

Working Out Loud Circle Guide

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Week 6: Improve your visibility

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For more information, including a customizable version of the Circle Guides for your organization, contact john.stepper@workingoutloud.com.

What to expect this week

It's hard for anyone to discover you and your work when you're invisible. This week, to improve your chances of making connections, you'll take a step towards improving your online presence. Then you'll use your improved presence to deepen a relationship.

Suggested Agenda for Week 6	
1. Check-in	10 mins
2. Exercise: Who are you?	10
3. Exercise: Update your main online profile	20
4. Exercise: A better way to connect	15
5. Voice your intention	5

1. Check-in (10 minutes)

What did you do since the last meeting? Did you "work your list," reviewing your relationship list and making some kind of contribution?

If so, share what you did and how you did it. If you didn't do much, there's no need to feel bad or make excuses. Instead, try to see what you might do differently next time (e.g., schedule 15 minutes to "work your list" before the next meeting).

2. Exercise: Who are you? (10 minutes)

One of the additional exercises from Week 3 was a "vanity search" - searching for yourself on the Internet and intranet. Improving your visibility isn't about promoting yourself or trying to be popular. It's about making it easier to come into contact with people related to your work, goals, and interests.



Search for yourself now. Are you and your work easy to find? List all of your profiles that you find: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, your intranet at work, and anywhere else where your name is visible and there's a section that you can customize. Share your results in your Circle, and show each other your "main" profile. (For me, that would be LinkedIn and Twitter - one long and one short.) This will help you get ideas that you can use in the next exercise.

3. Exercise: Update your main online profile (20 minutes)

Almost everyone I know is unhappy with their online profiles, yet few of us ever manage to take the time to work on them. Here's a chance for you to improve yours.

The point of this exercise isn't that you create the perfect profile. It's that you take a step towards creating a *better* profile. Any improvement you make today will be a good investment, and something you can build on. There are many, many articles on creating a good profile. (You can find links to a few at the end of this guide.) They all recommend the same three things:

1. A photo of you smiling and looking at the camera
2. A headline (a short description of who you are)
3. A summary that fits into a few sentences.



Update your main profile now. Whether it's adding one of the elements above, or refining what you already have in place, make at least one change. Once you've updated your profile, show it to the other members of your Circle and ask for their feedback. Note that updating your intranet profile is a particularly easy and useful thing to do.

Below are three of my own profiles that you can use as examples. I'm not suggesting they're perfect - or that there even is such a thing - only that they have the three basic elements. With those in place, I can continue to refine them over time as my work (and my taste) evolves.

PROFILE EXAMPLES

1. LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/johnstepper](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnstepper)
2. Twitter: twitter.com/johnstepper
3. About page: [workingoutloud.com/about](https://www.workingoutloud.com/about)

4. Exercise: A better way to connect (15 minutes)

Now that you have improved your profile, you can be more confident in making connections with it. That's another opportunity to practice empathy.

Imagine, for example, you receive a LinkedIn connection request from someone and it's the default, impersonal message provided by LinkedIn: *I'd like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn.* How would you feel? If you're like me, you might think, "Gee, he couldn't even spend thirty seconds to send a personal message!"

You should *always* personalize your request. But be careful. LinkedIn will often present a "Connect" button that automatically sends a default message without giving you a chance to personalize it. (This is especially true in the current mobile app.) The key is to look at the person's profile first and hit the Connect button there. Here are some of the instructions from the LinkedIn invitation process along with a screenshot.¹ Notice how LinkedIn also suggests including a personal note.

"When inviting members to connect, you can add a personalized message to the recipient to introduce yourself or add context to your relationship."

To add a message to an invitation:

1. Visit the member's profile page and click *Connect*.
2. Select the applicable option to indicate how you know this person.
3. Add your message in the text field."

You can customize this invitation



LinkedIn members are more likely to accept invitations that include a personal note.


Add a note

Send now



Now pick someone in your network that you've interacted with already and send him or her a personal request. Remember to include Appreciation, Context, and Value as described in the Week 4 exercise, "Earn someone else's attention."

¹ "Personalizing invitations to connect" - [linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/46662/personalizing-invitations-to-connect](https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/46662/personalizing-invitations-to-connect)

 If you're still unsure or uncomfortable with this exercise, send a connection request to other members of your Circle. Or search for "John Stepper" on LinkedIn and hit the Connect button on my profile from your desktop browser. If you mention that you're in a Circle and let me know what has been helpful or what could be improved, you'll "earn my attention" and I will gladly accept your request. (If you accidentally send me a default message, don't worry. Just send me an email at john.stepper@workingoutloud.com with the message you would have included in your LinkedIn request.)

5. Voice your intention (5 minutes)

1. Schedule the next meeting.
2. Ask yourself: "What will I do before the next meeting?"

Take a few minutes now to reflect on what you intend to do before the next Circle meeting. If you didn't finish all the exercises today, then consider finishing them in the coming week. If you want to do more, take a look at the additional exercise below. At a minimum, remember to "work your list" before the next meeting. Every time you review your relationship list and make one or more contributions, it further reinforces and expands your practice.

