SOCIAL MEDIA & Your Online Image

Social media is transforming the landscape in relation to networking and finding a job or internship. More than half of all employers will conduct online research of prospective employees and over half of all employers will use social media to recruit.

Your Online Image
Your online image is your personal brand—at least in the eyes of a potential employer. If you were going to learn about a new product, you might research what the brand stands for, the company's values, etc. Your personal brand is much the same. It represents who you are, what you believe in, and your personal values. Employers will use online tools to research your brand and to make the determination as to whether your brand fits with their own.

When a hiring manager receives an email or application from you, there is an excellent chance he/she will use tools like LinkedIn or Google to get a more complete picture of who you are as a candidate. The information that surfaces makes up your online image—and it could help you or hurt you, which is why it is so critical to pay attention to your online persona.

In today's world of social media, Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other personal websites have changed the way most people feel about publicity. Nowadays, virtually everyone has an online reputation to manage, even if you don't think you do. Personal branding is more than just making yourself look good online. While it is certainly a large part, nothing is more important than actually being who you say you are and being able to effectively communicate this.

Social media has also become an important tool for job seekers due in part to the new ways people are finding out about (and earning) jobs. As you may already know, most jobs come about through networking, not applying on job boards or aimlessly sending out resumes. Social media tools make networking much easier and much more powerful due to their interactive nature. Thus, when a job seeker really learns to use social networking well, his chances for finding opportunities multiply exponentially.

Nowadays, social media also plays a part in how hiring managers are conducting their research on candidates. More than 80 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn. Additionally, 50 percent of hiring managers can determine whether a particular candidate's personality is a good fit for their company just by seeing that person's social media presence.
Positive Reasons to Use Social Media:
The good news is that the positive potential of using social media far outweighs the negative. While skills are a critical factor in the hiring process, most hiring decisions also take into account two additional components: fit with the organization and personal motivation. While a resume can be great at showcasing skills, its 1-2 pages is limiting. Your social media profiles provide an avenue for providing a more complete picture of you—including organizational fit and personal motivation. Social media can help you in many ways:

- Google search optimization (the stuff that pops up first in a search)—leverage your social media accounts to ensure that a professional, positive impression is the first result that is returned
- Create professional online profiles to showcase experiences, skills, knowledge, etc.
- Network with professionals, colleagues, alumni, etc.
- Seek out mentors for career advice
- Search for jobs, internships, and other opportunities
- Locate and research employers
- Join meaningful groups to follow industries, expand knowledge base

Did You Know?

- “In their efforts to vet applicants, some companies and government agencies are going beyond merely glancing at a person’s social networking profiles and instead asking to log in as the user to have a look around.”
- “Companies that don’t ask for passwords have taken other steps -- such as asking applicants to friend human resource managers or to log in to a company computer during an interview. Once employed, some workers have been required to sign non-disparagement agreements that ban them from talking negatively about an employer on social media.” (http://www.boston.com)

IS YOUR PROFILE CLEAN?

- Clean up your profiles across all social media sites you use.
- Remove inappropriate photos, comments and apps—even page likes—that might give someone the wrong impression!
- Once you’re happy with everything, make sure your privacy settings are set appropriately.

RECRUITER “TURN-OFFS”

- Provocative/inappropriate photos/information
- Drinking/drugs/illegal activity
- Bad-mouthing of past employers, coworkers or clients
- Racist/homophobic remarks
- Poor communication skills
- Religious/political comments

FACEBOOK

- Use your social network to find opportunities, to connect with employers
- Find info on employer’s pages, engage in dialog
- 2nd most important social site for recruiters
- Some jobs available
- Will be checked by 78% of employers

TWITTER

- Expand & reinforce online brand
- Helps with search engine optimization (SEO)
- Real time job postings
- Job search advice
- Directly connect to employers & recruiters
- 53% employers checked Twitter feeds of potential employees
- 2nd best social networking site for finding jobs

LINKEDIN

- Professional networking only; world’s largest
- “LinkedIn is not about passing time, it’s about saving time” (LinkedIn CEO, Jeff Weiner)
- Online resume, recommendations, branding
- Job Postings: most jobs of any social networking site
- Research employers & connect with hiring managers