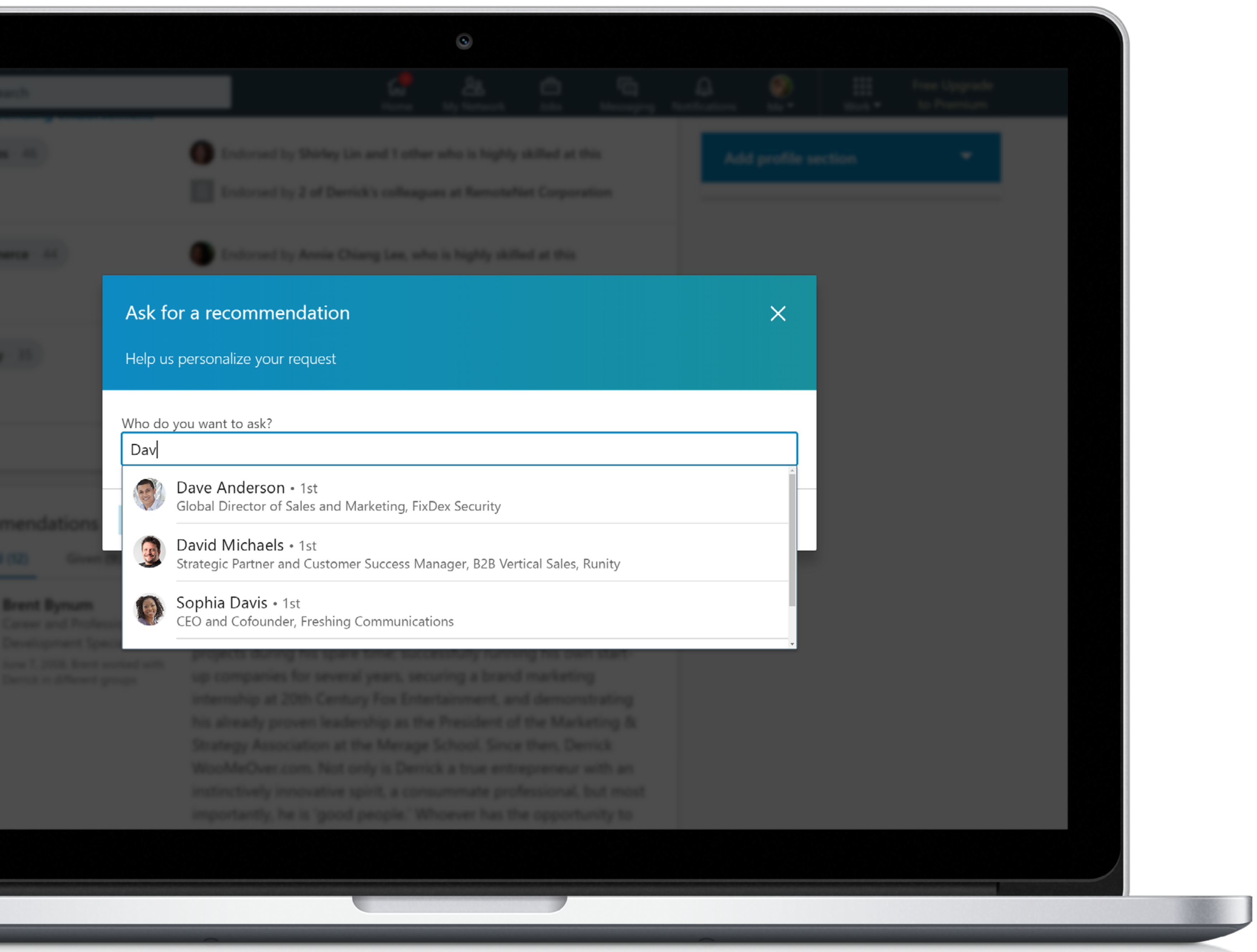
An effective way to grab your prospect's attention is by adding multimedia content to your profile. Pertinent links, videos, SlideShare presentations and infographics go a step beyond simply telling your prospects what you can do by actually showcasing your value.

The following are two areas to which you can add rich media:

- Enhance your **Summary** with awareness-type content: C-level interviews about your company, videos dealing with industry issues, or campaign microsites
- Support your **Experience** with greater detail about specific solutions, including presentations or even videos where you directly address customers, help them overcome challenges and achieve their goals

Limit yourself to around five pieces of media content for your summary and two pieces of media content for your experience. Make it a habit to review content in these sections every two months in case there is new and relevant content to be added.

PRO TIP
Source content from your marketing team, then use your ongoing conversations with customers to add assets that will resonate with your particular target audience.



