



R e a c h

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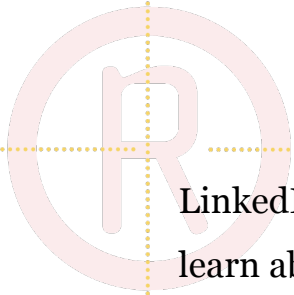
## How to Craft the Perfect LinkedIn About

By William Arruda, CEO, Reach Personal Branding - [www.williamarruda.com](http://www.williamarruda.com)



### First Impressions Last

First impressions have gone digital: people are learning about you online before they ever shake your hand. As soon as they know they're going to meet you or have a video conference with you, they'll start their online research. That means your LinkedIn About (formerly called Summary) is quickly becoming your most important tool for advancing your career and marketing your skills.



LinkedIn is often the starting point for research when someone wants to learn about you in a professional capacity. And even if they begin their researching with Google, they'll likely end up at your LinkedIn profile. Why? Because your profile will show up at the top of your results – usually in one of the top three spots. We know from a Chitika study that the top three results from a Google search get nearly two-thirds of all the clicks.

With nearly a billion members, LinkedIn is the most important social media tool you have for expressing your personal brand. Here's how my LinkedIn profile shows up in the top spot in a Google search.

About 458,000 results (0.23 seconds)

### [William Arruda | LinkedIn](#)

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/williamarruda>

Greater New York City Area - Personal Branding Pioneer. Motivational Speaker. Eternal Optimist.

View **William Arruda's** professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network, helping professionals like **William Arruda** discover ...

### [William Arruda - Forbes](#)

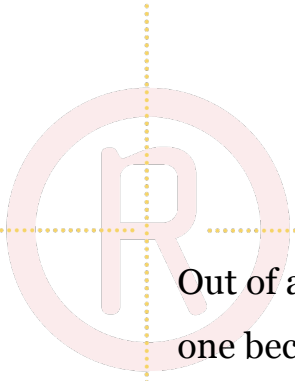
[www.forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/williamarruda/) ▾ Forbes ▾

**William Arruda's** stories. I write about personal branding.

### [William Arruda « Reach Personal Branding – William Arruda](#)

[www.reachpersonalbranding.com/about/william-arruda/](http://www.reachpersonalbranding.com/about/william-arruda/) ▾

Ask **William Arruda** about personal branding and you'll get a mile-wide grin, crackling energy, and a lively discussion of how personal branding can make every ...



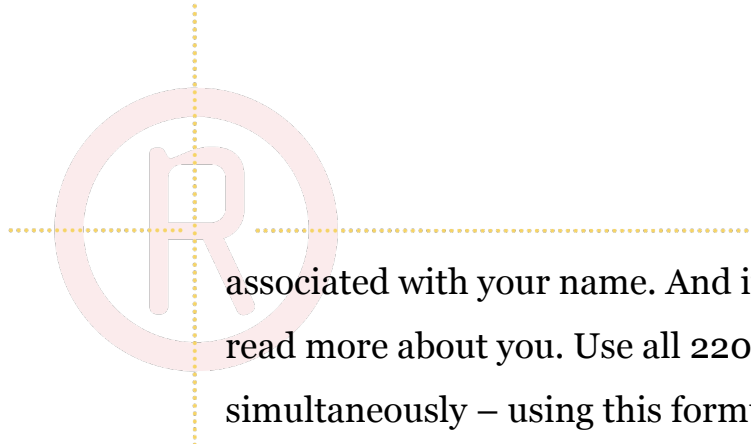
Out of all the elements in your profile, your About is the most important one because it's the place you tell your story; but don't forget your headshot and headline. They are viewed before your About. If you don't have them right, no one will even scroll down to your About to read it.

