

LinkedIn Best Practices & Tips for Physicians

Overview of LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional social network. Healthcare professionals use this platform to connect with past and current colleagues, LinkedIn influencers and other experts in medicine. In addition, healthcare professionals may use this platform to amplify innovative research and industry news relative to their work.

On this platform, experts can:

- Build a professional identity online while establishing leadership and authority by leveraging the platform's publishing tools such as professional profiles, posts and LinkedIn blog posts.
- Connect with colleagues and expand their professional network while discovering new professional opportunities and ventures.
- Engage their network around similar topics of interest.

Below we have our best practices and tips for physicians broken into three pieces: ***Build, Connect, and Engage***



Build Your Profile



Build Your Profile

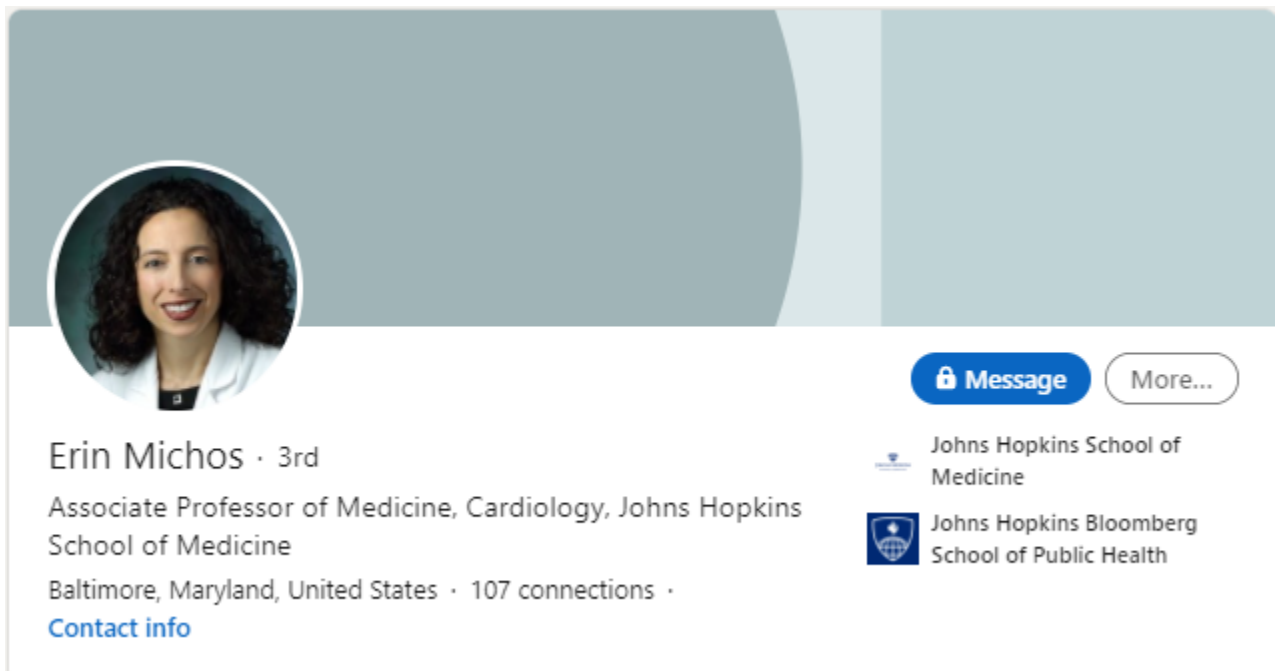


Figure 1: (LinkedIn, Dr. Erin Michos)

As the point of entry for your audience, a complete LinkedIn profile can introduce you, your experience and expertise. Here are some best practices for building an effective profile:

- **Complete a full profile and summary.** Use the experience, skills and education sections of your profile to tell your professional story and showcase your career milestones. Here are step-by-step instructions on how to do this: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/5>
- **Add a profile picture.** According to LinkedIn, users with profile photos received 14x more views on their profile than those without a profile image (See example in Figure 1). We recommend

using your Johns Hopkins Medicine headshot for consistency across the web where your name can appear in search results. Here are some tips on choosing [the best image](https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2014/12/5-tips-for-picking-the-right-linkedin-profile-picture).
<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2014/12/5-tips-for-picking-the-right-linkedin-profile-picture>

- **Write a good headline.** The headline is shown directly below your name and can help you stand out among other professionals in your field. With this headline, you have the opportunity to list your job title, or, you can get creative with it and use it as an opportunity to speak directly to your network. You might consider including key terms that are relevant to your specialty or practice. *See the example in Figure 1.* Here are a few ideas to help you get creative:
<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2015/01/5-ways-to-make-your-linkedin-headline-stand-out>
- **Additions to your featured section:** Add additional certifications, work samples, and published articles to the featured section on your profile. Under this section of your profile, please take the opportunity to showcase your projects, publications or any video features. This will help further enhance your profile while expanding on your field of expertise. Here are step-by-step instructions on how to do this:
<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/117363/featured-section-on-your-profile-faqs?>
- **Customize your profile URL.** When you customize your profile URL, you'll increase the chances that you will appear in search results, and it will make it easier for people to find you. Here are step-by-step instructions on how to do this:
<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/87>

Connect With Your Community



With LinkedIn, it's important to have quality connections in your network. Here are a few ways to correctly build a professional network of colleagues and potential patients.