 *Before the next meeting, I will:*

FINAL THOUGHT

"There are many benefits to using social platforms, whether it's your social intranet at work or Twitter, LinkedIn, and the many other public platforms. Sharing your work there amplifies who you are and what you do, extends your reach, and expands your set of contributions and how you can offer them.

But using social platforms is not the point of Working Out Loud. Rather, using the tools is in service of much more important things: deeper relationships and feelings of self-efficacy, even happiness.

- workingoutloud.com/blog/working-out-loud-over-email-or-coffee

If you need to do less...

If you ever feel like you're overwhelmed or you're falling behind in your Circle, there are always ways to simplify the exercises. This week for example, even if you didn't edit your profile, you could do the following things in a few minutes during your meeting:

- Search for your online presence
- Look at your Circle member's profiles
- Connect with someone in your Circle (or see how they do it).

These are simple, fear-free steps that can still help you make progress. Another way to do less while still making progress is to keep making small contributions - recognition, attention, gratitude. Offering one of these even once this week will reinforce your developing habits and mindset.

If you want to do more...

Easy: Something you can do in less than 5 minutes

Search your intranet, LinkedIn, or Facebook for groups relevant to your goal and join one. There are also WOL Groups on both LinkedIn and Facebook. Joining one can show you how easy it is to connect with people around the world who have something in common.

WOL Community on Facebook: facebook.com/groups/workingoutloud/

WOL Community on LinkedIn: linkedin.com/groups/4937010

More challenging: Something you can do in less than 15 minutes

Many people think they need to do something wildly different to find fulfillment and meaning at work, and the sheer prospect of such a change can be paralyzing. But you can “start where you are.” You can think of your current role, whatever it is, as a platform for you for learning and for developing new habits (including Working Out Loud).

A term for this is “job crafting,” and it's based on research by Dr. Amy Wrzesniewski, a professor of Organizational Behavior at the Yale School of Management. She found that people in a wide range of jobs - from highly prescribed jobs like hospital maintenance to nurses and software engineers - would change how they perform and how they feel about work by making small adjustments to their tasks, relationships, and perceptions at work.

Watch Dr. Wrzesniewski's talk or read one of the articles below. Then think about how Working Out Loud can help you craft your own job.

Video: “Job crafting and creating meaning in your work”

rework.withgoogle.com/blog/job-crafting-and-creating-meaning-in-your-work/

“Managing Yourself: Turn the Job You Have into the Job You Want”

hbr.org/2010/06/managing-yourself-turn-the-job-you-have-into-the-job-you-want

“When the employee survey results aren't good”

workingoutloud.com/blog/when-the-employee-survey-results-arent-good

To read, listen to, or watch

“The ultimate vanity search”

workingoutloud.com/blog/the-ultimate-vanity-search

“Victim or visible?”

workingoutloud.com/blog/victim-or-visible

“What makes a good profile in LinkedIn?”²

www.quora.com/What-makes-a-good-profile-in-LinkedIn

“3 stunningly good LinkedIn profile summaries”

linkedinights.com/3-stunningly-good-linkedin-profile-summaries/

“17 ways to make your LinkedIn profile irresistible to employers”

businessinsider.com/make-your-linkedin-profile-irresistible-2013-10

“Are you making these 7 mistakes with your About page?”

copyblogger.com/how-to-write-an-about-page/

Working Out Loud: For a Better Career and Life

Chapter 7 - Making You and Your Work Visible

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: I'm still not comfortable being visible. Do I really need a profile?

You don't need to do anything you're not comfortable doing. You can establish meaningful connections in person and via email. The other online tools simply increase your odds of making relevant connections.

It might help to frame the exercise as you taking *control* of your online presence. Imagine, for example, that someone meets you at a meeting or event and then searches for you to find your contact information or more about you. Would you rather leave it to chance as to what random online material they find, or proactively shape those results so something positive and useful appears? If you're still unsure, shrink the change and think of your profile as just an online version of your business card. Even something as simple as that can be helpful.

Q: What if I don't want to use LinkedIn? (And what's Xing?)

You don't need use either of them if you don't want to, but they do have a value. (Xing is similar to LinkedIn and is particularly popular in Germany.) There's a range of reasons why having a profile on LinkedIn or Xing is particularly easy and useful:

- They're seen as “professional” sites
- They follow a standard format
- They're widely used
- They're fairly static

In short, creating such a profile is a “safe” thing to do. It doesn't require much creativity or effort, and it's increasingly expected that you will have some kind of online business profile. Another good option is setting up your profile on your corporate intranet or enterprise social network. That's also safe and easy. If you have the chance to set up a profile at work, you should do it, following the same steps as in the exercise above.

² There were 69 answers to this question posted in this one discussion forum site alone.