

Do You Like Me? First Impressions on LinkedIn

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explored first impressions derived from LinkedIn profiles. Two independent factors were manipulated: viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and completing LinkedIn Learning courses. Four LinkedIn profiles were created to evaluate hiring manager's impressions of a job candidate. Participants were randomly presented with one of the four profiles and answered questions about their overall impressions of the candidate and their likelihood to invite the candidate for a job interview. Initial findings suggested that hiring managers provided more positive ratings for applicants who did not complete LinkedIn Learning courses. Further analyses, using only participants with correct manipulation responses, revealed no significant results for viewing a hiring manager's profile, completing LinkedIn Learning, or an interaction between the two on a hiring manager's impression of a job candidate.

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CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For job seekers, the success of standing out in a candidate pool may depend on just 50 milliseconds; the time required to form first impressions online (Lindgaard et al., 2006). First impressions are heavily relied upon in human interactions, including when organizations are making selection decisions. Organizations are utilizing Social Networking Sites (SNS) to gather information about potential employees (Maurer, 2016), forming initial impressions of candidates that may impact the individual's success at finding a job.

LinkedIn, a professional SNS, serves millions of individuals and organizations (LinkedIn, 2022) and is used by organizations as an applicant screening tool (Mauer, 2016). Little investigative research has been conducted to determine whether LinkedIn profile content impacts first impressions and hiring decisions. The present research examines how an individual's LinkedIn behaviors of viewing a potential manager's profile or sharing LinkedIn Learning certifications on one's profile impacts the impressions formed by those who make hiring decisions.

First Impressions

First impressions, initial perceptions of another person (American Psychological Association, 2023), are formed within milliseconds (Willis et al., 2006) and have a lasting effect (American Psychological Association, 2023). First impressions are often formed based on facial features (Willis et al., 2006). People relate first impressions of physical attractiveness to individual characteristics; attractive people are perceived to be smarter (Kanazawa et al., 2004) and more trustworthy (Shinners, 2009) than unattractive

people. One's voice also contributes toward impression formation. Personality information, such as extraversion, trustworthiness, and kindness (Philiphon et al., 2008; McAleer et al., 2014) can be gathered by the sound of a voice.

First impressions can be influenced by factors beyond the control of the person being perceived. Individual human differences impact the type of first impressions formed. People with high levels of social anxiety form less positive first impressions of others (Christensen et al., 2003), and prejudiced people are discriminatory against specific-sounding voices (Fontenele et al., 2023). Additionally, the amount of time exposed to a stimulus also impacts first impressions. The longer one is exposed to someone the more likely their impressions are to be accurate (Carney et al., 2007).

First Impressions and Hiring Decisions

Individuals who make selection decisions rely on first impressions for guidance in hiring the best candidate (Florea et al., 2018). A great deal of importance comes with making hiring decisions for an organization; potential consequences of hiring the wrong person include lost productivity, wasted time, lower morale, disruption for clients, and cost (Pike et al., 2014).

Links between first impressions and hiring decisions have been found, with researchers focusing greatly on job interviews. Components such as handshakes (Bernieri et al., 2011), eye contact (Imada et al., 1977), and dress (Reutzler et al., 2012) impact the interviewer's perception of the job candidate.

First Impressions and Résumés

One of the first opportunities for a job candidate to create a positive impression is through a résumé (Knouse, 1989). A résumé is a tool used by job applicants to convey

job-relevant information to a potential employer (Sterkens et al., 2021). They are important tools that boost the appeal of job seekers (Hornsby et al., 1995). Résumé details, such as paper type, formatting, contact information, spelling errors, and previous experience have an impact on the impressions of those job applicants.

Previous research suggests that résumé appearance and format are weighted as heavily as résumé content by human resource workers (Hornsby et al., 1995). Résumés printed on white paper are preferred over those printed on colored paper (Penrose, 1984), and traditional, formal layouts are more likely to lead to being shortlisted than creative ones (Arnulf et al., 2010). Additionally, one-paged résumés are more likely to lead to an interview than two-paged résumés (Thoms et al., 1999), and résumés with objective statements are more likely to lead to an invitation to interview (Thoms et al., 1999).

Contact information displayed on a résumé also impacts first impressions. Applicants with common first names, like “Susan,” are seen as most likely to be hired, while uncommon first names, such as “Majestic,” were least likely to be hired (Cotton et al., 2008). Additionally, résumés possessing informal email addresses that contain information other than the applicant's name have significantly lower ratings than résumés with formal email addresses (Van toorenborg et al., 2015). The impact that the first name and email address listed on a résumé have on first impressions showcases that information irrelevant to the job impacts employee selection decisions.

Résumé content also produces impressions of the job applicant's personality characteristics. Individuals who present a résumé with spelling errors are viewed to have low levels of conscientiousness (Sterkens et al., 2021) and those who display relevant education and work experience are viewed to have high self-confidence (Knouse, 1994).

Overall, the content presented in résumés influences the ratings of applicants and may impact job seekers' success in finding a job. Investigators of the present research question whether LinkedIn content will impact first impressions as traditional résumé content does.

Social Networking Sites

As the use of technology has increased, many types of human interactions take place virtually, such as through Social Networking Sites (SNS) like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. These online mechanisms allow users to express and promote themselves, connect with others, hold memories, and maintain relationships with others (Papacharissi, 2009). Having been considered the modern form of human communication (Clark et al., 2010), the use of SNS has become a staple in modern society.

First Impressions and Social Networking Sites

First impressions are formed based on information presented on SNS profiles. Selfies, self-portraits taken by digital camera or smartphone (Qui et al., 2015), provide insight into the individual's personality. Selfies in which the person displays a duckface, whereas their lips are pushed outwards (Oxford Dictionary, 2015), are linked to neuroticism, while pressed lips exhibit extraversion and openness (Qui et al., 2015).

Additionally, impressions formed via SNS tend to accurately perceive the Big 5 personality dimensions. Impressions formed via Facebook predict all five, while YouTube videos predict four of the Big 5 personality dimensions (Gosling et al., 2007; Biel et al., 2016).

