

USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE JOB SEARCH | | FACEBOOK, TWITTER, & LINKEDIN



Employment Services

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USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE JOB SEARCH

Networking (the art of connecting and building relationships with people) is the #1 way to find a job in the US marketplace. Certainly who you know (and who knows you) can directly affect your ability to find a job. So why not enhance your networking abilities online? With the advent and popularity of websites such as **LinkedIn, Facebook, Tumblr, Instagram, Reddit, Pinterest, and Twitter**, employers and job seekers alike are utilizing these tools for recruitment and job sourcing activities. This handout will explore these three websites and review some best practices for effectively improving your job search.



CREATING A POSITIVE ONLINE IMAGE

(Adapted from articles in jobpostings.net and collegegrad.com)

It is important to know that employers are accessing social networking sites to gain information about potential new hires. You have control of what type of information appears about you on these sites, and we want you to be aware of how these sites can and are being used.

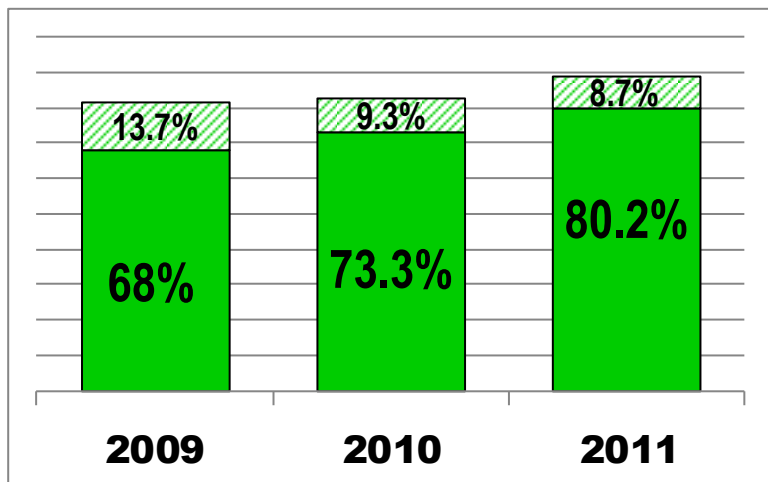
What is your online presence saying about you? Are you representing yourself as a tech-savvy professional candidate? Though you may feel that your social sites are personal spaces, you must realize that recruiters can, and often do, read much of what is posted about candidates on the web.

Social Network Recruiting Growth

Companies are increasingly using social networks to recruit new talent, not just new customers.

~ Results of Jobvite survey, July 2011

Companies Using Social Media to Recruit



Currently Use

Plan to Begin This Year

According to a recent survey by ExecuNet, a career and business networking organization, the influence of online research on hiring is on the rise: 83% of surveyed recruiters reported their use of search engines to learn more about candidates, while 43% reported that they have eliminated candidates from consideration based on what they found in online profiles.

Before posting information about yourself online, ask yourself if you would feel comfortable sharing the same information with your neighbors, family members, or future employers. If you are unsure, get a second opinion from a professional source.

What is your online presence saying about you? Are you representing yourself as an up-to-date, professional candidate?

Posting information about yourself online needs to be a deliberate and thoughtful act: you have to realize that once you have done it, it is permanent; and you won't always be able to control who sees it or how they will react to it. Sure, you can try to erase the information by removing it from your Facebook page or photos from your Instagram account; but, if those pages are indexed by Google or other search engines, or copied and posted to another page or web site, then you've lost the ability to ever *permanently* remove the information. People are discovering that the information that they post online is not private, even if they think that it should be, and even if the website has privacy settings. Therefore, you should use sound judgment when posting information online.

What to Avoid on Your Social Networking Sites:

Personal information:

- Phone numbers
- Addresses
- Social Security Numbers
- Highly personal family information

~~713-123-4567
890 Home Avenue~~

Postings where you discuss or include:

- Controversial issues
- Politics, religion, etc.
- Spelling or grammatical errors
- Quotes with vulgar language
- Threats to the safety of you and others
- Rants about current or former employers

~~My Daily Gripe
I really hate my boss! He is such a #^@*%!\$ idiot! I just want to punch him in his stupid face! >:(~~

While it is necessary to take these precautions, you don't want to go overboard and not have any sort of online presence whatsoever. In today's highly technological world, living "off-the-grid" might seem unusual to hiring managers. Instead, use these online platforms to your advantage!

