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***Social Recruiting,
Personal Search Engine Optimization, and
Personal Online Reputation Management.***

Susan P. Joyce, Guest Editor

The Internet Revolution

Social Recruiting

Personal Search Engine Optimization

Personal Online Reputation Management

LinkedIn

Other Social Media

Special Interest Groups

CAREER PLANNING and ADULT DEVELOPMENT JOURNAL

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Foreword

Looking Ahead with the Journal

We wish to thank the authors of this special issue of the Journal devoted to Social Recruiting, Personal Search Engine Optimization, and Personal Online Reputation Management. Our Guest Editor, Susan P. Joyce, has worked to bring together strong materials to support our readers who wish to use modern social media effectively. Thank you Susan!

Here is what we have planned for future issues of the Journal:

Job Search 6.0 with Guest Editor **Marie Zimenoff** of Fort Collins, Colorado.

Your Inner Hero's Journey and the **Kiersey temperament assesment system**, with Guest Editor **Carolyn Kalil** of southern California.

Book Reviews 2016-2017, with our Book Reviews Editor **Maggi Kirkbride** of San Diego, California.

Careers Related to the Internet, with Guest Editor and our Newsletter Columnist **Melissa A. Venable** of Beaufort, South Carolina.

A Life in the Military: Serving Worldwide Protecting our Nation. Guest Editor TBD.

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Introduction to This Issue

Welcome to the new world of job search technology!

I am very honored to be the editor of this special edition of the Career Planning and Adult

Development Journal on the topics of Social Recruiting, Personal Search Engine Optimization (“SEO”), and Personal Online Reputation Management (“PORM”). These have enormous impact on successful job search today, but are, unfortunately, invisible to the majority of job seekers today, in my experience.

Hopefully, this edition of the Career Planning and Adult Development Journal will help more people understand the current face of technology. I see too many people who are struggling and being defeated in their attempts to find good jobs. In my observations, one of the major reasons is because they do not understand how to effectively find a job today. The *rules* for job search have changed. In this special edition of the Journal, we will attempt to make the current rules and tools for effective job search clear and easily understood for successful implementation.

As the *graduate* of two corporate layoffs, I have seen the devastation caused by job loss. As a *techie* who worked in HR for several years and who has been observing, studying, speaking, teaching, and writing about online job search since 1995, I see the difficulty many job seekers have understanding the new steps and process required for successful job search today.

I gave a talk about LinkedIn at MIT last December to over 100 people unemployed for more than six months (described as the “*long-term unemployed*” or, simply, as the “LTU”). When the event was over, I sent invitations to the attendees to join our private LinkedIn Group, but over 25 percent of the attendees were not on LinkedIn. That lack is part of their problem, perhaps a major part, today.

My suspicion, since, in general, these were highly educated people, is that they were in *protecting-my-privacy* mode as soooo many (too many!) job seekers – particularly those over 40 – have told me. While I’ve been encouraging (some have said *nagging*) people to protect their privacy online since the mid-90’s, avoiding LinkedIn is not the way to do it. Those who are skipping LinkedIn to protect their privacy are protecting their privacy, but at the cost, today, of their employability, as described in this Journal.

While too many actively use Facebook with no concern about sharing their birthdays (crucial data for identity theft) with the world, those same people are avoiding LinkedIn. Thus, they are invisible in the very social network most used by employers for recruiting. Most employers trust that the information someone publishes on LinkedIn – with friends, family, and associates watching – is closer to the truth than the applications or resumes submitted. However, without a LinkedIn Profile, these folks have no solid online visibility to confirm the *facts* on their resumes and job applications. So, *many* opportunities are lost! And, they are much harder for old friends and colleagues to find for networking opportunities, like employee referrals.

The Articles and the Authors

Understanding this new world of technology is essential for job search and career success today. This special edition of the Career Planning and Adult Development Journal will attempt to describe this new process and help you to assist your clients in understanding the new process and appropriately leveraging the new tools. These authors are some of my favorite writers, experts in their fields. Most are regular contributors to my main website, Job-Hunt.org, trying to help job seekers cope with and succeed in today's evolving recruiting environment.

Introduction

1. [The Internet Revolution: Digital Disruption in Recruiting and Job Search](#) by Susan P. Joyce

We hear the term “*digital disruptions*” often these days. It refers to the changes in how we do things in our lives at work because of the impact of digital technologies. As those technologies become more available, permeating all parts of our lives, their impact increases. Unfortunately, we aren't necessarily handling those changes well. In this article, I try to provide an overview of what has happened and how both recruiting and job search are changing.

2. [Google Is the New Resume](#) by Richard N. (Dick) Bolles

For me, Dick Bolles was the first person to point out the impact of the disruption when he said, “*Google is the new resume.*” And, he said that in 2009. In this article, he brings us up-to-date on what that means today. Dick summarizes in 10 points how employers are using search engines today and what they are looking for now, information we should be sharing with our clients and readers as they search for jobs, today.

3. [Managing the Google Resume](#) by Susan P. Joyce

Building on Dick's introduction to the Google resume, this article describes what a Google resume is (yes, we all have one). The Google resume is the foundation of our personal online reputation management, requiring us to learn and use personal search engine optimization and enabling us to leverage social recruiting.

Social Recruiting

“*Traditional job boards*” as well as corporate “*career pages*” are supplemented and, sometimes, replaced with social media. Most of us have seen jobs posted on LinkedIn and links to jobs posted on Twitter, but social recruiting definitely doesn't stop there. These articles by Hannah Morgan and recruiter Jeff Lipschultz in this Journal help us understand what is going on in that space.

4. [How Social Recruiting Impacts Job Search](#) by Hannah Morgan

Hannah Morgan, the Career Sherpa and Job-Hunt's Guide to Job Search Navigation columnist, describes the sometimes surprising ways recruiters use social media for recruiting. Hannah analyzes the social media platforms being used by recruiters and employers today, and also

describes some emerging new sites that may become more important in the future, including how job seekers can leverage these platforms. Reading this article is essential if you think the current recruiting (really “*social recruiting*”) process is limited to LinkedIn.

5. Recruiters’ Selection Process Starts (and Ends) with Your Personal Brand by Jeff Lipschultz

A “*personal brand*” is an essential element for careers today, and a key aspect of professional visibility, personal SEO, and online reputation management. As a recruiter, Jeff Lipschultz, co-founder and president of A-List Solutions and Job-Hunt’s Guide to Working with Recruiters columnist, is perfectly positioned to explain the importance of a consistent “*personal brand*” for job seekers, today. Jeff gives us the recruiters’ perspective on someone’s personal brand, why it is essential, how it can be conveyed, and how it can be misinterpreted.

Personal Search Engine Optimization [SEO]

Often, to be hired today, a job candidate must be *find-able*. The best qualified candidate will not be hired unless they can be found by employers in resume databases/applicant tracking systems, LinkedIn, and other appropriate venues. Unfortunately, few job seekers understand how personal SEO works and how to implement it effectively to help them succeed in their job search.

6. Advanced Google Search: Making Google Work for Personal SEO and Personal Online Reputation Management by Susan P. Joyce

As a technology junky, I enjoy using Google. Really understanding how to use Google is a key to success today, as important as LinkedIn and resumes. As *sourcers* (experts at leveraging Google and other search technology) know, Google is much more talented than most of us realize. In this article, you’ll learn how to turn off Google’s personalization to see what others see when they search on your name and to stop Google from *fixing* search terms. This is essential knowledge for today.

7. Are Keywords the Foundation for Career Success? By Martin Yate

As usual, Martin Yate, author of the very successful *Knock Em Dead* series of books and also Job-Hunt’s Guide to Effective Resumes columnist, helps put the requirements of today’s resumes into perspective. He describes the automatic instinct to *generalize* resumes today and why that is so ineffective for the requirements of the technology being used today. In this article, Martin shares how to do the *customer-centric* resume required for success today, based on *Target Job Deconstruction* (TJD). A must-read for effective resumes and applications today!

8. Personal SEO for Job Search and Careers by Susan P. Joyce

Understanding and applying these elements of personal search engine optimization for job search and career documents is essential to successful job search today. In this article, I cover why, when, and where those keywords should be used to have the greatest impact. Finally, I

walk you through the process of using *Indeed's* very useful JobTrends to figure out the best keywords to use for social media (LinkedIn, in particular) to be easily found. This article is a must-read when trying to determine the best terms to choose for a LinkedIn Profile.

9. [How to Identify and Implement Keywords into USAJOBS](#) by Camille Carboneau Roberts

If you or your clients are looking for jobs with the US Federal Government, this is the article to read. Camille Carboneau Roberts, CEO of CC Career Services and Job-Hunt's columnist for the *Guide to Federal Job Search*, describes how to understand how to successfully use

USAJOBS.gov, the unique job board for the United States Federal Government. In this article, Camille provides both information and examples of the keywords in USAJOBS job descriptions being matched with the keywords in the resume submitted for that job, with the keywords highlighted so you can see them and how they are used.

Personal Online Reputation Management [PORM]

We all relentlessly search for information online, whether we are considering going to a movie or buying a house. We don't want to make a mistake with our investment of time and/or money. Employers filling jobs have the same instincts. In 2010 Microsoft released an amazing study, *Online Reputation in a Connected World* (1). The USA results showed that nearly 80 percent of employers "reviewed online reputation information about candidates" before reaching out to them. Too few job seekers understand or pay attention to that practice or their own images.

10. [Why Personal Online Reputation Management Is Necessary Today](#) by Susan P. Joyce

Being invisible online is not an effective method of reputation management. In fact, it can be very destructive! If someone else with the same name has done something that would disqualify the job seeker for an opportunity, opportunities are lost without any trace. Today, not having at least one solid entry in Google search results associated with us is viewed as a very bad sign by most employers.

11. [The Basics of Personal Online Reputation Management](#) by Susan P. Joyce

As Dick Bolles told us, Google is the new resume, whether or not we like it. In this article, I offer tactics for managing our online reputations plus how to repair a damaged reputation so that Google doesn't show the "bad stuff" on the first page of Google search results.

12. [Success by Association: Providing Evidence of Credentials in Personal Online Reputation Management](#) by Chandlee Bryan

Chandlee Bryan, Assistant Director at the Dartmouth College Center for Professional Development and Job-Hunt's columnist for the Guide to Job Search for New Graduates, offers very interesting analysis and advice on building professional reputation by earning credentials

from professional associations. These credentials fit very well in LinkedIn and offer proof of some level of expertise.

13. Plan B: Thoughts on Career Management for the New Era by Martin Yate

In his second article in this edition of the Journal, Martin Yate explains the concept of *MeInc* which turns *current* personal online reputation management into a career-long idea, essential for personal SEO and PORM. Once established, MeInc becomes the core of a career and can be modified to meet the changes we are experienced in both technology and the economy – making Plan B more achievable.

14. Mind Your Online Reputation: The Personal Branding Social Proof Paradigm by Meg Guiseppi

Meg Guiseppi, professional resume writer and Job-Hunt's columnist for the Guide to Personal

Branding, shares how essential a *personal brand* is and how closely it ties to and supports someone's personal online reputation. She also shares key insight into what employers are seeking when they search online, and how to provide them with what they need.

15. Use Social Media to Manage Your Online Reputation and Support Your Brand by Debra Wheatman

Debra Wheatman, president of Careers Done Write and Job-Hunt columnist for the Guide to Building Your Career and the Guide to Company Research, analyzes the five major social media sites (including two that might surprise you). She includes excellent advice on the most effective way to use them to support your professional reputation without falling into some of the traps that can harm that reputation.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the dominant professional network today, so it is extremely important for job seekers to understand how to use it and to use it effectively. Google respects it, so LinkedIn serves as the foundation of personal online reputation management for most of us.

16. LinkedIn as Your Online Professional Home by Ed Han

Ed Han, recruiting manager in New Jersey and columnist for Job-Hunt's Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search, provides in-depth information on the effective use of LinkedIn, from the value of LinkedIn to recruiters (as measured by LinkedIn's revenue) to the use of LinkedIn Groups and the completeness of LinkedIn Profiles. As a recruiter, Ed well recognizes the value of LinkedIn to job seekers and shares his insight.

17. How the LinkedIn Profile Should (and Should Not) Align with the Resume by Laura Smith-Proulx

Laura Smith-Proulx, CEO of An Expert Resume and columnist for Job-Hunt's Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search shares the importance of ensuring that the LinkedIn Profile is

appropriately aligned with the resume or job application. She also explains how the LinkedIn Profile is more than a resume, including elements not found in a traditional resume. If you think a LinkedIn Profile is just another online resume, read this article to understand how wrong that perspective is.

18. [How to Combat Ageism with a LinkedIn Profile](#) by Laura Smith-Proulx

To their detriment, many *older* job seekers avoid using LinkedIn for fear of being discriminated against because of their age. In this second article by Laura Smith-Proulx, Laura describes how to manage the appearance of age in a LinkedIn Profile and how to present a consistent message about the value provided by the job seekers without revealing age.

19. [How the Unemployed Can Leverage LinkedIn](#) by Susan P. Joyce and Laura Smith-Proulx

Laura Smith-Proulx and I combined forces to write this article because while LinkedIn can be challenging for someone who is unemployed to use, they can (and should) nonetheless be very visible and active on LinkedIn. But, many questions exist like: What *job title* should be used? Who is the *current employer*? What should the Professional Headline say? Read this article for the answers.

Other Social Media and Visibility

LinkedIn is, of course, not the only social network that can impact personal online reputations today, and we have many ways to present ourselves positively to potential employers using the currently available technology.

20. [Using Social Media for Personal Online Reputation Management](#) by Debra Osborn

Debra Osborn is an Associate Professor in the Educational Psychology and Learning Systems department at the Florida State University. In this article Debra and her associates take a deep dive into the various social networks available today, including some very new ones that may be more important to all of us in the future.

21. [Add Pinterest to Your Client Support Repertoire](#) by Kathleen Lyons

Kathleen Lyons, president of FastNet Media and columnist for Job-Hunt's Guide to Green

Industry Job Search, offers her expert advice on leveraging Pinterest.com a social media site with 176 million users (September, 2015), growing in popularity every day. Kathleen describes how to set up a Pinterest account and use it effectively.

22. [Online Visibility Through Portfolios](#) by Hannah Morgan

In her second article in this Journal, Hannah Morgan offers a glimpse into online visibility beyond the usual social media venues. Online portfolios offer job seekers the ability to provide a demonstration (and proof) of their skills and accomplishments described in their resumes,

applications, and other social media profiles. These portfolios can be linked from job applications, LinkedIn Profiles, even email.

Special Groups

Some groups have special issues to address in their online visibility. In this section, we address the needs of four specific groups.

23. Best Practices in Online Reputation and Personal Branding for New Graduates by Laura Smith-Proulx

In her final article in this edition of the Journal, Laura explains why new grads of both college and vocational schools need to be visible on LinkedIn. She also explains how they can build an effective Profile, before they graduate, so they are ready for employers to find them when the inevitable searches begin.

24. Online Presence for Mature Job Seekers: Getting Started by Phyllis Mufson

Certified career coach Phyllis Mufson is Job-Hunt's columnist for Job-Hunt's Guide to Boomer Job Search. As a speaker and career coach, she is accustomed to the concerns Boomer and other 40+ job seekers have about being visible online. In this article, she offers an eight-step process for older job seekers to build the online presence necessary for successful job search today.

25. Coaching Veterans to Understand the Value and Proper Usage of Social Media by Patricia Frame

Many transitioning military and veterans are skeptical about the necessity and relevance of social media for job search. Patricia offers a step-by-step approach to helping them build their online presence, translating their military terminology for the civilian job market, and leveraging those excellent skills in planning and organization to use social media successfully for their job searches.

26. Social Media Branding for People Living with a Chronic Health Condition by Rosalind Joffe

Rosalind Joffe, president of ciCoach and Job-Hunt columnist for the Guide to Job Search with Chronic Illness, provides an amazingly sensitive description of the personal career journey for someone with a chronic illness. She also offers excellent guidance in the use of social media for the personal online reputation management/personal branding for them. In light of how many people have chronic illnesses which range from allergies to life-threatening conditions like heart disease, this article applies to more individuals than we may think it does.

27. A Grad School Parable by Kate Duttro

Kate Dutro, PhD, trainer/career coach for "recovering academics" and Job-Hunt's columnist for the Guide to Careers for Academics, offers a parable about how students in grad school typically focus all of their attention on their research and studies which leaves them unprepared for a nonacademic life after that PhD is achieved. In this article, Kate describes how academics can lay the groundwork for their life after grad school in case they are not among the minority

of PhD graduates who land a tenure-track job. This parable is applicable to students and also those currently employed folks who are also ignoring LinkedIn. This article may be the *last* in this Journal, but it is definitely not the *least*.

Reference

Data Privacy Day: Online Reputation in a Connected World, Microsoft: go.microsoft.com/?linkid=9709510

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About the Guest Editor



Susan P. Joyce is the president of NETability, Inc. a company she founded in 1995 after her 1994 corporate layoff from Digital Equipment Corporation (number 29 on the Fortune 500 at that time). With several years of experience working in Harvard University's central personnel office, in a compensation consulting firm, and recruiting online for NETability clients combined with her early career in military intelligence, she has a relatively unique perspective and understanding of how today's job market works.

Susan earned a B.S. in Education at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, and an MBA in Information Systems at Boston University. In January, 2016, Susan concluded nearly five years of work with the MIT Sloan School of Management as a Research Affiliate and a Visiting Scholar focused on studying the issues related to long-term unemployment for people over forty.

Susan is also a veteran of the United States Marine Corps where she served as an intelligence officer on a general's staff at a NATO command – a very interesting job! This background in technology, information collection and analysis, and HR, enables Susan to focus on helping job seekers understand the technology-related issues necessary for success in job search today: personal SEO (search engine optimization), social media management, personal online reputation management, and effective use of Google.

Susan publishes two websites. *Both* sites are included in the current **Forbes** list of **Top 100 Websites for Your Career**:

[Job - Hunt.org](http://Job-Hunt.org) (owned since 1998, don't forget that hyphen between the "Job" and the "Hunt"!) which is currently in the top 27,000 websites in the world, according to Alexa.com. Described by *Readers' Digest* as "vacuum-packed with solid advice," Job-Hunt has won numerous awards and recognition over the years, including Forbes Best of the Web for over 10 years, PC Magazine's Best of the Internet, and US News Top Site for Finding Work. More than 1,300,000 people a month visit advertiser-supported Job-Hunt.org to find free help with their job searches.

WorkCoachCafe.com (owned since 2011), which is currently in the top 204,000 websites in the world according to Alexa.com, is her “spare-time” blog. WorkCoachCafe.com is one of the “*Sites We Love*” listed by the PBS NextAvenue.org site.

She is also a contributor to NextAvenue.org, the HuffingtonPost.com, the YouTern.com blog, and the ***Career Planning and Adult Development Network Newsletter***. She teaches LinkedIn to members of the Department of Defense who are in transition to the civilian workforce. She also speaks to local job search support groups, career industry events, and career centers. She has been quoted many times over the years in media including NPR, PBS, ***The Wall Street Journal***, ***New York Times***, ***TIME***, ***Fortune***, ***Forbes***.

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The Internet Revolution: Digital Disruption in Recruiting and Job Search

By **Susan P. Joyce**

We're in the middle (or, perhaps more likely, the beginning) of a revolution in human communications greatly impacting everything from commerce and entertainment to crime and warfare. We live in a new digital world (pay phone or map book, anyone?) that surrounds us. This technology has permeated our daily lives, growing and changing hourly or, at least, monthly (BlackBerry or MySpace, anyone?).

This new environment offers both new benefits (Internet search technology) as well as new hazards (personal online reputation management) and new skills (personal search engine optimization).

This is a brave and dangerous new world that has changed traditional recruiting and job search so completely that it may be unrecognizable.

As documented by a 2015 study by PewResearchCenter, the perception held by a wide portion of the population is that the Internet is a *short-cut* to a new job. (1) Or, it is the **only** way to a new job. So people spend hours on job boards applying for jobs, which is too often a waste of time.

According to the Pew study, the Internet is the first place Americans go to find a job:

Fully 90 percent of these recent job seekers have ever used the internet to research jobs, and **84 percent have applied to a job online.**(1)

Yet the 2015 SilkRoad **Sources of Hire** Report documented only 39 percent of hires coming through job boards (e.g. CareerBuilder), job search engines (e.g. Indeed), or corporate websites. (2)

Dr. John Sullivan wrote an extremely interesting article for eremedia.com in 2013, **Why You Can't Get a Job...Recruiting Explained by the Numbers.** (3) In it Dr. Sullivan highlighted some mind-blowing information:

- An average of 250 resumes are received for each corporate job opening.
- The first application is received within 200 seconds (3.3 minutes) after a position is posted.
- More than 50 percent of applicants fail to meet the requirements of the job they applied for.
- Recruiters spend an average of 19 percent of their time reviewing applicant LinkedIn Profiles.
- Between 30 and 50 percent of all recruiting efforts are classified as *failures* -- the person didn't accept the offer or the new hire quit or was terminated within the first year on the job. So, we are using technology more intensively (desperately?), but not particularly effectively.

Another *Perfect Storm*

The job market for the last 10 years has been the perfect storm – from the *great recession* to the increased use of technology, a combination of events that have made the whole hiring process more challenging, and less effective, for both sides of the transaction.

Unemployment Stinks!

Not understanding these new rules and tools has terrible consequences which we see every day in this field. Being jobless is un-American. The MIT research (4) has shown that extended joblessness has terrible consequences for the individuals involved. Boston Federal Reserve (5) research has shown that employers do discriminate against the unemployed, so the longer someone is unemployed, the more challenging their job search can become.

After 6 months of unemployment, employers are even less interested, particularly in someone who appears to be out of date.

People feel hopeless and powerless. Confidence is reduced (personal and economic), making the job search much more difficult. Individuals and families become homeless. Hope is lost. Goals are reduced. Futures are diminished. Suicides result, even entire families are eliminated — I've seen it happen to people I knew.