### **Your Headshot - Get Ready for Your Close-up**

The web is an impersonal place. If you want to connect with people on an emotional level, you need to make it personal. Your headshot can help with this. But all headshots are not created equal. Make sure yours is on-brand and of high quality. Invest in a headshot taken by a professional. Don't use a photo your mother took of you at last year's family beach outing. Don't use a selfie. And don't use a picture you cropped with your arm around someone! Make sure you're facing forward. When you're looking off-screen, it sends a subtle message that you don't believe your own content. Now that LinkedIn uses your photo to show how you're connected to others and those you endorse, your headshot is visible well beyond your own profile.

### **Your Headline - Make It Grab the Reader**

Don't make the mistake many people do by using your current job title as your headline (that's the default, if you don't customize it). If you do, you're making yourself a commodity – interchangeable with anyone else who shares that job title. Instead, your headline needs to let people know what you do. It also needs to feature the keywords you want



associated with your name. And it should entice people to want to read more about you. Use all 220 characters to solve these three goals simultaneously – using this formula:

**Job title + Keywords + Zing!**

O.K. now, back to your About!

Many people leave the About blank and merely list their experience. That's like trying to build a website without a home page. The About receives the most prominent position on the screen in LinkedIn, so it's the ultimate place to tell your story and get people interested in knowing you. To make the most of this opportunity, you must be able to express your personal brand in 3,000 characters and glorious 3D, creating a dazzling picture of who you are and what makes you great.

For more than a decade, I've helped executives at many of the world's top global corporations uncover their personal brands and build stellar LinkedIn Abouts. My approach is part of a comprehensive day long workshop, but I've simplified the process into 5 basic steps to get you started.





## Step 1: Know your audience



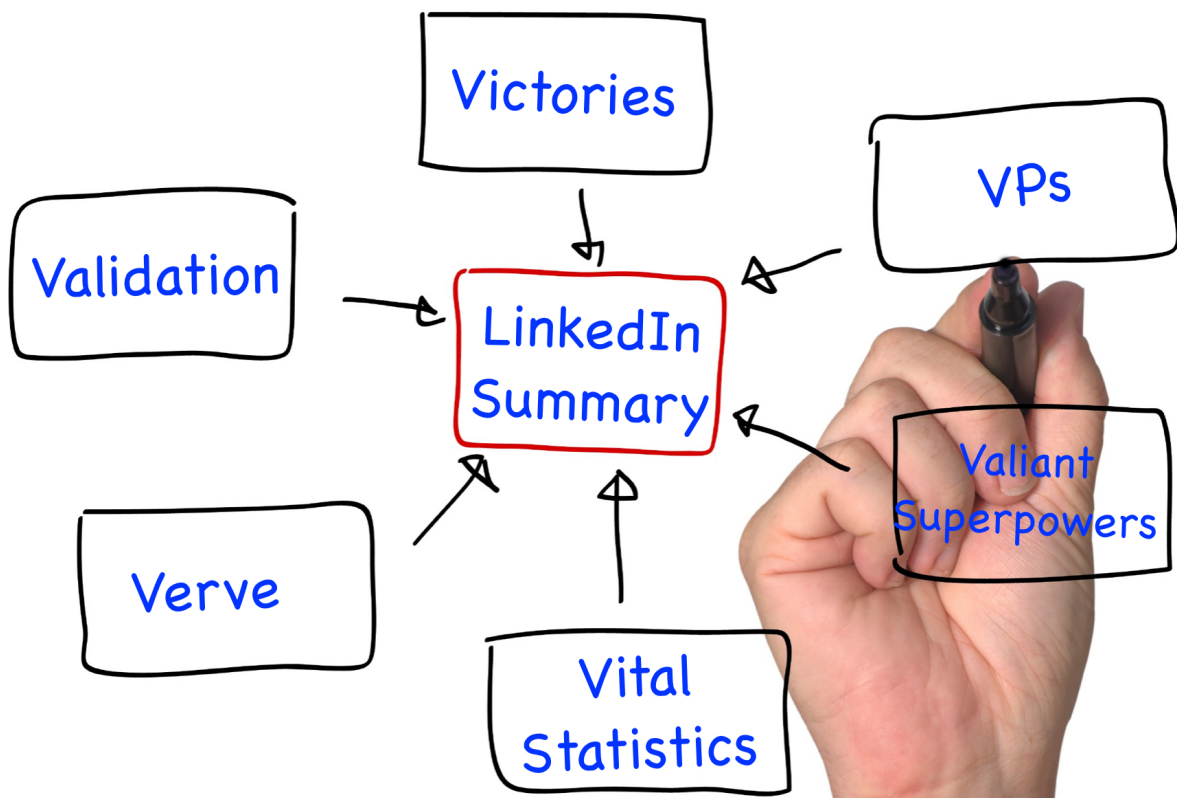
Write your profile specifically for the decision makers you would like to impress and influence. Know who they are (by name, industry, job function, job title, etc.) and don't start writing your About until you have the answers to these critical questions:

- What do you want them to know about you?
- What do you want them to do after reading your profile?
- How do you want them to feel?

When you're clear about your audience, it's time to pull together the content.

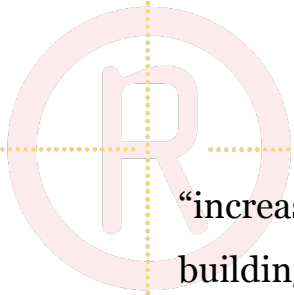
## Step 2: Prepare the raw content

You may feel overwhelmed by the different options for presenting your info. I recommend arranging your raw content into the following six buckets:



Don't worry too much about what content makes it into which bucket. Just be sure that when you look at all the buckets, they include those things you want others to know about you.

**Victories:** Write a sentence for each of your significant accomplishments in terms of the value you create/created (for example,




“increased revenue with key small businesses through relationship-building and networking; hired, trained and led our company’s first inside sales organization to support revenue growth objectives”).

**VPs (values and passions):** List your operating principles and the things that energize or inspire you (for example, “creativity, diversity, and building win-win relationships” along with “windsurfing, astronomy and UNICEF”).

**Valiant superpowers:** Describe the things you do better than anyone else – the skills that enable you to be a hero for your colleagues (for example, “I can review reams of data to find the million-dollar error; I make team meetings fun and productive, getting everyone involved; I love to listen – not only to what's being said, but to what is not being said. I have been told I am the best listener”).

**Vital statistics:** Provide a few quantifiable facts – interesting figures and things you can count (for example, “I participated in three triathlons on three continents; I saved the company \$3M through the ‘Go Green’ initiative that I created and executed; I have held six different roles in various finance functions, giving me a comprehensive understanding of the field”).

**Verve:** Capture the quirky things that make you YOU and differentiate you from your peers (for example, “Being a night owl, I get a lot of my



best writing done in the late evening; I like to use my humor to defuse tense situations and keep the team focused on results; I love TV commercials and start every team meeting with one of my favorites to get the creative energy flowing”).

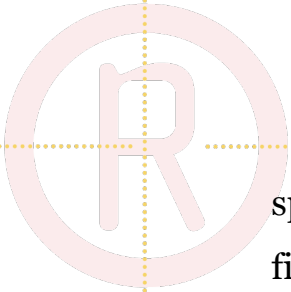
**Validation:** This could include quotes from others and encompasses all the awards and accolades bestowed upon you (for example, “graduated Suma Cum Laude from Washington University; was named one of the top ten social media executives to watch by Advertising Age”).

Make sure you have content in all six buckets because a truly compelling About will paint a 3D picture of you. Remember, your About is YOU when you aren’t there, so you want your personality to shine through.