Remember: you are in charge!



Tips to Help Create and Manage a Positive Online Image:

BE ALERT: Search for yourself online.



- ⇒ Type your name in quotation marks in Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and Pipl.com. If you see something you don't like, contact the site's owner and ask that it be removed. If it is impossible to remove, you may need to create new positive online content that will overshadow the negative content over time.
- ⇒ Be aware that comments about you or pictures of you can get posted on someone else's page and cause job search setbacks. Create Google news alerts* for yourself.
- ⇒ Monitor your "brand" monthly to determine exactly what information is available to potential employers.

BE PROFESSIONAL: Clean up your social networking sites (Facebook, Reddit, Flickr, Twitter).

- ✓ Choose your friends wisely.
- ✓ Activate privacy settings on social networking accounts.
- ✓ Make sure to look at everything on your site with a critical eye!
Pictures say 1,000 words!



BE PROACTIVE: Increase your online presence to build visibility and credibility as an expert in your field or hobby.

- Create a LinkedIn profile (www.linkedin.com) to confirm your resume information and to build a network of professional contacts.
- Start a career-based blog (with only positive comments).
- Design a professional online portfolio or resume highlighting your accomplishments.
- Create a personal website specific to your job search.
- Join online groups related to your career interests and make intelligent, well thought-out comments.

BE PREPARED: Develop a response for any negative online information about yourself.



- ◆ Before the interview process begins, develop key messages designed to answer questions that may arise if there is negative information connected to your name online.
- ◆ For more assistance in creating a positive online image, contact a career counselor at Jewish Family Service.

***How to set up a Google news alert:**

1. Go to: www.google.com/alerts
2. Enter your first and last name in quotation marks into the "Search query" box
3. Select the options you prefer for alert type, frequency, and quantity
4. Enter your email address—it does not have to be a Gmail address
5. Click on "Create Alert"

GET FOCUSED WITH **facebook**

Facebook was originally created to connect users socially to family and friends, but its usage has exploded to include professional business marketing and networking. Since so many companies and organizations are using Facebook to enhance customer communications and marketing, it makes sense for job seekers to use it to promote themselves, meet other professionals and research job openings. The following are some Facebook strategies to consider:

- 👍 Whether or not you use Facebook for professional networking, experts highly recommend having a clean Facebook page, free from any unfavorable pictures, photos or comments that are not “work appropriate.”
- 👍 If you don’t want to use Facebook for professional purposes, be sure to adjust your account’s privacy settings so employers can’t access your complete profile.
- 👍 Add job search apps—these allow users to post and share resumes, view new job openings and expand users’ professional networks.
- 👍 “Like” companies in which you have interest. Many companies use Facebook to connect with job candidates.

TWEET YOUR PROFESSIONAL NETWORK USING **twitter**

At first glance, Twitter may seem like an unlikely source for conducting a job search. Brief, little, 140-character “tweets” may not appear to offer very much information. However, because Twitter feeds are regularly picked up by web search engines, it is a powerful resource for networking, researching organizations, searching job opportunities, and following companies that are prospective employers. The following are some Twitter strategies to consider:

- 🐦 Whether or not you use Twitter for professional networking, experts highly recommend having a clean Twitter account, free from any unfavorable pictures, photos or comments that are not “work appropriate.” This is not the place to express political opinions, to complain, or to vent anger/frustration!
- 🐦 If you choose to use Twitter as a professional tool, provide a brief bio indicating employment goals, skills and accomplishments, as well as a professional-looking photo.
- 🐦 Tweet regularly about your job search—state desired position, field/industry and location.
- 🐦 Search companies/people of interest and regularly follow their tweets.
- 🐦 To search job opportunities, type in a desired job title into the Twitter search engine. Hash tags (#) can be very useful—search the following hashtags: #jobs, #jobseeker, or #careers. Also, check out www.twitjobsearch.com to search for jobs on Twitter.