Researchers have investigated how online first impressions are formed in a general context. Using Facebook, Seidman et al. (2013) found differences in impression

forming based on gender. Participants spent more time focusing on women's profile pictures than men's profile pictures but spent more time focusing on men's personal information than women's personal information. The same researchers also found that people dedicate more effort toward finding out about physically attractive job candidates compared to physically unattractive candidates. This insight into forming impressions via SNS provides some understanding of what types of online content are considered when individuals are forming impressions.

Employee Selection Decisions and Social Networking Sites

Organizations are using SNS as a tool in the employee selection process. Eighty-one percent of organizations use SNS to screen applicants (Mauer, 2016). Additionally, five percent of organizations use SNS as their only recruiting tool (Mauer, 2016).

Recruiters who review SNS activity for selection purposes do so to “get a better picture of a candidate” (Henderson, 2019).

There is a concern against using SNS as a selection tool. Researchers stress that viewing SNS for employment decisions negatively impacts how human beings communicate (Clark, 2010). Because they assume that they will be cyber-vetted when applying for a job (Root et al., 2014), applicants may limit or filter any potentially damaging SNS behaviors because they know they are being examined (Clark, 2010). Additionally, SNS screening as a selection measure lacks criterion-related validity. SNS profile screening does not predict job performance, turnover intentions, or turnover (Van Iddekinge et al., 2016).

There is large empirical concern about the potential biases when using SNS as an applicant screening tool (Jeske et al., 2016). Viewing potential employee SNS profiles

exposes the organization to information that may lead to appearance, race, gender, stigma, and age biases (Black et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2004). SNS screening informs organizations of potential employees' membership in a protected class, thus increasing the potential for adverse impact. Overall, the potential for bias when using SNS as a selection tool should be alarming for organizations, and those who continue to utilize this type of screening should proceed with caution.

There are some established guidelines for the organizational use of SNS as a selection tool. Organizations are encouraged to notify applicants of SNS screening, consider negative consequences, maintain confidentiality, and ensure that the applicant information attained is accurate and job-relevant (Clark et al., 2010). Additionally, organizations should examine casual social media sites, like Facebook, later in the hiring process (Kluemper, 2013), such as after conducting the initial interview (Lam, 2016).

The present research adds to the body of existing SNS research by focusing on the impressions formed because of LinkedIn activity.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an SNS designed for professionals to network, work on career-development skills, and share their résumé (LinkedIn, 2023) and for organizations to post job advertisements, find potential job candidates, and screen job applicants (Koch et al., 2018). With 830 million individuals and 57 million organizations registered as members (LinkedIn, 2022), LinkedIn is the largest online professional network (LinkedIn, 2023). Both individuals and organizations are actively using LinkedIn; 40 million users apply for jobs once a week and 100 million job applications are sent using LinkedIn monthly (Iqbal, 2022).

Existing literature is mixed on whether LinkedIn should be used as a selection tool. There is evidence that supports the organizational use of LinkedIn; people are more honest about previous work experience on LinkedIn than traditional résumés (Guillory et al., 2012). This is accredited to the social aspect of LinkedIn, as individuals are less likely to lie about previous experiences when those involved (i.e., previous managers and colleagues) have access to that information (Guillory et al., 2012). Guillory et al.'s finding suggests that using LinkedIn to view previous work experience will result in more accurate information about the job applicant. There are additional benefits to using LinkedIn during the selection process, such as the vast availability of new talent (Archambault et al., 2012) and cost (Subhani et al., 2012). There is positive research regarding LinkedIn and the potential for adverse impact. The use of LinkedIn is less prone to adverse impact on gender (Roulin et al., 2019).

There are some reasons to be wary of relying on LinkedIn for employment decisions. The previous discussion of biases in SNS as a screening tool is relevant to the discussion of LinkedIn use. For example, small-to-moderate adverse impact has been found for ethnicity and country of residence (Roulin et al., 2019). Additional drawbacks of LinkedIn are that recruiters do not always accurately gauge an individual's organizational fit using LinkedIn (Chiang et al., 2015). Implementing LinkedIn in an organization's selection strategy may have additional costs. Because recruiters cannot analyze all the information provided on a LinkedIn profile (Ibrahim et al., 2019), resorting to a third-party AI recruitment company may be necessary to create an algorithm that finds appropriate candidates (Ibrahim et al., 2019).

LinkedIn and First Impressions

Information about LinkedIn and first impressions is empirically vague. There have been some findings regarding how LinkedIn content, such as personality information, physical appearance, and profile format impact first impressions.

Personality information can be successfully gathered from one's LinkedIn profile (van de Ven et al., 2017). Fernandez et al. (2021) confirmed this and found that personality traits of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, and agreeableness can be deciphered via one's LinkedIn profile. Note that although the LinkedIn profile examination does present viewers with personality information, organizations are advised to use established personality assessments for selection purposes (Roulin et al., 2022). This is because such established assessments have been assessed for reliability and validity and are legally defensible.

Existing literature also explains how one's physical appearance impacts first impressions on LinkedIn, specifically facial hair on male candidates. Individuals wearing a beard in their profile photo have higher perceived expertise than those without beards (van der Land et al., 2014). The attractive biases, as mentioned previously in this literature, are also expected to impact impressions formed on LinkedIn.

The format of LinkedIn profiles also impacts the impressions formed from that profile. LinkedIn profiles that are longer, contain a photo, and have more connections are rated more positively (Roulin et al., 2019).

Job Applicant Activity on LinkedIn

LinkedIn activity may have an impact on one's career, six people are hired every minute on the platform (LinkedIn, 2022) and LinkedIn users report higher professional

informational benefits than Twitter and Facebook users (Utz, 2016). There is little literature that provides insight into how a job applicant's LinkedIn behaviors impact impressions and hiring decisions. It has been found that hiring managers do consider an applicant's LinkedIn profile when making hiring decisions. Garcia et al., 2023 found that applicants with errors on their LinkedIn page are less likely to be hired. The present research will contribute to this body of research by examining the impressions formed when a job applicant views a potential manager's profile and/or has completed LinkedIn learning courses.

