

Writing a Bio-Eight Steps to Success

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A short professional bio has become increasingly important as most of us cannot be bothered to read lengthy documents about anybody. A bio is useful for a host of reasons such as applying for a job, publishing an article or general networking etc. It's basically a great vehicle for quickly communicating who you are and what you do.

You are likely to have a bio somewhere on the Internet already. If you are on LinkedIn, it will be your summary. If you are on Twitter, it will be your... Bio! These sites allow for different have different lengths, with Twitter allowing for a 140 character bio.

As writing a professional bio is one of the most important things you can do for your career- follow these simple steps to do your personal brand proud.

1. Identify your purpose

Why are you writing this bio? Who will read it? You need to take some time to think about your readers and what you want them to think about you. People write anything from professional bios for potential employers or a comedy bio full of in-jokes for your friends. Keep your audience in mind when creating your bio.

2. Third person perspective

Your bio should sound as though it were objectively written, although it is obviously anything but. If you look at any book cover, the bio will be in the narrative mode even though the author has probably written it themselves. So instead of writing "I have lived in Boston and I work as a librarian", try "Ethel has lived in Boston and is a librarian at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy".

3. Micro, Short and Long

You will need a micro, a short and a longer bio for different purposes. You will find that your bio will be requested in different lengths and therefore it's advisable to keep three or even more versions. The micro bio is basically a sentence that you can use as your elevator pitch and on your Twitter profile. The short one should be one paragraph long and cover all the need to knows. The longer one adds the nice to knows and should sum you up completely. As a rule of thumb, the shorter one should be roughly a hundred words; the long one could be up to one page.

4. Start with your name

You will want to put your name in the first sentence of your bio so the reader catches on and realizes what they are reading. Just like when you are introduced to somebody, you will start with your name and then move on to pleasantries.

5. State your business

Just like a resume, you want to drop your occupation and accomplishments in there early. The reader needs to be hooked and enticed to keep reading. An example would be to write that you are a “clinical pharmacist practicing in a 500 bed teaching hospital ” and you have given over 2 dozen in-services” in your current position – music to a directors ear.

6. Throw in some personality

Add some flavor to your bio by including something unexpected. This can be a bit of humor or just curious information that you think people will be interested in, such as you speak three languages– already a topic for conversation. A little witty twist at the end can tell a lot about your personality.

7. Contact details

End your bio with your contact details or hyperlink the content to ways of contacting you like your email or your LinkedIn profile.

8. Read and rewrite

Get your friends to proof your bio before you publish it anywhere. Remember that your bio is a living document and you should review it on a monthly basis. As it’s fairly short it won’t take you too long to make changes that can be quite important to the reader.