LEVERAGING FOR THE JOB SEARCH

(Portions of this section were adapted from John Hopkins University Career Services, per their permission).

LinkedIn is a professional networking site designed to help you connect with professionals in industries and organizations that relate to your career and professional interests. Think of LinkedIn as a professional Facebook. LinkedIn is a place to share interests, ask questions, and network with professionals from a wide range of job titles and industries. In fact, over 135,000 University of Houston alumni currently have profiles on LinkedIn.

As a job seeker, you can utilize LinkedIn to:

- Build your professional network
- Connect with alumni and other professionals in industries/organizations that interest you
- Learn about current trends in the fields that interest you
- Research companies and industries
- Demonstrate your knowledge/expertise
- Find job opportunities

Once you complete these 5 steps, LinkedIn will become a powerful tool for you both to learn about careers and to find a job or internship. You can also visit an on-line tutorial at <http://grads.linkedin.com>.

Getting Started with LinkedIn:

1. Establish your professional profile.
2. Join groups.
3. Populate your profile with connections.
4. Find and promote expertise and ideas.
5. Explore opportunities.

1. Establish your professional profile.

Your profile should demonstrate the knowledge and skills you have developed that relate to your interests. It should only include information relevant to your job search, much like a conversation at a professional networking event. Your major, internship/work/volunteer experiences, class projects, honor societies, student and professional activities are all relevant, but other information such as the year you were born, your marital status and your home address is not.

Professional “Headline”

This, along with your name, is the first thing others will see. This can be your current or desired job title, but your headline gives you a way to sum up your professional “identity” in a short phrase. Think of it almost as your motto or tagline. It is recommended that you use a short phrase that highlights your career objective along with your skills, interests and experiences. Examples can be found on the next page:

- *Marketing professional with experience creating campaigns for Fortune 100 companies.*
- *Proven leader with experience in designing biomedical devices and managing interdisciplinary teams.*
- *Sales/customer service professional with demonstrated strengths in client relations and account management.*
- *Computer engineering graduate with software development, programming and systems analysis experience.*

Photo

This is the first image an employer or connection will have of you. Your photo needs to project a polished and professional image. Take a photo in business professional attire. Don't use a photo from a social event or one that requires you to crop someone out of the photo.



Summary

This should outline the key skills and experiences that are relevant to the industry or career field that interests you. Areas to focus on include:

- Professional interests
- Activities/Affiliations
- Community involvement
- Professional Strengths/Accomplishments
- Relevant work/volunteer experience
- Relevant training & projects
- Leadership experience

Strong background in promotional writing and editing. Experienced reporter for a regional newspaper. Fifteen years of experience in public relations and marketing for a non-profit arts group. Utilized print and social media. Interested in career opportunities in advertising, public relations, or other positions focused on promotions work, communication, and writing.

Specialties

Include key words so others can find you. These can be skills, languages or techniques such as:

- ✓ Communication - verbal & written
- ✓ Interpersonal/Teamwork
- ✓ Problem-solving/Analytical
- ✓ Organization
- ✓ Management
- ✓ Languages
- ✓ Computer/Technical skills
- ✓ Research/Analytical skills

Social Media experience: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. Technical: Adobe, Pagemaker, Dreamweaver CS4, Html code, Windows and Mac Platforms.

Education



Include your Major(s), Minor(s) and Concentration(s), if relevant to your professional goals. Highlight any academic honor societies and/or awards in the Honors section. Typically, many experienced professionals who have been out of school for a long time do not elaborate much on their educational experiences, but recent graduates may feel free to highlight relevant courses, papers, projects, and assignments.

☞ Examples:

Selected Chemical EE Courses and Projects:

Modeling Dynamics & Control for Chemical and Biological Systems, Kinetic Processes, Chemical & Biological Separations, Applied Physical Chemistry, Transport I & II, Thermodynamics, Biochemistry and Introduction to Chemical & Biological Process Analysis.

Mass Transport from a Dissolving Particle:

Created a simulation of a spherical water droplet from an inhaler traveling down the respiratory system using MATLAB. Summarized the findings in a research report.

