

## Using Social Media in Your Career

In the past decade social media ( e.g. Linked In, Facebook, Twitter, blogs) has allowed us to extend our network beyond our location or geographical territory, and as a result, allows us to communicate with friends, family, and business contacts from all around the world.

Social Media technology continues to grow and change in order to accommodate business relationships as well as networking for professionals. While many employers are now using social media for recruitment, keep in mind that they are also choosing to use it to connect with colleagues, as well as to promote their products and services; meaning more professionals are online than ever before, allowing you to interact and network with them in a new way.

## Build a Professional Profile

Whichever social media venue you use, make sure your profile is professional and current. This means:

- Using a professional, not casual picture; be consistent through all your social media
- Separating the personal from the professional e.g. restrict access on Facebook so professional contacts only see what is appropriate; don't link all your tweets to your Linked in profile if they aren't relevant
- Updating your profile regularly with relevant information
- "Google" yourself; is there information that you would rather professional contacts not see? Ask your friends to untag you and improve your professional presence so it is first in the search results
- Introducing yourself when adding a new friend or for a connection; don't send a generic link, explain who you are and why you would like to connect with them, including information such as mutual friends/connections if applicable
  - Viewing the LinkedIn videos that help you get the most out your account. Go to <http://university.linkedin.com/career-services/resources>

## Building Your Network

- **Import your contacts from your email.** Doing this step can help you establish your first set of contacts, and eventually allow you to extend your network beyond just your mutual friends.
- **Join groups that relate to your career area, follow people in your industry.** This could include professional associations, alumni groups, individuals or organizations who are tweeting or blogging about your career/industry area. Linked In also has groups such as "Students and Recent Grads" where students, recent grads, career professionals and industry reps exchange useful information and leads.
- **View the connections of your connections.** People you know maybe connected to people in your career area; if so, ask your connections for an introduction (remember, personalize requests, explaining why this connection could be helpful).

## Finding Career and Employment Information

- **Monitor and participate in group discussions;** you can learn a great deal about your career area/industry by listening to these professionals and asking relevant questions.
- **Ask for advice.** Not for a job; advice and information can help you understand what a career is really like and what you need to do to be competitive when you graduate. As you establish connections, you can ask about potential opportunities and hiring/recruitment practices, but not for someone to tell you where the jobs are.
- **Don't be ashamed to say you're looking for work.** People have been successful finding work by using social media by letting others know they are unemployed. Still, remember that status updates should be used in moderation. If you don't get any results this way, don't post a similar update everyday until someone responds. Many people have so many friends on their profile, they seem to forget that they have a large network at their disposal – why not use it?

- **Company search.** LinkedIn can be especially helpful if you know of an organization that interests you already. Simply search for the organization in LinkedIn and you can find stats on the company, current employees, former employees, as well as their past or current position within the company. Use this specific search option to find a contact, or to set up an information interview with someone within a specific department.

Access to this kind of information can be extremely helpful and can give you an advantage as a networker. Many organizations are using Facebook and Twitter to share information about their operations, so don't forget to use these venues to find company information too.

## Tips for Using Social Media

### LinkedIn Tips <http://www.linkedin.com/>

- This is a professional networking site; post relevant career/work information only
- Present your experience with descriptive, relevant language, including your title, summary and experience sections
- Show your portfolio e.g presentations under the 'upload your work' option when editing your profile
- Personalize your URL
- Ask for recommendations from those who can positively describe your work. The best way to get a recommendation is to give one (Remember to be professional in your requests).
- Don't "overuse" your network; don't bombard or "spam" your online contacts with constant profile updates or requests, or else you might see your list of contacts decrease with time.

### Facebook Tips <http://www.facebook.com/>

- Use status updates moderately and effectively; think about who your audience is and what they need to know
- Don't spam friends with invites, games or applications; avoid sending out "mass" invitations or recommendations
- Read Facebook's privacy settings carefully and make sure your profile presents only what you want others to see. Also, avoid writing private messages on you or your friends' profiles – anything private should be said in person, or at least written in an Inbox message. These settings change frequently and it is best to check periodically to see if they are what you want them to be for your profile.
- **Use Facebook to gain new contacts.** Use key words within the search box to find groups relevant to your career interests. When joining a group, look for hints to see if the group is active and appropriate to what you're looking for. The more you communicate within the group, the more you will strengthen your networking bond with these individuals, and increase your chance of gaining potential contacts that may aid with your career endeavours.
- **Create separate friends list for your group of contacts.** By going to Facebook's Friends tab on your page, you can establish your friends into specific "lists." This can be incredibly useful as it can allow you to filter which friends can see your profile information, photos and status updates; as well as allow you to easily split your personal friends from your professional friends when looking at your newsfeed or main page.

### Twitter Tips <http://twitter.com/>

- Market yourself in your bio.
- Customize your background to showcase your skills and creativity
- Have a link to your online resume (tools like [VisualCV](#) can help).
- Follow industry experts in your industry on Twitter. Tools like [Twellow.com](#) can help.
- Use [TwitterJobSearch](#) to find positions

### Blogging Tips

- Decide if your blog is personal or professional and link accordingly
- Once you are working, make sure you don't blog inappropriately about your employer

### Career Centre Resources (available in our Career Library):

**Seven Days to Online Networking.** Ellen Sautter and Diane Crompton, JIST Works, 2008

**Profiting From Social Networking.** Patrice-Anne Rutledge, Pearson Education, 2008

**How to Find a Job on Linked In, Facebook, Twitter, My Space and Other Social Networks.** Brad & Debra Schepp, McGraw Hill 2010.

This tip sheet is intended as a counseling document and the information is subject to change. (Updated May 2015)