Business Expert Reveals 6 LinkedIn Recommendation Mistakes That Kill Your Career Prospects

These common phrases guarantee generic endorsements – here's what successful professionals say instead

Key Points:

- **Business expert lists 6 common mistakes professionals make when requesting LinkedIn recommendations that often result in generic or delayed responses**

- **Expert provides specific alternative phrases for each mistake, including how to make requests more personal and actionable**

- **Business leader explains why vague, last-minute requests typically produce weak endorsements that don't help career advancement**

A LinkedIn recommendation can make or break your professional credibility, yet most people approach them all wrong. A strong endorsement from your boss not only validates your skills, but can also provide third-party proof of your impact that potential employers and clients actually trust.

The problem? Most professionals sabotage their chances before they even hit send on that request. According to Jason Morris, Owner and CEO of [Profit Engine](#), a specialized link-building agency, the language you use when asking for a recommendation often determines whether you'll receive something meaningful or generic.

"I've seen countless professionals make the same mistakes when requesting recommendations," Morris explains. "They either sound desperate, demanding, or so vague that their boss has no idea what to write about."

A thoughtful, specific recommendation can be the difference between landing an interview and getting lost in the applicant pool. Below, Morris breaks down the most common mistakes professionals make when requesting LinkedIn recommendations and provides the exact language that gets results.

What Not to Say: The Phrases That Kill Your Chances

1. "Can you write me a LinkedIn recommendation?"

This bare-bones request puts all the work on your boss's shoulders. They're left wondering what aspects of your performance to highlight, which projects to mention, and what tone to strike.

Say this instead: *"Would you be willing to write a LinkedIn recommendation focusing on my project management skills, particularly how I led the Q3 product launch that increased sales by 15%? I'd be happy to send over a few bullet points about specific results if that would be helpful."*

"Giving your boss a clear direction doesn't mean you're being pushy – it means you're being considerate of their time," Jason notes. "They appreciate having a roadmap rather than staring at a blank page."

2. "I need this by tomorrow."

Last-minute requests signal poor planning and put unnecessary pressure on your boss. Even if they agree, rushed recommendations tend to be generic and forgettable.

Say this instead: *"I'm planning to update my LinkedIn profile over the coming weeks as I transition to my new role. Would you have time in the next two weeks to write a brief recommendation? I'm happy to work around your schedule."*

"Quality recommendations take thought and consideration," Jason adds. "When you rush the process, you get rushed results."

3. "Just write something quick."

This phrase practically guarantees a mediocre result. It suggests you don't value quality and gives your boss permission to phone it in.

Say this instead: *"I know you're busy, so I don't need anything lengthy. Just a few sentences about my strengths in client relationship management would be incredibly valuable."*

Jason emphasizes the difference: "You're still acknowledging their time constraints, but you're asking for something meaningful rather than just 'anything'."

4. "Everyone else got one, so I should too."

This approach makes your request sound like an obligation rather than a recognition of your actual contributions. It also creates an awkward comparison dynamic.

Say this instead: *"I really valued working with you on the marketing campaigns this year. Would you be comfortable writing a recommendation that highlights my analytical skills and campaign optimization work?"*

"Your boss wants to help you succeed, but they need to know what success looks like for you," Jason explains.

5. "You know me better than anyone here."

While this might seem like a compliment, it puts pressure on your boss to capture your entire professional identity in a few paragraphs, which is an impossible task.

Say this instead: *"You had a front-row seat to my work on the customer retention initiatives. Would you be willing to write a recommendation focusing on that experience and the results we achieved together?"*

"Specificity is your friend," Jason explains. "When you narrow the focus, you make it easier for your boss to write something compelling and authentic."

6. "I'll return the favor."

This transactional language cheapens the entire exchange and suggests you view recommendations as a quid pro quo arrangement rather than genuine professional endorsements.

Say this instead: *"I'd be honored to have a recommendation from you, given how much I learned under your leadership. Please let me know if there's ever anything I can do to support your professional goals as well."*

"The best recommendations come from genuine professional relationships, not transactional exchanges," Jason notes.

Jason Morris, Owner and CEO of Profit Engine, commented:

"The difference between a generic recommendation and one that actually moves the needle comes down to how thoughtfully you make the request. When you provide specific examples and clear direction, you're making your boss's job easier, while also ensuring they can write something authentic and compelling.

"Vague requests lead to vague recommendations, which don't help anyone. The best recommendations tell a story about your impact, and that story starts with how you frame your initial ask.

"Take the time to think about what you want highlighted, provide context about your achievements, and give your boss the tools they need to showcase your strengths effectively. A well-crafted request often results in a recommendation that's more detailed and persuasive than anything you could have written yourself."

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About Profit Engine

[Profit Engine](#) is a specialized, family-run link-building agency that combines hands-on, white-hat outreach with AI-driven strategy to secure high-quality backlinks via guest posts, niche edits, HARO placements, tiered linking, and full-service packages tailored to e-commerce, affiliate, agency, and in-house marketing teams. They manually vet prospects through a rigorous 16-18 point quality checklist to ensure authoritative, relevant sites, while AI-powered insights reveal optimal link opportunities and anchor strategies. Their offerings range from strategic link audits and bespoke campaigns to packaged services at various price tiers, all backed by transparent reporting, dedicated support, and a strong replacement guarantee if links drop. Trusted by SEO professionals and online businesses alike, they've delivered measurable ranking and traffic growth through ethical, scalable link solutions.