### **Step 3: Craft your About**

Before you put pen to paper (or more likely, finger to keyboard), choose between first- and third-person formats. Either is acceptable; it’s a personal choice. But let me make a pitch for the first-person (really... go this route!). Here’s why I think it is more powerful:

- Everyone knows you wrote your own LinkedIn About – so it seems a little weird to be writing about yourself in the third-person. There are times you will need a third-person bio, like for company proposals or for your introduction when you are



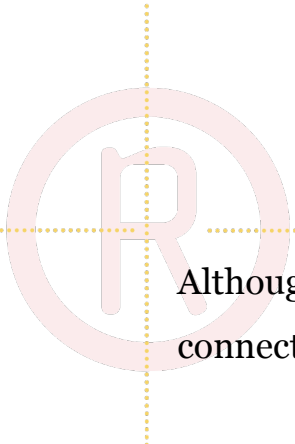
speaking at a professional association meeting. For LinkedIn, first-person seems a bit more authentic and transparent.

- The first-person gives you the opportunity to engage in a conversation with the reader.
- It's easier to build an emotional connect when you are speaking in the first-person.



O.K. now the challenge with the first-person.

Those who are uncomfortable bragging often water down their accomplishments or leave out valuable credentials.



Although it's easier to brag in the third-person, it does less to connect deeply with the reader than a first-person voice.

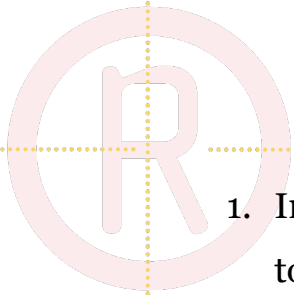
Now that you have chosen which pronoun is right for you (I hope you chose first-person!), kick off your About with a field goal. There was a time where the purpose of your first sentence was to tell people what you do, but today, that's not original enough. To get the viewer to want to know more and read on, you need to be truly interesting or even provocative. Your first line could be a question, statement or even a few words with punctuation, like: High-Energy. Results-Driven. Focused.

Next, let the story unfold by weaving elements from the various buckets above. This is a writing exercise, so it's OK to go through several drafts. Don't give yourself a time limit, just keep adding to your draft, editing and refining as you go.

Then, close with what you want them to do or where they can go to learn more about you or connect with you.

While you're writing, save some of your 3,000 characters for two additional sections that are important to being found. I call this planned serendipity. You don't know who may be looking for you, but you need to make it as easy as possible for them to find you.





1. Include a section called Specialties. This gives you the opportunity to add those all-important keywords you want to be associated with one more time.
2. Include a section called AKA/Common Misspellings so people can find you with a Google search even if they don't know how to spell your name/nickname or weren't aware that you were married or divorced and changed your name. Here's what Sean Combs' (a man with many names!) might look like:

AKA/Common Misspellings: Sean Jean Combs, Puff Daddy, Diddy, P. Diddy, Sean John

Here's what the end of my About looks like:

AKA/Common misspellings: Bill Arruda, Will Arruda, William Aruda

Specialties: Personal branding, executive branding, online branding, internal branding, social media, LinkedIn. Public speaking, communications skills, personal brand, talent development, leadership development

Bravo! You've written your LinkedIn About, but how do you know if it's a Yay or a Yawn? I'm a firm believer in reality checks. It's time to critique your work.

#### **Step 4: Test it two ways**

To get the most out of your About, perform these two tests.

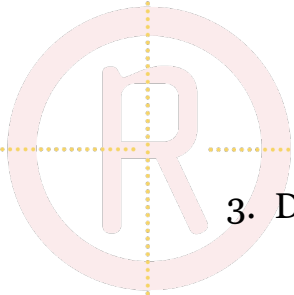
## Test it Two Ways



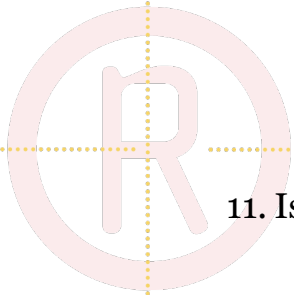
### **Test I: The Question Test**

Start by reading your LinkedIn About as if you were reading it for the first time, through the eyes of your audience. And read slowly, paying attention to every word you wrote. Avoid the tendency to skim. Then, for each of the following questions, give yourself a rating from 1 to 3, where 1 is 'very little' and 3 is 'completely'. Keep track of your ratings so you can calculate a total score (between 13 and 39) at the end.