LinkedIn offers a feature called "Who's Viewed Your Profile," which provides users with a list of individuals who have viewed their profile in the last 90 days (Basak et al., 2014). Scientific research has yet to examine the impact that this feature may have on the formation of first impressions. Although, "profile viewer data" is a main gratification of LinkedIn use (Basak et al, 2014). The proposed research study will investigate whether hiring managers have different impressions of job applicants who have viewed their LinkedIn profiles.

Research Question 1: Does the job applicant's behavior of viewing a recruiter's LinkedIn profile have an effect on the hiring manager's impressions of the applicant?

An additional LinkedIn behavior of interest is completing LinkedIn Learning courses. LinkedIn Learning, the self-development component of the platform hosts many courses ranging from business to creative to technology (LinkedIn, 2023). LinkedIn Learning provides LinkedIn users with a way to confirm industry-specific approaches,

strategies, and current trends (Barbeau, 2019). Additionally, LinkedIn Learning can be utilized as a tool to upskill and stand out in competitive job markets (Carson et al., 2019).

Existing research on LinkedIn Learning is focused on higher education. LinkedIn Learning is a helpful tool for universities; college students enjoy learning on this platform, can work at their own pace, and find LinkedIn Learning to be engaging (Carson et al., 2019). Professors express that LinkedIn Learning is useful for teaching research principles and explaining abstract concepts, like credibility (Carson et al., 2019) to college students.

Investigators of the current research were unable to locate existing research regarding impressions formed when individuals display the completion of LinkedIn Learning courses on their profiles. A Google Scholar search of the terms "First impressions and LinkedIn Learning", "Hiring decisions and LinkedIn Learning, "LinkedIn Learning and job applicants." yielded zero relevant results (Google, 2023 a).

This research proposes to be the first to investigate whether displaying the completion of LinkedIn Learning courses on a LinkedIn profile has an impact on impressions formed.

Research Question 2: Does the presentation of LinkedIn Learning courses on an individual's LinkedIn profile have a main effect on a hiring manager's impressions of the individual?

In addition to measuring the impressions formed because of LinkedIn behaviors, the current research will investigate an interaction between viewing a manager's profile and LinkedIn Learning

Research Question 3: Is there an interaction between viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and completing LinkedIn Learning courses?

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study initially recruited 138 participants using Prolific. The existing literature of Prolific has found Prolific to be superior to similar services (Palan et al., 2018). Participation in this study was limited to HR professionals who are 18 years or older and responsible for making employment decisions. Participants were paid \$3.33. Participants provided informed consent and were able to withdraw from the study at any time.

The first step in data cleaning consisted of removing the 20 participants with no responses. Then, 23 participants who spent less than 5 minutes on the survey were deleted. Next, 1 participant who stated that their data should not be included in the analyses was removed. Finally, 13 participants who failed to correctly answer 75% (3 out of 4) of the attention checks were excluded.

After cleaning the data, 81 participants were used. Participant sociodemographic information is in Table 1. An additional comparative analysis was conducted with participants who only correctly answered the manipulation checks. For this analysis, 30 participants who did not correctly answer manipulations were excluded from the data. After this data cleaning step, 51 participants were used. Sociodemographic information for this sample is in Table 2.

Table 1
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

Sample Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	81		45	13.9
Ethnicity				
White or Caucasian	66	81		
Black or African American	4	5		
Hispanic or Latino	4	5		
Mixed	5	6		
Asian or Pacific Islander	1	1		
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	1		
Sex Assigned at Birth				
Male	50	62		
Female	30	38		
Has a LinkedIn profile				
Yes	60	74		
No	20	25		
Prefer not to say	1	1		
Log in to LinkedIn				
Every day	2	2		
Multiple times a week	10	12		
Once a week	17	21		
Every other week	6	7		
Once a month	6	7		
Every few months	9	11		
1-3 times a year	6	7		
Never	23	28		
Prefer not to say	2	2		
Posting on LinkedIn				
Multiple times a week	2	2		
Once a week	1	1		
Every other week	2	2		
Once a month	9	11		
Every few months	12	15		
1-3 times a year	9	11		
Never	43	53		
Prefer not to say	3	4		
Uses LinkedIn to make hiring decisions				
Yes	30	37		
No	48	59		
Prefer not to say	2	2		
Did not respond	1	1		

Table 2
Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants - Correct Manipulations

Sample Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	51		45	13.1
Ethnicity				
White or Caucasian	40	78		
Black or African American	3	6		
Hispanic or Latino	3	6		
Mixed	4	8		
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	2		
Sex Assigned at Birth				
Male	30	41		
Female	21	59		
Has a LinkedIn profile				
Yes	38	74		
No	12	24		
Prefer not to say	1	2		
Log in to LinkedIn				
Every day	1	2		
Multiple times a week	5	10		
Once a week	13	25		
Every other week	4	8		
Once a month	5	10		
Every few months	6	12		
1-3 times a year	2	4		
Never	13	25		
Prefer not to say	2	4		
Posting on LinkedIn				
Once a week	1	2		
Every other week	1	2		
Once a month	8	16		
Every few months	6	12		
1-3 times a year	7	24		
Never	25	59		
Prefer not to say	3	6		
Uses LinkedIn to make hiring decisions				
Yes	18	35		
No	30	59		
Prefer not to say	2	4		
Did not respond	1	2		

Procedure

This study used a two-by-two factorial between subjects design. The two independent variables studied were viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and displaying LinkedIn Learning courses on one's LinkedIn profile. The dependent variable was the hiring manager's impressions of the applicant.

Materials

Applicant Packet. A fictitious company (A.C.E. Soap Company), job position, job description, and LinkedIn profile was created for this research. Four versions of a LinkedIn profile were created to coincide with the four research conditions. All versions of the LinkedIn profile have the same individual, named Rebecka Wilson, same profile photo, experience, and education. LinkedIn profiles were created using Canva, an online design tool. The headshot for the individual was found through a Google Images search of “Stock headshot photos” (Google, 2023b). For the profile picture, I chose the headshot of an average-looking, smiling woman. A first name was chosen based on a list of common first names in the United States (NameCensus, 2023). A last name was chosen based on the most common surnames (Powell, 2020). The complete applicant package can be found in Appendix A.