At the same time, these people hide from the systems that can help them. They avoid LinkedIn because it's only for employed people who have perfect careers and no fear of losing their privacy – a wrong assumption that is too widely held by the unemployed.

But Employers Are in a War for *Employed* Talent!

If you've been to any recruiter conferences or read any articles about *talent acquisition*, you've read about the famous *war for talent* employers are conducting (at the same time that salaries stay flat, eh?). While over two million long-term unemployed are struggling to pay bills and keep their homes and any retirement savings they may have, many employers are struggling to find good applicants to fill their job openings.

Employers prefer *passive job seekers* (employed people who are not – eek! – actually looking for a new job). The underlying assumption: if someone is looking for a job, they are an *active job seeker* and clearly (?) less desirable as a job candidate.

In addition, my observation of recruiters is that many of them are as confused as job seekers about how to use their new technology tools effectively, including LinkedIn and LinkedIn Recruiter. This exacerbates the problems faced by job seekers. The good news is that has also created the need for a new person in many recruiting organization – *sourcers*. Sourcers are people who are skilled in using (or *sourcing* people through) Google, LinkedIn, and other relevant websites. They understand how to find qualified job candidates by leveraging the technology in ways most of us would never try.

Bad/imperfect/poorly understood software and tools have also had an invisible – but significant – negative impact on the hiring process. For mysterious and inconsistent reasons, people are not found in the infamous applicant tracking systems – *incorrect formatting* or the *wrong keywords* in the *wrong places* for that particular system (on that particular day). And, of course, thousands of different ATS systems exist, meaning that no one solution works for all of them. As someone who has programmed computer systems, I know how damaging a single comma in the *wrong place* can be. In addition, negative assumptions about *active job seekers* (who are clearly looking for new employment) are made too quickly by people who haven't had to face the new hiring process themselves from the *other side* – yet.

New Recruiting Methods Based on Technology

Technology is obviously widely used for recruiting today. And, in this highly competitive world, the use of technology changes every year.

Recruiters Are Measured on Time-to-Hire

Hiring new employees is typically expensive, an average of \$4,000 per hire in 2014, according to a Bersin by Deloitte (6) study this year. Other industry studies have estimated the cost as north of \$25,000 or more, depending on the level of the job and the scarcity of qualified applicants. And these costs only count those associated with posting the job, reviewing the resumes/applications, researching candidates, and expensive staff time spent in job interviews and meetings about the new hire.

Faster is often assumed to be less expensive because of the cost associated with not having a job done, so the top metric used to measure recruiters today is how long it takes them to fill a job. According to a recent survey of recruiter metrics by the Novo Group (7), time-to-hire (53 percent) was top, followed by cost-per-hire (36 percent), and then quality-of-hire (25 percent). Time-to-hire, or time-to-fill, are mentioned often in measuring the success of recruitment efforts, with quality-of-hire recognized as very important, but apparently secondary to speed and more difficult to measure quickly and easily.

As a result of that need for speed, most recruiters today do not have the time to carefully sift through all of the qualified applicants to find the best ones. Recruiters estimate that they spend 60 seconds on each resume. However, according to several recent studies, they typically spend less than 10 seconds skimming through resumes (focused on job titles, employer names, and education) before moving on to the next one. And, often, job seekers who apply after the first day, or first few hours a job is visible, are not even evaluated.

But the Process Is Actually Taking Longer Now

According to a recent analysis by GlassDoor.com (8), the time to fill an open position has nearly doubled in the United States since 2009 (from 12.6 days to 22.9 days). A major contributor to the length of time needed is the addition dramatic increase in use of background checks (from 25 percent of job candidates in 2010 to 42 percent in 2014) and a substantial increase in use of drug

tests (from 13 percent in 2010 to 23 percent in 2014). Both of these steps add more than one week to the time to fill a job.

Another part of the reason for the increased time in filling jobs is that employers have constructed another hurdle, hopefully to reduce the cost-of-hire metric, and that hurdle is skills tests. The GlassDoor (8) study shows an increase in *skills testing* from 16 percent in 2010 to 23 percent in 2014.

My suspicion is that the increase in background checks, skills tests, and drug tests is the result of some quick social media checking done as part of the initial screening process.

Technology Is Both the Problem and the Cure

Use of technology has not necessarily improved the process for anyone, and, in many cases, problems have increased as technology exacerbated the issues with the existing processes.

Neither side is happy with the current process. Both sides are struggling to compete and to succeed. Employers want the best employees, and job seekers want the best jobs.

The Most Damaging Technology Traps for Employers

Many problems exist, but let's just consider the most significant problems for both sides related to their current use of technology for the hiring/job search process.

The three major problems for employers:

1. The need for speed

For employers, cost is associated with not having someone doing a job. Depending on the job, the cost may be substantial (hopefully, reflected in the salary). Consequently, recruiters are typically measured primarily on their speed in filling positions, called *time-to-hire* or *time-to-fill* metrics. Unfortunately, these metrics are usually a more important measurement of recruiter quality/ productivity than the *quality-of-hire* metric -- for most employers. Time-to-hire is also quicker and easier to calculate.

More changes are obviously coming as employers embrace more technology to speed up the hiring process, as described in a May 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article (9).

2. Quick Google background checks are now used for quick screening

This is where the *Google resume* becomes very important. Search engines and social media seem to have provided employers with part of the answer to the need for speed combined with the necessity of hiring the highest quality candidates possible. The combination of Google and social media, like LinkedIn and Facebook, have provided early, fast, and cheap background checks. A quick Google (Bing, etc.) search on a candidate's name can provide seemingly useful information on the candidate's *fit* for the job and the corporate culture.

At least 79 percent of employers and recruiters (10) use search engines to learn more about job applicants, and many more use search engines to find qualified job candidates, even using Google to “x-ray” LinkedIn!

The result of that research is really not surprising. Think about the times you are considering an investment (of your time, your money, or both). You use a search engine to research and evaluate your options -- which car, smart phone, computer, box of cereal, etc. is the best investment for you?

Similarly, employers hiring new employees are making big investments, too.

Given how many people have the same name (or very similar names), mistaken online identity is more of a problem than most people suspect. (Thus, the need for Personal SEO and Personal Online Reputation Management!) In addition, the necessity of maintaining a professional image and managing our personal online reputations is a new requirement for the vast majority of us. So, a nasty comment about the Yankees or a selfie taken in a bar and posted on Facebook can cause damage that is never seen or understood by job seekers.

3. Too many responses

To manage the tsunami of responses to job postings (3), the majority of employers use new and evolving technologies to collect, screen, and evaluate resumes and applications. Commonly called *applicant tracking systems* (a.k.a. ATS), these systems vary widely in capability and quality -- some are commercial and some are *home-made* by the employer's staff. Most are imperfect, with known, and unknown, issues impacting their effectiveness and efficiency.

While most employers with more than 50 employees have implemented an ATS, their employees are not always well-trained or comfortable using the systems. As time passes, the systems are, hopefully, updated and improved. Those incremental changes may also not be well-understood by employers' staffs, lessening (or not increasing) their efficiency in using the technology and the effectiveness of their results.

The Most Damaging Technology Traps for Job Seekers

Most job seekers want to use the process they used in the past -- find a job, submit a resume, and interview for the job. As noted above, the process has been changed dramatically and permanently by technology. The three major problems for job seekers:

1. The job search as a "numbers game" theory

This is the mindset that helped create the need for the applicant tracking systems that are a major impediment to most job seekers currently. Like a lottery, many job seekers view the job search process as a numbers game. Indeed shows over 76,000 jobs in Chicago right now (March, 2016). Many job seekers see that large number as a golden opportunity to apply, apply, apply. They apply for as many as possible, as quickly as possible. (See the employers' number one problem, above.)

The job seeker theory seems to be that a job search is simply a "numbers game" where success is dependent on the number of applications submitted -- the more times they try, the greater the probability of finally landing a job. Just like a lottery.

Unfortunately, this is not how successful job search works for most jobs. Successfully landing a new job that is a good fit for the job seeker is not a random event/gift from the universe based on xxxx number of applications submitted randomly and quickly.

A successful job search today is the result of a great deal more work than in the past, analyzing the job market and themselves, and working hard to find a good match (see the next problem).

2. Simple one-size-fits-all response

Too many job seekers operate with a mindset that believes having a generic resume and a generic LinkedIn Profile will help them "*avoid limiting my options.*" Sadly, this very common attitude demonstrates a complete lack of understanding about the importance of keywords for effective job search and online visibility.

Without the right keywords describing their skills, experience, accomplishments, and education in light of their target jobs, job seekers are invisible -- particularly to recruiters in a hurry. Unfortunately, right now ***all*** recruiters are in a hurry! (See #1 in Employer Technology Traps, above.)

Recruiters are ***not*** searching for "experienced marketing professionals" -- at least, they aren't searching for them using those terms. Because they need to find qualified people as quickly as possible, they are searching for terms related to the job's requirements to find candidates who meet those requirements. They search using the specific terms (keywords and keyword phrases) that describe or define exactly the kind of *experienced marketing professional* that they want to hire, for example: product marketing, PLC assessment, GANTT, and other terms used in the job description.

To stand out in the large crowd of job seekers (and 400+ million LinkedIn Profiles), job seekers must include the terms that define them and their next jobs, in the exact words that employers use to define those jobs (a.k.a., job descriptions). Read more about how to stand out in the Personal Search Engine Optimization articles in this Journal.

3. Google and social media

Again, too many job seekers are unaware of -- or underestimate -- the widespread use of Google by employers seeking to find good candidates and also to learn what they can about the people who have applied for their openings.

In 2010, Microsoft released an amazing study, **Online Reputation in a Connected World** (10). The U.S. results showed that while nearly 80 percent of employers *reviewed online reputation information about candidates*, only 11 percent of the people being reviewed were *very concerned*, and 18 percent were *somewhat concerned*. While there are legal issues that may

eventually reduce the level of research done in the future, recent studies and my own interactions with recruiters seem to indicate that employers have increased their use of Google and other search engines to research candidates, particularly through social media. Read more about LinkedIn and other social media in the Personal Online Reputation Management articles in this Journal.

Catching Up with Technology

Since 2009, job seekers have become *somewhat* more concerned about their online visibility and personal online reputation management, but we still have much to learn and room for improvement. Keywords and personal SEO are mysteries to the vast majority of non-techies, and misunderstandings abound. As described in my Personal SEO for Job Search and Careers article, one job seeker chastised me because employers were not using the keywords she had in her resume to find her. Backwards, today!

At some point in the future, employers will hopefully need to pay more attention to the terms job seekers use in their resumes and LinkedIn Profiles, but today we still live in a *buyer's market*. Job seekers must pay attention to employer requirements. It's not the other way around -- yet. Fortunately, there are tools to use. Read more about keywords and personal SEO later in this Journal.

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About the Author

Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are **Job-Hunt.org** and **WorkCoachCafe.com**

Google Is Your New Resume

By Richard N. Bolles

Let's cut to the chase here. This article is intended to be a summary of what we are (or should be) teaching to our clients in the year 2016 about resumes. I can summarize this whole article, right at the beginning. Here are the key points:

1. We should tell them that most employers, when they're trying to fill a position, find resumes defective. Why? Because the employer is looking, generally speaking, for candidates who have competence and compassion. Competence is shorthand for "*can you do the job?*" Compassion is shorthand for "*how do you get along with people?*"
2. Traditional resumes have a format that is designed to help you make the case for the first part of the equation—what you can do, what you know, what experience you have had—but that format is lousy at communicating anything about the second part of the equation: how do you get along with people.
3. With the invention of the Internet and more particularly, social media, that important omission can now be corrected, sometimes to a great degree. By putting the candidate's name into a search engine like Google, and studying all that you have written or posted on the Internet, the employer can get a feel for your compassion—or lack of it.
4. So, I have called this: Google is your new resume. That's hyperbole, of course, for—to be more exact—it is your Resume #2. Resume #1 can reveal what is your competence, or can you do the job? Resume #2 can reveal what is your compassion, or how you get along with people?
5. Employers want both, and I mean both; but they will privately confess to you that, for many jobs, they give priority to the question of how you get along with people. In the past, employees, especially managers, have wrecked a company because while they were very competent at what they did with information or things, they had terrible people skills. So, it's important to find this out before hiring. And that is why, if they are thinking seriously about hiring you, many employers will Google you.
6. How many employers will do this? Ah, good question. Reliable statistics are hard to come by—they wander all over the map. Some studies say only 24 percent of employers do this; some studies claim 70 percent; some say it's 91 percent. (A lot depends on who those studies included in their sample: all businesses? Or just recruiters?) What this uncertainty means is you never know. You have to assume there is every chance that the employer you are approaching is going to Google you.
7. And how often does this result in the employer deciding not to hire that candidate? A commonly-quoted figure is 70 percent of the time. And how often does this result in tipping the

employer over into deciding that they will indeed hire that candidate? A commonly-quoted figure says this happens 69 percent of the time.

8. What are employers looking for when they Google you? The answer is: anything about you that is disturbing. bad grammar or gross misspelling on your Facebook or LinkedIn profile; your using bad words (starting with “f...”); badmouthing of previous employers or people with whom you’ve worked; any signs of racism, prejudice, or jaw-dropping opinions; anything indicating alcohol or drug abuse; obsession with sex, as well as any—to put it delicately—inappropriate content, etc. Not to mention, the general overall tone of you, on the Internet.

9. On a more sophisticated level, employers will be searching your presence on the Internet for any evidence that you are compassionate, empathetic, a good communicator, good learner, flexible, adaptive, and that you speak kindly, care deeply, can stay calm, cool, and collected, plus have the ability to motivate others, not intimidate others. Some of this searching, on the part of employers, is just intuitive. Basically, they are looking to see if you feel likeable. That means do you come across as basically friendly, cheerful, optimistic, open, honest, even-tempered, emotionally stable, confident, conscientious, dependable, with a sense of humor—and also if you would interact well with other people regardless of their background. Any or all of the above.

10. We need to tell our clients or students how to clean up their “Google resume.” I won’t go into this here; there are numerous books out there -- some written by the readers of this article -- that cover this thoroughly. I cover it myself in the latest edition (2017) of ***What Color Is Your Parachute?*** designated by Amazon, curiously enough, as the #1 bestseller on the subject of resumes. And also in my little book, the ***What Color Is Your Parachute Guide to Rethinking Resumes***. Basically the steps are Delete, Fill-in, Expand, or Add.

Well, there you have it. The ten points I think we should be teaching our clients. And now that I think about it, I don’t need to expand this into a longer article. I have said what I need to say.

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About the Author



Dick Bolles -- more formally known as Richard Nelson Bolles -- is credited with founding the modern career counseling field, and is often described as the field's #1 celebrity. He is the author of ***What Color Is Your Parachute? A Practical Guide for Job-Hunters and Career Changers***, 2016, the most popular job-hunting book in the world. The book has sold more than 10,000,000 copies to date, and is dramatically updated, reshaped, and rewritten, every year. It has been translated into 20 languages and is used in 26 countries. **TIME** chose ***What Color Is Your Parachute?*** as one of the 100 All-Time Best and Most Influential Non-Fiction Books published since 1923.

The U.S. Dept. of Labor chose ***What Color Is Your Parachute?*** as one of The Books That Have Shaped the World of Work, since 1758. Dick is an alumnus of both M.I.T. and Harvard, with a physics degree cum laude from the latter; he has been awarded two honorary doctorates as well. He has four grown children: Stephen, Sharon, Gary and Mark (deceased). He and his beloved wife Marci live in the San Francisco East Bay. Contact him as follows:

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Managing Our New Google Resumes

By Susan P. Joyce

As Dick Bolles so ably described in his article, *Google Is Your New Resume*, Google really is our new resume in many ways. Employers and recruiters definitely use Google to discover those aspects of our personalities that Dick describes as “*compassion*” or “*Resume #2*.” How do we get along with people?

As the manager of several LinkedIn Groups, I’ve seen too many job seekers make nasty comments in LinkedIn Groups, as though those comments were invisible to the world. Somehow, perhaps because the interaction isn’t live and face-to-face (or even voice-to-voice as in a phone call), being nasty and rude is easier to do. We have fewer signals to “*withhold fire*.”

Google searches also make it easier for employers to evaluate Resume #1, what Dick calls the “*competence*” for the job, the more traditional resume we’ve used for decades. They compare the private *facts* on the job application with the *truth* we make visible to our friends and colleagues on LinkedIn. When they don’t match, LinkedIn is assumed to be more accurate since it is public.

For most of us, Google is our new resume whether or not we are officially looking for a new job. The issue for all of us now is to understand the impact of that resume, what is included in it, and begin the process of understanding and managing it.

What Is a Google Resume?

A Google Resume is what the world sees when they do a Google search using your name as their search criteria. Try it now yourself. Search Google for your name, your significant other’s name, another relative or friend, or even your child’s name. Surprised by what you find?

Recruiters and sourcers relentlessly search Google for qualified job candidates and also to verify what they find on job applications. We all do similar searches whenever we are considering making a big investment, from movies and restaurants to cars and houses. Employers have the same instinct to learn as much as possible about a job candidate before investing in them.

Because of those searches, each of us has a Google Resume, whether or not we are paying attention or looking for a new job. These days, the new job can find us.

How Does a Google Resume Work?

None of us can control what Google shows in search results, but we can influence it by giving Google what it prefers to show in search results.

Usually in a hurry, recruiters seldom look past the first page of search results, so that’s where most of us should focus our attention. Because people are usually interested in social media, a Google shows people what they want. A Google search results page for a search on a person’s

name will typically show their social network accounts. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn accounts will usually be in the top five results, even if the person is not particularly popular or active in each of those networks.

Frequently, among those top search results will be an entry like this – “Top 25 [name] profiles | LinkedIn.” Showing that at least 25 people have the name visibly demonstrates to the searcher that they need to do a little more digging to find the *right* person. Clicking on that link brings the searcher to a special LinkedIn page with those people listed.

If the person being searched has their own website or blog, that will typically be included near the top of the search results as long as Google can find it -- Google has indexed most of the web, but not even Google has 100 percent of websites included in search results. White pages directories will also usually be included on the first page of search results.

Lack of Visibility on Google Is Bad

If there is nothing about someone in a Google search for their name, the impression given about the person is usually negative. Searchers typically make bad assumptions about “invisible” people:

1. The person is out-of-date.

Unless their profession requires online invisibility (spy?), the invisible person appears not to understand how to operate in today's online social and business environment. That often disqualifies a job candidate or, at a minimum, makes them much less appealing to employers.

2. The person is hiding something.

It takes effort – or extreme lack of participation – to be invisible, so there must be a reason the person is invisible, and the reason isn't good. The person must be hiding something.

3. The person is not someone to hire.

Unless the person's name is so unique that no one else has it, they are vulnerable to mistaken online identity. Someone else will be found in that search, and that other may be unqualified for the jobs being sought, have an unprofessional image, or have done something an employer would not want in an employee. This ruins many opportunities, invisibly.

Frequently, searchers are looking for a LinkedIn Profile. The good news is that LinkedIn Profiles are very visible on Google, usually within the top five entries on that first page, and they are also very popular with recruiters.

But a Google Resume is much more than a LinkedIn Profile, and if the recruiter or employer is really interested in the person, the other entries in Google results will be checked, if deemed relevant.

Impact of a Google Resume

A colleague shared a very scary story about one of her clients. This is a tale that many job seekers should know about because research has shown that this is very likely a common occurrence -- much more common than you probably know. My colleague prepared an excellent resume for her client which he used in several months of job hunting.

After absolutely *no* response to resume submissions in four months, they finally decided to Google him to see if something there might be causing a problem. ***Bingo!***

The Problem:

That Google search (finally!) showed them that this job seeker had a serious reputation management problem! Someone else using the same name was involved in a U.S. Supreme Court obscenity case!

My friend's client was not the person named in the obscenity case, but it didn't matter. Someone who didn't know him, like a recruiter receiving his resume, wouldn't know that he was not the person in the obscenity case. Result: many opportunities lost!

The Recovery:

To differentiate the job seeker from the man in the obscenity case, they simply added his middle initial to the name used in his resumes, business cards, LinkedIn Profile, and other professional visibility. Within two months, this man landed his new job.

Managing the New Google Resume

Recent research has shown that employers and recruiters Google job candidates more than 90 percent of the time! So, knowing what they find, and impacting it is the smartest approach.

The Basics

These are the fundamental activities for managing a Google Resume:

1. Understand that online activities are being observed.

If employed, it is very likely that the current employer is monitoring the person's online activities, particularly when they are at work. Certainly future employers will be paying attention. Recruiters are trying to understand how knowledgeable the person is, how well they can communicate, and if they have the *right* personality to fit into their organization.

2. Create positive visibility.

As we have seen above, social media, particularly LinkedIn, are very effective tools to build positive visibility. Many other online opportunities also exist, providing the opportunity to create and sustain a reputation that will support their job search and career.

3. Behave appropriately online.

Operating with the knowledge that recruiters are observing online actions, understand that a price may well be paid for misbehavior. One may never know about opportunities lost, but that doesn't mean that losses won't happen.

If ranting about politics or sports is necessary, a different version of the person's name and a different email address should be used in association with the ranting.

Unless the career goal is a job that requires nastiness, the best approach is to avoid scaring off potential employers, customers, and network contacts, by online ranting and complaining. Using a different name and email address for online nastiness can help to limit the damage.

4. Research to find the best name to use professionally

Everyone needs to find a *clean* version of their name, one hopefully without any *digital dirt* associated with it – their own *dirt* or someone else's. They also need to avoid versions of a name used by someone famous or infamous. It's very hard to be on the first page of Google search results when someone with the same name is famous, so rather than being "*Brad Pitt*" (if that was the real name), the person could be "*Bradly E. Pitt*."

Avoid the mistaken online identity problem by using the same, *clean* version of the name to avoid being confused with someone an employer would avoid hiring.

5. Consistently use the same name for all professional actions when online (and off-line).

Claim the clean name with LinkedIn, hopefully as part of a solid LinkedIn Profile. Add professional presence in other appropriate social media venues with that name. Use that same name for resumes, job applications, email, business cards, meeting name tags, professional directories, and all other online and off-line professional activities.