Experience: Work and Volunteer Experience

The key to a successful experience is to think of all your experiences that are relevant to your goals. Paid experiences should be included only if they are relevant. In fact, if your volunteer experiences are more relevant to your career objective, then describe those in this section.



Resume Upload: It is possible to upload your resume into LinkedIn to populate the experience section. If you opt to include a copy of your resume as part of your profile, it is VERY IMPORTANT that you remove your address from that resume. For your personal safety and to prevent identity theft, only your email address should be included in your LinkedIn profile.

Include Keywords in the “Specialties” and “Skills” Sections

Hiring managers and recruiters often conduct keyword searches to find and filter candidates. You can research the Specialties sections of others’ LinkedIn profiles to learn more about keywords within a particular career field. Include the keywords related to your field for which you have knowledge and experience.

Request Recommendations and Endorsements from Professionals Who Know You and Your Work Well

Ask current and former supervisors, colleagues, volunteer coordinators, and other professionals to write LinkedIn recommendations for you. Hiring managers are often drawn to candidates whom other people have endorsed. You may write recommendations for others as well.

Visit Jewish Family Service (JFS) for additional assistance with your LinkedIn Profile.

TIP: Once you are a member of a group, post articles, ask questions and comment within these groups to raise your professional profile.

2. Join Groups

By joining groups, you can interact with individuals who have similar interests, attended similar schools, or who have similar career objectives. It is a quick way to connect to a number of individuals while you build your individual connections. It allows you to discover the current issues and trends within a particular career field. Best of all, by joining a group, you have access to job listing posted by group members that may not be posted elsewhere.

Network with other JFS career professionals, job seekers, and employers!

Join the **JFS Houston, Employment Services LinkedIn Group** at <http://tinyurl.com/jfslinkedin>. This online group is managed by the JFS Employment Services staff and includes updates about job opportunities, news, and events. JFS clients can now connect with professionals for information interviews and networking through this LinkedIn group

Connect with others with whom you share common interests.

Do a keyword search in the Groups Directory to find other groups related to:

- **Industry/Career Fields** - Join Groups Directory to find other groups related you.
- **Professional Associations and Organizations** - If you are a member of a local chapter of a group, join the corresponding LinkedIn Group.
- **Other Interests/Recreation** - Interested in particular hobbies and/or volunteer causes? Many people who work in those industries belong to those same groups online.

3. Populate Your Profile with Connections

The more people you have in your network, the easier it is to connect to others in a variety of industries and locations. You should start by connecting with 5 people you already know. This number should grow as you use the system.



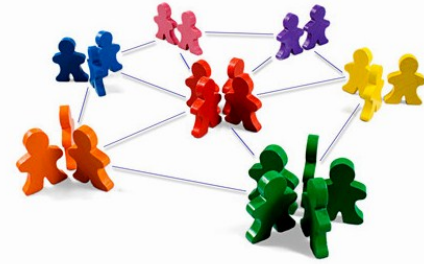
Be sure to connect with people you already know (Add Connections)

LinkedIn will suggest people to add to your network, but it's important that you seek out people that you know to add to your network.

- For people you already know, search by their name.
- Find other people by using the Advanced People Searches. Search on school, keywords, current and past employers, and fields.
- Upload your address book and/or search your email contacts through your email provider (Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, etc.).
- Import your desktop email application contacts (Outlook, Apple Mail, etc.).
- Once you list your previous schools and employers in your profile, you can opt to invite people that are connected to those organizations.

Potential people in your network:

- ☺ Supervisors and Co-workers - Past and Present
- ☺ Neighbors, Fellow Community Members
- ☺ Fellow Congregants
- ☺ College & High School Classmates
- ☺ Alumni Associations' and College Clubs' Members
- ☺ Friends, Friends of Relatives
- ☺ Volunteer Groups' Members
- ☺ Professional Associations' Members



There are four ways to connect directly with professionals on LinkedIn:

1. You can send an **invitation** to add a new contact to your network.
2. You can send a **message** to an existing contact in your network.
3. You can request an **introduction** to a contact in someone else's network.
4. You can send an **InMail message** to a new contact. This requires an account upgrade for a subscription fee.

