

A Simple Guide to How (and Why) to Endorse People on LinkedIn

Chris Read – EPRAKT Consulting

LinkedIn endorsements are often overlooked and scoffed at without a full appreciation of their real value. I have been on a journey of discovery in this area for a few years and have found that savvy business people genuinely get an unfair advantage by utilising this very simple and effective tool.

LinkedIn has become an important piece of most professional's puzzle for managing business networks and researching people's background. LinkedIn is especially used as a reference before meeting new contacts such as interviewing for a job or a contract.

Many people that I meet are embarrassed to make their LinkedIn profile look professional and some even feel "above" promoting themselves via this social media platform. Commonly people maintain a scant LinkedIn profile out of fear - "what if people think that I am looking for another job?", "what if people think I am big noting myself?" or "what if people think my claimed strengths aren't true?"

These same people often then struggle to articulate their value proposition when trying to actually win a new job or win a new contract. They often think doing the job is far more important than understanding, developing and promoting themselves. As a senior executive, I have in the past made many "first impression" decisions about other people based on the available information at hand, including LinkedIn profiles.

In my role as a business consultant and coach, I recently developed and led a Leadership Development Program for a Global Executive Team. Based on their LinkedIn profiles, these executives were actually more suited to junior engineers than CEOs. There was no mention of leadership skills, team building or any sort of executive presence in their profiles (apart from their job title). There was one younger high potential graduate sitting in that session and she commented that she "always checked the LinkedIn profiles of any company and their senior executives before considering applying for a job" and that if the underwhelming LinkedIn profiles of that executive team was the only information that she had, "she wouldn't have applied". It was no co-incidence that this business was having trouble retaining their talent, including their graduates.

LinkedIn endorsements are a subtle tool that can ease cautious people into utilising LinkedIn and ultimately help them to feel more comfortable to appropriately position themselves amongst their peers (enhancing their personal brand). A professional LinkedIn profile with many endorsements helps to build credibility. If 100 people have publicly endorsed you for business development, then there is a fair chance that you do know something about business development.

The obvious and direct benefit of utilising LinkedIn endorsements is that it publicly highlights the strength's and competencies of your business contacts. By endorsing someone you are affirming them, building their personal brand and paying it forward – nice !!

However, most don't recognise that there are some other significant benefits that make endorsing people on LinkedIn more valuable than just being nice.

When you endorse someone you:

1. **Get their attention** – a message is sent to their email with your photo saying that you have just affirmed them – this feels great for most people and you haven't asked for anything in return!
2. **Remind Them That You Exist** – skilled networkers find value adding ways of staying front of mind. LinkedIn endorsements is one simple and inoffensive ways of helping people think about you. It might even prompt them to look at your profile and see what you are up to or give you a call.
3. **Build Positive Vibes** – People tend to do business with people that they like. If I know that someone thinks that I am competent, then I am possibly more open to want to do business with them. LinkedIn endorsements can create and enhance goodwill.
4. **Creates a Spark for Future Engagement** – endorsing someone can smooth the way in setting up future discussions and meetings
5. **Might get endorsed back** – it's human nature if someone goes out of their way to say nice things about you then you might feel prompted to do the same. Endorse enough people and it is very likely that more people will endorse you for your skills.

Simple Steps To Endorse Your Contacts on LinkedIn:

- Step 1:** Log in to LinkedIn and go to the profile of the contact that you want to endorse eg. type the person's name and company into the search bar. Click on the correct profile and request to connect if not already connected (personal message can help).
- Step 2:** Once connected, scroll down to the contact's "Skills and Endorsements" section – close to the bottom of the profile
- Step 3:** Click on the + sign next to skill that you want to endorse eg. + Business Strategy. Skills with ticks next to them are ones that you have already endorsed.

Note: The Top Three skills are listed first. These are not actually the most endorsed skills but are the three skills that have been selected by the profile owner to be their Top Three. If they are LinkedIn savvy, then they will have set these Top Three to best align with their personal brand (as the Top Three appear more prominently in their profile)

- Step 4:** A pop-up box will appear. Select "Good", "Very Good" or "Highly Skilled". You can also select the relationship (this is optional and I don't tend to do that)
- Step 5:** Hit the "Submit" button. You have now endorsed your contact for that skill and they are likely to be sent a notification to their nominated LinkedIn email
- Step 6:** Repeat the process above for multiple endorsements

A Tip for Your Own Profile:

Your contacts can only endorse you for the skills that you have added to your profile – so it is really important that you have added the skills that you want to be endorsed for. These are generally the skills that are aligned to your personal brand.

Simple Steps To Add More Skills To Your LinkedIn Profile:

- Step 1:** Click the **Me** icon at the top of your **LinkedIn** homepage
- Step 2:** Click **View profile**
- Step 3:** Scroll to the **Skills & Endorsements** section and click **Add a new skill**
- Step 4:** In the pop-up window, type the name of a **skill** in the text box and select it from the dropdown list that appears
- Step 5:** Click **Add**

If you would like to test LinkedIn Endorsements, then you are very welcome to use [my](#) profile as a test case. Good luck !!

Kind regards
Chris Read

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