6. Know and leverage the best keywords.

It's important for job seekers and all of us who want careers to understand the keywords that are relevant to our job search and careers. We must use those keywords appropriately in professional (not personal) social media profiles and job search documents. Read *The 25 Best Keywords for Your Job Search* -- <http://www.job-hunt.org/personal-SEO/top-25-job-search-keywords.shtml> -- for more details.

5. Practice "defensive Googling" every week.

We should all know what Google shows people on that first page of search results. Because it changes often, the best defense is self-Googling every week.

I know that's been called "*ego surfing*," but I don't care. Today, it's just smart self-defense. It's best to know what will be found when someone, like a recruiter or potential network contact or client, Googles your name. Learn and regularly practice the technique called "*Defensive Googling*."

Bottom Line

These are the facts of this new world of technology and constant search and research. Stay tuned, and pay attention to the articles in this Journal. Technology will change, and new tools and hazards will appear.

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Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are **Job-Hunt.org** and **WorkCoachCafe.com**

How Social Recruiting Impacts Job Search

By Hannah Morgan

In order to be successful in today's job search, job seekers need to stay up-to-date with how employers source and recruit talent. When job seekers understand the logic recruiters and hiring managers use, they can present their qualifications where employers will find them. More importantly, this insight enables job seekers to position themselves and their qualifications in terms that are meaningful and convincing to those hiring.

Throwing resumes up on online resume databases isn't enough to get hired today. Hiring professionals look for more than specific qualifications. They want proof of work and want to learn about a candidate's motivation and personality before the interview. Social media provides this additional insight.

Simply defined, "social recruiting" involves using social platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, as databases to search for talent or to advertise job openings. The actual number of hiring professionals using social recruiting tactics varies by industry and the function being recruited for. The number of HR and recruiting professionals who have adopted social recruiting in 2015 ranges from a CareerBuilder's survey of 52 percent (1) to a high of 92 percent as reported by Jobvite (2).

Social recruiting does not mean that candidates are being hired on the spot based solely on information in social media profiles. It is used to screen and research candidates as part of the recruiting process.

To be clear, social recruiting does not eliminate the importance of the interview process. It does serve as another means to evaluate candidates.

Why Is This Happening

"Finding the right talent continues to be one of the most urgent issues for companies, and the disruptive force of technology has transformed the way people look for jobs and how employers hire" according to the 2015 recruiting report by iCIMS (3), a talent acquisition platform.

The rise in social recruiting is driven by several factors. Accessing candidate information through social media and online is freely accessible; finding qualified candidates has become increasingly difficult for employers; and employers want to learn more about candidates faster.

How Do Recruiters Use Social Media?

Organizations, large and small, use an integrated approach to source and hire new employees which incorporates job boards, job aggregators, social media, career sites, search engine optimization (SEO), and employee referrals. By combining these strategies into the recruitment process, organizations hope to reach the right candidates and improve the hiring process.

Recruiters use social media to:

- Share posted job opportunities.
- Search for candidates with unique qualifications.
- Preview candidates.
- Research before an interview or job offer.

Some recruiters use Boolean or “*x-ray*” searches which specifically filter search results either within a social networking site or across the Internet. These searches can contain geographic limitations, technical skills, or any other keyword or phrase to help refine search results for the job they are trying to fill.

Sharing status updates about job opportunities across social media is another strategy. Companies ask their employees to share job postings with their network in an attempt to increase employee referrals or to reach a broader audience. Recruiter, Jennifer Scott of Workforce Engine notes, “The more people in my network who share that job posting, the more people who will see it, and I have filled jobs that way. Someone I’m not even friends with on Facebook has seen my posting through networking, and has responded to the job posting, and has gotten hired.”

To attract employed candidates who are not actively job seeking, also known as passive candidates, companies are using email opt-in newsletters and creating groups across social media platforms, known as talent pools. Talent pools allow companies to target specific types of candidates with recruitment campaigns.

What Are They Looking for and What Do They Hope They’ll Find?

Employers are evaluating candidates’ online content to help assess skills and personal qualities beyond what can be found on the resume or in the cover letter. CareerBuilder’s 2015 survey of hiring professionals (1) reported that 52 percent use social media to evaluate candidates, and of those, 23 percent found online content that led them to hire a candidate.

A candidate’s personality or being a potential fit with the company’s culture ranked as one of the top ways in which employers used social media to evaluate candidates.

Validating the candidates background and qualifications ranked closely as the next area of evaluation. Other online insights rated as important included: conveying a professional image, showing a wide range of interests, communication skills and creativity.

What Platforms Are They Using?

Employers will go to any social network where they know they can find the talent they are looking for. LinkedIn is the go-to professional network, and the obvious first-choice, but many recruiters turn to Facebook due to the large number of active users.

Other social networking sites recruiters turn to include Twitter, code-sharing sites such as Github, and newer sites like Pinterest, Instagram and SnapChat.

Facebook

The *post and pray* methodology of social recruiting on Facebook is Scott's primary strategy. She shares her new job posting in her status updates and let's her network do the rest. There are other ways to use Facebook as well. Posting a Facebook ad allows recruiters to target specific demographics. X-ray or Boolean search is another way to hunt down specific skill sets.

Creating a page on Facebook to rally anyone interested in learning more about a company and discussing events and careers. Some recruiters create groups on Facebook to attract candidates interested in a specific topic related to the types of roles they are trying to recruit for.

Twitter

Recruiters use Twitter to share job postings, contact candidates, and share content that will interest potential candidates according to Dice's Social Recruiting in Tech survey 2015.(4) One benefit of Twitter is that, unlike Facebook and LinkedIn, mutual connections are not needed in order to follow or communicate with people. This open network allows recruiters to easily reach out to a greater number of potential candidates.

Recruiters source candidates on Twitter by searching for specific keywords and hashtags either in tweets or profiles. A hashtag or the # sign is used to flag attention and is easily searched on platforms like Twitter. For example, someone with skills in social media might use #socialmedia in their bio and would include it in the tweets about social media.

Chris Russell, founder of CareerCloud.com and recruiting consultant says, "for recruiting, it's best to use twitter to create lists of candidates and engage with them. Use it to establish relationships with your target candidate pool. Humanize yourself. You can post your jobs, but for every job tweet, post four more interesting pieces of content."

LinkedIn

As the "world's largest professional network", LinkedIn serves as an obvious choice for recruiters to source talent. Users create profiles on LinkedIn which serve as a database of viable candidates for recruiters to search. Jobvite's 2015 Recruiter Nation survey (2) reports that 87 percent of hiring professionals use LinkedIn for their hiring needs. Recruiters use LinkedIn to search, contact, and keep tabs on potential candidates. They also vet candidates before an interview and post jobs via LinkedIn. Recruiters can either use LinkedIn's Advanced Search or subscribe to a paid service, Recruiter, to search for talent by key skills, mutual connections, geographic location, previous employer and more. Recruiters share job postings on LinkedIn as status updates and on their company's career page. They also can pay for listings on LinkedIn's job board or buy various types of ads on LinkedIn. Some recruiters have found joining or creating groups on LinkedIn as a way to engage with members possessing desirable skills.

Additional Social Networks

There are many places recruiters are looking online and sharing job postings. *“Because anywhere there are large groups of people, recruiters will follow. It's what we do”* says Scott. Job seekers should consider joining and participating on high-ranking social media sites. Scott recommends YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, and blogs. She says *“the more profiles you have will help what shows up first in search engines.”*

Learn to Leverage the Power of Social Media

Everyone in the workforce today should manage their online reputation, the digital search results when someone searches for their name online. And job seekers need to be savvy enough to tap into social networks to uncover job postings, which may not be promoted via traditional methods. Scott emphasizes the positive aspects of social media for job seekers. *“You can really get a lot more control about what people find out about you on a search engine when you have active profiles, and you're actually engaging people in conversations through those profiles.”*

To get the most from social media, job seekers will need to know the basics of online marketing, such as how and where to use keywords. For job seekers, keywords are industry-specific or work-specific skills recruiters would search for to find talent. Common or generic terms, like *manage* or *leadership* would seldom be search criteria recruiters use to pare down the candidate pool.

Job Searching with Social Media

Finding a new job involves more than just applying for posted jobs. Scott says *“There are a lot of different ways that you can use social media in your job search: for example, researching companies; researching company culture; researching hiring managers inside that company; researching people you know who can introduce you to the hiring managers inside that company.”* Savvy job seekers can tap into this research to improve how they target their resumes and prepare for interviews.

Russell agrees. There are many ways job seekers could improve how they use social media, for example, filling out all social networking profiles like Facebook's. “Facebook lets you place all your employment details in your About section” which Russell believes many job seekers aren't doing. Russell knows first-hand that *“Recruiters are definitely going to be sourcing through Facebook and looking for keywords.”*

Additionally, Russell recommends job seekers tap into the “hundreds of local Facebook job search groups that offer great job leads for anyone who joins.” Russell explains finding these groups is as easy as *“searching Facebook for the city name and add the word **jobs** to it.”*

The Long-Term Benefits of Social Media

Companies embrace social media to promote their business and have begun asking employees at all levels, from CEO to customer service rep, to use it professionally. Learning how to leverage social media is becoming an important skill for all employees, not just those in a marketing role. “As we move into the new world, the proficiency in social media and how you demonstrate that proficiency, is critical” according to Scott.

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End Notes

(1) ***35 percent of Employers Less Likely to Interview Applicants They Can’t Find Online,***

survey by Harris Poll for CareerBuilder.com:

<http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=5%2F14%2F2015&id=pr893&ed=12%2F31%2F2015>

(2) ***2015 Recruiter Nation Survey,*** by Jobvite.com: http://www.jobvite.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/jobvite_recruiter_nation_2015.pdf

(3) ***16 Tips for 2016,*** by iCIMS Hire Expectations Institute: <https://www.icims.com/sites/www.icims.com/files/public/16%20Tips%20for%202016v7.pdf>

(4) ***Social Recruiting in Tech 2015,*** by Dice: <http://www.slideshare.net/Dice/social-recruiting-intech-2015-survey>

About the Author



Hannah Morgan, Job-Hunt.org’s columnist for **The Guide to Job Search Navigation**, is founder of Career Sherpa.net an online resource where she dispenses actionable job search advice to people in transition. She serves as a guide in today's treacherous job search terrain. She is passionate about keeping up with the latest trends in reputation management, online visibility, personal branding, social networking strategies and other job search trends. Her newest book, ***The Infographic Resume***, shows how to use visuals and infographics to showcase experience and work history.

She is also the co-author of ***Social Networking for Business Success: How To Turn Your Ideas Into Income***, which teaches small business owners how to market their businesses. She also delivers presentations at colleges to students and alumni to help increase job search and networking skills. Media and career professionals recognize her as an advocate for job seekers. She is frequently quoted in national media outlets and writes a weekly column for ***U.S. News***

& World Report On Careers. She also co-owns a training business, The Career Navigator Program, a job search boot camp.

This program delivers five days of interactive job search training through some of New York State's One-Stop offices. She is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University. Her career path began in one of the largest law firms in Washington, DC and has taken twists and turns through roles in Human Resources to her most recent experience as a career consultant. During her three years with Lee Hecht Harrison, she discovered her vocation and has spent the past 10+ years guiding new job seekers through the changing job search landscape.

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Recruiters' Selection Process Starts (and Ends) with Personal Branding

By Jeff Lipschultz

Personal Branding has been a buzz word in career management for several years now. But in reality, there has always been a *personal brand*—it was just called *professional reputation*. The modern-day version just has more variables.

In the past, candidates seeking new jobs would offer references. It was just about the only way to check past performance, unless there were published works.

Now, one's reputation is tied to information of all kinds, often available on the Web. When Google first appeared, many thought it was fun to *Google* themselves and see what popped up. Today, self-Googleing is a more serious exercise for job (or promotion) seekers who are expected to pay attention to Google output to ensure they are viewed in the best light. Even high schoolers are being counselled to watch their online personal brand to present a good image to college admissions officers.

Recruiters can use many tools to assess a potential candidate's fit for a position they are looking to fill. They can look at technical projects on sites like GitHub or LinkedIn. They can look at published works and presentations on candidates' blogs or the public domain.

Networking sites allow recruiters to find people who know the candidate (and who may not be forewarned about a call from recruiters). Of course, social media sites of all kinds will provide insight on the job seeker's personality, along with what organizations they belong to, what opinions they have on hot topics, and even how they perceive the world around them.

All this research can be done before the recruiter decides to contact the job seeker. The job seeker may never know they missed an opportunity due to their Personal Brand.

A Jobvite survey published in July of 2015 cited an increase in use of social media by recruiters from 82 percent in 2010 to 93 percent in 2014. Additionally, 55 percent of recruiters have reconsidered candidates based on their social profiles.

This article presents background on how job seekers' Personal Brand plays a pivotal role in the process of working with recruiters (and hiring managers). How recruiters interpret a candidate's Personal Brand dictates how likely a job seeker will have a chance to meet their client. Further in this article, suggestions for how to create and manage Personal Brand are offered. This is an important exercise for job seekers. Without dictating one's own Personal Brand, recruiting professionals can easily misinterpret a great deal about the potential candidate's fit for the job.

Presenting the Personal Brand

One of the first steps in the recruiting process is a resume or profile review—which can occur without a candidate even being aware. This is often the first exposure to one's Personal Brand.

When recruiters look at a resume, they are looking for something specific and they are scanning resumes very quickly (sometimes in 15 seconds or less). If a job seeker's professional summary on the resume does not clearly state the skills, experiences, and knowledge they are looking for, recruiters move on. There are many examples of how and why this happens.

- The **Professional Summary** on a resume is the most important real estate on a resume—it is where the personal brand is stated. Some job seekers keep this statement vague so they can be considered for many positions. But a recruiter is not evaluating candidates for many roles—just the one they are presently working on.

The two Professional Statements below could be for the same person. One clearly states their brand; one is too vague.

Accomplished thought leader with 14 years of management consulting and industry experience with demonstrated expertise in transforming organizations and business units. Skilled in formulating future-focused and aggressive (yet attainable) strategies, and developing and executing corresponding roadmaps to achieve desired outcomes. Effective influencer, collaborator and consensus-builder within cross-functional matrix environments. An inspiring leader committed to building, developing and leading high-performing teams.

A proven leader and strategist in driving process improvements within a multitude of business environments including finance, marketing, and procurement. Experience includes identifying deficiencies, collaborating on solutions, and road mapping how to achieve lasting change and strategic results.

Without clearly stating one's strengths and focus, there can be too much guesswork as to what the candidate is seeking for an ideal position. A chance to define one's Personal Brand is missed.

- When describing experiences, some job seekers share so much information covering many areas of expertise that the best matched experiences to job requirements are buried in the resume. Many recruiters miss key information (qualifications and experience) when it is not obvious or listed consistently within different roles throughout the resume. For example, if one is seeking jobs that have a strong requirement for abilities in Finance, all job experiences on the resume should have accomplishments in Finance-related activities listed in the first few bullets.
- At times, a resume won't even make it to the recruiter's desk or computer screen due to a technicality in branding. Most job seekers are aware recruiters use keyword searches to pull

resumes up to the surface within databases (internal and external). And yet, many use the same keywords over and over within a resume.

For example, if a recruiter is specifically looking for someone who has experience with Enterprise Resource Planning (commonly known as ERP and defined as business-management software), they may only search on the term ERP.

If a resume writer only spells out the acronym or only mentions “business management software,” the resume may not come up in the online search. Google is smart enough to know about the acronym, but custom Applicant Tracking Systems may not be.

Personal Brand /s Personal

When recruiters dig deeper in a candidate’s Personal Brand, they search for information beyond what is presented about someone on paper or online. A job seeker’s reputation is also built day-by-day through all interpersonal relationships. Everyone from a supervisor to a neighbor has an opinion about who we are.

Both professional references and personal references need to line up with what the textual impressions shared. It does not require too many phone calls to get a general impression of someone. People are who they are, and just need to represent themselves on paper as their references would describe them.

Recruiters and hiring managers look for that consistency—does the online and written description match the day-to-day description? If one acts polished in an interview and has a very professional resume, but several references describe the candidate as “*rough around the edges,*” doubt creeps into the picture.

Recruiters can find *non-provided references* who may not be recent peers, supervisors, or subordinates. Considering that Personal Brand can change gradually over one’s career in a variety of ways, job seekers should update former colleagues who may not know their latest news or roles (a.k.a., most current version of Personal Brand).

However, when it comes to personality, most people are pretty consistent throughout their lives. How people are perceived is cumulated over hundreds to thousands of individual interactions and situations. One has to be honest with themselves about how they have been perceived by their peers. Recruiters hate surprises. They do not appreciate having inconsistencies between what a candidate states about the personality versus what they find out in the final stages of the process (during reference checks). Typically, *we are who we are*, so being genuine is a key.

Thoughts from Shelly Lazarus, former CEO of Ogilvy & Mather, when asked “**What can a personal brand do for your career, and what’s the best way to start building one?**”

Here’s the thing: I hate it when people talk about personal brand. Those words imply that people need to adopt identities that are artificial and plastic and packaged, when what actually works is authenticity.

One of the fabulous things I've enjoyed about my career is collaborating with so many leaders across different industries and countries, and without exception the successful ones have been comfortable in their own skin. Resilience—the ability to hang in there when things are difficult—is critical in a career, and if you're spending every hour of the day pretending to be someone you're not, you'll be exhausted and won't have the energy needed to face your real work.

On the flip side, if you're genuinely excited about what you're doing, and have that light in your eyes, it will attract other people to you, and motivate them.

Her answer to the question **How does the recommendation to “be yourself” hold true if you're not certain you'll be effective?**

Expressing a point of view is always legitimate, and if you're doing it because you're genuinely passionate about a topic, I don't think anyone will have a problem with that. If you're valuable to the organization and advocate strongly for an idea, what's the worst that can happen? Even if the project doesn't move forward, you're not going to get fired.

What you do need to pay attention to, however, is style—not just what you say, but how you say it. People tell me I smile a lot—but I'm strong. I express very clear and forceful opinions, but I try to do it nicely. You don't have to be mean to be powerful, and you can do anything with charm.

Taking Ownership of One's Personal Brand

Knowing that a recruiter will explore the job seeker's Personal Brand is important. However, it is even more critical that the job seeker embrace the concept well in advance of looking for a new position. Once committed to managing one's Personal Brand, having a plan is the first stage--as opposed to just simply jumping into all areas of a Personal Brand. As William Arruda points out in a **Forbes** article, one of the biggest mistakes is to **Act First, Think Later**.

When it comes to personal branding, I see people building Blogs, using social media, and joining associations without any strategic plan for how it will help them build their brand and achieve their goals.

Successful branding requires having a plan. Don't act until you think – and make your decisions based on your brand strategy. Start by identifying your goals. Then get to know yourself, understand your differentiation, and discern what makes you compelling. You have to establish your brand promise before you can start to build the brand itself with your target audience.

Many people struggle with how to determine their own brand. Tom Peters shed light on Personal Brand in 1997 in a **Fast Company** article. Along with many advanced steps, he starts with the simple suggestion of thinking of yourself as a commercial product.

To start thinking like your own favorite brand manager, ask yourself the same question the brand managers at Nike, Coke, Pepsi, or the Body Shop ask themselves: What is it that my product or service does that makes it different?

Give yourself the traditional 15-words-or-less contest challenge. Take the time to write down your answer. And then take the time to read it. Several times.

If your answer wouldn't light up the eyes of a prospective client or command a vote of confidence from a satisfied past client, or — worst of all — if it doesn't grab you, then you've got a big problem. It's time to give some serious thought and even more serious effort to imagining and developing yourself as a brand.

Start by identifying the qualities or characteristics that make you distinctive from your competitors — or your colleagues. What have you done lately — this week — to make yourself stand out? What would your colleagues or your customers say is your greatest and clearest strength Your most noteworthy (as in, worthy of note) personal trait?

Identifying the Personal Brand

A Personal Brand can be made up of many components, but it can be summarized by a Personal Branding Statement. This statement should capture the essence of what the person is all about a few sentences. In the past, this was called one's elevator pitch—describing oneself in the time it takes to ride the elevator to the desired floor. When networking with recruiters, it is essential to have this well-thought statement ready to share.

J.T. O'Donnell, of Careerealism.com offers five questions to create an impactful personal branding statement. By answering each one, one can use the answers to create a short statement that ties it all together.

- What problem do you love to solve at work? How are you the aspirin to an employer's pain?
- What's your process or methodology for doing it? How do you systematically tackle the problem to get it solved?
- What analogy can you use from everyday life to help someone understand better what you do? How can you help someone who doesn't understand what you do get a grasp on it?
- What proof do you have that what you say is true? How have you done this successfully before and what are the facts and statistics to back it up?
- What do you want to do next with this valuable skill? Where do you see potential for this skill to be of great value (i.e. save or make significant money) for an employer?

By answering each one, a job seeker can gain personal insight and use the answers to create a statement that ties it all together.

Self-Evaluation of Personal Brand

Well before approaching recruiters, job seekers should test their personal brand with someone they don't know that well. Having a resume review and a mock interview can be very enlightening as to what people's first impressions are. One of the interview questions to convey brand is the old standard: *Tell me about yourself*. In the article mentioned above, Tom Peters also addressed this evaluation stage of the process.

The real question is: How is brand You doing? Put together your own "user's group" — the personal brand You equivalent of a software review group. Ask for — insist on — honest, helpful feedback on your performance, your growth, your value. It's the only way to know what you would be worth on the open market. It's the only way to make sure that, when you declare your free agency, you'll be in a strong bargaining position. It's not disloyalty to them; it's responsible brand management for brand You — which also generates credit for them.

In practical terms, it is not uncommon to ask recruiters directly, *"How does my personal brand (resume and/or interview answers) tell you I'm the right candidate for the job?"*

This can be an iterative process, too. If the descriptors are sending the wrong message, there is clearly a disconnect between the desired perception and what is actually being conveyed.