1) Sending an Invitation to Connect

You can connect directly with individuals or through groups on LinkedIn. Clearly articulate who you are and what your goals are.

- **State how you are connected** (How did you find this person? What do you have in common with the person? Who referred you to this person?).
- **Describe who you are** (Your current profession/job seeking status).
- **Communicate your objectives:**
 - To learn about their industry/career field, organization.
 - To get advice on the job search process/preparing for an interview.

2) Sending a Message

You can send direct messages (like an email) to contacts in your network and your groups. It is extremely important to be professional and courteous in your correspondences with professionals! **Be sure to carefully review any messages before you send them, as LinkedIn does not offer spell check assistance.** Please review the section in this handout entitled, "LinkedIn Etiquette" for tips and sample messages.

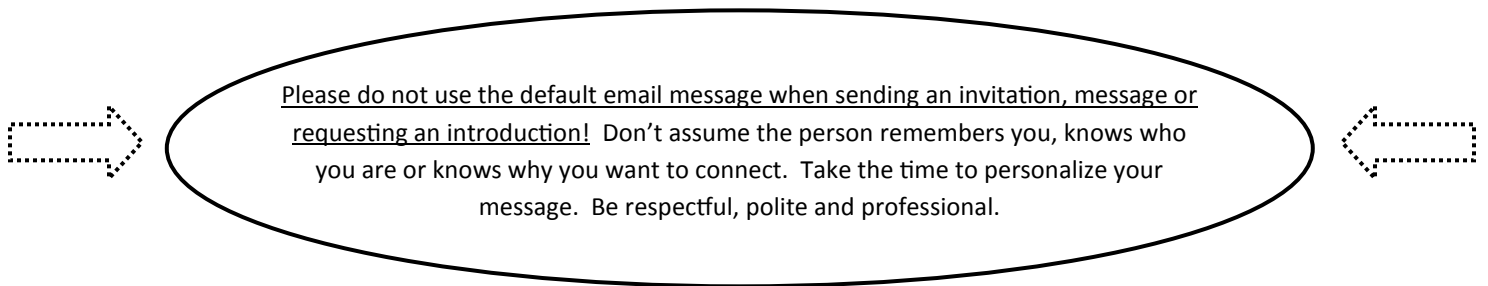


3) Request an Introduction

You can request an introduction from a 1st degree contact in your network to someone in their network (a 2nd or 3rd degree contact in your network). **Be careful to send introduction requests only to contacts who have indicated an interest in providing expertise and/or job inquiries to others - this will increase your chances of receiving the introduction** (this will be included in the Contact Setting section of each profile).

4) InMail Messages

This feature allows you to send a message to any LinkedIn member, whether the member is in your network or not. This feature requires an account upgrade for a subscription fee.



Invitation Example One:

Hello Evan,

My name is Rachel Wasserstein, and I met you at last Thursday's HR Pros networking event. I found your profile on the JFS LinkedIn Group, and I thought your comments on the accounting industry discussion were timely and insightful. I'd like to add you to my LinkedIn network. Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,
Rachel Wasserstein

Invitation Example Two:

Hello Naomi,

I've been reading your blog posts on the _____ website, and I want to thank you for the great information. As a new marketing communications professional, your advice and knowledge about the public relations field has been really informative. I'd like to add you to my professional LinkedIn network. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Sam Goldman

LinkedIn Etiquette: What to Say and How to Say It

Networking with professionals is about building relationships and connections in a purposeful, organized way. When you contact other professionals to network, it should be to seek out and gather information about careers that interest you. Your questions should focus on asking for advice or assistance based on that purpose.

It is appropriate for job seekers to connect with LinkedIn members for the following purposes:

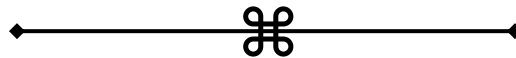
1. To **ask questions/gain information** about their company or organization.
2. To **request information** and advice about a career field or industry.
3. To **request referrals** to other professionals in their industry or organization.
4. To **request consideration** for a job opportunity at an organization for which you have already submitted your application.