Impressions of Applicant. Harrison's Applicant Qualification Scale (2003) was used to determine rater's impressions of the candidate. Participants will be asked to respond to 13 items, such as “I feel this person would make a good candidate for the job in question.” Participants will rate items passed on a five-point Likert scale, 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Previous research using this scale reported a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .86$ (Elliot, 2011). A high score on this score translates to more

favorable impressions of the job candidate. The full scale can be found in Appendix B.

Invitation to Interview. In addition to completing the Applicant Qualification Scale, participants were asked, “On a scale of 0 to 100, how likely is it that you would want to invite Rebecka Wilson to interview for this job?” Participants used a slider-bar to reflect their response.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

The data ($N = 81$) were analyzed using Jamovi. Prior to analysis, reliability tests were conducted for the Harrison's Applicant Qualification Scale. The Cronbach's Alpha showed that the scale is a reliable measure for rating a job applicant. The reliability analysis is presented below in Table 3.

Table 3
Reliability Scale Statistics

	<i>N</i>	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Harrison's Applicant Qualification Scale	81	13	0.91	4.16	0.59

Two Independent Samples T-Test were conducted to determine whether the manipulation worked as intended. The first manipulation, viewing or not viewing the LinkedIn profile was significant, $t(79) = -4.85, p = <.001$. The second manipulation, completing or not completing LinkedIn Learning, was not significant, $t(79) = -0.28, p = 0.78$. The T-Test results indicate that the profile viewing manipulation worked while the LinkedIn Learning manipulation did not work. The Independent Samples T-Test results are below in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4
Independent Samples T-Test Results for Viewed Profile Manipulation

Group	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
No Viewing	38	1.34	0.48	0.08	-4.85	<.001
Has Viewing	43	1.81	0.39	0.06		

Table 5
Independent Samples T-Test Results for LinkedIn Learning Manipulation

Group	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
No Learning	38	1.53	0.51	0.08	-0.28	0.78
Has Learning	43	1.56	0.50	0.08		

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the effect of viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and completing LinkedIn Learning on the hiring manager's ratings of the applicant. The means and standard deviations for applicant ratings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Means by Condition for Applicant Ratings

Profile Condition	Learning Condition	<i>N</i>	Mean Score	<i>SD</i>
No Viewing	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	19	4.35	0.65
	Has LinkedIn Learning	22	4.23	0.58
Viewed Profile	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	19	4.11	0.52
	Has LinkedIn Learning	21	3.94	0.55

The results indicated a significant main effect for completing LinkedIn Learning, $F(1, 80) = 4.12$, $MSE = 1.37$, $p = .046$, partial $\eta^2 = .05$. Specifically, applicant ratings were higher when applicants did not showcase completed LinkedIn Learning courses on their LinkedIn profile ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.61$) than when applicants displayed LinkedIn Learning courses on their profile ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.54$). There was no significant main effect for viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = 1.25$, $MSE = .42$, $p = .27$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$ and no significant interaction between completing LinkedIn Learning and viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = .03$, $MSE = .01$, $p = .86$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$.

Table 7
ANOVA Results of Likelihood to Invite Applicant to Interview

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2 <i>p</i>
Learning Condition	1.37	1	1.37	4.12	.046	.05
Profile Condition	0.42	1	0.42	1.25	.27	.02
Learning Condition * Profile Condition	0.01	1	0.01	0.03	.86	<.01

An additional two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the effect of viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and completing LinkedIn Learning on the hiring manager's likelihood to invite the job candidate to interview. The means and standard deviations are in Table 8.

Table 8
Means by Condition for Invitation to Interview

Profile Condition	Learning Condition	<i>N</i>	Mean Score	<i>SD</i>
No Viewing	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	19	88.9	19.90
	Has LinkedIn Learning	22	89.9	10.50
Viewed Profile	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	19	90.3	7.82
	Has LinkedIn Learning	21	86.8	11.40

The results indicated no significant main effect for completing LinkedIn Learning, $F(1, 80) = .09$, $MSE = 16.1$, $p = .76$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$; no significant main effect for viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = .20$, $MSE = 33.7$, $p = .66$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$; and no significant interaction between completing LinkedIn Learning and viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = .58$, $MSE = 98.4$, $p = .45$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$.

Table 9
ANOVA Results of Likelihood to Invite Applicant to Interview

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2 <i>p</i>
Learning Condition	16.1	1	16.1	0.09	0.91	<.01
Profile Condition	33.7	1	33.7	0.20	0.66	<.01
Learning Condition * Profile Condition	98.4	1	98.4	0.58	0.45	<.01

One possible reason why there were no significant differences (except for the main effect of LinkedIn learning content on applicant ratings) is that the manipulations did not work as intended. Additional analyses were conducted that contained only the participants from the previous analysis who correctly answered both manipulations ($n = 51$). A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the effect of completing LinkedIn Learning on the hiring manager's ratings of the applicant and viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile. The means and standard deviations for applicant ratings are presented in Table 10.

Table 10
Means by Condition for Applicant Ratings – Correct Manipulations

Profile Condition	Learning Condition	<i>N</i>	Mean Score	<i>SD</i>
No Viewing	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	12	4.34	0.72
	Has LinkedIn Learning	10	4.16	0.44
Viewed Profile	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	16	4.36	0.54
	Has LinkedIn Learning	13	4.06	0.51

The results indicated no significant main effect for completing LinkedIn Learning ($F(1, 50) = 2.21, MSE = 0.70, p = .14, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$) no significant main effect for viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile ($F(1, 50) = 0.07, MSE = 0.02, p = .79, \text{partial } \eta^2 = <.01$), and no significant interaction between completing LinkedIn Learning

and viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile ($F(1, 50) = 0.14$, $MSE = 0.04$, $p = .71$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$) on applicant ratings.