As mentioned before, knowing how one's entire network of colleagues and friends would describe them is critical, too. The same questions need to be asked of them with no prompting. The standard question: *How would you describe me to a potential hiring manager or recruiter?* My personality, work ethic, knowledge in a particular area, etc.

Along with the standard written documents and personal references, Personal Brand evaluation must include one's online persona, as recruiters leverage this information heavily. The simplest exercise for this is to Google oneself. By typing their name in quotation marks in a Google search, a job seeker will see what recruiters see when doing the same thing. Naturally, it is best to avoid negative materials being posted throughout one's career instead of being reactionary after the fact. However, there is a way to try to remove inaccurate information: <https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/removals>.

(Find more tips in The Basics of Personal Online Reputation Management in this Journal.)

Personal Brand Should Match Desired Jobs

When targeting specific positions recruiters are promoting, job seekers must validate that their

Personal Branding has all the elements necessary to effectively promote oneself. The principal question is: Does it match the job description? There are two halves to this.

1. Knowledge, Skills, and Experience, and

2. Personality and *Soft Skills*.

When it comes to experience, there are typically no secret requirements or qualifications for a job posted by a company or recruiter. What the hiring manager wants is laid out for all job seekers to evaluate. The hope is that an honest self-evaluation is conducted before the first contact or conversation.

When it comes to personality, some desired traits are typically listed (albeit oftentimes generic). But sometimes assumptions need to be made, and then confirmed by a recruiter, by asking about these “unwritten requirements.”

For example, one should consider the personality spectrums below. Although one could consider themselves somewhere in the middle for any one of these, in some cases, they are at the extremes. Those are the critical attributes to convey in a Personal Statement and need to match the personality sought after by the hiring manager.

Personality Spectrums

Visionary ----- Implementer
Qualitative -----Quantitative
Adventuresome -----Conservative
Proactive ----- Reactive
Decisive -----Noncommittal
Extraverted -----Introverted
Detailed -----Big Picture Thinker
Innovative ----- Maintainer
Leader -----Follower
Theoretical -----Experimental
Collaborative -----Independent

Both types of elements of the Personal Brand should line up with the attributes shared in the job description (or further explained by the recruiter). There is no reason for a job seeker to interview for a job that does not match their personality. Mismatches in personality between company and candidate typically lead to a short engagement or job dissatisfaction.

Personal Brand Goes Deeper

There are a few other areas of a person's background that recruiters can leverage to gage proper fit in either experience or personality: hobbies, volunteerism, and education (especially, ongoing training and coursework).

As recruiters dig into a candidate's background, hobbies can say much about one's Personal Brand, especially with regard to fit within a company's culture. On the surface, an obvious question is whether personal interests match a company's, such as philanthropy, the environment, or volunteering with schools for the disadvantaged.

In some companies, even being physically active is seen as a key personality trait. REI embodies all of these things—a quick review of their careers section speaks volumes about their culture. Hobbies and interests can go even deeper in conveying a Personal Brand (which should be consistent with the stated version).

Sharp recruiters know that certain personality traits go with certain hobbies. Patience is required in model building—being a risk-taker is typically required in skydiving.

Education and training can sometimes be a deal-breaker or differentiator for hiring managers, too. Some companies look for constant-learners—people who are continually looking to improve their knowledge within their area of expertise and beyond. For example, recruiters will look for courses taken in the last several years for technical positions where staying razor sharp on the latest technologies is critical (especially in smaller companies where they do not have the time or resources to train new employees).

Recruiters Can Misinterpret Personal Brand

Beyond the pitfalls of inconsistencies or mismatches with what is shared directly, there is one more area where recruiters can be concerned about one's Personal Brand: biases. Although a broad subject in itself, there are specific elements of Personal Brand that are formed through perceptions that may not be obvious. Job seekers must address these directly within their Personal Branding to avoid misconceptions about who they are. Examples include:

- No online persona (i.e., LinkedIn profile) = afraid of new technologies, not adaptive to change.
- Short tenure at several companies in a row = hard to please, culturally does not fit in, impatient
- Multiple, long spans of unemployment = not hireable, skills are antiquated
- Lofty titles compared to actual deliverables = not trustworthy and/or ethical
- Poor formatting, grammar, spelling on resume = ambivalent to a required quality standard
- Little detail in online persona (i.e., no descriptions in LinkedIn profile) = not interested in a career change

The list goes on and on. Just like having people provide feedback on perceived Personal Brand messaging in mock interviews (or real ones with recruiters) and resume reviews, job seekers

should ask for feedback on the non-stated elements. It sometimes requires an open-mind or heedful self-reflection, but the feedback one gets may be extremely insightful.

Bottom Line

Personal Brand is a part of job seeker's professional life whether they want one or not. Recruiters develop one for the job seeker before, during, and after meeting them. A successful candidate who tries to control their destiny will have a carefully crafted Personal Brand; they will consistently weave this Personal Brand into all aspects of their public-facing persona, re-evaluate it often, and check for external factors skewing the Personal Brand from desired messaging.

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At BNSF and Motorola, he was trained as a Six-Sigma Blackbelt and Lean Engineering expert. He also was awarded three patents while working at Motorola. He was one of the founding members of a regional chapter of the Peter Drucker Society. He earned

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He has also provided on-site training on *Sourcing Top Talent, Employer Branding, and Goal Setting and Achievement* to many organizations. His Goal Setting and Achievement presentation is quite informative and entertaining as it compares setting personal/professional goals to his experience crossing the United States on a bicycle: 3,280 miles in 40 days.

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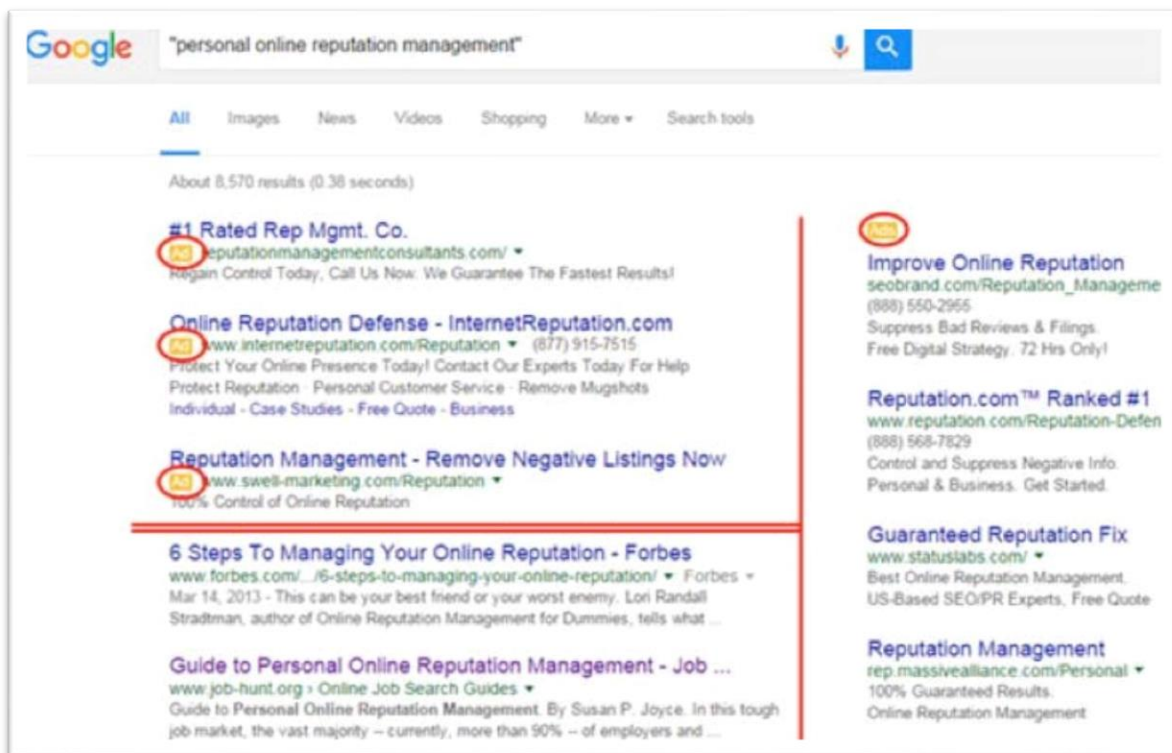
Advanced Google Search: Making Google More Useful for Personal SEO and Personal Online Reputation Management

By Susan P. Joyce

Most of us use Google dozens of times a day, but we usually only skim the surface. Google is more complex and talented than most people realize.

Understanding the Search Results Page Can Be Tricky

Understanding what Google shows us in the results of our search is important. Google usually shows us results that they are paid to show us (ads) at the top and right side of most results pages, assuming that advertisers appropriate to your query are available. Advertisers bid to be shown on those results pages, and those payments are a significant portion of Google's overall revenue.



The entries below the double line in the image above are the *organic* search results. They comprise the vast majority of information on the page. These results represent the pages that Google thinks will be the pages that are most important, trustworthy, and relevant to us in our searches.

You'll see that whenever an entry is paid, Google clearly marks it as an ad. The word **Ad** appears in gold above each paid entry in the center of the page and at the top of the right column which contains only paid entries. After the first few pages of results for a search, Google puts most of the ads at the bottom of the page, but they are still identified with the *Ad* label.

The Mechanics of Effective Google Search

People often express frustration when they can't find what they want on Google. Google is not perfect -- no question. However, it is very, very good.

Google Search Ground Rules

Often when someone is describing their Google *problem* they demonstrate some confusion with how Google works, so here are some *ground rules* to keep in mind when you are using Google for search.

1. Google assumes you mean *and*.

When you type two (or more) words into the search bar, Google assumes that you want to find pages containing all of those words, regardless of how close they may – or may not – be to each other on a page.

Google thinks you are using an *and* between those words, even if you don't type that word into your query.

Assume you want to find a job located in Milwaukee, Indianapolis, or Chicago, and you type job Milwaukee Indianapolis Chicago into Google, it will assume you really mean Milwaukee and Indianapolis and Chicago and job. So, it will show you web pages containing all FOUR of those terms scattered across the content.

2. Capitalization doesn't count (with two exceptions).

Google ignores capitalization used in queries in most circumstances. So, Google will find the same pages in search results whether you type *Chicago* or *chicago*. Capitalization (or lack) makes no difference to Google.

Capitalization *does* matter in some situations. Using capitalization allows you to give Google some direct instructions, for example:

- **Either/or queries:**

Going back to our example above, if you wanted Google to find jobs for you in Milwaukee, Chicago, or Indianapolis, Google could find jobs for you in those cities if you typed the word *OR* in all capitals between the city so your query would look like this: *real estate sales job* (Milwaukee **OR** Chicago **OR** Indianapolis)

Be sure to put a space on either side of the **OR** and enclose the optional terms inside a set of parentheses, as above, to be sure that Google understands the terms that may replace each other.

If you don't include the **OR** (in all capitals, as in the example above), Google assumes you intend an **and** between those words, so it would find only those pages which contained all the words – Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Chicago, and job.

- **Exclude some results:**

If you want your search results to definitely exclude some terms, make that clear to Google by using **NOT** in all caps in your query. For example, assume you wanted a job in Milwaukee, Chicago, or Indianapolis, but you didn't want a temporary job, then you would structure your search like this:

real estate sales job (Milwaukee OR Chicago OR Indianapolis) **NOT** temporary

Then, Google would find you the pages containing the term *real estate sales* and *job* in Milwaukee, Chicago, or Indianapolis that are not temporary.

3. Google will correct your spelling errors.

Most of the time, Google will correct what it *thinks* are your spelling errors.

If it is pretty sure it understands what you want, it will provide results for the correctly-spelled term, identified as "*Showing results for [correctly spelled term].*" On the next line it offers you the option to "*Search instead for [misspelled term].*"

4. Google uses “stemming” to find many variations of a word.

Google tries to help you find what you are seeking by sometimes showing you variations of what you want. If you search on the word *job*, it will typically also show you pages containing the word *jobs*. A search on *engineer* will typically also find *engineers*, *engineering*, and *engineered*.

5. Google ignores some words.

Just as you always suspected, Google ignores some of the words in your queries that it considers unimportant. It's usually right. It ignores words like *the*, *in*, *of*, *for*, and other similar words. Use them if it helps you, but Google will ignore them.

What if You Don't Want Google to “Fix” Your Query?

Sometimes Google can drive you crazy helping you, fixing things that aren't really broken.

Misspellings are fixed (when you want to search on that exact spelling of the word), and some words in a query are ignored as irrelevant. When that happens and the search results are not useful for you, try *Verbatim* to force Google to search for **exactly** what you type into the search bar.

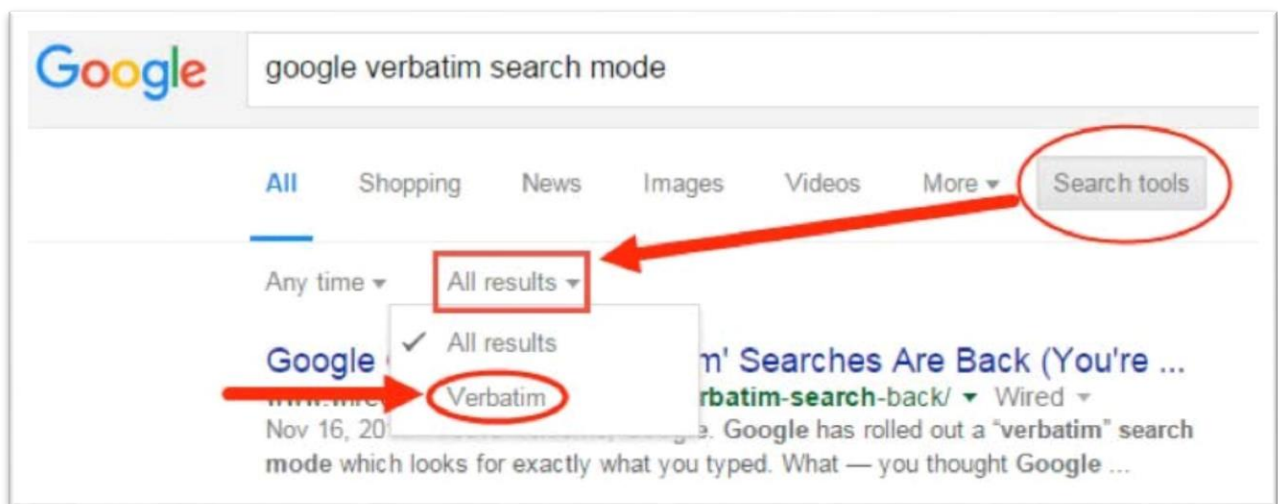
Finding and Using Google Verbatim

The smart people at Google have figured out that they don't always know what you really want. So, they now provide a way for you to over-ride their *fixes* to your queries. It is called *Verbatim*. When

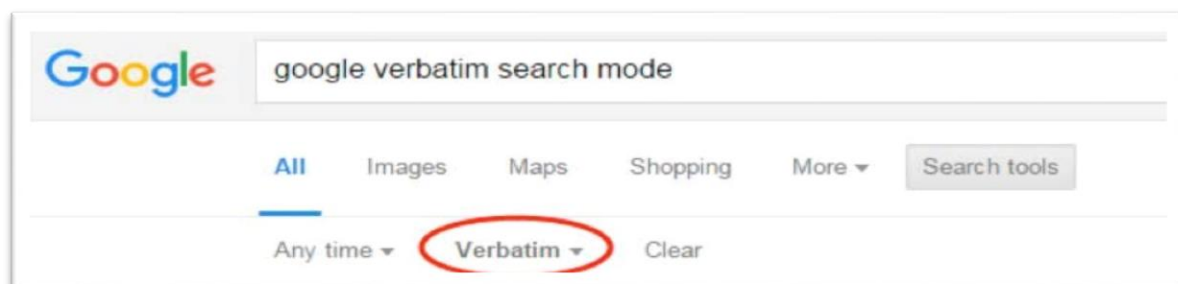
you want Google to search for exactly what you type into the search bar, use Google's Verbatim search mode.

Find **Verbatim** (currently) in at the top of a Google search results page (not the Google home page).

- First, click on **Search tools** and then select **All results** from the options that appear below on the right, above the search results.
- The **All Results** link opens up a drop-down list containing the word **Verbatim**.
- Click on **Verbatim**.
- Google will run subsequent searches exactly as specified in the search box, without any corrections or fixes.



The Verbatim search allows a user to be very specific, particularly with spelling, when Google otherwise corrects what it sees as misspellings or awkward search queries.



As shown above, when Google is in Verbatim search mode, the word Verbatim appears above the search results on the page.

Ten Tips for Better Google Search Results

Sometimes changing how you ask Google to find something can help improve the results of the search.

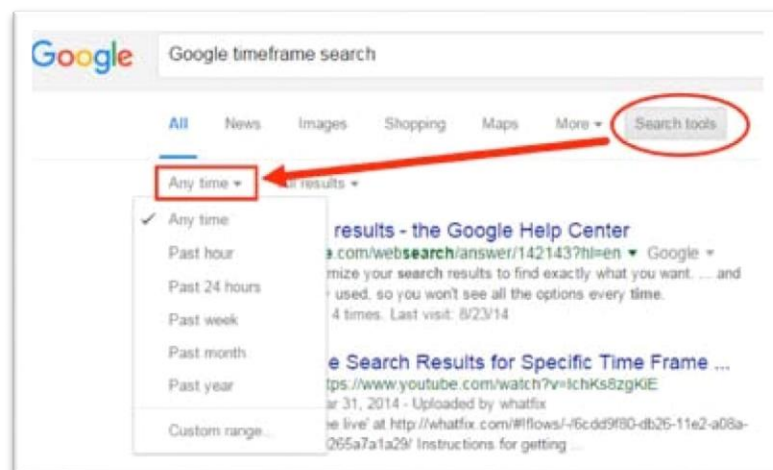
1. Limit the search to a specific timeframe.

The default timeframe for Google search results is *Any time*. Google displays the most relevant search results, according to its algorithm and understanding of your preferences.

But, sometimes, you want Google to search for something during a specific period of time, for example:

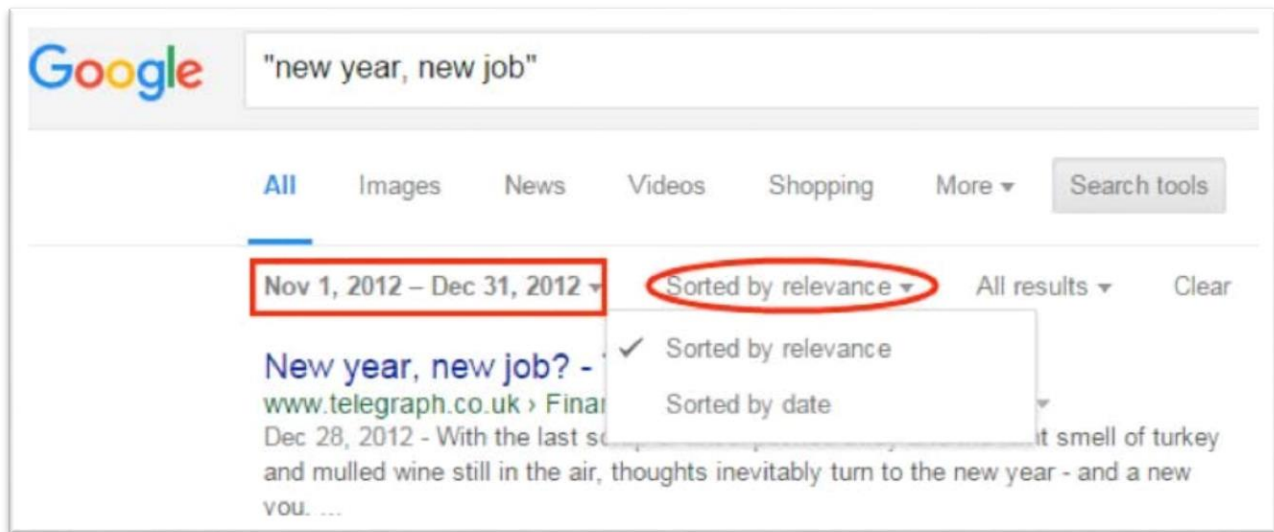
- Have Google check an employer's website for any jobs posted within the past 24 hours.
- Get the latest news about a target employer to read just before heading out on a job interview, or, maybe, to find an announcement (or job posting) from some point in the past.
- Look for *old news* that might give an indication about how an employer operates.

As with the Verbatim search, to use the timeframe search, start on a Google search results page, and click on the **Search tools** button above the search results.



Then click on the down arrow beside **Any time** to choose your timeframe from the drop-down list or to specify your own. When viewing a specific timeframe, Google puts the dates or timeframe (like **Past hour**). Then, Google offers options for how the results are ranked -- by time or by relevance (again, determined by the Google algorithm and the searcher's previous preferences).

In the example above, the search results are for the period of November 1 through December 31,



2012, and they are sorted by relevance. To change to date sort, click on the other option.

This can be an extremely useful search. Understand that if a page from the past has been deleted from the website where it was located, Google won't reconstruct it. But, the results will show what remains on the web from the timeframe specified in the search.

2. Try different variations of your search terms.

Different versions of your search query will return different results.

Google typically assumes that the most important words are first in the query. Test by changing the order of the terms, like from "Boston, MA marketing jobs" to "marketing job in Boston, MA."

Try different, more specific (and relevant) versions of the job title, like "marketing specialist" and "marketing analyst." Pay attention when searching for long words or phrases that are typically reduced to acronyms, like the names of large companies (HP or Hewlett Packard), degrees (MBA), professional certifications (CPA), etc. The acronyms may be better in some queries, but the full phrase may be required for others.

With specific target employers in mind, analyze relevant job descriptions to determine what works best for a specific query by doing trial-and-error testing. Or use a tool like **TagCrowd.com**. If the job seeker doesn't have any target employers, test for the terms used most widely by all employers using Indeed.com's JobTrends as described in Personal SEO for Job Search and Careers (Chapter 8).