1. Does the opening sentence, phrase or heading make you want to read more?
2. Is it authentic - consistent with who you really are?



3. Does it differentiate you from your peers or competitors?
4. Is it relevant, addressing the needs of the people you are trying to attract (decision-makers and influencers)?
5. Is it compelling? Does it provide interesting facts and statements that make the reader want to get to know you?
6. Does it contain at least 20 - 30% personal information (your interests, passions, values, philanthropic interests, point of view and life experiences)?
7. Does it explain how you add value, telling the reader what happens when you do what you do?
8. Does the writing style and content you included convey your personality?
9. Is it formatted beautifully? Did you create enough white space to break up the paragraphs? Did you write powerful headlines for different content blocks?
10. Does it include external validation (things like “People say I’m...” or a favorite quote or “The Association of Finance Executives awarded me...”)?



11. Is it grammatically correct and perfectly proofed?

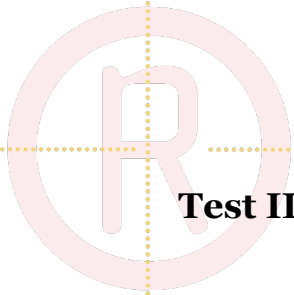
12. Does it include all the keywords for which you want to be known multiple times? (This is vital for being found in online searches.)

13. Did you get the reader to want to learn more or take action?

Now, total your score.

If you scored...	
between 30 and 39	Bravo! Your About will attract the attention of those who need to know you.
between 20 and 29	It's a great start, but you need to spruce up your About. Refine it and test it again.
19 or below	Perhaps you want to start again with a new draft. Don't be discouraged. It takes time to create the perfect About.

Once you refine your About or create a new draft and finalize it, you're still not quite ready for prime time. Apply one final test before uploading it to your profile.



## Test II: The Audience Test

Identify three people who would be open to helping and will provide you with honest feedback:

1. A member of your target audience
2. A mentor, coach or trusted colleague who wants you to succeed;  
and
3. A friend or family member who knows you well.

Ask them:

- Is it an accurate representation of who I am and how I create value?
- Does it make you want to learn more?
- Is there anything missing?
- What one change would you make to improve it?

Once you get their feedback and make your final refinements, upload your About to your profile.

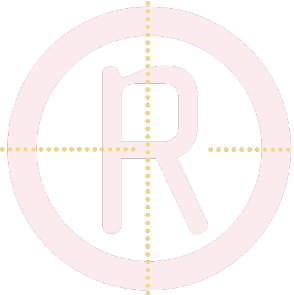
## Step 5: Bring your brand to life



Now that you have the perfect text, it's time to augment your prose with pictures. After you upload your About to LinkedIn, supplement it with a variety of multimedia. LinkedIn allows you to integrate videos, pictures and documents into a section called Featured, making it a rich, vibrant way of telling your story while providing evidence to bolster your claims. This will change how your profile looks and provide readers with opportunities to get to know you better.

LinkedIn lets you build a portfolio, so use it that way. Create a video bio or thought-leadership videos to embed in the section called Featured. And incorporate white papers, images and other media to distinguish your profile from others. Use all the complimentary elements LinkedIn offers to tell a compelling story – your story.





## About William Arruda



Dubbed the Personal Branding Guru by Entrepreneur, William Arruda is a motivational speaker, branding consultant and author of Digital YOU, Ditch. Dare. Do! and Career Distinction. He has been credited with turning

the concept of personal branding into a global industry. Connect with him: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/williamarruda>

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