Table 11

ANOVA Results of Likelihood to Invite Applicant to Interview – Correct Manipulations

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2 p
Learning Condition	0.70	1	0.70	2.21	.14	.05
Profile Condition	0.02	1	0.02	0.07	.79	<.01
Learning Condition * Profile Condition	0.04	1	0.04	0.14	.71	<.01

An additional two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to evaluate the effect of viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and completing LinkedIn Learning on the hiring manager's likelihood to invite the job candidate to interview. The means and standard deviations are in Table 12.

Table 12

Means by Condition for Invitation to Interview – Correct Manipulations

Profile Condition	Learning Condition	<i>N</i>	Mean Score	<i>SD</i>
No Viewing	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	12	90.3	21.70
	Has LinkedIn Learning	10	89.0	8.47
Viewed Profile	Does Not Have LinkedIn Learning	16	91.0	9.83
	Has LinkedIn Learning	13	87.3	10.30

The results indicated no significant main effect for completing LinkedIn Learning, $F(1, 80) = .09$, $MSE = 16.1$, $p = .76$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$; no significant main effect for viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = .20$, $MSE = 33.7$, $p = .66$, partial $\eta^2 = <.01$; and no significant interaction between completing LinkedIn Learning

and viewing the hiring manager's LinkedIn profile, $F(1, 80) = .58, MSE = 98.4, p = .45,$
 partial $\eta^2 = <.01$.

Table 13

ANOVA Results of Likelihood to Invite Applicant to Interview – Correct Manipulations

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2 p
Learning Condition	78.25	1	78.25	0.43	0.52	<.01
Profile Condition	3.26	1	3.26	0.02	0.89	<.01
Learning Condition * Profile Condition	17.24	1	17.24	0.09	0.76	<.01

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

This study examined how job applicant LinkedIn behaviors of viewing a hiring manager's profile and posting LinkedIn Learning course completion certificates on their LinkedIn profile effects hiring manager's ratings of that job candidate. A significant amount of research has been conducted on the topic of impressions derived from social media profiles (e.g., Qui et al., 2015, Gosling et al., 2007; Biel et al., 2016, Seidman et al., 2013), but little research has been conducted regarding LinkedIn. To date, this is the first research study that investigates the specific LinkedIn behaviors of viewing one's profile and displaying the completion of LinkedIn Learning on one's profile.

Research Questions

The initial ANOVA results showed that there was not a significant effect for viewing a manager's LinkedIn profile but did show a significant effect for completing LinkedIn Learning courses on a hiring manager's impressions of a candidate. This finding showed that hiring managers rate job applicants who have completed LinkedIn Learning courses less favorably than job applicants who did not complete LinkedIn Learning courses. This suggests that the completion of such courses may be detrimental to job applicants in terms of impressions formed based on their LinkedIn profile. A possible reason for this is that hiring managers may view LinkedIn Learning as a substitute for formal education, like a college degree. Hiring managers may also view LinkedIn Learning completion as a replacement for work experience or skills that are typically learned on-the-job. Although LinkedIn Learning may increase knowledge of skills, it is not comparable to years on the job where one receives hands-on experience and

expertise. Although this finding was significant, it should be noted that the manipulation of LinkedIn Learning was not found to be effective and did not work in this study.

The secondary analyses, including only participants who correctly responded to the manipulation checks, showed no significant effect for viewing a manager's LinkedIn profile or completing LinkedIn Learning courses on hiring manager's impressions of a job candidate. The average ratings were above 4 on a 5-point scale, suggesting that the candidate was considered qualified regardless of the manipulations. It appears that these behaviors do not matter when a hiring manager is forming impressions of a job candidate. It is possible that LinkedIn users may be wasting their time by participating in such behaviors. This is especially true when considering the initial analysis findings that LinkedIn Learning negatively impacts a job candidate's ratings.

If an individual has the proper education and experience required for a job, the completion of LinkedIn Learning may not change the manager's impression. Viewing a hiring manager's profile may have benefits other than creating a positive first impression based on LinkedIn content. Job applicants may use the information found on a hiring manager's profile to create a conversation during a job interview. Personalized questions, such as about the hiring manager's experience working for the organization, may lead to the formation of a positive impression by the manager.

Limitations

There were several limitations regarding this study. To begin, this study may have been underpowered to detect any meaningful differences due to the small sample size. Also, the sample may not be representative of the population of individuals who are on LinkedIn. Additionally, 30 participants (37%), failed the manipulation checks and were

excluded from the secondary analysis. This suggests that the intended manipulations were not deemed relevant considering the candidate qualifications. Furthermore, because this study used a hypothetical LinkedIn profile, participants may not have responded as they would have if they were actually viewing a job applicant's profile on LinkedIn. It is also likely that the research design impacted the findings. Because this was a between-subjects design, participants were not asked to compare applicants. If this was a within-subjects design that asked participants to compare multiple candidates, participants may have had more reason to attend to the information that was manipulated.

Future Directions

Future directions should implement a within-subjects design, comparing job candidates with varying degrees of being qualified for the job. In that case, manipulations, such as completing LinkedIn Learning, may be deemed more important in determining impressions of a job candidate. Future directions could also work to increase the fidelity of the study. A more realistic situation, perhaps including a live notification that the candidate had just viewed the participant's profile, could lead to a stronger manipulation and thus, further information regarding the impressions formed based on LinkedIn behavior. Future studies should aim for a larger sample size than this study, resulting in more statistical power to detect meaningful differences. Finally, future directions should work to gather a sample with experience using LinkedIn. Participants who are familiar with LinkedIn behaviors, such as viewing profiles and completing LinkedIn Learning, may have a better understanding of the manipulations within the study.

Conclusion

This study was the first to examine the impact of a) viewing a hiring manager's LinkedIn profile and b) completing LinkedIn Learning courses on a hiring manager's impression of a job candidate. The significant finding that LinkedIn Learning results in less-favorable ratings from a hiring manager was not replicated when participants who correctly answered the manipulations were analyzed. The lack of significant findings was likely impacted by the research design, small sample size, and failed manipulation. Further research should implement a within-subjects design and work to improve this study's manipulations. Studying the impact of a job applicant's LinkedIn behaviors can help improve selection methods in organizations and is important to society due to the popular use of social networking sites.

