

Hey! What's New? 2025-61

Want A Board Seat? Get A Great LinkedIn Profile

Dan Bigman writes, in *Chief Executive*, “in today’s competitive landscape, if you want to land a seat on a public company board, members must be strategic not only about how they prepare for the job also have to be savvy about how you present yourself online – particularly on LinkedIn – to remain visible and attractive for new board opportunities.”

“There are only 30,000 board seats available in public companies,” Bigman quotes board recruitment expert Tate Purcell, a longtime director himself and a currently on the board of Air+ Inc. as saying. “If they turn over on an average every five years, it’s only 6,000.”

Standing out, in other words, is essential, Bigman says. “The executive resume focuses on the proactive things that you can implement and you have implemented, so it’s operationally focused,” says Purcell. Board member, as you know, aren’t operationally forecast focused. “They are focused on coaching, helping the management team to do those operational things. And so the board bio and the public persona needs to be more focused on how you help people to do those things.”

Here’s some of what Purcell suggested:

Avoid Focusing Too Much on Past Titles. One of the most common mistakes board members make is structuring their LinkedIn profiles like a career resume. “They focus on the positions that they’re currently in or the positions that they were in,” Purcell explained. While past experience is valuable, an effective board profile should be forward-looking and highlight the value the individual brings to the boardroom rather than simply listing past titles.”

Shift Away from an Operational Focus. Another frequent misstep is presenting a profile that reads like that of an executive rather than a board member. “They’ll put together a profile that looks like a CEO or a CFO...which is not what a board member does,” Purcell noted. Board members aren’t responsible for running the company – they provide oversight, strategic guidance and governance. Profiles should reflect this distinction.

Define a Clear Unique Value Proposition. To stand out, “the first line of your headline needs to deliver what I call the UVP, the unique value proposition,” Purcell said. Instead of simply listing a title, the headline should summarize the expertise and impact the board member can bring.

Optimize for Both Humans and Algorithms. LinkedIn profiles need to appeal to both human readers and search algorithms. “Your ‘about’ section on LinkedIn is really where you want to be more algorithm friendly,” Purcell advised. This means incorporating relevant keywords throughout the profile to increase discoverability while ensuring the overall narrative is compelling to human viewers – particularly board nominating committees.

Use Board-Appropriate Language. The language in a board member’s profile should reflect governance responsibilities rather than executive duties. “Some no-nos would be ‘executed’ or ‘implemented,’” Purcell emphasized. Instead, he suggests using terms like “coached,” “facilitated” or “led the process,” which better align with board-level contributions.

Recognize That Networking Drives Board Placements. While LinkedIn optimization is essential, Purcell underscored that networking remains the most effective way to secure board opportunities. “The primary way to get on a board is to know someone who’s already on that board,” he said. Many board searches start with existing board members tapping their networks before engaging search firms.

Know Who Your Profile Should Be Targeting. Board members should tailor their LinkedIn presence to the right audience. “You’re really targeting the chairman of the nominating governance committee,” Purcell explained. This individual plays a central role in identifying and recommending director candidates, making it essential that a board member’s profile clearly communicates the value they bring to the table.

“You need to have your materials well thought through,” says Purcell. Going through the process of doing that for LinkedIn, building out your bio, can be a helpful part of the preparation process – helping to ensure that you are ready for a constructive dialogue when approached by a board recruiting a new director.

For more, check out [Want A Board Seat? Get A Great LinkedIn Profile](#) .