

get SOCIAL

NEW WAYS TO (JOB) SEEK AND FIND ONLINE

The rise of online social networking is becoming a major complement to the science of online job hunting. There is a clear benefit to having your professional profile already accessible on social networking sites at the exact time you are posting your resume and other information on traditional job search sites like Monster.com and WorkinTexas.com.

Try to keep employers' perspectives in mind. What are they doing to find the right employees? What tools, resources, shortcuts, and tricks-of-the-trade are they using to fill costly job openings as quickly as possible?

Search (and Think) Like Employers

Learn to anticipate employers' search methods when they are trying to find good job candidates. If you were an employer and needed someone like you, how would you find you?

Employers try all kinds of tactics, including joining and searching the same social networking sites as many job hunters do. Employers also have access to job candidate source databases such as: Monster's SmartFind, Notch-Up and Airc Sourcepoint. Get familiar with these databases.

Meanwhile, some recruiters resort to a tactic called "x-raying" (searching deep within a competitor company's Web site for passive job candidates) and "flipping" (using a competitor's Web site to identify linked sites that also may be a source of passive job candidates). They search using keywords, job titles, location, education, etc. — just like you.

However, employers are sorting through hundreds of profiles and don't have time to read through all the "fluff." So, whenever you post professional information about yourself online, always make it short, simple and straight to the point.

For example, Twitter limits you to 140 characters per "tweet." So, if your purpose for having a Twitter account is to find employment, only "tweet" things that may draw potential employers to your profile and make them actually care about what you are tweeting. Otherwise, they will breeze right past what you've written on their way to tweets they can use in looking for good candidates.

Ultimately, employers will "unfollow" you if your tweets are often or always seem concerned with non-professional matters.

Spend some time learning the nuances of each site. One size does not fit all and you are the best judge of which site(s) are best for you.

Using social networking sites also means getting accustomed to certain informal nuances adopted by social networkers. For example, because Twitter provided no easy way to group tweets or add extra data, the Twitter community came up with hashtags. A hashtag is similar to other Web tags — it helps add tweets to a category. Hashtags have the "hash" or "pound" symbol (#) preceding the tag, like so: #traffic, #followfriday, #hashtag.

Employers are always drawn to people who have things in common with them. So, don't forget your alma mater. On all job-search and networking sites, there's obviously a chance of connecting with an employer when you offer information about the school(s) you attended and the year in which you graduated.

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As you would on a resume, steer clear of anything that has the potential of turning off an employer. While social networking sites are made to help people learn more about others, be careful about aligning yourself to one political or religious affiliation, for instance. For every potential employer that affiliation attracts, it will probably deter another.

Remain as individual and unique as you possibly can. You want employers to know you by name and maybe even have the office buzzing about you before you arrive for that first interview. The idea is to make your skills, experience, knowledge, and work ethic stand out. Position yourself in such a way that the employer can't stop "following" you!

ACRONYMS: Space-friendly Online Assets

The Internet is the perfect venue for acronyms. They allow you to say more with less. JDGCAWI! (Just don't get carried away with it!) If the acronym is not commonly known or has more than three letters, don't use it.

Examples of commonly-used acronyms include:

- **FYI** – For Your Information
- **DIY** – Do it Yourself
- **BTW** – By the Way
- **BC** – Because
- **FWD** – Forward
- **B4** – Before
- **FB** – Facebook
- **PPL** – People
- **YW** – You're Welcome

Pick a Spot and Build a Profile

There are a lot of online social networking sites popping up on the Internet. It can get confusing, especially if you try to master them all. If you find it overwhelming, find one or two sites and focus on putting them to optimal use. Dan Schawbel of Mashable.com says, "Most job seekers don't optimize their profile, cultivate their network, join and participate in groups, use applications, and exchange endorsements. That is basically everything you should be doing in a nutshell."

Disclaimer: Although becoming transparent to employers can work for you, it can also work against you. Don't reveal too much about yourself. TMI (too much information) can turn employers away.

Write Tight and Spell Right

Don't forget the basic rules of the English language. First of all, some sites limit the number of characters you can use in a message. Writing well prevents you from seeming long-winded while still letting you get your message across. There are two reasons this is important. You don't want people to misunderstand what you are saying, and a lot of employers value employees with good written communication skills.

To further reiterate on grammar and spelling, employers have a lot of well-qualified candidates from which to choose. So, they use alternate criteria (like writing skills) to narrow their choice. To avoid being eliminated from consideration on a technicality, review EVERYTHING you say and do. Use a dictionary or a Web site like dictionary.com or Google.com to check your spelling. If you're not sure something you are about to post makes sense grammatically, have someone else check it or copy and paste it into a software program (i.e., Microsoft Word) that checks grammar. The goal is to remain as appealing to employers as possible — almost all they can go by is what you have written. Even the smallest slip-up can cost you a chance at a job.

Always double-check punctuation, grammar, and organization before you hit send or submit!

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