Also, try searching with typical shortcuts and abbreviations as well as the complete words (e.g. try both telecom and telecommunications). Also test both plural and singular (job and jobs). Google uses *stemming* to try to find different versions of the word you are seeking, but it may not find the version you mean. (Also see # 5 and # 6, below, to try a Google *wild card* search and a synonym search.)

3. Add “*long-tail*” keywords to the search query.

If anyone searches on the term *job*, Google will find billions of pages that contain the word *job*. Far too many to be useful, and the vast majority of the search results would not be for the job being sought, or, likely, not even job descriptions at all!

To have more relevant search results, narrow the search by asking Google to find more specific information. For example, assuming that the search is for a social media marketing analyst job in Boston, use this search instead:

job "social media marketing analyst" Boston

Learn more about *long-tail* keywords in the Personal SEO and Keywords articles.

4. Enclose phrases inside of double quotation marks.

Google always assumes - unless told otherwise - that it should find pages which include all of the search terms, if it can. So, if you typed in this search query:

entry level social media jobs < < this query is *not* a phrase

Since these words aren't enclosed in quotation marks, Google would assume that the searcher wanted pages containing all five words anywhere on the page, not necessarily in a phrase. Then, Google would find all the pages that contained all five of those words -- assuming that the query means *and* between those words: entry AND level AND social AND etc -- regardless of how close together (or far apart) those words were on a webpage.

However, when a phrase is typed into Google with the intent of having Google find all those words, side-by-side, in the order typed, Google offers a way to make that clear. Enclose those words inside double quotation marks (" "), and Google will look for that exact phrase. So the phrase search would look like this:

"entry level social media jobs" < < this query *is* a phrase because quotation marks are used

Notice the much greater number of search results when quotation marks aren't used. In this case, fewer results are better because those results are more accurate--they are what the searcher really wants.

5. Exclude some results.

If Google search results have some entries mixed in that have nothing to do with the goal of the search, many extraneous entries can be excluded by specifying the words for Google to ignore.

For example, if the goal is a job in a Florida bank, our first search results contains not only the financial institutions that we want, but also entries for fishing banks and food banks that are not what we want.

To exclude results that are not good fits for what is being sought, expand the search terms by adding words from the kind of sites that should be excluded (e.g. fish, food) but attaching a minus sign (-) to the front of each word. So "fish" becomes "-fish" and so on for all the terms to be excluded.

Thus, after a few tries, the Google search query looks like this:

job "florida bank" -fish -food

and Google returns results that include pages that **do** contain the phrase "florida bank" but do **not** contain the words "fish" or "food."

Please note! As in the example above, there should **not** be a blank space between the "-" for the word to be excluded. So, "-fish" (without the space) **will** exclude pages containing the word "fish," but "- fish" (with the space after the minus sign) will **not** exclude those pages!

6. Use the Google "wild card" * (an asterisk)

When you aren't sure exactly the word to use in a phrase, replace that word with an asterisk (with spaces on both sides of it), and Google will fill in the blank for you. Perhaps you want an entry level job, but you aren't yet sure which job title you want, you could type this query into Google to have Google show you your options: entry level:

** entry level jobs <<* This search would find many different entry level jobs

*assistant * jobs <<* This would find many different assistant jobs, including assistant cook, assistant bookkeeper, assistant manager, etc.

** manager jobs (Boston OR Cambridge) <<* This would find different kinds of manager jobs, like engineering manager, marketing manager, etc. located either in Boston or Cambridge.

In the last example, putting Boston **OR** Cambridge inside parenthesis helps Google understand which words are included in the either/or statement.

7. Limit the search to a specific website.

Limit Google's search to a specific website, or even part of a specific website, using Google's Site Search capability. Type your query into Google's search box, type the word "site" with a colon (:) after it. Then, immediately following "site:" add the domain name of site you want searched.

Start by tracking down the correct website for the jobs. Most employers post their jobs on their websites, like any other webpage. Some very large employers have special websites specifically used for job postings, and other employers assign part of their website specifically to job postings.

For example, to search through the jobs at these three employers, these searches would be appropriate based on how each employer makes their jobs visible to the world:

"administrative assistant" MA site:hubspot.com << jobs on the HubSpot.com website

"administrative assistant" NJ site:att.jobs << a website specifically for AT&T jobs

"administrative assistant" NY site:careersatjpmc.com << a website specifically for jobs at JP Morgan Chase

Please note! Again, as with the use of the "-" sign, do **not** put a space between the "site:" and the domain name you want Google to search. And don't forget the colon after the word "site".

8. Combine the techniques.

When you have a complex search, you can combine the various techniques into one long query. For example, assume you wanted an assistant job for a green industry employer located in

Boston or Cambridge, MA, but you don't want to work for a fictional company named Employer, Inc. This is how you would structure that query:

*"assistant * job" finance (boston **OR** cambridge) -Employer*

So, you have a phrase ("assistant * job"), a wildcard (assistant * job), an either/or (boston OR cambridge), and an employer to be avoided (-Employer).

9. Google Maps (google.com/maps) can find potential employers.

Suppose you want to work in a hospital somewhere near you. Go to google.com/maps, and do the following:

- Type the city and state into the search bar, or use your mouse to move the map around until it shows you the area you want.
- Click the "**nearby**" link.
- Type "healthcare" or "accountant" (whatever type of employer you want) into the search bar (with the city and state).
- Google will populate your map with dots indicating locations of businesses offering those services.
- Look in the box below your search query, and you will see the names and addresses of the first ten businesses near that location.
- Click on a business name, and you'll see more information, including a link to the business website where you can find out more about the business and look for job postings or contact information.
- If Google has a photo image of the area available, a "Street View" option will be visible. Click on "Street View" to see views of the buildings and streets by clicking on the "Street View" button, and dropping the little figure onto the street beside the employer.

- This is the online version of the Yellow Pages which job seekers have used for years to identify potential employers. But Google can do it more quickly and completely for you. Note: these employers do **not** necessarily have jobs open, but they could be good employers for you to keep track of (maybe set up Google Alerts) and network into.

10. Queries for interview preparation.

Combining all our new techniques, be up-to-date with the latest news about an employer before heading for that job interview. Run Google searches like these before the interview so you can knock their socks off in the interview:

“[insert company name here]” “(ceo OR president)”
 “[insert company name here]” officers
 “[insert company name here]” “expanding in *”
 “[insert company name here]” (announced OR introduced)
 “[insert company name here]” “new * announced”
 “[insert company name here]” (growing OR planning)
 “[insert company name here]” (launched OR launching)
 “[insert company name here]” (awarded OR won)
 “[insert company name here]” (chosen OR selected)
 “[insert company name here]” “opening *”
 “[insert company name here]” “venture funding”
 “[insert company name here]” “quarterly financial results”
 “[insert company name here]” “beginning production”
 “[insert company name here]” “acquiring
 *” “[insert company name here]”
 ~competitor

There are **many** more queries, so keep thinking and looking!

To avoid a bad situation or an employer heading for trouble, check out the 50 Google Searches to Avoid Layoffs and Bad Employers (4).

Use "*Incognito*" or "*Private*" Google Search for Defensive Googling

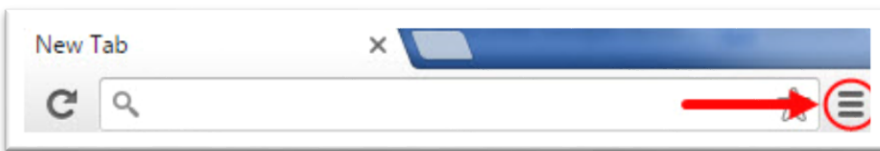
The way we use Google in our searching, specifically the search results we choose and use, is monitored by Google because Google is trying to give us search results that match what we find useful. Google calls this "*personalized search*" and most of the time it is very useful. But, for a search on your name, a different kind of Google search will be more useful.

While personalized search is very helpful when we are doing our typical Google searches for movie reviews, etc., we need an *impersonal* search when we are checking our online reputations.

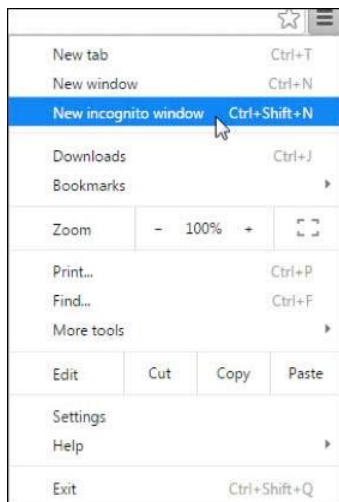
We don't want Google to show us results we would like; we want Google to show us the results it shows an employer or recruiter searching for our names. The closest we can come to that is an *incognito* (or *private*) search, which is relatively easy to do with most browsers.

Since Google's own Chrome browser is currently the most popular, that's the one we'll describe here. But all current browsers offer a way to search that is private.

To do an *Incognito* search using Chrome, click on the small box of horizontal lines at the right end of the browser's location bar, circled in red, below.



When you click on the lines inside the circle, this dialog box will open (below, left).



Simply choose the **New incognito window** option highlighted in the list in the dialog box (left), and Chrome will open a new browser -- that announces **You've gone incognito.**

Now, type your name into the browser's location bar, to the right of the magnifying glass icon, and Google will search for your name, almost completely without personalizing your search.

While Google ignores your other Chrome browser activity (out side of the Incognito tabs you have open), it retains the information about your location (city, state, and country) in the search results.

Most other browsers have a version of *Incognito* search, sometimes called *private* search. If you want to use a different browser for your private searches, do a Google search on the browser name (like Firefox or Internet Explorer) plus the word *private*, and you'll find how to do a private search with your favorite browser.

Use Incognito/Private search to see what someone else, who doesn't regularly search on your name, will see. Do search on your name relatively often!

Searching on your own name is called **Defensive Googling**, described in more detail in *The Most Important Keywords for Job Search and Careers* article in this Journal issue. Be sure to practice Defensive Googling (5) to see what Google shows the world (recruiters and employers, specifically) in association with your name.

[\[Back to Table of Contents.\]](#)

End Notes

- (1) **2014 Social Recruiting Survey**, Jobvite.com:
https://www.jobvite.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Jobvite_SocialRecruiting_Survey2014.pdf
- (2) **Online Reputation in a Connected World, Microsoft, 2010**, report PDF download link:
go.microsoft.com/?linkid=9709510
- (3) **Number of Employers Passing on Applicants, Due to Social Media Posts, Continues to Rise**, June 26, 2014:
<http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=6%2F26%2F2014&id=pr829&ed=12%2F31%2F2014>
- (4) **50 Google Searches to Avoid Layoffs and Bad Employers**, by Susan P. Joyce:
<http://www.job-hunt.org/guides/google/google-for-layoff-avoidance.shtml>
- (5) **Guide to Defensive Googling**, by Susan P. Joyce:
<http://www.job-hunt.org/guides/google/defensive-googling-method.shtml>

About the Author

Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are Job-Hunt.org and WorkCoachCafe.com. For more about using Google, check out Susan's Guide to Using Google for Job Search column –

<http://www.job-hunt.org/guides/google/using-google.shtml>

Are Keywords the Foundation for Career Success?

By Martin Yate

New Realities

We grew up in the dawning of the digital age, experiencing firsthand the disruption of every profession and industry, along with the transformation of every product we use and the ways all products and services are now delivered. It's not surprising that this revolution of the way we live, work and communicate has destroyed almost every building block of the traditional career management strategies that have been foundational to success and security for a hundred years.

As a profession, we are necessarily re-inventing the strategies and tactics that help working professionals successfully navigate the rough waters of long careers that offer diminished horizons and little job security. This is a challenging and simultaneously thrilling time for career management professionals who want to be part of the conversation that impacts the fulfillment of so many lives.

Many working people still cling to the old career management strategies that taught hard work and loyalty led directly to job security and success in life. They still believe and play by these rules, so the harsh realities of unexpected job loss come as a hard smack in the face.

Resumes and Branding

All too often, clients come to us troubled about getting back to work, but exhibiting little or no concern for long-range career strategy (see Martin's article Plan B, later in this Journal), so our relationships invariably begin with cries for help with a resume. However, resume creation is the time when everyone is forced to examine the past to date, and evaluate it in terms of planning for the future. So discussion of the resume becomes a very effective starting point for introducing new career management strategies to workers of all ages as they struggle to survive and succeed in an uncertain world.

On the list of things anyone wants to do in life, fixing your resume is right up there with hitting yourself in the head with a hammer. Yet a properly constructed resume is the start of every successful transition, and serves as the introduction to a person's professional brand. A resume defines how a person chooses to be seen in the professional world and is an essential part of defining a commodity (you) that the professional world wants to employ. It is arguably the most financially valuable document a person owns, because when it works you work, and when it doesn't, you don't.

An insecure world of work demands greater marketing skills for anyone hoping to survive and prosper, and requires every professional to become, in part, a Brand Manager of the brand they choose to create

and nurture. Once the messaging of such a resume is defined, you have the essence of a professional brand that can be echoed across social media platforms and exemplified in everything you do; but first we have to define and package a product that will have customer appeal, helping deliver job interviews and offers.

The Customer Is Always Right

When a client isn't getting interviews, the causes and the cure always begin with the resume. Often that resume isn't focused enough to be discoverable in database searches, a generalized resume that tries to be everything to everyone is like one-size-fits-all clothing, it usually fits no one and simply has no place as the primary marketing document for a modern day job search.

The first two lessons we all learn in our professional lives are so important that we have carried them with us through the years. They are, *"The customer is always right,"* and *"Find out what the customer wants and give it to them."* These simple phrases are so important to everything we do in our work – whatever that work might be, that understanding and applying them correctly is the bedrock of all professional success.

Everyone knows this, until the word *"resume"* is brought up and then collective amnesia sets in. Most people try to generalize a resume, making it a jumble of everything they've ever done, in the mistaken belief that it will give their resume wider appeal. They make it all about: *"me and everything I have done and think important."*

Because such a resume includes everything imagined to be important, without reference to what the customers are actually buying, it will rarely, if ever, be seen: It lacks the focus and the keywords that deliver enough detail (data density) to make that resume discoverable in a database search. This me-centric myopia will short-circuit a person's ability to get interviews, turn them into job offers and then succeed in those jobs; effectively crippling hopes for career success and financial stability.

Contrarily, a customer-centric resume focused on a specific target job and built from the ground up with the customers' needs in mind and using the words and phrases they use to describe the job, will perform far better in database searches. Then once pulled from a database for review, it will speak more intelligently to recruiters and hiring managers, dramatically increasing the odds of interviews and job offers.

On top of these benefits, a more objective understanding of an employer's needs increases our clients' ability to be successful in their work and achieve their professional goals.

As we move forward with the discussion of how, why and where keywords work in a resume, you will notice a subtext of how they can effectively play an important role in the discussion of long-range career planning.

The Customer-Centric Resume

Rather than telling potential employers what you want or what you think they want, a customer centric, or job-targeted resume, is the only sensible way to sell to a customers' expressed needs.

With today's resumes going into databases that can exceed 300 million competitive documents, a resume written with a specific job in mind, using the language and priorities employers use to describe that job will outperform competitive documents because it will include the keywords that recruiters are most likely to use in their database searches, and subsequently resonate with recruiters and hiring managers when read by them.

While no one likes writing a resume, if your clients want to get ahead in life a customer-centric orientation is essential to defining a brand that the professional world is eager to embrace.

This is achieved with a logical process I've called Target Job Deconstruction, which we have used in our resume and coaching practice for over fifteen years. It leads to both better resumes and greatly enhanced interview performance.

Target Job Deconstruction (TJD)

Every successful job search begins with an analysis of what the customers are buying so that the resume can be built to sell to the customers' needs. This is how it's done:

Step One. Collect six job postings for the one job you are best qualified to do and save them in a folder. Geography is largely immaterial; the job postings can be from anywhere.

Step Two. Open a new MSWord doc and save it as, for example Internal Auditor TJD. Add a subhead reading Job Title, then copy and paste in the job title variations from each of the sample job descriptions. Looking at the result you can say, "when employers are hiring people like me they tend to use these job titles."

Step Three. Add a second subhead titled Skills/Responsibilities/Experience/Deliverables Look through the job postings for a single requirement that's common to all of the collected job postings. Take the most complete description of that single requirement and copy and paste it into your TJD doc, putting a #6 by your entry to signify it is common to all.

Add any other words and phrases from the other job postings used to describe this same responsibility to the bottom of the entry. This tells you how employers think about and describe that particular job requirement; and in the process, the keywords recruiters will most likely use in a data base search. Repeat this exercise for other requirements common to all six of your sample job postings.

Step Four. Repeat this process for requirements common to only five of the jobs and when those are exhausted look for requirements common to four and so on all the way down to those requirements mentioned in only one job posting.

What Do Clients Learn From Target Job Deconstruction?

When the above exercise is complete, a client can look at the document and say, "when employers are hiring people like me they tend to

- Use this selection of job titles

- Prioritize their needs in this way
- Use these keywords to describe each requirement.

This delivers a template for the story that the resume needs to tell, and the words it should employ to achieve maximum database discoverability and resonance with the selection team.

The client also learns the areas of specific interest that will fuel interview questions and has time to develop examples of performance. These insights empower a client with the ability to develop intelligent questions that demonstrate understanding and engagement with the challenges of that job. And as we know, while hiring decisions are based on many criteria, intelligent questions turn a one-sided examination of skills into a two-way conversation between professionals with a common interest – something that sets a candidate apart from the competition.

How, Where, and Why Keywords Work in a Resume

The greater the number of keywords in a resume that are directly relevant to a specific target job, the higher the ranking that resume will achieve in recruiters' database searches. The higher a resume's ranking, the greater the likelihood that it will be reviewed by a recruiter.

However, if a client overdoes the usage of keywords, search engine algorithms will likely penalize the resume for keyword stuffing, so clients need to be educated to use keywords appropriately.

Keyword stuffing means jamming a document full of keywords in an attempt to make it more visible. Just about every search engine penalizes this today. Google's keyword optimization rule is three percent, which means if a document contains a word that exceeds the three percent of total document content, it gets penalized. The developers of Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) tend to regard the "*Google three percent rule*" as a commonsense and standard practice.

Target Job Titles

Every book and blog we read; every TV show, movie and advertisement we watch has a title to draw us in, so I'm continually amazed that at least 50 percent of the resumes that I see in the course of a week, lack a target job title.

When recruiters search databases for candidate resumes, they start with a job title (taken from the company job posting): Obviously a resume with a target job title immediately becomes more discoverable. Plus once pulled from search results and looked at by recruiters, that target job title delivers immediate focus and pulls the reader into the doc.

This makes a target job title the first mandatory keyword / keyword phrase to use in a resume. It comes right after the name and contact information and is usually bolded and in similar font and font size to the person's name: These font styling suggestions are not to enhance database discoverability (they have no impact), but to create an immediate visual connectivity between the name and the job title.

With a choice of varying job titles discovered that describe essentially the same job, the challenge is to choose a target job title that has the greatest chance of being discovered. For example, here are three job titles for the same job:

Social Networking Specialist

Social Media Specialist

Social Networks Specialist

Which would you choose? To achieve maximum discoverability, the logical response is to combine all three options into one keyword phrase: Social Media Networking Specialist.

Performance Profiles

This real estate at the top of a resume is valuable real estate for database discoverability and for quickly engaging a reader technically knowledgeable in that profession, so it needs to be used wisely.

Follow the target job title at the top of the resume with **Performance Profile / Performance Summary** as a subhead. This replaces the traditional **Objective**. No one cares what a potential candidate wants at this point anyway.

Use of the word *performance* works because it speaks to everyday job performance capabilities, and simultaneously to the formal performance review that every manager must do with every employee every year.

The content of the Performance Profile avoids traditional Job Objective idiocies like, “*The desire for professional growth with a blue chip company,*” (duh!) or a Summary of what the writer thinks is important, “*I’m a results-driven executive with excellent communication skills who thinks out-of-the-box,*” can’t you just hear some jaded headhunter muttering, “*We’ll be the judge of that*”? Now if we don’t talk about such things as these, how do we use a Performance Profile to maximum effect?

How to Create a Performance Profile

Start by collecting three to six of the most common (therefore important) requirements identified in the Target Job Deconstruction (**TJD**) exercises. Then, write a bulleted statement for each, capturing professional capabilities as they relate to that particular need.

You then combine this sequence of bullets into a few short sentences, so that the resume opens with a familiar job title and introduction to the person’s skills exactly as they relate to employer priorities.

Dense blocks of text are visually inaccessible, so if you have more than five or six lines, break the text into two paragraphs. Finally check the wording against the TJD to see that, wherever possible, you use the same keywords that employers are using in their job postings and that recruiters will use in their database searches.

Done this way, a Performance Profile demonstrates understanding of the job's priorities and possession of the skills employers seek. It's a powerful way to open a resume both for its impact with the resume search engines and because it gives the reader a clear, customer-centric summary of what is being offered. This approach also delivers a clear focus on the story the rest of the resume needs to tell.

The Professional Skills Section

A Professional Skills section should list all the skills (keywords) required to execute the responsibilities of the job, as identified in the TJD exercises. It should come right after a Target Job Title and a Performance Summary at the top of your resume because the ATS programs that help recruiters search databases reward both the presence of keywords and the placement of keywords – those keywords found near the top of a document are seen to make that doc potentially more relevant to the user.

Every relevant skill keyword has the ability to increase database discoverability. While, for the reader, each keyword mentioned in the Professional Skills section supports claims made in the Performance Profile and gives the reader potential of topics for conversation, “Ah, she can talk about this and she knows how to... I wonder if she...?” Subtly suggesting topics of conversation by telling a focused story and delivering facts in a considered sequence.

Search engines don't care much about formatting (as long as keyword search terms are separated by commas), but employing a visually accessible format, usually single words or short phrases in three or four columns, makes a big difference to readability and comprehension for a reader.

This suggested structure of Target Job Title, followed by Performance Summary and a Professional Skills section means the resume delivers all the critical information an ATS program or a recruiter needs to screen in a candidate within the first half of the first page.

