

Social Media in Your Job Search

Social media is a great way to stay in touch with friends and relatives, but it also can be a useful tool in your job search. Employers are using social media sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to both promote their organizations and connect with potential job candidates.

While social media can help you research employers (critical to your job-search success), be sure to use it more actively—as a way to connect with potential employers. By following a few basic tips, you can use social media to get in front of hiring managers.

Get Noticed

There are a few key points to keep in mind when using social media as a job-search tool.

Create a Profile That Gives a Positive Impression of You

Think of it as your online resume: What do you want it to say about you? Hiring managers can get a stronger sense of who you are, and if you're a potentially good fit for their company, through your profile.

Be Aware of the Keywords You Include in Your Profile

This is particularly true for sites focused on professional networking, such as LinkedIn. Many employers do keyword searches to find profiles that contain the skill sets they're seeking in potential hires.

Don't Include Photos, Comments, or Information You Wouldn't Want a Potential Employer to See

Don't Mix Personal With Professional

The social media you use in your job search has to present you as a potential employee—not as a friend. Follow the rules for writing a resume.

Make Sure Your Profile Is Error-Free

You wouldn't offer up a resume rife with misspellings, would you?

Choose Appropriate Contact Information

Your e-mail address or Twitter handle should be professional—a simple variation on your name, perhaps—rather than suggestive or offensive.

Connect

Many organizations have embraced social media as an extension of their hiring practices, and provide information that you can use to research the organization and connect with hiring managers and recruiters.

- Check your college/university's social media groups: Many times, employers join such groups.
- Check social media groups that are focused around your field of interest or career.
- Search for the social media pages, profiles, and videos of organizations that interest you. Many organizations post job descriptions, information about salaries, and more.
- Ask questions. Even something as broad as "Is anyone hiring in [industry]?" may bring responses, and asking questions about a specific organization—"What's it like to work at Company X?" can give you insight into the organization and its culture.

Stay Connected

Keep in touch with recruiters or other decision makers you may interact with in cyberspace.

There may not be an available opportunity at their organization right now, but that could change, and you want to be considered when it does.

Finally, in addition to maintaining your network, use social media to build your network. Don't just establish a social media presence—work it. Reach out. Interact. You will get out of social media what you put into it.

Courtesy of the National Association of Colleges and Employers.