



Working Out Loud Circle Guide

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Week 6: Improve your visibility

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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 that presence to make new connections.

Suggested agenda

Thing to do	Approx. time
1. Check-in	10 mins
2. Exercise: Who are you?	10
3. Exercise: Update your online presence	20
4. Exercise: "Can we be friends?"	15
5. Checkout for Week 6	5

Check-in (10 minutes)

Share how you're feeling about your goal and the progress you're making towards it. It's likely that many of you are having similar experiences and reactions, and sharing them can be helpful.

Exercise: Who are you? (10 minutes)

One of the additional exercises from Week 3 was a "vanity search" - searching for yourself on the Internet. If you didn't do it yet, try it now. Are your work and goals easy to find? Improving your visibility isn't about promoting yourself or trying to be popular. It's about making it easier to build relationships with other people related to your work, goals, and interests.

For now, list all the profiles that exist: LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, your intranet at work, and anywhere else where your name is visible and there's a section 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 you can use in the next exercise.

Exercise: Update your online presence (20 minutes)

Almost everyone I know is unhappy with their online profiles, yet few of us ever manage to take the time to improve them. Now's your chance.

Update your main profile now. Don't worry about it being perfect. The key is taking any step towards improving it. Here are the top 3 things to check that you have:

- 1. A photo of you smiling and looking at the camera
- 2. A headline (a short description of who you are)
- 3. A summary

You can find great examples in ["3 Stunningly Good LinkedIn Profile Summaries,"](#) and more tips in ["17 New Ways To Make Your LinkedIn Profile Irresistible To Employers"](#) or ["Are You Making These 7 Mistakes with Your About Page?"](#) (Links are at the end of this guide.)

Once you've updated your profile, share a link to it with members of your Circle and ask for their feedback.

Exercise: “Can we be friends?” (15 minutes)

Now that you have improved your profile, you're more likely to make connections there, and that's another opportunity to practice empathy.

Imagine 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. The key is to look at the person's profile first and hit the Connect button there. Here are the instructions from LinkedIn (link is at the end of this guide):

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.*

If the recipient replies to your message, it will appear in your LinkedIn inbox.

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 from the exercise in Week 4, “Earn someone's attention.” You can draft your message here.

If you're still unsure, send a connection request to other members of your Circle. Or connect with me. Just search for “John Stepper” on LinkedIn and hit the Connect button on my profile.

You can select “Friend” when prompted for how we know each other. Then mention you’re in a Circle, and let me know what has been helpful or what could be improved. That’s “earning 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.)

Checkout for Week 6 (5 minutes)

1. Schedule the next meeting.
2. Ask: “What will you do this week?”

Write down what you will do this week, and you will be even more likely to do it. You’ll increase the chances even further if you write down when and where you will do it.

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, and yet having an online profile certainly does help you make meaningful 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 instead 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 (given the standard, professional nature of the sites) or require much effort after you’ve set it up.

Another great 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.

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).

Those are simple, fear-free steps that can still help you make progress. Another great 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 LinkedIn or Xing for groups relevant to your goal and join one. Or, if you use Facebook, join the [“Working Out Loud” group](#) to see how easy it is to connect with people around the world who have something in common. (The link is at the end of this guide.)

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

The video “Job crafting and creating meaning in your work” can change how you think about what you do for a living (the link is at the end of this guide). It's a talk by Dr. Amy Wrzesniewski, a professor of Organizational Behavior at the Yale School of Management. She describes her research on how our approach to work - even highly prescribed jobs like hospital maintenance - can change how we perform and how we feel.

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 to develop new habits and a new mindset, including Working Out Loud.

To read, listen to, or watch

Online Profiles:

- “3 stunningly good LinkedIn profile summaries” by Andy Foote - Link: linkedinsights.com/3-stunningly-good-linkedin-profile-summaries/
- “17 ways to make your LinkedIn profile irresistible to employers” by Julie Bort - Link: businessinsider.com/make-your-linkedin-profile-irresistible-2013-10
- “Are you making these 7 mistakes with your About page?” by Sonia Simone - Link: copyblogger.com/how-to-write-an-about-page/

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

Places to connect:

- My LinkedIn profile - Link: [linkedin.com/in/johnstepper](https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnstepper)
- WOL Facebook Page - Link: [facebook.com/workingoutloud](https://www.facebook.com/workingoutloud)
- WOL Community on Facebook - Link: [facebook.com/groups/workingoutloud/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/workingoutloud/)

A good way to respond to generic LinkedIn Connection requests

- “3 LinkedIn Email Responses For Invitations to Connect” by Helen Blunden - Link: [linkedin.com/pulse/3-linkedin-email-responses-invitations-connect-helen-blunden](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/3-linkedin-email-responses-invitations-connect-helen-blunden)

“Start where you are”

- “Put your cape on” - Link: [workingoutloud.com/blog//put-your-cape-on](https://www.workingoutloud.com/blog//put-your-cape-on)

If you want to do more... An excellent video on “Job Crafting”

- “Job crafting and creating meaning in your work” by Dr. Amy Wrzesniewski - Link: rework.withgoogle.com/blog/job-crafting-and-creating-meaning-in-your-work/