Keyword Skills Prioritization

There is another important consideration for keywords in the Professional Skills section of a resume: they need to be prioritized. Once pulled from database searches, resumes are read by people who understand the job, professionals who are aware of which skills are *must-have* and which are *nice to have*. Your clients will want their most important skills to come first.

The easiest way to explain this is with an example: Around 1999, when we first got serious about keywords in resumes at ***Knock Em Dead***, we prepared a resume for a dental assistant, putting all the important technical skills of her job into a Professional Skills section. We put these skills into three columns for visual accessibility, and everything looked fine, until something terrible jumped out at me: The list we created started with “Teeth whitening” and ended with “Fourhanded dentistry.”

What was so terrible about this, all the skills were present?

They were indeed, but it suddenly occurred to me that, as someone who is a deeply orthodox coward and who dreads dental visits, these skills weren't prioritized in terms of their relative

importance to successful execution of duties, so common sense said that the most important skills for a job should come before the less important skills.

In the West we read from left to right and top to bottom so we immediately switched these phrases so that “Four-handed dentistry” (a highly marketable skill) came first and “*Teeth whitening*” (a more routine skill) came last and prioritized the importance and appearance of the other keyword skills.

Here is that very section, both to illustrate the point and to offer an example of a professional Skills section:

Professional Skills

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ▪ 4-Handed Dentistry | ▪ Infection Control | ▪ Preventative Care |
| ▪ Oral Surgery/Extraction | ▪ Casts/Impressions | ▪ Emergency Treatment |
| ▪ Root Canals | ▪ Diagnostic X-Rays | ▪ Instrument Sterilization |
| ▪ Prosthetics/Restorations | ▪ Tray Setups | ▪ Teeth Whitening |

Prioritizing skill keywords based on their relevancy to execution of a job’s responsibilities doesn’t help database discoverability, but it does offer a subtext for the knowledgeable reader who will understand that here is a professional who has a firm grasp of the relative importance of all the necessary professional skills of the job. This adds to the clear focus and obvious grasp already being established by resume structure and keyword usage.

Keywords in Context

With job-relevant skills collected and prioritized, the task is now to include them in the Professional Experience section of the resume within the context where they have been applied.

While ATS search engines now reward the contextual use of keywords, seeing keyword skills in the context of work experience helps the recruiters and hiring managers get a better understanding of a candidate’s suitability. This not only dramatically increases the odds of interviews happening, it changes the tone of those interviews, because the employer has greater assurance going in to the interview that s/he isn’t wasting time with a non-contender.

Keywords and Resume Length

The standard for resume length has been one page for every ten years of experience, and never more than two pages for at least the last 35 years; but now that length is outmoded and potentially harmful to a successful job search.

Technology has revolutionized every job on the planet, and as jobs have gotten more complex, they require more explanation. For professionals with 7+ years’ experience, most technology and science professionals and all management ranks, a one-page resume is almost impossible and a two-page resume often very difficult to achieve, if you expect that the resume will tell the right story and be data dense enough to be discoverable. On the whole, the rule of one page for every

ten years is still a sensible guideline, but the bottom line is that a resume can be as long as it needs to be to tell a concise and compelling story.

No recruiter on God's green earth is going to read a resume built as we have discussed, thinking as he goes from page one to page two, that this candidate is a great match for the job and then on flipping to third page decide *not* to interview that candidate because she has so much relevant experience that the resume went to a third page. In 35+ years in the world of career management I have never—ever—heard of a qualified candidate being rejected because a resume exceeded some arbitrary page count; it just doesn't happen when a customer-centric focus is achieved on the first page and maintained throughout.

The length of a resume is less important than its sustained relevance to the target job. For example, a two-page resume that has all the right stuff, but is illegible because the ridiculously small font used to squeeze everything onto two pages, doesn't advance anyone's candidacy.

When the first page makes a convincing argument, the rest of the resume will be read carefully. More complex jobs demand longer resumes and offer more space for relevant keywords and establishing who you are and how you want to be seen (Your professional brand). However, you should make every effort to maintain focus and an *if in doubt, leave it out* editing approach.

Keywords, Branding and Your Success

If you want a brand that helps you succeed professionally, you must consider what your customers want and deliver it to them; Target Job Deconstruction helps people at all levels achieve this awareness and ability. Keeping the messaging established in the resume consistent and visible in all you say, do, and write is what constitutes a professional brand that steadily builds into a resilient professional reputation.

While we have been talking about keywords and resumes, we have also been having a discussion that is foundational to long-term career success and fulfillment. The greater the effort you put into working toward credibility and visibility—which over time translates into a steadily widening professional reputation in your area of expertise—the quicker you enter the inner circles in your department, your company, and ultimately your profession.

It is in these inner circles that job security, plum assignments, raises, promotions, and professional marketability all dwell.

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About the Author



New York Times bestseller **Martin Yate**, CPC, writes the 17 book ***Knock 'Em Dead*** career management series, collectively published in some 63 foreign language editions. He is considered the father of the new career management. Martin's work unfolds a new and unique approach to getting what you want out of life, rather than living as a drone in some high-rise salt mine. As Dun & Bradstreet says, "*He's just about the best in the business.*"

In his spare time, Martin is the columnist for 2 Job-Hunt's Guides: Guide to Effective Resumes and Guide to Successful Job Interviews.

To read more of Martin's articles, visit his Job-Hunt.org columns –

- Guide to Effective Resumes –
<http://www.job-hunt.org/resumes/resumes.shtml>
- Guide to Successful Job Interviews –
http://www.job-hunt.org/job_interviews/job-interviewing.shtml

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Personal SEO for Job Search and Careers

By Susan P. Joyce

Today, the vast majority of recruiters and employers use search engines to find qualified candidates. Once good candidates are found, searches again help employers to vet those candidates, helping to separate the person who receives a job offer from the also-rans.

Many employers are desperate to find qualified job candidates. They call it the “*war for talent*.” I believe that a big part of the reason employers are having so much difficulty finding qualified job candidates is because most potential job candidates don't understand how to make themselves visible so that they can be found. Consequently, understanding personal search engine optimization (“SEO”) and using these techniques effectively will be a competitive advantage.

Personal SEO is the solution, and it is an advantage in this job market. Understanding and applying the principles of personal SEO is an essential skill today for job search and also for careers -- for career coaches and for job seekers. Particularly when in a job search, personal SEO is not optional.

What Is Personal SEO?

Understanding personal SEO is hard to do without understanding the concepts of SEO practiced by web professionals.

"Search Engine Optimization (SEO)" is the art (or science) of using the right words on a web page to have the page appear in the results of a search engine query without paying the search engine for that visibility. The goal is to be in the top five search results on the first page of Google search results since few people look below the top five entries and very few people check the second page of results.

"Keywords" and *"Keyword Phrases"* are the terms that a searcher types into a search engine when they want to find information online. In this edition of the Journal, when you see the term *"keyword"* know that it also means *"keyword phrases."* A *"keyword"* is *"manager."* A keyword phrase is *"social media marketing manager."*

When the right keywords are on the web page, the webpage shows up in the search results when that term is used for a search. Keywords are the foundation of SEO -- the right words ("keywords") in the right places on a web page so that the page is visible in search results when the keywords are used for a search.

"Personal SEO" is managing personal online visibility (which we all have now, like it or not), so that we can be found in a search engine's search results on a search that is appropriate for us, like a Google search for our name or our job title. We also need to be found in LinkedIn's search results on a search by job title or some other keyword/keyword phrase.

Advanced SEO concept that is critical for success today:

"Long-tail Keywords" are the keywords that are very specific to the goal of the searcher. They are *not* generic.

The term *"long-tail"* comes from a statistical distribution of numbers (or searches), and refers to the *"long tail"* at the end of the distribution curve where there are fewer occurrences. This means **more visibility with less competition** when someone searches using the "long-tail" keywords, which *most* serious searchers do.

When applied to SEO, it refers to the greater success of more specific keywords rather than more generalized/generic on keywords.

If you were looking for a someone to fill your construction project manager job opening, would you search on the term "project manager" or the term "construction project manager"? Which would be faster and return more relevant search results?

This is a counter-intuitive idea until you think about it. Generic seems useful, but, in fact, it is less useful than being specific, because being specific brings the long-tail keywords with it.

In a job search, is it useful to go to Google or a job board and type in the word "jobs"? Type that into Google right now and you'll get more than 2 billion results! How useful is that? But, if your goal is a SAP Netweaver 7 project manager job, then you would find the most useful results by searching on the long-tail term *"SAP Netweaver 7 project manager job."* Many fewer results, *but exactly the right ones.* And, possibly, less competition from other job seekers for those jobs, too.

Recruiters use long-tail keywords when searching for qualified job candidates. They don't search for *"resumes"* or *"resumes in Boston"* even if that's where they are located. Nor do they search for *"experienced (whatever) professional"* on LinkedIn. All of those searches are much too generic to be useful.

Recruiters search for the specific terms that are relevant to the job they are filling. For example, assuming they had a SAP Netweaver 7 project manager job open, they would search for people with the terms *"SAP Netweaver 7"* and *"project manager"* in their resumes, job applications, and/or LinkedIn Profiles. Presumably, these people could be qualified candidates (more below). Searching only on *"manager"* or *"project manager"* would be a waste of time because they want project managers who are experienced with SAP Netweaver 7.

"The Long Tail" (1) an article in *Wired* magazine by Chris Anderson (2004) created the term and mobilized web content providers.

Why Personal SEO Is Necessary

The necessity of understanding and practicing good personal SEO is here. Now. For all professionals, with very few exceptions. Having a coherent, professional, visible, and find-able presence on the web is not optional.

Search technology is used in all stages and in many ways by recruiters, employers, potential customers/clients, and potential members of our professional networks. In job search, personal SEO has an impact in six main ways:

1. When a recruiter searches through LinkedIn to verify the qualifications of job applicants before issuing interview invitations.
2. When a recruiter searches through the Internet to see what can be discovered about the applicant before issuing interview invitations.
3. When a recruiter uses a search engine to find job candidates qualified for a specific opportunity in a search of the whole Internet.
4. When a recruiter searches through their applicant tracking system (ATS) or resume database to find applicants who are qualified for a specific opportunity.
5. When a recruiter searches through a job board's resume database, a professional association's member database, or even their own email messages for qualified applicants for specific opportunities.
6. When a potential network connection wants to reach someone on LinkedIn or Facebook.

To consider anyone for a job, that person must be “*findable*,” and good Personal SEO is how they are found.

Where and When Keywords Are Important Now

We need the right keywords in both our resumes and also in our social media profiles. And, they are not exactly the same keywords, unfortunately. Today, for a successful job search and a successful career, we need two sets of keywords.

Keywords in Resumes and Job Applications

The keywords included in a resume or job application should be customized to that specific employer and opportunity. The customization should enable the resume to be found in an employer's resume database or applicant tracking system.

We've left behind the days of a one-size-fits-all-opportunities resume. Now, resume customization for each opportunity is a necessity. We must be sure to include exactly the right words in our resume (the appropriate keywords), or the resume will not be found in the search results because it won't contain the right keywords for the opportunity.

For example, if the job description specifies “*Outlook email and calendar*” skills, include the phrase “*Outlook email and calendar experience*” rather than simply “Outlook experience.”

If the job description requires applicants who have “*managed other staff members*,” be sure to include the term “*managed other staff members*” rather than “*oversaw the work of...*” or “*supervised subordinates*” which may mean the same thing, but use different terminology. The slight difference in terminology may mean invisibility in search results because, typically, searchers use the exact terminology from the job description.

Keywords in Social Media

On the other hand, unless the focus is on one employer even in social media, use less opportunity-specific keywords in social media profiles, like a LinkedIn Profile. The better focus for social media are the terms in widest use by employers, preferably in job descriptions.

So we need to use a different set of keywords in our social profiles -- more general, focused on industries and professions and groups of employers rather than one specific employer and opportunity.

How Personal SEO Works

Personal SEO is used for two basic reasons:

1. To be visible in search results when someone searches on our name.

Most of us don’t realize that our name is our most important keyword phrase. But, it is!

According to a 2010 study funded by Microsoft (2), most employers (79 percent) did a quick Google search on the names of promising job applicants (and job candidates) before seriously considering someone for their job opportunity or issuing the job interview invitation. In all my discussions with recruiters since 2010, they consistently confirmed that they Googled job applicants, so my expectation is that the 79 percent in 2010 is very close to 99 percent in 2016.

If nothing positive is found related to the person’s name, two negative assumptions are usually made:

- **This person is out-of-date** – they are invisible in search results because they do not understand how to use the Internet, a necessity for most professional jobs today. Or...
- **This person has “something” to hide** – they are invisible because they do not want to be found, not usually an advantage unless the job being filled requires invisibility or anonymity (like a spy?).

Neither reason reflects well on the person involved or helps their candidacy for the job move forward.

This search raises the importance of the version of our name we use in all of our professional visibility. We must consistently use that name to provide a clear and coherent image, to

“*connect the dots*” between the resume or job application and the LinkedIn Profile which are so often compared by employers looking.

Facebook and LinkedIn are the best sites, currently, to claim your name. Google trusts them, so they typically appear at the top of the first page of Google search results on most names if anyone with that name has a Facebook or LinkedIn profile. This is a benefit when more than one person uses the same name. Google search results will typically show “*Sue Smith Profiles | Facebook*” and “*Top 25 Sue Smith profiles | LinkedIn*.” Then, people are on notice that more than one person has the name, and they have a link to pick out the Sue Smith they are seeking.

Consistency is critical!

If the LinkedIn Profile for Sue Smith uses the name “*Sue Smith*,” then “*Sue Smith*” is the name that she should use consistently in *all* of her professional visibility. That should be the name used on her:

- Resumes
- Job applications
- Business cards
- Professional Twitter and Facebook visibility
- Name tags at professional events
- All other professional visibility for Sue, online and off-line.

Without that consistency, opportunities may be lost. If her LinkedIn Profile uses the “*Sue Smith*” version of her name, but she uses “*Susan Smith*” on her resume and business cards, employers will need more time and effort to find her LinkedIn Profile – time they may not be able or willing to spend. And opportunities Susan/Sue Smith may consequently lose.

On the other hand, if her name is very common, using the “*Sue Smith*” version of her name will also make her hard to find. Which of the 25 LinkedIn Profiles for “*Sue Smith*” is the Sue Smith an employer just met? This is where using her full name “*Susan Smith*,” adding a middle initial or middle name, maiden name, or other version of a name can help distinguish her from all of the other Sue Smiths in the world.

For her personal (vs. professional) visibility, she can call herself “*SuzieQ*” or “*SmartSuzie*” or whatever name she wishes, particularly when she is ranting online about politics, religion, or sports.

Practice *Defensive* Googling!

Defensive Googling is another new necessity of our technology-centered world today. Sue should also be aware of what other people named Sue Smith (and the other variations of her name) are doing online – becoming a major movie star or accused of robbing a bank – because those other Sue Smiths will confuse people looking for her and/or push Sue off the first page of Google search results.

Major same-name competitors may mean that Sue should revise her professional name (on LinkedIn, resumes, name tags, etc.) to again appear on the first page of Google search results.

2. To be visible in search results when someone searches on a qualification or keyword related to our job or career.

Many employers are desperately searching for qualified candidates right now. Often the people doing the searching are using job descriptions as their sources of search terms (keywords) because that is all they have to use. Don't assume that searchers understand the job, the duties, or the abilities necessary to do the job. They are typically working only from the job description. Even the most experienced recruiter or HR staffer doesn't understand everything needed for every job they have posted. So, give them exactly what they are looking for.

Much like job seekers searching for jobs, employers and recruiters search for job candidates based on three main criteria:

- Job title of the job they are trying to fill
- Skills required for the job
- Location of the job

Job titles and job requirements change over time. Don't assume that a current or past employer used terminology that current employers use. Research to be sure to use the terms used most often by the target employer(s) or by all employers. Indeed.com and LinkedIn are very useful for research.

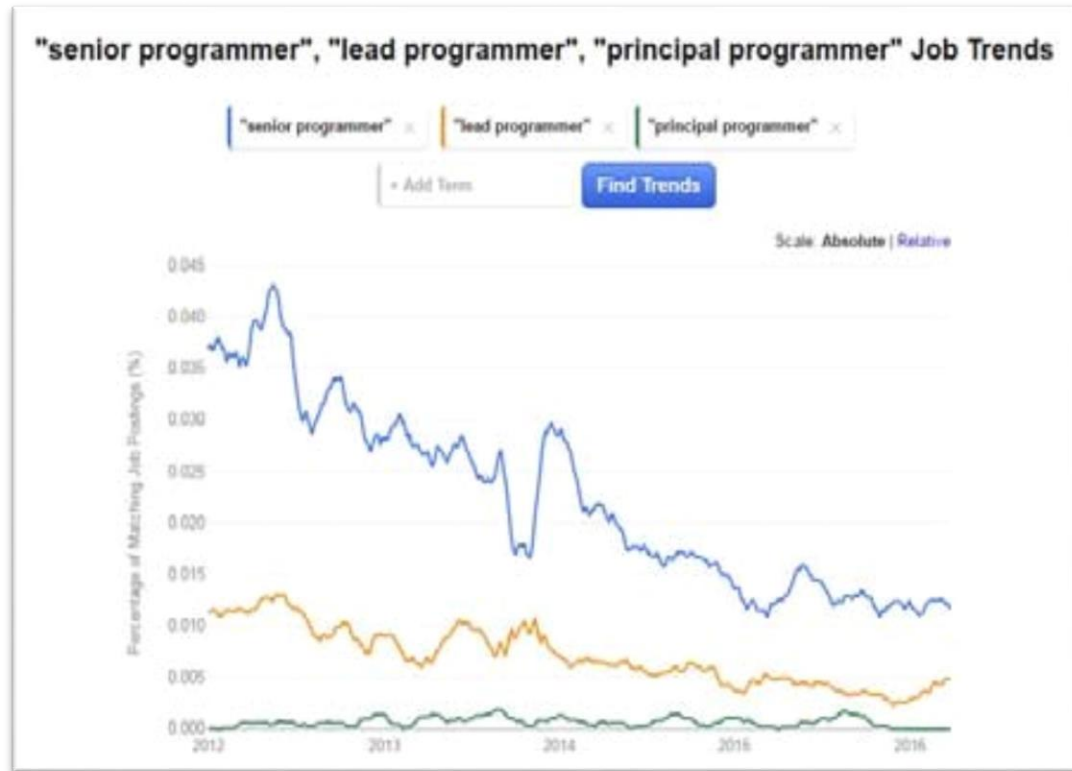
Note: Research to use the keywords that are appropriate. Avoid using questionable techniques like *"keyword stuffing"* where the same keyword is repeated 20 or 30 times.

Use of inaccurate keywords will probably be discovered, and keyword stuffing will be discovered, particularly in a site like LinkedIn. Both will end up costing the person opportunities and credibility. Instead, focus the research on finding and using accurate keywords that apply to the job seeker and are in current use by employers.

For Example: Job Titles...

Perhaps someone has been the senior programmer for their employer for several years, with the job title of *"Principal Programmer."* Then, their employer was acquired by a larger company, and the programming staff was laid off. Checking LinkedIn, job boards, and other job posits shows that fewer employers – and none of this job seeker's target employers – use the job title *"Principal Programmer."* Comparing job descriptions show that this job is more often called *"Lead Programmer"* now.

A check of Indeed.com's JobTrends (<http://Indeed.com/jobtrends>) (3) which analyzes millions of job postings over several years (back to 2012, currently) confirms that *"Lead Programmer"* (the orange line in the chart below) is the job title used most often by employers now. The trend is downward but seems to have leveled off in 2015. So, *"Lead Programmer"* would be the best title to use for this job seeker's LinkedIn Profile.



If the job seeker was currently employed as a “*Principal Programmer*,” the best strategy would be to become a “*slash person*” in LinkedIn. That means changing the current job title from “*Principal Programmer*” to “*Principal / Lead Programmer*.” This leaves the current job title in place, if the employer checks. And it also provides the most often used version of the job title for potential employers to find.

When this job seeker is applying for an appropriate job, he should use the job title used in the job description. Otherwise, recruiters at that employer using their own job description as a guide, will most likely search on the term used in that job posting rather than what the majority of employers are currently using.

For Example: Job Requirements...

Continuing with our programmer, let’s assume that our job seeker holds the Professional Project Manager (“*PMP*”) certification. That term should definitely be included in the LinkedIn Profile. But, what exactly is the best version of that credential to use for that LinkedIn Profile?

Again, we turn to Indeed’s JobTrends, and ask it for some more analysis. As usual, it shows us that one version of the terms we tested is used extensively, but the others are less popular and the last two are hardly used at all.

In this case, the term used most often is “*PMP*” (the orange line in the chart below) followed by “*PMP Certification*” (the black line). Again, when responding to a specific job posting, the best practice is to use the terminology in the posting, regardless of the Indeed JobTrends analysis.



Since this programmer holds the PMP certification, this programmer's LinkedIn Profile must include the term "PMP." LinkedIn has a Profile section for "Certifications" where it should also be included. And, if this certification is typically required by target employers or by most employers, then also including the in this programmer's LinkedIn Professional Headline (a.k.a. "tagline") is a very good idea. So, at the top of this programmer's LinkedIn Profile, and in all his or her visibility online, the term "PMP" should be included to attract those employers requiring that credential.

3. To push "bad" search engine results off the first page.

When someone has a doppelganger with a bad reputation or has made a few public mistakes, effective personal SEO helps push the bad stuff onto the second or third page of Google search results. Read more about how to accomplish this in the Personal Online Reputation Management section which starts with Chapter 10.

Stay Active and Visible When Employed

Too often people drop out of LinkedIn and forget about maintaining a current presence online after they have landed a job. This is a big mistake today. We all need to be active to stay current and visible. That next great opportunity could be one Google search away!