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APPENDIX A: APPLICANT PACKET

Scenario:

You are a hiring manager for an artisan soap company. You are looking to fill a new position for **Social Media Coordinator**. The HR department has sent you a list of qualified job applicants and asked you to select candidates to interview for the position. You will be viewing the applicants' online LinkedIn profiles to decide which applicants you would like to invite for an interview. Remember, you are deciding if you would like to invite the applicant to interview or not. You are not making a final hiring decision.

Job Description:

Company Overview

ACE Soap Company has been the most successful small soap company in the region for the past decade. We treat our customers and employees like family because we know that we could not thrive without either. We are committed to providing the best product to consumers while being the best employer possible. We offer competitive wages and great benefits, including full medical. We have decided to expand into the national market and are looking for talented individuals to join us in this process.

We are looking for a Social Media Coordinator to help expand our social media presence while developing a positive online reputation. This person should be a highly motivated self-starter who can work with ambiguity. The Social Media Coordinator will have the opportunity to manage all social media accounts, develop and implement online marketing tactics, and communicate trend analyses to organization executives.

The goals of the Social Media Coordinator are to increase online customer engagement and interest in the services we offer. We want our social media accounts to reflect who we are as a company: fun but means business.

Job Responsibilities

- Develop and implement a social media content strategic plan that maintains our positive image with the public
- Manage all ACE social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok)
- Remain up to date on online advertising and marketing trends and communicate to executives
- Collaborate with outside departments to understand how social media can improve their specific department
- Work may be required during evenings or weekends

Qualifications

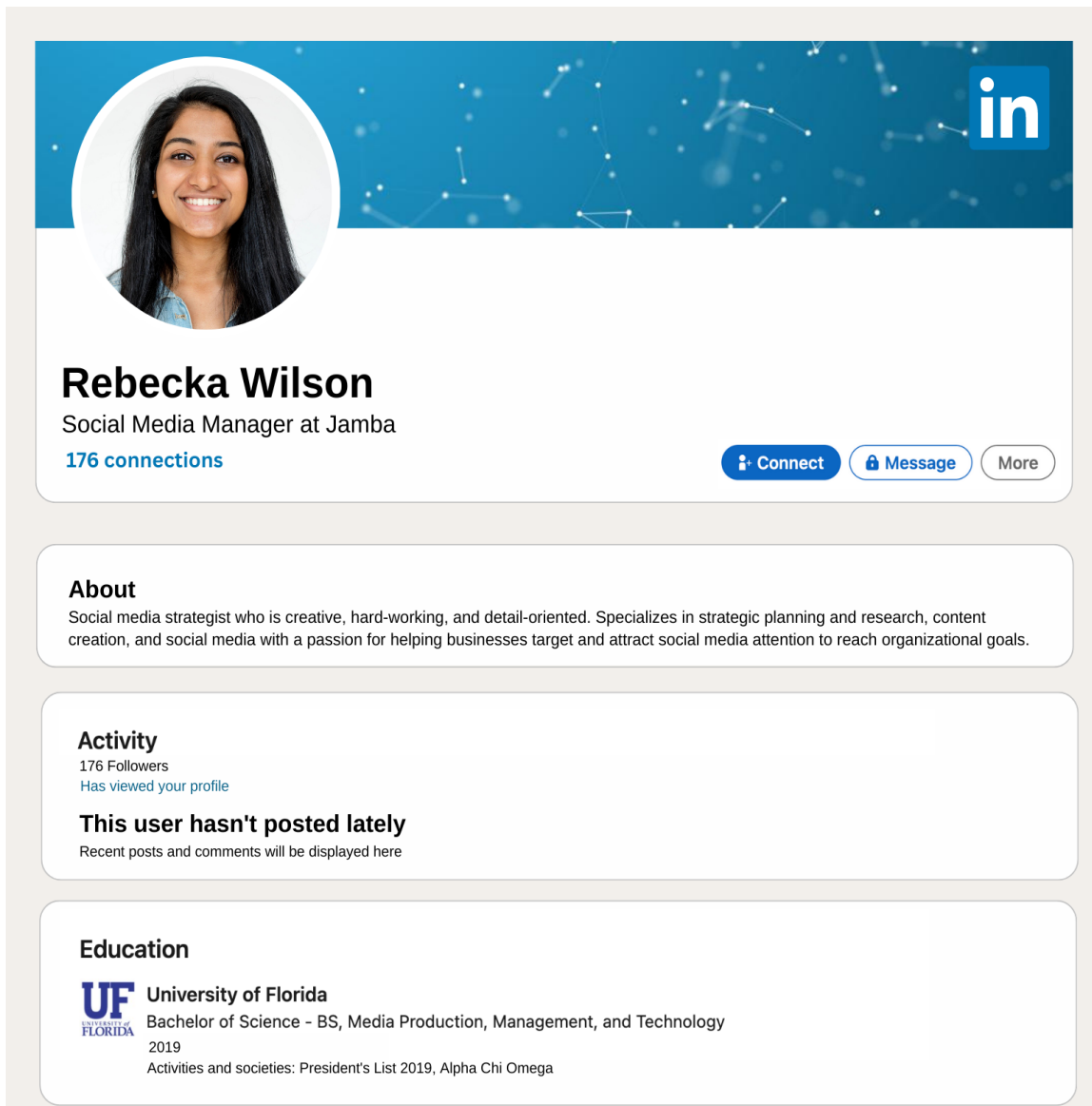
- High School Diploma/G.E.D. required
- Advanced proficiency in social media use
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Knowledge of analyzing online marketing trends
- Understands how companies can use social media to support business objectives
- Strong organizational and time-management skills

Preferred Qualifications

- Bachelor's Degree in a relevant field (Communications, Digital Marketing, Public Relations, etc.)
- Photo/Video Editing software knowledge

If you think that you have what it takes, please send the link for your LinkedIn page to our corporate email address. You will be contacted for an interview.

