

GUIDE TO USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Why use social media for job searching?

Social media can prove an excellent job-searching tool when used properly. Not only can you develop your own personal image, but you can use it as a networking tool and find hidden vacancies in the industry that you wish to work in. It is estimated that 90% of people hiring for jobs use social media for advertising and screening, but very few job seekers do the same.

There are a number of mainstream social media sites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn and through these you can access a whole range of different audiences.

Using social media in a professional capacity is very different to how you use it personally, so you will need to adjust your privacy settings on certain accounts to keep things private for family and friends, and make other accounts publically available with a professional tone.

Benefits of using social media

- Build your knowledge and identify main organisations in the careers sectors that interest you.
- Identify issues currently facing each industry, and particular organisations. These are valuable at interview
- Find key contacts at particular organisations and learn more about projects that they are working on. You can interact with these people and make comments on their posts, leading to excellent networking opportunities
- Be alerted to job vacancies and job postings
- Build your own professional presence online, helping you set yourself aside from other candidates

Why do employers use social media?

- It offers them a quick and cheap way to advertise their vacancies
- They can easily communicate with applicants and find out more about each one
- They can look for people with a professional image, good communication skills, and those that match their brand and their values
- They can advertise and market their organisation to followers and engage with people who are genuinely interested in what they do

Getting started with social media for professional networking and job-hunting

There are several key social media avenues that you can explore, but it is important to use ones that are relevant to the sector that you are keen on working in. Your online presence is equally as important as your CV. Before you set out on your job hunt, think about these two things

- How am I presenting myself professionally online now?
- How could I improve my online image?

Managing your online reputation is fundamental. You should always keep your language and tone professional, and not write or share anything that you wouldn't want to share with your employer. You should keep your photos, comments and articles in line with your company's values. It has been estimated that approximately 50% of employers review candidate's profiles online before making job offers.

Using Linked In

With more than 433 million users worldwide, LinkedIn is the largest professional networking site. It offers opportunities for you to network with professionals from all kinds of employment sectors, regions, groups and organisations. You can use it to:

- Find out more about organisations of interest and use this information in your interviews
- See the latest topics discussed within your sector and contribute
- Search for professionals by job and sector, and make speculative approaches
- Gain access to job postings
- Network with professionals

The most important part is your own professional profile. Make sure that you spend time developing your profile to include your skills and experiences, education and interests. Make sure that you pay some attention to your spelling and grammar.

To complete your profile, add a professional looking photo – this will add to your appeal and attract more people to look at your profile.

Also, try and join some groups and connect with people in your own sector, get involved in some discussions and share some articles that you think people will find interesting.

Using Twitter

Twitter is the ultimate micro blogging site, and you can connect with anyone from around the world. It is a little more informal than LinkedIn, but you still need to present yourself in a professional way. You need to complete a small profile, and you can put a job bio on twitter as well. You can also link your LinkedIn profile, so other people can go and find out more about you. It is important to have some strong tweets under your belt before you can really utilise Twitter. Do not just keep retweeting other people, share meaningful content that other people will care about.

You can use Twitter for job hunting by:

- Following companies that you want to work for and watching their job listings
- Interacting with their employees (but not too much as this can be seen as unprofessional)
- Looking for vacancies on www.twitjobseek.com
- Employers often tweet about their vacancies before they post adverts online, use the hashtag #job along with your desired job and find vacancies.

Using Facebook

Facebook is primarily a social site where people network for personal reasons, which sets it aside from LinkedIn. However, some employers and professional groups use Facebook to promote their brand and vacancies. More importantly, a lot of recruiters use Facebook to check you out. You can improve your job-hunting efforts by

- Creating two profiles – a professional one and a personal one. Make sure that your professional profile is squeaky clean.
- Provide detail – your professional profile should give employers some insight into who you are, and what you can offer them. Give some details of your work history, educational background and some of your skills and achievements. You can also upload your CV.
- Get involved – join some groups and like some companies that you are interested in. This can be a good way to establish a relationship with them and understand your sector.

Having an online presence shows your willingness to engage in the most current ways of working. Now employers are looking for someone who is confident in using ICT, and is comfortable with changing digital technologies. The way that we interact is developing quickly, and showing that you can network and engage with others online is a great way of showing your willingness to adapt. An effective social media presence can provide you with lots of opportunities to network with people from relevant sectors, and give recruiters more chance to find you and what you can offer.

Besides this, social media platforms are an excellent way to stay abreast of current affairs within your industry. This can provide you with information to fuel your application and leave a lasting impression at your interview.

Relevant websites

- www.twitjobseek.com
- <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin> - guides on using LinkedIn effectively
- <https://support.twitter.com/categories/281> - guides on using Twitter effectively
- <https://www.theguardian.com/careers/social-media-job-seeking>

Related documents

- [Guide to Researching the Job Market and Networking](#)
- [Top 10 Tips to using LinkedIn](#)
- [Top 10 Tips to Networking](#)
- [Building my Network](#)