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End Notes

- (1) "The Long Tail" **Wired** magazine, October, 2004: <http://www.wired.com/2004/10/tail/>
- (2) "Online Reputation in a Connected World" Microsoft Corporation, Data Privacy Day, January 2010: <http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=9709510>
- (3) Indeed.com's JobTrends: <http://www.indeed.com/jobtrends>
- (4) TagCrowd.com: <http://tagcrowd.com>

About the author

Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are Job-Hunt.org and WorkCoachCafe.com. To read more of Susan's articles about Personal Search Engine Optimization, read her Job-Hunt column, **The Guide to Personal SEO** – <http://www.job-hunt.org/personal-SEO/personal-SEO.shtml>

How to Identify and Implement Keywords into USAJOBS (Federal) Resumes

By **Camille Carboneau Roberts**

The bottom line to the success or failure of a resume is the strategic use of keywords and *keyword phrases*. They are *the* foundation for conveying a candidate's value to capture the attention of all six potential federal gatekeepers. Conveying VALUE through keywords and keyword phrases will prevent the resume from landing in cyberspace, also known as the black hole.

It is the responsibility of the job seeker to convey his/her value to each of six gatekeepers in a federal job search. It is well known that federal hiring practices differ greatly from private sector methods. The first gatekeeper in the federal vetting process is the USAJOBS applicant tracking system (ATS). This is the first opportunity for keywords and keyword phrases to make their debut. The ATS can increase the consistency of information and reduce the recruiter's time in identifying top candidates.

USAJOBS: eHarmony® for Federal Job Seekers Analogy

Think of the ATS like eHarmony®—it matches people to positions using criteria defined by the member. The primary function of the USAJOBS ATS is to sort resumes and questionnaire answers by pre-defined criteria as well.

The federal recruiter writes the job announcement with pre-defined criteria using keywords and keyword phrases that *define* the agency's qualification requirements and are designed to seek out and match candidates' experience and education. In the best of circumstances, this will separate a smaller group of compatible candidates who meet at least the minimum requirements for hiring.

Let's further illustrate the correlation between USAJOBS and eHarmony® with an example. Let's say "Kate" is our hiring agency and "Kirk" is our job seeker. On the profile form is a section where "Kate" can describe the "*the one thing she is most passionate about*" (in eHarmony speak). In a USAJOBS Job Vacancy Announcement, this is comparable to the **Duties and Qualifications section**.

Kirk responds to Kate's preferences with a persuasive, qualitative summary describing his possession of those exact qualifications. On a federal resume, this summary is typically found at the top of the first page under such titles as Profile, Career Highlights, or Career Performance. Kirk has more opportunities to woo the job by including a section describing his possession of "*the most important things 'Kate' is looking for in a person to share her life with.*" On a USAJOBS vacancy announcement, this would be found under **Specialized Experience, Desired Qualifications, and/or Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**.

By proving to *Kate* that he is the man of her dreams (or the perfect candidate for the job, in this case) in a section on his resume titled **Value Offered, Expert Value, Key Qualifications,**

Qualifications, or Snapshot, he has demonstrated that they are a good match and off they go on their first date which would be the interview for the candidate.

Just because a person on eHarmony® lists keywords he/she thinks will attract the perfect match, this doesn't automatically mean they will fall in love. It takes a courtship (interview) to prove the claims made on the profile (application). The point is, members of eHarmony® might eventually meet, but sparks are not going to fly if Kate is expecting to meet Kirk's description of himself as a "George Clooney" clone, but instead Kirk is more like "Charlie Brown" in real life.

Matching keywords is a critical strategy, and applicants must be able to prove every claim made and definitely not "game" the system by telling the ATS everything it wants to hear just to get an interview.

The federal government is a huge enterprise and it is quite possible to get blacklisted by submitting applications containing false information.

Keyword Matching for USAJOBS

A successful resume for the USAJOBS ATS requires a resume that matches the job announcement language in describing how the candidate's experience, education, skills, accomplishments, and value will provide a seamless transition and benefit the hiring agency. Mirroring the job announcement with keywords and keyword content can prove the candidate is Best Qualified. Keyword content is vital to sailing past the ATS. If the candidate scores high enough, the application moves to the next gatekeepers, who, from this point on, will be human.

Keywords used on the resume under headings such as "Value Offered" or "Expert Value Offered" will most likely capture the attention of the ATS as well as the next gatekeeper, usually the Human Resources Assistant. However, the candidate needs to do more than capture attention. They must ensure the resume is written in such a way as to **keep** the attention of the Human Resources Assistant and Human Resources Specialist. They are looking for keywords in qualifications context. Most modern applicant tracking systems have been updated to search for keywords in context because some applicants began "keyword stuffing" their resumes and not backing them up with substance.

Simply put, keywords in context means:

- Using keywords in keyword phrases from the job vacancy announcement.
- Providing an example such as an accomplishment will prove the level of expertise regarding that keyword.

This is where it is important to pull out all the stops and show, *not tell*, the facts, figures, before and after data, results, and impact. Incorporating keywords through *keyword phrases* are vital to an effective federal resume, but it is equally important to "prove it" with accomplishments.

The Top of the Job USAJOBS Announcement

The best way to capture, and keep, the attention of the human gatekeepers is through qualification accomplishments that include keywords and keyword phrases that **relate to the specific job announcement**.

NOTE: To emphasize the keywords in this article, you will see **bold and underlines** for the important keywords and keyword phrases from selected portions of the job announcement.

Let's start at the top of a federal job announcement from USAJOBS.gov.

Job Title: **Mathematical Statistician**

Department: Department Of Commerce

Agency: Bureau of the Census

Job Summary:

The Census Bureau produces **quality data** that help Americans better understand our country - its population, resources, economy, society and culture. If working in an environment that values your **individuality and diversity** and allows you to **innovate, engage in problem solving**, and achieve your professional goals appeals to you, then the Census Bureau is the place for you. Come join the Census Team and be **responsible for contributing to the fabric of our nation** - where everyone counts.

Note these highlighted keywords in the *Job Summary*? Most people skip right over that section, but there are some great opportunities to mirror the keywords and keyword phrases to showcase related strengths into the resume.

The USAJOBS Duties and Qualifications

This is a good example of keyword phrases.

Duties:

Analyze the accuracy and validity of statistical data:

- **Determine whether processes and operations are appropriate**
- **Recommend improvements to the collection and analysis of statistical data**
- **Prepare and disseminate technical documentation of work**

Qualifications Required:

A. You have a **bachelor's or higher degree**; **AND B.** You have 24 semester hours of **mathematics** and **statistics**, of which at least 15 semester hours were in mathematics and 6 semester hours were in statistics; **AND C.** You have at least 6 semester hours of statistics with a calculus prerequisite **AND** the following mathematics courses: **Calculus I, II, and III** (or **Differential Calculus**, **Integral Calculus**, and **Multivariate Calculus**), **Linear Algebra**, 1 additional junior/senior level mathematics course; **OR D.** You do not have a bachelor's or higher degree but do have education specified in "B"

and “C” above and also have additional education/experience performing duties such as sampling, collecting, computing and analyzing statistical data; applying known statistical techniques such as measurement of central tendency, dispersion, skewness, sampling error, simple & multiple correlations, analysis of variance, and conducting tests of significance. Your combination of education and experience must total at least 4 years.

The USAJOBS Occupational Questionnaire

Another great place to identify and pay attention to keywords is the Occupational Questionnaire. Look at this goldmine of keywords:

From the Questionnaire:

7. GS-9 (Non-Research) and GS-11 (Research) Qualifications Based on Specialized Experience

I have at least one year of professional work experience where my assignments were most often defined by my supervisor or by standard operating procedures, but I used some judgment in selecting the statistical methods and, when necessary, made minor changes to adapt the methods to my specific work situations. My analytical methods and results, written documents, and reports were closely reviewed for technical and analytical adequacy. I have experience in the following areas: (a) sample design and estimation for finite populations, (b) design of data collection, processing, and analysis methods, (c) applying known statistical inference techniques to real data, and (d) the development of new statistical methods.

D. My education and experience includes advanced knowledge in calculus (differential, integral, and multivariate calculus and linear algebra) and calculus-based statistics. Also, my experience includes the application of survey sampling techniques, experimental design, time series analysis, regression analysis, linear models, statistical inference, statistical computing, and applied probability. The level and scope of knowledge required to perform these duties is comparable to that of a Master's or equivalent degree in Mathematics, Statistics, Biostatistics, Economics, Operations Research or other field with a major emphasis in statistics.

Also within the questionnaire, you can expect to rate knowledge, skills, and abilities on a list of topics. It is critical that these keywords be incorporated into the resume, specifically on page 1, as well as throughout the job blocks and education fields. To continue with that information from this particular announcement, here is the rating scale and topics for rating:

For each of the following knowledge areas, choose the statement from the list below that best describes your experience and/or training in that task. Select only one statement for each knowledge area.

A-I have had no education or experience in this.

B- I have undergraduate-level course work in this that comprised at least one month of the course.

C- I have graduate-level course work that included this as part of a broader course, or I have professional-level experience in this, working under close supervision.

D- I have taken a graduate-level course entirely devoted to this.

E- I have significant professional-level experience in this, working independently, and normally without the review of a supervisor or senior employee.

F- I have recognized professional expertise in this area, am often consulted by others for assistance, and am responsible for training other employees in this area.

Here are the topics to be rated by the candidate:

Analysis of variance	Time series analysis
Probability	Variance estimation
Categorical data analysis	Bayesian statistics
Estimation	Survey topics
Experimental design	Data analysis
Exploratory data analysis	Coverage and measurement error
Generalized linear models	Methods research (pretest methods, context/mode effects)
Hypothesis testing	Missing data methodology
Non-parametric statistics	Non-sampling error evaluation
Quality Control/Assurance	Questionnaire design
Regression analysis	Survey design
Sampling theory	
Statistical inference	

As you can see, the job announcement is a goldmine of information for developing the resume. However, in order to make the resume *effective*, the keywords and keyword phrases must be included in the context of the federal resume and throughout the other parts of the application that is outlined on the job announcement.

If this is done right, the ATS will match the application to the requirements and Human Resources will review the resume, score it, and determine if it progresses to the next gatekeeper.

The Resume Summary Section

Let's review the Job Summary:

Job Summary:

The Census Bureau produces quality data that help Americans better understand our country - its population, resources, economy, society and culture. If working in an environment that values your individuality and diversity and allows you to innovate, engage in problem solving, and achieve your professional goals appeals to you, then the Census Bureau is the place for you. Come join the Census Team and be responsible for contributing to the fabric of our nation - where everyone counts.

This could be written into the Summary section of resume such as this:

Professional statistician with a reputation for producing quality data to improve resources, economy, society, and culture. Leadership style encourages individuality and diversity to allow innovation, problem solving, and professional goals to be achieved. Exceptional ability to manage the workflow of infrastructure teams and develop innovative statistics technology. Committed to the philosophy of "everyone counts" and contributing to the fabric of our nation.

Other keywords could also be incorporated here, but this example demonstrates the idea of incorporating keywords that identify the candidate's character, work ethic, and job fit which is often overlooked or left off of resumes.

The Resume Experience Section

Let's review the Duties section again. This is an excellent example of keyword phrases.

Duties:

Analyze the accuracy and validity of statistical data:

- **Determine whether processes and operations are appropriate**
- **Recommend improvements to the collection and analysis of statistical data**
- **Prepare and disseminate technical documentation of work**

Here is an example of how the duties could be re-written into a couple of concise bullet points in the Experience section of the resume based on a client's work experience:

- ✓ Exceptional ability to **analyze the accuracy and validity of statistical data** as a Policy Analyst with the General Services Administration's Office for government-wide policy.
- ✓ Led a team of statisticians to **analyze and interpret the validity of statistical data** to guide decision making on key policy issues.

- ✓ Supervised a team of economists to **determine whether processes and operations were appropriate** to escalate to the subject matter expert for recommending **improvements to the methods of collection and analysis of statistical data**.
- ✓ **Prepared and disseminated technical documentation** including preparing economic and feasibility studies for a variety of transportation and international travel policy issues; provided testimony, talking points, and briefing papers for proposed legislation concerning asset management programs.

Note how the keyword phrases tell the stories that have high impact relevant to the requirements on the job announcement.

The Resume Education Section

Now let me demonstrate how to do this in the Education section of the resume.

Here are the requirements outlined on the job announcement:

A. You have a **bachelor's or higher degree**; **AND B.** You have 24 semester hours of **mathematics** and **statistics**, of which at least 15 semester hours were in mathematics and 6 semester hours were in statistics; **AND C.** You have at least 6 semester hours of statistics with a calculus prerequisite **AND** the following mathematics courses: **Calculus I, II, and III** (or **Differential Calculus**, **Integral Calculus**, and **Multivariate Calculus**), **Linear Algebra**, 1 additional junior/senior level mathematics course; **OR D.** You do not have a bachelor's or higher degree but do have education specified in "B" and "C" above and also have additional education/experience performing duties such as **sampling, collecting, computing** and **analyzing statistical data; applying known statistical techniques such as measurement of central tendency, dispersion, skewness, sampling error, simple & multiple correlations, analysis of variance, and conducting tests of significance**. Your combination of education and experience must total at least 4 years.

Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics, minor in Business.

University of North Texas, Eagle Student Services Building, Denton, Texas 76203-1400. Total semester hours: 131. GPA: 4.0. Outstanding Scholar. December 2015.

Coursework included: **Calculus I, II, and III; Differential Calculus, Linear Algebra**, Statistics, Financial Accounting, Foundations of Marketing, Economic Consumption, Data Description and Analysis, and Principles of Macroeconomics. Earned an internship at the Bureau of Land Management to compute and analyze statistical data; measure central tendency, skewness, dispersion, **sampling errors**; analyze **variance**; and **conduct tests of significance**.

Note how this candidate's education and internship align with the keywords on the job announcement.

On the questionnaire for this job announcement, some of the rating statements include:

- Write instructions to conduct statistical tasks or operations.
- Author statistical or mathematical technical reports.
- Prepare statistical or mathematical professional papers.
- Publish articles in scientific/peer-reviewed journals.

This candidate had authored several research papers related to these statements including:

- Consumer Price Index Comparison Project. Fall 2015.
- Presentation of the Debt Crisis of the 1980's in Argentina & Brazil. Fall 2015.
- The Impact of Blacks vs. Hispanics in the workforce using the Duncan and IP Index and OAXACA Decomposition from Regression Analysis Model. Summer 2015.
- Planning a Personal Budget Project. Spring 2015.
- Research and Decision Making on Consumer Durables Project—Comparison Buying and Advertising. Spring 2015.
- Transition of Georgia. Spring 2005.

Further, the questionnaire for this job announcement required candidates to use the following self-rating scale:

- A- I have had no experience doing or using this.
- B- I have beginner level experience doing or using this.
- C- I have intermediate level experience doing or using this.
- D- I have advanced level experience doing or using this.

Applied to these tasks:

- Develop software applications in a UNIX environment.
- Develop software applications in a VMS (VAX/Alpha) environment.
- Conduct statistical analysis in SAS, SPSS, S-PLUS or SUDAAN.
- Create and modify spreadsheets (1-2-3, Quattro Pro or Excel).
- Develop applications using ARCINFO, ARCVIEW, MAPINFO, ATLAS, or SAS-GIS.
- Develop software applications using C.
- Develop software applications using C++.
- Develop software applications using the SAS Macro Facility.
- Develop software applications using Fortran.
- Develop applications using other programming languages (e.g., Basic, Pascal, Cobol, etc.)
- Develop web-based applications using Perl, CGI, or Java.
- Develop applications using Oracle, Sybase DBase, Access, Paradox, Foxpro, Approach, Ingres, Informix, etc.
- Develop applications using rapid application development tools (e.g., Delphi, Oracle Developer 2000, Power Objects, Power Builder, Visual Basic, Visual C++, etc.).
- Develop applications using Oracle PL/SQL.

These keywords could be listed in many sections on the federal resume, including the Job-Related Training listed like this:

JOB-RELATED TRAINING

Oracle PL/SQL. Colorado Tech, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Summer 2014.

ARCVIEW, **SAS-GIS**. Beacon Training, Texas. Spring 2013.

Java, CGI, and **Cobol**. Beacon Training, Dallas, Texas. Summer 2013.

Visual Basic, **Visual C++**, C. Beacon Training, Dallas, Texas. Spring 2012.

Perl, **Fortran**, **Access**, and **Excel**. New Horizons Computer Learning Centers, San Antonio, Texas. Winter 2011.

These keywords could also be listed under the heading Computer/Technical Skills such as this:

COMPUTER/TECHNICAL SKILLS

- **UNIX**
- **VMS (VAX/Alpha)**
- **SAS/SPSS/S-PLUS/ SUDAAN**
- **Excel**
- **ARCINFO**, **ARCVIEW**, **MAPINGO**, **ATLAS**, and **SAS-GIS**
- **C/C++**
- **SAS** Macros
- **FORTRAN**
- **Basic/Pascal/Cobol**
- Perl/CGI/**JAVA**
- **Oracle**/ Sybase Dbase/Access/Paradox/FoxPro/Approach/Ingres/Informix
- Delphi/**Oracle Developer 2000**/Power Objects/Power Builder/Visual Basic/**Visual C++**
- **Oracle PL/SQL**

These keywords could also be used in keyword phrases such as this:

Key Accomplishments

- ✓ Applied a life cycle management program for all like devices—accomplished near zero downtime, producing high customer satisfaction rates, and minimizing annual purchasing costs using **Excel**, Access, **C++**.
- ✓ Established a tracking system to ensure 100% accountability for all portable devices using advanced **Excel** functions.
- ✓ Created a **Java**-based app for enterprise-grade, rapid web application development to process online forms that increased productivity by 42%.
- ✓

This brings us to the subject of acronyms. If the job announcement uses only the acronym and it is spelled out on the resume, and vice versa, that could result in a screen out and the resume could land in the black hole. The number of times a keyword appears in a job announcement is not necessarily how many times it needs to appear in the resume.

It is better to use the keyword in a phrase, *especially within an accomplishment*, rather than to try to stuff the keywords several times into the resume.

If the candidate doesn't have many accomplishments that reflect expertise, education, or experience with the keyword, they may not be "Best Qualified" for the job. Candidates who score high enough to make the Best Qualified list are referred to the hiring official.

However, the questionnaire is heavily weighted in the scoring process, so it is crucial that the candidate rate themselves honestly then support their ratings with evidence in the resume. It is critical for candidates to review the questionnaire for keywords to incorporate into the federal resume. Not only do candidates need to incorporate keywords into their federal resume, they also need to effectively demonstrate their proficiency level using the keyword.

After watching clients struggle with writing their accomplishments and narratives, I developed a method to obtain crucial information from the candidate by combining the Content, Challenge, Action, Result and Situation, Task, Action, Result (CCAR and STAR) and coined the term the STCARI™ method, pronounced stuh-car-ee. It has helped countless clients overcome the roadblocks of using the other methods of writing.

S – Situation. What was the situation when you arrived?

T – Task. What task(s) were you assigned?

C – Challenges. What were the challenges?

A – Action. What actions did you take?

R – Result. What were the results of your actions/leadership?

I – Impact. What impact did it have? Who did it impact? Was a new technology developed? Did it reduce expenses? Increase productivity? Improve morale? How would this experience impact your future employer? Why was this project important? Why should the new employer care? Did you receive any awards?

The advantages of using keywords are evident. Keywords help resumes pass through the first gatekeeper. Keyword phrases also help the resume capture and keep the attention of the human gatekeepers who are scoring the resume and determining if it moves to the next gatekeeper.

The disadvantage of the keyword concept is the learning curve. Writing an effective, keyword-inclusive federal resume to have the desired impact requires skill, talent, and practice. If keywords are not **implemented properly**, the USAJOBS ATS may reject the candidate despite their level of qualification. This is one of the biggest mistakes federal job seekers make when writing their resumes.

Despite the fact that candidates are encouraged to leverage their networks to gain access to "inside" opportunities to become employed by the Federal Government, by law all federal jobs must be posted publicly. Even if a candidate has help from a decision-maker, they, like every other candidate must go through the proper channels of federal hiring, and that begins with the first gatekeeper—the USAJOBS ATS—in order to *qualify* for the job.

As an example, I was honored to work with a highly qualified candidate who had been previously employed by the National Security Agency before moving on to work with Steve Jobs in developing the legendary security code that prevents virus attacks on Apple products. One would think this candidate would be a front-runner candidate just by dropping a few

names. However, his self-written resume couldn't get past the first gatekeeper—the USAJOBS ATS.

After re-writing the resume using proven strategies and methods to obtain key information, along with well-written keyword phrases to showcase accomplishments in the industry, the candidate's resume sailed past the USAJOBS ATS.

In summary, it is important to take the time to identify and implement keywords to meet, and exceed, the minimum qualifications to get past the USAJOBS ATS by using keywords and keyword phrases that are compelling to *capture and keep the attention* of the *human* gatekeepers who are scoring the federal resume throughout the qualification process.

Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives—choice, not chance, determines your destiny. —Aristotle

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About the Author



Camille Roberts, Job-Hunt's columnist for **The Guide to Federal Government Job Search**, is the CEO of CC Career Services, a offices in various parts of the United States. CC Career Services is proud to be celebrating 26 years in business. She is an award-winning, internationally recognized, trusted advisor to clients who are ready to up-level their career. She is the go-to resource for accelerating promotions, or career transitions from private industry to Federal, Military to Federal, Military to Corporate, or to entrepreneurship.

Camille is well known throughout Federal Government agencies and the careers industry as one of the top career strategists. She is also known as the USAJOBS resume expert. She is a leader in the careers industry and a constant resource for resume writers, career coaches, and entrepreneurs for support in career and resume -writing strategy, technology, and business development. She pioneers new trends and stays ahead of the curve as evidenced by her expertise, education, awards, and her clients' success. She is passionate about educating her clients on current, successful career strategies.

Camille has earned 10 industry certifications, including Certified Master Resume Writer and Certified Federal Resume Writer/Coach, and two Entrepreneurial Certifications, including Certified Money, Marketing, and Soul Coach™ and Certified Sacred Money Archetypes Coach®. Her clients benefit from learning the big picture as to why they work, understanding their relationship with money, and how it connects with their job, job satisfaction, family, personal environment and their career. She has served on numerous committees and in various roles including a member of the Idaho State Bar Association Professional Conduct Board; Board of Directors, Grand Teton Mediation Association; Volunteer Mediator in the Seventh Judicial District Court in the State of Idaho; CDI Education Committee; CDI Conference Committee; and the Certified Professional Resume Writer's Grading Committee.