- **Personalize your invitations to connect.** Typically, when you request to connect with someone, LinkedIn will generate a generic message. It is always best to edit this message to briefly explain why you want to connect with that person.
- **Include your LinkedIn URL in your email signature.** Adding the URL in the signature of your email will help your email contacts find you on LinkedIn.
- **Join LinkedIn Groups and Participate.** Find and join professional groups related to your professional healthcare interest. Once you've developed relationships with people in groups, you can send them an invitation to connect. Be sure to mention the group when you send your LinkedIn invitation.
- **Make connecting a part of your routine.** Whether at networking events or sharing medical research at speaking engagements, you should consider connecting with those in the room on LinkedIn. Remember, anyone you come in contact with in your professional career can make a valuable addition to your network.
- **Leverage 1st degree connections to meet 2nd and 3rd-degree connections.** People who are connected to your 1st-degree connections are considered your second-degree connections. People who are connected to your 2nd-degree connections are your 3rd-degree connections. If you're looking to connect with someone who is a 2nd or 3rd degree connection, try reaching out to your 1st degree connection for an introduction. You'll see a 2nd and 3rd-degree icons next to their name in search results and on their profile. Read a full description here: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/topics/6096/6108/110>
- **You should be responsive to people when they reach out to you, but use appropriate discretion.** Naturally the more you become active on social media, you'll increase organic exposure and opportunities to connect with others. We encourage you to engage with those who reach out to you, but with the appropriate discretion. For example, when connecting with existing patients, it is up to your discretion in whether you would like to add them to your LinkedIn network. If you do add them, you should not identify them as your patient at all as it could be a violation of [HIPPA](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

- Below are our recommendations on frequently asked questions when engaging existing or potential patients in social media:
 - **What should I do if I receive a specific health related question via social?** While general/common questions are ok to answer, you should never give specific medical advice via social channels. Here is an example of a specific medical question:
 - **Patient:** *"Hi Dr. XXXX, I have a 2.8 cm pancreatic cyst. Pet scans have cost so much even with insurance, but I did get a scan in which the doctor found a white mass on my adrenal glands.*

They came back benign. Could my pancreas be affecting my adrenal area?"

Appropriate Response: *Hi XXXX, thank you for reaching out to me. I am sorry to hear about what you're going through. Unfortunately, because each person's medical situation is different, I am unable to provide treatment recommendations or second opinions via this form of communication.*

- **How can I promote our services on LinkedIn within FTC guidelines?** As a Johns Hopkins Medicine expert, potential patients and consumers trust your recommendations, making you somewhat of an influencer for the brand. That said, it's important that you disclose that you are a medical expert at Johns Hopkins Medicine when appropriate. Here are the guidelines for expert and employee endorsers. <http://bit.ly/2kFCryX>

Need help managing your connections? Visit LinkedIn's help page here: <http://bit.ly/2fEOpXI>

Engage and Share Your Content



On your LinkedIn homepage, you will see updates daily from members of your network. Members will have typically used this to catch up on industry news and to share professional updates and content. Below are some tips on how you can use LinkedIn's publishing features:

- **Post and share relative content.** The key to building a LinkedIn presence is to consistently post good, high-quality content of your own and from trusted sources. LinkedIn recommends 20 posts per month, so about 1 post per weekday. [Here](#) are a few tips on how to share good status updates and content.
- **Avoid tools that automatically share posts from other platforms.** LinkedIn isn't a place where you want to saturate your colleagues' timeline with your posts. Connections are critical and you don't want to end up hidden from their feeds.
- **Publish long-form posts.** LinkedIn welcomes professional insights from its members and has created a publishing platform that allows you to publish long-form posts about your expertise

and interest. Long-form posts on LinkedIn are similar to personal blog but are published through their platform. Explore LinkedIn's publishing platform to establish thought leadership in your field.

Want to know more about long-form publishing? Visit LinkedIn's overview here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/47538>

Additional Resources

- **[LinkedIn for Beginners](#)** – Published by LinkedIn
- **[LinkedIn Knowledgebase](#)** – Published by LinkedIn
- **[Educational Webinars for LinkedIn](#)** – Published by LinkedIn
- **[LinkedIn Best Practices Guide](#)** – Published by MOZ
- **[LinkedIn Essentials Marketing Guide](#)** – Published by Social Media Examiner
- **[Johns Hopkins Medicine Social Media](#)** – Internal Resource for Social Requests
- **[JHM Social Media Guidelines](#)** - *(This is not an official policy, rather a helpful guide.)*