Sample Questions to Ask LinkedIn Contacts

- I'm interested in your organization or industry. What skills and experiences would help me stand out as an applicant?
- Since I am interested in this industry, what are the key companies, organizations and professional associations that I should know about? Are there other professionals that you recommend I talk to?
- What advice do you have for a career-changer who is preparing to enter your field?

Example 1:

"I found your profile through the JFS Group on LinkedIn, of which I am a member. I am very interested in pursuing a career in consulting, and your profile suggests a vast knowledge and experience in this field. Would you have a few minutes to share information and advice for pursuing consulting? I am flexible and open to a conversation at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you! Thank you in advance for your time and consideration."



Example 2:

"Hi Sarah, I noticed that we were both in the Texas Exes group on LinkedIn and that Tim Jones is a mutual contact. I've heard great things about your company and would like to learn more about it from you. Would you be available for a quick call this Tuesday at noon or Thursday at 3pm to discuss it? Please let me know if e-mail works better for you, and I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you very much."

Example 3:

“Susan, I noticed on your LinkedIn profile that you work for Apple Computers as a Sales Representative but you are connected to Louis Reeves, a Research and Development specialist at Apple. I was wondering if you would be willing to introduce me to him so that I could ask him some questions about his position with Apple. I appreciate any help or suggestions you would be willing to provide me. Thank you in advance, Martin”



Example 4:

“Bill, Dan suggested I check out your group. In the process, I came across your profile. I’ve recently submitted an application to your company and I was thinking that maybe our networks can help each other. I’m exploring new directions after a successful career in Pharmaceutical Sales at Pfizer, GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca. Would you be open to a brief networking conversation? Thanks for your consideration, Phillip”



LinkedIn Etiquette Dos & Don'ts

DO:

Be Patient.

If someone you want a connection with or information from does not respond right away to your request, do not flood them with additional requests. It is considered rude and may be frustrating to the potential connection.

Create a User-Friendly Profile.

Include enough information so that potential contacts or employers will not have to hunt for information about you. Otherwise, contacts may think that you do not care enough about your job search or you are just too busy to fill in the information.

Post a Professional Photo of Yourself.

It is worth the time and effort to get a professional headshot for your profile. You want connections to see that you are a professional who cares about the image you portray to others. A picture can be worth 1,000 words!

Thank the Person Who Gives You a Recommendation.

Remember, the person giving you the recommendation had to take time out of his/her busy day to do so. Make sure to always send them a thank you message because giving recommendations is a choice, not something that connection had to do.

Use Good Judgment.

LinkedIn is not for social networking. It is for professional networking, and professionals do not want to know where you went to dinner last night and with whom, unless it was with the CEO of a large corporation.

DON'T:

Make Up False Experience.

You will be discovered, and that will ruin your credibility. While you may be connected to over 100 people, your potential employer could be connected to many more.

Make Up False Connections.

Do not tell Sue that you know Bill from Exporting International when really, you only looked on their website at their biographies. Even in large companies, people talk, and you will be discovered.

Update Your Status Multiple Times a Day.

Twitter is for constant status updates. On LinkedIn, update with important professional information, not that your grandchild took his/her first steps. Remember that others may not have time to check your status every hour; they may only check it once a day.

Accept an Invitation from Someone You Do Not Know or Are Not Acquainted With.

LinkedIn was designed to help you connect with people you know. You do not want to connect with someone you do not know.

Approach LinkedIn with an “It’s all about me” Attitude.

Do not include your email in your name or headline. It is considered rude because it shows connections that you are only in it for yourself and do not care about the welfare of a company that supplies the basic functions for free. It is important to value the relationships that you are making when you connect.

Constantly Self-Promote.

Job seekers and small business owners frequently use LinkedIn to promote their small business or unemployment status—doing this is spam. Remember: the primary purpose for LinkedIn is to build and maintain professional relationships. Contributing intelligently to discussions, offering solutions to problems, and providing useful information to others is a much better way to “self-promote” a business or to get noticed by hiring managers.