



How to Give and Get Outstanding LinkedIn Recommendations

LinkedIn's *Recommendations* feature is a great way to make your brand - and others' - shine online.

You can write a testimonial for a fellow contact by using the "Recommend This Person" link on the upper right of individual profile pages. Once they "accept" it, the testimonial will be visible to anyone who visits their page – including recruiters, who are among the top users of this site. Don't wait for people to ask for your recommendation – pay it forward!

You can also ask others to write testimonials for you. Here are tips to be successful at both.

When Giving a Recommendation:

- 1. Be concrete.** Which recommendation is better: "Keith Ferrazzi is a great consultant," or "Keith Ferrazzi's expert coaching on how to improve my networking strategy led to a 30 percent jump in revenue over six months"? Be as specific as you can, focusing on results whenever possible.
- 2. Pay homage to their professional brand.** Before you write a testimonial, scrutinize your contact's profile and any other online presence carefully. Look for clues to the brand and value propositions they're already trying to communicate, and mirror them in your testimonial. Of course, make sure your testimonial speaks genuinely and specifically to the experience you've had. You're not looking to make stuff up or duplicate their marketing copy; you're looking for overlap between what they want to communicate and your own experience with the person's work.
- 3. Ask for direction.** If you've looked carefully at their profile and can't figure out what kind of recommendation to give, ask them! Explain that you're planning to write them a recommendation. You already have some ideas in mind, but you'd like to know what skills or knowledge they're most interested in sharing. Once you speak to them, just make sure you follow through and write the recommendation. Period.
- 4. Go pro by using an editor.** There's nothing worse than getting a LinkedIn recommendation full of grammatical errors and typos – posting it would make *you* look bad, and so it puts you in the awkward position of having to turn down a kind offer. After writing a recommendation, give it to an eagle-eyed wordsmith for proofing. You can always offer to give them a LinkedIn recommendation in return!

To Get a Great Recommendation:

1. You can ask via phone or email, within the LinkedIn system or outside of it. Use whichever communication method feels most natural.
2. Here's a suggested script for your ask – you can use this as a starting point and adapt it as you see fit:

I'm getting up to speed with LinkedIn and am looking to add recommendations to my profile. Would you be willing to write one for me about our work together on [project]? It would mean a lot to me to have your testimonial. And of course, I'd be glad to write one for you as well!

3. Sometimes people are willing to put their name to a testimonial, but don't have the time or the expertise to write a good one. If you suspect that's the case, consider offering to write it for them. Here's an example:

I know you're a very busy person. If it would help, I'd be glad to write a couple of sample recommendations of what I'd LOVE to hear from you. You can rewrite or adapt them however you'd like – and tell me honestly if you think I've gone overboard! Thanks so much, and either way, let me know!

4. Don't stress if people don't respond – the most important thing is that you ask. Remember, lack of a response doesn't necessarily mean that they don't value your work! They may be too busy, but don't be afraid to follow up if you haven't heard back in a few weeks. And if they don't respond, find someone else to ask!