**APPENDIX B1: LINKEDIN PROFILE
(HAS VIEWED PROFILE/HAS LINKEDIN LEARNING)**




The image shows a screenshot of a LinkedIn profile for Rebecka Wilson. The profile header features a blue background with a white circular profile picture of Rebecka, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. To the right of the profile picture is the LinkedIn logo. Below the profile picture, the name "Rebecka Wilson" is displayed in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the name, it says "Social Media Manager at Jamba" and "176 connections". To the right of the name and connections are three buttons: "Connect", "Message", and "More".

About
Social media strategist who is creative, hard-working, and detail-oriented. Specializes in strategic planning and research, content creation, and social media with a passion for helping businesses target and attract social media attention to reach organizational goals.

Activity
176 Followers
Has viewed your profile

This user hasn't posted lately
Recent posts and comments will be displayed here

Education

 **University of Florida**
Bachelor of Science - BS, Media Production, Management, and Technology
2019
Activities and societies: President's List 2019, Alpha Chi Omega

Experience



Social Media Manager

Jamba

Sep 2019 - Present

- Create social content for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.
 - Curate and manage content calendars across all social media platforms - our following has grown on all channels by 475% since entering this role
 - Consider data to understand viewing trends and how they relate to organizational revenue
 - Stay up-to-date on all marketing and social media trends
 - Develop and implement marketing plans that align with organizational goals and values
-



Chapter Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing

Alpha Chi Omega Fraternity, Inc.

2018 - 2019

- Follow organization's guidelines while staying on trend with social media posts
 - Promote Alpha Chi Omega to recruit new members
-



Assistant Manager

Jamba

Mar 2017 - Sep 2019

- Assist General Manager with any administrative duties
- Schedule and staff a busy location
- Train new employees to increase their customer service skills
- Assisted with employee reviews and feedback sessions

Licenses & certifications



LinkedIn Marketing Strategy

LinkedIn

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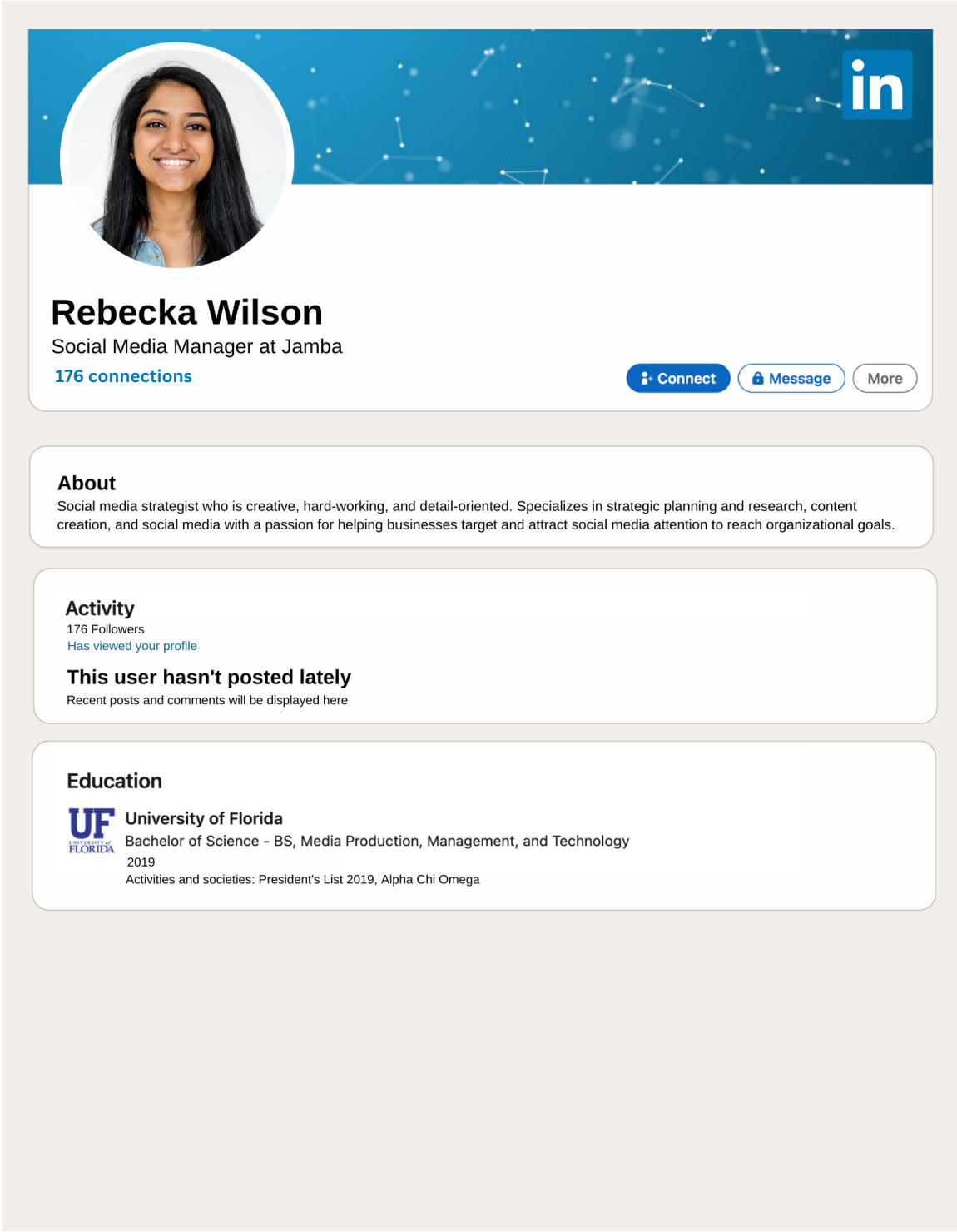
Manage your account and privacy

Go to your Settings.