STEP 8

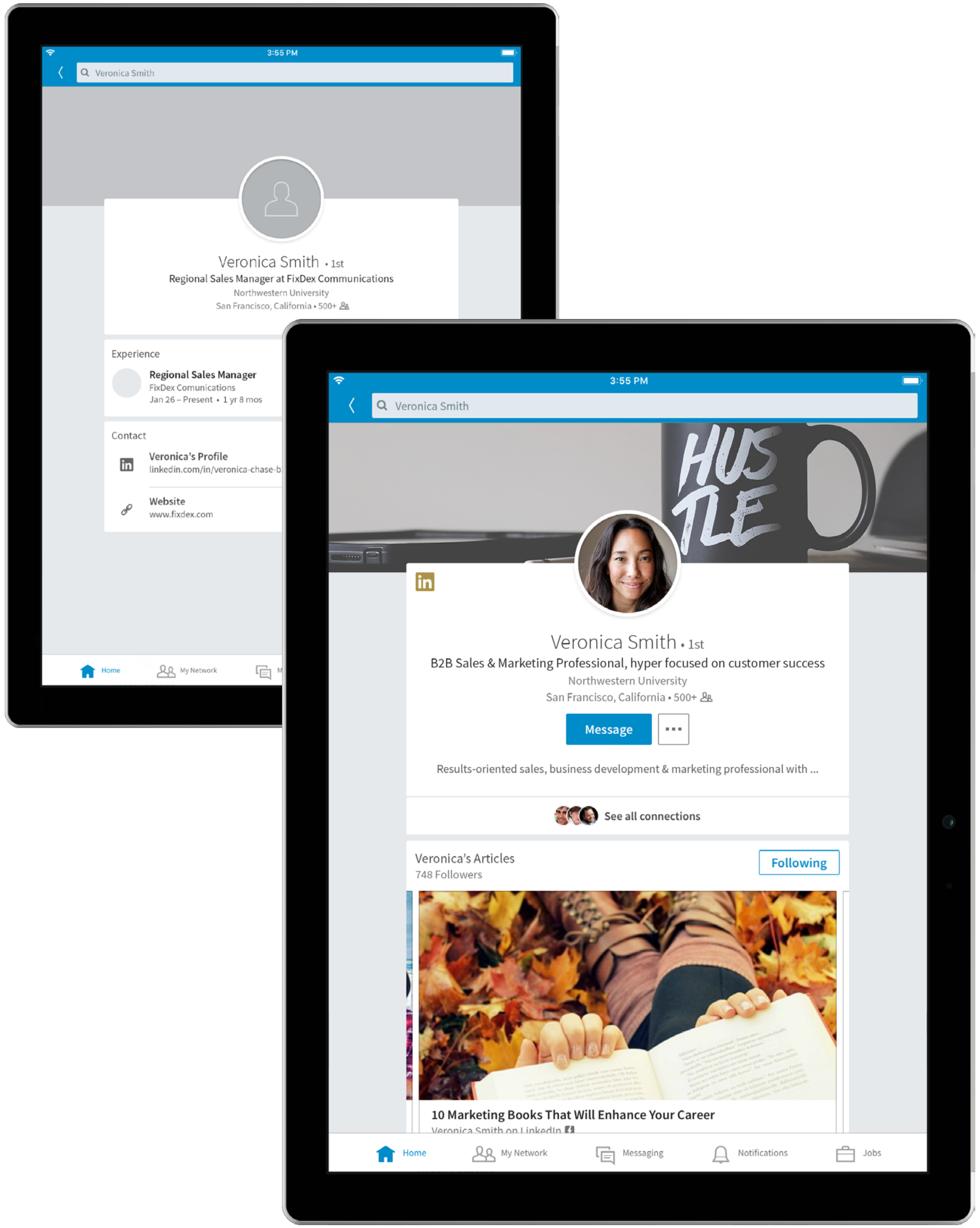
Solicit recommendations

To support what you say about yourself, ask for recommendations and endorsements from satisfied clients. Remember to give to get. In other words, offer to provide recommendations to others before soliciting recommendations from them.

When it is time to request a recommendation, from your profile page:

- Click the **Me** icon at the top of your LinkedIn homepage
- Select **View profile**
- Scroll down to the **Recommendations** section and click **Ask to be recommended**
- In the **Who do you want to ask?** field, type the name of the connection you'd like to ask for a recommendation
- Select the name from the dropdown that appears
- Fill out the **Relationship** and **Position at the time** fields of the recommendations pop-up window, and click Next
- You can change the text in the message field, and then click Send

As you ask for recommendations, write a personalized message to accompany your request. A solid recommendation describes how you collaborated and includes specific examples of how the client benefited by working with you, so don't be shy about asking your client to include those in the write-up.



Breaking it down

Take a look at these two profiles of the same hypothetical person. The right-hand profile of Veronica is obviously a lot more engaging for prospects and leads. She's using a professional and warm photo, and her headline clearly defines the value she brings to clients. Her summary further elaborates on the skills and personality she brings to her role and customers, even highlighting specific benefits like time-to-market and media articles that demonstrate her expertise.

Veronica could take her profile even further and support her summary with even greater detail by filling out other sections in her profile like volunteer experience and projects.

About us

LinkedIn Sales Navigator makes it simple to establish and grow relationships with prospects and customers by helping you tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of 500 million members. Designed for sales professionals, LinkedIn Sales Navigator combines LinkedIn's network data, relevant news sources, and your accounts, leads, and preferences to produce customized recommendations and insights.

With LinkedIn Sales Navigator, you can focus on the right people and companies, stay up-to-date on what's happening with your accounts, and build trust with your prospects and customers.

Looking to get LinkedIn Sales Navigator for your team? Request a free demo.