

# How to Write your Firm Website Bio and LinkedIn Profile Bio for Maximum Web Exposure

By [LawVision](#) on December 6, 2012

## **Take a lesson from Dr. Seuss and use "The Cat in the Hat" method**

If you are struggling with how to write your bio to create maximum exposure on your website, LinkedIn and on search engines, take a lesson from Dr. Seuss and use his method for writing one of the most famous books in the world.

As the story goes, William Ellsworth Spaulding, director of Houghton Mifflin's education division, challenged his friend Ted Geisel to write a book that first-graders couldn't resist. He allowed Geisel only 225 words from a list of 348 words every first-grader ought to know.

Geisel (or Dr. Seuss as you may remember him) took on the challenge and nine months later he emerged with the now classic *The Cat in the Hat* using 223 words from the list and adding only 13 words of his own. He essentially wrote the book backwards starting first with a list of the words he wanted to use and crafting a masterpiece by creating a story around them. [1]

Dr. Seuss couldn't have known he'd created the ultimate template for professionals wrestling with how to make their bio discoverable but it appears he has.

## **Begin with the end in mind**

Make a list of all the words or phrases you think someone might enter into a web search to find someone with your expertise. Be thorough. Ask friends how they might find someone with your expertise. Ask your kids words they might use. Try to search on the web for someone like you and see who comes up. What words did they use?

Once you have a nice list of words, create a description of your work using those words. Standard search engines weigh the first part of the bio heavily so it's important to get as many key words as possible in the first part of the bio – use your best wordsmithing up front.

## **Don't forget the basics**

Make no mistake, armed with *The Cat in the Hat* method, you are still capable of creating a really horrific bio. Search engine optimization is less than half the battle. A bio isn't a children's primer but it is a story – your story. And, you still want to tell it your way. Once people find it, you still need them to get to know you and understand how you can help them with their problem.

To tell that story best, don't forget the basics. My friend Amy Spach of [AS Written Communications](#) recently led an excellent workshop on this topic for the Legal Marketing Association. Amy and Per Casey of [Tenrec](#) asked participants to provide bio examples in advance and then pointed out weak points and strengths for the class. Workshop participants came away with real world examples of how to craft bios that work. Amy suggests the following key points for drafting compelling professional bios:

1. **Hook Your Audience.** Your bio, like an initial conversation, is an ongoing transaction with your reader. You have to earn the right to continue with each section. The first few lines need to convince the reader to keep reading. Lead with your strengths framed as a potential client would want to learn about them. Draw readers into the rest of the narrative, make them want to get to know more about you by giving them something worth reading – make it interesting. Note – starting with an accolade, your law school or your LSAT score does not count as something interesting.
2. **Use Subheadings.** Think how you read a web page. Most likely you're in a hurry, and you're probably on the phone or multitasking. Your eyes scan the page in search of something interesting. Subheadings provide that promise and a reason to keep reading and continue the transaction. A dense mass of words in long paragraphs frustrates the impatient, and we are all impatient. Make it easy on us – break it up. Short paragraphs with bold headings keep the transaction alive. It says: "Hang on reader, just one more bite...look it's not so big, you can handle it."
3. **Don't repeat your name at the beginning of each paragraph or section.** When you've completed a first draft go back and look at your first lines. If it looks like this, you are in trouble:

Marie graduated from....

Marie got her start....

Ms. Henderson was awarded....

Ms. Henderson helps engineers and architects to....

Marie's favorite pets are.....

Go back in and vary sentence structure. It will help keep the reader engaged and on the right path, instead of wrestling with a visually monotonous string of identical words and phrases.

4. **Include representative matters.** It's the best way to show, as opposed to tell, someone what you do well and the results you achieve. Isn't that exactly what anyone checking you out really wants to know? It does not have to be a long list. Short summaries of big cases and matters give the reader a flavor of what you've done and also provide excellent words for search engines.
5. **Keep it lively.** When possible, avoid using past tense and passive tense. Play with words to present yourself as a vital and relevant person today. That does not mean you ignore past accomplishments – just present them in a modern context by showing a continued path of successful representations. Parentheses are another type of bio killer. It stops the rhythm of the reader and makes them pause inconveniently. If a thought is important enough to include, then take the words out of parentheses and let them stand on their own merits.
6. **Bios change.** Your bio won't go on your tombstone, so remember to see it as a dynamic document that is not meant to be the final word or even your resume. Instead, it is meant to spur a conversation, or encourage the reader to contact you. New events and successes happen all the time. Your bio should reflect new changes as well as where you have been. Try to update your bio every 6 months if possible. You might want to create modified bios for different audiences, variations that emphasize various areas of your practice. It is a smart, targeted marketing practice.

7. **Call to Action.** Sonny Cohen adds to this list with his [excellent suggestion for a call to action](#) -An invitation beyond just listing contact information. He suggests an invitation to get in touch on a specific subject or to link to another source of social media content. Look [here](#) for [an interesting debate on whether to link back to your LinkedIn bio](#) as well.

Start with the end in mind. Visualize your target audience and come up with some killer key terms. But, don't forget the basics. Give us a hook and then keep it interesting. As our friend with the hat says, "it is fun to have fun but you have to know how." If Dr. Seuss can do it, so can you.

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[1] Note the famous British humorist Craig Brown (unrelated to me) takes this notion a step further putting 180 character twitter experts to shame in the process as he reports in his new book [Hello Goodbye Hello](#) unlikely encounters of famous but unrelated people in 101 vignettes each containing exactly 1001 words resulting in a book exactly 101,101 words long.