Select Language

English (English) [▼](#)

**APPENDIX B2: LINKEDIN PROFILE
(HAS VIEWED PROFILE/DOES NOT HAVE LINKEDIN LEARNING)**



The image shows a LinkedIn profile for Rebecka Wilson. At the top is a blue header with the LinkedIn logo on the right and a circular profile picture of Rebecka on the left. Below the header, the name "Rebecka Wilson" is displayed in a large, bold font, followed by her title "Social Media Manager at Jamba" and "176 connections". To the right of the connections are three buttons: "Connect", "Message", and "More". Below this is an "About" section with a short bio. The "Activity" section shows "176 Followers" and "Has viewed your profile", followed by a message that the user hasn't posted lately. The "Education" section lists the University of Florida, a Bachelor of Science degree in Media Production, Management, and Technology from 2019, and mentions membership in the President's List and Alpha Chi Omega.



Rebecka Wilson

Social Media Manager at Jamba

176 connections

[Connect](#) [Message](#) [More](#)

About


Social media strategist who is creative, hard-working, and detail-oriented. Specializes in strategic planning and research, content creation, and social media with a passion for helping businesses target and attract social media attention to reach organizational goals.

Activity

176 Followers
Has viewed your profile

This user hasn't posted lately
Recent posts and comments will be displayed here

Education

 **University of Florida**
Bachelor of Science - BS, Media Production, Management, and Technology
2019
Activities and societies: President's List 2019, Alpha Chi Omega

Experience



Social Media Manager

Jamba
Sep 2019 - Present

- Create social content for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.
- Curate and manage content calendars across all social media platforms - our following has grown on all channels by 475% since entering this role
- Consider data to understand viewing trends and how they relate to organizational revenue
- Stay up-to-date on all marketing and social media trends
- Develop and implement marketing plans that align with organizational goals and values



Chapter Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing

Alpha Chi Omega Fraternity, Inc.
2018 - 2019

- Follow organization's guidelines while staying on trend with social media posts
- Promote Alpha Chi Omega to recruit new members



Assistant Manager

Jamba
Mar 2017 - Sep 2019

- Assist General Manager with any administrative duties
- Schedule and staff a busy location
- Train new employees to increase their customer service skills
- Assisted with employee reviews and feedback sessions



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**APPENDIX B3: LINKEDIN PROFILE
(HAS NOT VIEWED PROFILE/HAS LINKEDIN LEARNING)**




The header features a blue background with a white circular profile picture of Rebecka Wilson on the left and the LinkedIn logo on the right. The background is decorated with a network of white dots and lines.

Rebecka Wilson
Social Media Manager at Jamba
[176 connections](#) [Connect](#) [Message](#) [More](#)

About
Social media strategist who is creative, hard-working, and detail-oriented. Specializes in strategic planning and research, content creation, and social media with a passion for helping businesses target and attract social media attention to reach organizational goals.

Activity
176 Followers

This user hasn't posted lately
Recent posts and comments will be displayed here

Education
 **University of Florida**
Bachelor of Science - BS, Media Production, Management, and Technology
2019
Activities and societies: President's List 2019, Alpha Chi Omega

Experience



Social Media Manager

Jamba

Sep 2019 - Present

- Create social content for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.
 - Curate and manage content calendars across all social media platforms - our following has grown on all channels by 475% since entering this role
 - Consider data to understand viewing trends and how they relate to organizational revenue
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-



Chapter Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing

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- Follow organization's guidelines while staying on trend with social media posts
 - Promote Alpha Chi Omega to recruit new members
-




Assistant Manager


Jamba


Mar 2017 - Sep 2019

- Assist General Manager with any administrative duties
- Schedule and staff a busy location
- Train new employees to increase their customer service skills
- Assisted with employee reviews and feedback sessions


Licenses & certifications

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 **Building an Integrated Online Marketing Plan**
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**APPENDIX B4: LINKEDIN PROFILE
(HAS NOT VIEWED PROFILE/DOES NOT HAVE LINKEDIN LEARNING)**




The header features a circular profile picture of Rebecka Wilson, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. The background is a blue banner with a network diagram of white dots and lines, and the LinkedIn logo in the top right corner.

Rebecka Wilson
Social Media Manager at Jamba
[176 connections](#) [Connect](#) [Message](#) [More](#)

About
Social media strategist who is creative, hard-working, and detail-oriented. Specializes in strategic planning and research, content creation, and social media with a passion for helping businesses target and attract social media attention to reach organizational goals.

Activity
176 Followers

This user hasn't posted lately
Recent posts and comments will be displayed here

Education
 **University of Florida**
Bachelor of Science - BS, Media Production, Management, and Technology
2019
Activities and societies: President's List 2019, Alpha Chi Omega

Experience



Social Media Manager

Jamba
Sep 2019 - Present

- Create social content for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.
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Chapter Vice President of Public Relations and Marketing

Alpha Chi Omega Fraternity, Inc.
2018 - 2019

- Follow organization's guidelines while staying on trend with social media posts
- Promote Alpha Chi Omega to recruit new members



Assistant Manager

Jamba
Mar 2017 - Sep 2019

- Assist General Manager with any administrative duties
- Schedule and staff a busy location
- Train new employees to increase their customer service skills
- Assisted with employee reviews and feedback sessions



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APPENDIX C: SCALE

The Applicant Qualification Scale (Harrison, 2003) with an addition of the attention check item and open-ended response item about invitation to interview.

1. I feel this person would make a good candidate for the job in question.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

2. I do not think this person is sufficiently qualified for the job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

3. I would give this person serious consideration for the job in question.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

4. I would feel uncomfortable if this person was hired for this job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

5. I would guess that this person is in the top 20% of people interviewed.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

6. This person has the necessary qualifications to be successful at the job in question.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

7. I feel favorably toward this person.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

8. I would guess that most other applicants would be better suited for this job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

9. If you are paying attention, select "Neutral" for this item

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

10. This person has excellent qualifications for the job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

11. I would not hire this person for the job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

12. This person should have no problems competing for the job or a similar job.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

13. This person's education was an important aspect in my evaluation.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

14. This person's experience in the field was an important aspect in my evaluation.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly Agree

15. On a scale of 0 to 100, how likely is it that you would want to invite Rebecka Wilson to interview for this job?

Note: Items 2, 4, 8, and 11 were reversed scored