She is also a member of the USAJOBS Usability Committee. Camille provides training and support to career professionals in academia by speaking and training staff members in career centers and organizations on current employment trends so they can guide their students to success and help ensure the return on their education investment. She has developed successful new programs so career professionals, students, and other job seekers can take advantage of her successful career strategies. She has been published in many industry publications. You can find Camille's advice in her blog: Intelligence For Your Career at www.ccCareerServices.com. She has also been retained as a GovLoop Mentor, GovGigs resume Advisor, and quoted in GovLoop's *Getting into Government—A Guide for High Achievers*. She has been quoted in *The Washingtonian*, *Military Times*, and in newspapers, articles, and curriculum related to the federal hiring process.

To read more of Camille's articles, go to Job-Hunt's Guide to Federal Job Search, at – <http://www.job-hunt.org/federal-government-job-search/federal-job-search.shtml>

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Why Personal Online Reputation Management Is Necessary Today

By **Susan P. Joyce**

Most of us have heard this old marketing slogan for Las Vegas –

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas!

Unfortunately, today, that slogan is different --

What happens in Vegas stays in...Google, Bing, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.

With the Internet, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. we have all become “public figures” who need to monitor our online reputations. What we all do online now can be viewed by anyone anywhere in the world, thanks to search engines.

"Google Is Your New Resume"

Famous author Richard N. Bolles, who writes the classic best seller *What Color Is Your Parachute?* every year made that statement in 2009. And, as usual, Dick was absolutely right, then, and even more *right now*. See his article in this Journal for more of Dick’s wisdom, updated to 2016.

The smartest strategy today is for us all to know what a potential employer, client/customer, or networking contact will find when they Google the name on our business/networking card? If they don't find something good, we may lose opportunities. And, if something *bad* is found by a searcher, opportunities will be lost. Not knowing what can be found is head-buried-in-the-sand insanity.

What Is "Personal Online Reputation Management"?

Personal online reputation management is managing our “*digital footprint*,” trying to control or, at least, to have a positive influence on one’s online image. The goal is to impact the impression people have based on what they can find about someone online.

People get a sense of who we are when they read the comments posted in LinkedIn Groups, the updates shared in Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other online activities. They learn about us based on the opinions we express, the information we share, and also the methods we use for sharing.

Why Personal Online Reputation Management Is Necessary

Like anyone now who is considering making an investment of time or money, people research potential business associates and those they are contemplating working or connecting socially with.

Significantly for job seekers, the vast majority of employers and recruiters use Google (mostly) to research job seekers before considering them for a job opportunity. The research is typically for 2 reasons:

1. To confirm the *facts* on the resume and
2. To get a sense whether or not the applicant would fit into the *corporate culture*.

This means that we all should know what people are finding when they type our names into a search engine. The reason? Because what they find may support--or destroy--opportunities for us.

For decades in the past, we had a standard process for finding a job. Find an ad in the paper (or through a recruiter or networking); type up a cover letter to go with the one-size-fits-all resume; put them in an envelope sent via regular mail; and interview for the job. We didn't usually have much competition, and the process was clear.

Recruiting is not so simple now because search engines make it possible to research the job applicants just as most of us research any other investment we are considering. For many organizations, this is simply standard “due diligence” done before making an investment or signing a contract. And, hiring someone is both investment and a contract! In hiring, the investment can be very large going well beyond the cost of an online job posting.

Depending on the level of the job, a bad hire can:

- Reduce revenue or profitability
- Create legal liability
- Scare away new customers or clients
- Offend current customers or clients
- Reduce employee productivity and employee morale
- Damage the reputation of the person who hired them
- Put the employer out of business

When you add the standard employee separation and replacement costs, the expense associated with making a bad hire can run from 30 percent of the annual salary to millions of dollars, depending on the level of the job and the problems created, according to the Society of Human Resources Management *Quality of Hire* Whitepaper (1).

Like it or not (and many don't like it), meeting the new needs of today's job market means we must become more visible to the world, enabling recruiters to find us and also to find good information about us that supports our job search. Recruiters do extensive research on the Internet.

Recruiters typically research job applicants before inviting them in for an interview. They are looking for:

- **Visibility** – Is the person up-to-date in their understanding of the importance and the use of social media today?
- **Verification of facts** – Does the information on the job application or submitted resume match the information on the LinkedIn Profile? Does the person demonstrate the skills and qualifications claimed?
- **Personality/fit** – Does their personality, as demonstrated in their online visibility, seem like a good fit for the organization?
- **Honesty/reliability** – Does the person seem trustworthy? Any evidence of lack of respect for the law?

While public visibility is not comfortable for many of us, a lack of appropriate visibility in the right places makes a job search incredibly more challenging. No visibility -- or only bad visibility (nasty photos or posts on Facebook, for example) -- can ruin opportunities.

Online Invisibility is not a Good Solution

Many people think that the smartest approach for managing their reputation is *not* to be found -- to be missing in Google search results. I call this “*online invisibility*.” These people assume that if they nothing can be found online about them they are safe. They believe that not being visible means they are protecting their privacy and their reputations. With invisibility, they are unable to embarrass themselves with an inappropriate photo on Facebook or a nasty comment on LinkedIn.

Note: If someone is currently employed, they should avoid announcing their job search goals online. Best case, the result will be an awkward discussion with their manager. Worst case, they will be fired.

Avoiding employer anger is why being appropriately and consistently active online is the best strategy, whether employed or unemployed. So be appropriately active and visible, but make no announcements to the world about “seeking my next job.”

The “Missing Person” Syndrome

Invisibility has a definite “down side” today. Even if someone has lived a perfect, blameless life, lack of online visibility is a problem. To employers, that lack of visibility in Google or Bing means one of two things:

1. The person doesn't know how the world works today (out-of-date), *or*

2. The person is hiding something.

Neither of those two impressions will help in a job search or career, unless the career is something secret like a spy. My bet is that even spies have online visibility associated with their public personas.

Mistaken Online Identity Is a Serious Hazard Today

Unless a person's name is very unique, being invisible means they are very vulnerable to mistaken online identity. Someone with the same name may do something that would eliminate them for consideration for an opportunity, but searchers won't know the wrong person is being viewed.

A much more effective approach is to be positively visible (LinkedIn is perfect for this) and also to be aware of – and manage when possible -- other online visibility.

Examples of Personal Reputation Management Problems

Two examples of online reputation confusion:

1. Problem: The porn star with the same name.

I spoke with a job seeker recently who has the same name as a famous porn star who died a few years ago. People were very confused when they did a search on the job seeker's name when he applied for jobs using the same name as the porn star. Clearly the job seeker is not dead, but the first few pages of Google search results are dominated by the dead porn star.

Consequently, when the job seeker applied using the porn star name, people tended to think he was making bad a joke or playing some sort of trick. So they ignored him, or, worse, blocked him as a bad joker or a spammer.

The Fix: the job seeker modified the version of his name he used for his job search (by adding his middle initial), and the problem cleared up. His LinkedIn Profile connects to his resume, applications, business cards, and other business communications. He now has a good online reputation, separate from the porn star, and his job search efforts are not usually viewed as bad jokes.

2. Problem: The disbarred attorney with the same name.

A colleague shared a story about one of her clients. He is an executive, and she prepared an excellent, executive-level resume for him which he used carefully. After absolutely NO interest in him for 4 months, they finally decided to Google him to see if they could find something that might be causing a problem. BINGO! Someone with the same name, living in the same state, was a disbarred attorney named in a U.S. Supreme Court case.

People who didn't know this job seeker (a recruiter, for example) wouldn't know that he was not the disbarred attorney. Even people who met this man in networking events and one-on-one discussions were put off by what Google showed them.

The Fix: This job seeker also modified his professional name (by adding his middle name). After he changed the professional/public version of his name (LinkedIn Profile, resumes, business cards, meeting name tags, etc.), his job search was successful within a few weeks.

The Solution: Appropriate, Managed Visibility

For all of us, not knowing what a potential employer, customer/client, or networking contact finds associated with our names in a search engine is head-in-the-sand insanity.

As you will see in the next article, the solution to this need for online reputation management is all around us, in social media and in Google. The problem is that this is a new addition to our daily “to-do” list, so it is a nuisance and takes a while to learn. But many tools are available, and more are developing. So, personal online reputation management will be easier in the future.

Start today by practicing “Defensive Googling” (2)! This is NOT “vanity Googling” or “ego surfing.” It IS self-defense! Encourage your clients, family, and friends to do their defensive Googling, too. We can’t fix a problem if we don’t know we have one, and, whether or not we are paying attention, the damage will be done – we just won’t know about the opportunities that were lost.

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End Notes

(1) Quality of Hire: The next Edge in Corporate Performance (by Taleo Research): https://www.shrm.org/Research/Articles/Documents/Whitepaper_Quality_of_Hire.pdf

(2) Defensive Googling: <http://www.job-hunt.org/guides/google/defensive-googling-method.shtml>

About the author

Susan P. Joyce’s biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are **Job-Hunt.org** and **WorkCoachCafe.com**. To read more of Susan’s articles about Personal Online Reputation Management, read her Job-Hunt column, **The Guide to Personal Online Reputation Management – <http://www.job-hunt.org/reputation-management/reputation-management.shtml>**

The Basics of Personal Online Reputation Management

By Susan P. Joyce

Companies and other large (and small) businesses and organizations have monitored their reputations for centuries. In the past, people occasionally became prominent and well-known, but those people (politicians, generals and admirals, actors, singers, etc.) were the exceptions.

Most of us have had the luxury of anonymity for our whole lives, without knowing it was a luxury, particularly if we are over 40. We didn't spend much time and energy worrying about or managing our reputations. We were known to a small circle of people - family, friends, colleagues, and customers and maybe our neighborhood, professional association, local meeting places, and so on. But, the visibility was local.

A landmark study published by Microsoft in 2010, *Online Reputation in a Connected World* (1) showed two very interesting things:

- "Of U.S. recruiters and HR professionals surveyed, 70 percent say they have rejected candidates based on information they found online."
- "In the United States, 86 percent of human resources professionals surveyed stated that a positive online reputation influences the candidate's application to some extent; almost half stated that it does so to a great extent."

In the past, if we did, wrote, or said something stupid, very few people noticed. Not now!

21st Century Reality: "Google Is Your New Resume"

Famous author Richard N. Bolles, who writes the classic best seller *What Color Is Your Parachute?* made that statement in 2009. And, as usual, Dick was absolutely right, then, and even more right *now*.

Dick highlighted something that most of us don't pay much attention to. Time to change that! These keywords should uniquely identify the job seeker in every search of every search engine, or, at a minimum, have the job seeker appear on the first page of search results when this set of keywords is used in a search.

Read the 2016 edition of Dick's book and his article at the beginning of this Journal for his latest views on this topic.

Being Professionally *Invisible* Online Is Not a Good Strategy

Unless the career requires invisibility (spy, perhaps?), being invisible is like an *out-of-date* stamp on someone's forehead! Employers use search engines to research job applicants more than 80 percent of the time (1). They are looking for *social proof* that the job seeker:

- Is who they say they are.
- Has done what they say they have done.
- Would fit into the organization well.
- Understands how to use the Internet for business.

If they don't find that corroboration, they move on to the next candidate.

If nothing is found about the job seeker on a Google – at a minimum – somewhere in the first three pages, this is a problem! Yes, it is better than having photos of the job seeker drunk or smoking pot at a party, but a lack of online visibility brands the job seeker as out-of-date or worse.

Invisibility also makes the job seeker vulnerable to mistaken identity. (Read *Your Most Important Keywords for Job Search and Career* (2) for details.) Oh, that person who has the same name the job seeker has and stole money from his or her last employer isn't the job seeker? An employer doing a quick Google search would not know that, and, most likely, they would not take the time to find out.

Having no professional presence online is now the classic characteristic of someone who is completely out-of-date, if not completely clueless. Yes, I've spoken with these people, and they think they are protecting their privacy. And they are protecting their privacy to a certain degree, but they are hurting themselves much more in the process because they have no visible, credible professional presence online.

Repair or Push Bad Visibility Down in Search Results

People are often oblivious to their online reputations until something bad happens -- speeding ticket, or, worse, a car crash with a failed sobriety test. And the person who has done the "bad deed" may be someone else entirely. But, the names are the same. So, the visibility is damaging, particularly with strangers online (like hiring managers and recruiters).

Problems that Need Fixing

These are the typical problems:

1. Bad mistaken online identity.

Someone else with the same name as the job seeker has done something which a potential employer would view as reason to disqualify the job seeker. When an employer finds this result, the applicant is typically rejected.

2. Positive mistaken online identity (that may have a negative impact).

Someone else with the same name is famous and, therefore, very visible. This visibility is positive (for them). However, the famous person dominates the search results, pushing the job seeker off the front page. Unless the searcher is skilled and/or determined, they will give up, probably thinking that the application is a fake.

3. Self-inflicted wounds.

You have created your own “*digital dirt*” which is discoverable when someone does a search of your name, particularly something that requires an appearance in a court. Often, court records are posted publicly, so everyone can find that DUI or other oops in your life. In addition, we are all often careless about what we post in social media — photos and comments that disqualify us for consideration.

Reputation Repair and Recovery

If changing the name used professionally is not an option, what does someone do to repair their personal online reputations in those situations, and also when they are the miscreant who perhaps posted a bad photo on Facebook or a nasty comment on a national blog? Well, if they own or manage where the bad photo is, like their Facebook account, take the bad stuff down. And request that friends do the same.

Then work to increase the amount and quality of “good” online visibility to push the “bad stuff” off the first page of Google search results, since few people (including hiring managers and recruiters) look past the first page of results. Google loves Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, so visibility in those venues will usually be at the top of the search results.

When bad results are found, perhaps written by a critic or someone with a grudge, avoid clicking on those links in Google search results. Repeatedly clicking on those results tells Google that they are “*important*” so Google may show them to the rest of the world more often.

Change the Professional Name Used, if Necessary

When possible, the simplest and, usually, fastest “*fix*” is to change the version of their name that the job seeker uses for their professional visibility online. So, if “Sue Smith” has done something an employer would not want in an employee, change the name used for LinkedIn, resumes, business cards, etc., to “Susan Smith” (after Googling that version of the name to see if it has an “*digital dirt*” associated with it). Other options include adding a middle initial, middle name, or maiden name to the professional name used online, like “Sue Ellen Smith” or “Sue Jones Smith” for example. Changing the person’s name through a legal process is not usually required.

Be consistent! Encourage consistency in the use of the name. Consistency will build credibility and enable employers and recruiters to connect the dots between different platforms. If someone is “Suzie Smith” on LinkedIn, “Sue Smith” on Facebook, and “Susan E. Smith” on her business cards, she is creating enormous confusion. Choose one version of the name for professional use, and use that version everywhere.

Create, Curate, and Connect Professional Visibility

For successful career management, and credibility outside of work, we all need to create accurate and effective online visibility. Then, we also need to maintain that visibility for the foreseeable future. Connect the LinkedIn Profile's URL to other professional online visibility, including SlideShare (owned by LinkedIn), YouTube, Twitter, blog, and other online professional visibility. More on that below.

Create the Professional Image -- Name plus Face.

Effective professional visibility is based on two key things: the person's name and the person's image.

Professional Name: Choose and use the professional name very carefully. Also continue to monitor to be sure that it has not become visibly associated with a major crime or a major success for someone else. Either/both can push someone off the top Google search results and hamper opportunities.

Change the name if necessary, but be sure to change it for all professional visibility online and off so that employers, possible customers/clients, and professional network members can *connect the dots* to the right person in a Google search.

Again, be consistent! If Susan Smith is the professional name, that name should be used on all professional communications, from LinkedIn and online job applications to business cards and name tags.

Professional Photo: Many people avoid a headshot on the LinkedIn Profile to avoid discrimination. In my opinion, that's a very poor choice. If someone is going to discriminate against them, the discrimination will happen regardless of the LinkedIn Profile, and the lack of a headshot on the Profile is a significant handicap for LinkedIn visibility. LinkedIn requires a headshot photot – not a logo, landscape, animal, etc. Review the requirements in their Profile Photo Guidelines (3).

I've observed five important reasons to use the same name and photo for all professional visibility and to have a good headshot photo visible on your profiles:

1. Credibility

To be successful today, most professional jobs require knowledge and skill with social media. Using the same name on all professional visibility in social networks enables employers (and others like potential network contacts, clients, and customers) to "connect the dots" between a job application or just to learn more about the candidate. Profiles without photos are usually

either not very active or just plain out-of-date. And, very few employers want to hire someone who is so demonstrably clueless.

In addition, many “*spam*” social profiles exist to sell products or collect information, and those profiles usually either have no photo or the photo is obviously a model or someone extremely attractive in a very professional-looking photo. Recruiters, in particular, are not interested in fictional profiles.

2. Recognition

Someone who already knows the job seeker from the past or a recent networking or professional activities will, hopefully, recognize the photo and remember the job seeker. Also, that friend from the last job (or the job before that) who is looking for the job seeker will find them in the long list of people who have the same – or a very similar – name.

3. Consistency

Someone who follows the job seeker in other social networks will find, and probably follow, the job seeker in new social networks. People who meet someone in person at an event will find them (and be able to connect) online. So, the reach of social media visibility will be expanded and connected, and “*social proof*” will be strengthened.

4. Personal Appeal

Any profile is more appealing when a person’s face is associated with it. LinkedIn has said that entries in LinkedIn search results with photos beside them are 7 times more likely to be clicked than entries without photos. So, that recruiter looking for someone with your job title will probably not click on the job seeker's name unless there is a photo beside it in the search results listings.

5. Personal Branding

When used with your professional activities in social media, the photo represents your brand – I think of it as a personal logo – particularly when the same photo is used for all professional social visibility.

Curate Visibility Carefully

More profiles equal added social proof of who someone is and what they can do, improving their personal online reputation.

Consider adding more online visibility related to the job seeker's goals and/or profession, like:

- ***Social media activity***, particularly Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter are very visible on Google.
- ***A personal blog*** (on professional topics), hopefully on a domain named owned by the job seeker, which is the job seeker's name -- like [name].com.

- **Articles written for other blogs and websites** (LinkedIn Pulse, HuffingtonPost, Mashable, professional associations, your local weekly newspaper, etc.)
- **Presentations and articles** (and resumes!) posted on SlideShare.com (owned by LinkedIn).
- **Videos for YouTube and/or Vimeo** (YouTube is the world's second largest search engine and owned by Google).
- **Photos, recipes, PowerPoint slides** and other graphical information posted on Pinterest.
- **Podcasts** shared on iTunes and other platforms.
- **Tumblr blog posts.**
- **Instagram** (for photographers or unique themes).
- **Relevant product reviews on Amazon.**
- **Answers posted on Quora.com.**
- **Articles posted on Medium.com.**

Staying visible isn't difficult, but it does take time -- ten minutes a day, perhaps?

- LinkedIn is an essential starting point for most professionals, but for many people, it shouldn't be the end. If there is time to be active in only one venue, LinkedIn is the one that usually matters the most. The LinkedIn Profile can look active if kept up-to-date (adding new accomplishments). And the Profile will have increased visibility if a relatively constant stream of "*Updates*" happen, which is easy to do by simply clicking the "*Like*" button on someone else's news item or LinkedIn Post.
- Automate tweets using a tool like HootSuite.com, to keep the Twitter account active.

If the job seeker doesn't have a personal blog or other web platform, add the LinkedIn Profile's URL to the Twitter Bio, for a business/professional Twitter account.

Play Nice!

I've seen some very nasty and/or whiny activity in LinkedIn Groups, and I wonder what those people are thinking when they do that. Recruiters belong to most LinkedIn Groups so they see that activity. Trash talking former employers and others is not impressive.

In Twitter, job seekers who claim to be desperately job hunting describe themselves in their Twitter bio as a "*life-long Yankees (or Red Sox) fan,*" missing a golden keyword/personal reputation building opportunity. Then, they tweet off-topic about the weather or take shots at their former employers and co-workers. Recently, a job seeker posted a tweet about how he had been "fired on trumped up charges." Not smart or useful.

A CareerBuilder study in mid-2014 (4) showed what recruiters are looking for when they search on Google for information about job applicants and candidates.

- Often, the searches are to verify the claims made on the resume or application, supporting their professional qualifications, education, employers, job titles, etc.
- They were also looking for indications that the candidate would be a good "*fit*" for the organization and the job.
- 33 percent of the recruiters found content that made them more likely to hire a candidate.
- 23 percent found content that led them to hire the candidate.

On the other hand, they also found postings that ended opportunities if the job candidate had:

- Posted provocative or inappropriate photographs or information -- 46 percent • Posted information about drinking or using drugs -- 41 percent
- Bad-mouthed a previous employer or co-worker -- 36 percent.
- Demonstrated poor communications skills -- 32 percent
- Shared discriminatory comments related to race, gender, religion, etc. -- 28 percent

Job seekers can limit the visibility of their posts on Facebook if they have the settings correctly implemented (assuming Facebook doesn't change anything). The same is true of LinkedIn. Most LinkedIn members, including job seekers, don't understand that what they post on LinkedIn and

"like" in LinkedIn becomes an "*Update*" which is visible to their connections (including 2nd and 3rd levels), their LinkedIn "*followers*," other LinkedIn Group members, and recruiters who pay for extra visibility.

Connect Visibility

Connect the LinkedIn Profile to the other professional social media profiles, like Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and so on by editing the contact information on Profile, which allows you to create up to 3 links (more for people with "Premium" LinkedIn accounts) to the blog, SlideShare (owned by LinkedIn), YouTube (owned by Google), and other online visibility. When possible, add links to the other profiles, like a link from the Twitter bio to the LinkedIn Profile.

Resumes: Include links to the LinkedIn Profile, at a minimum, to every resume submitted. Link to other relevant professional social media as appropriate to try to ensure that the right social media profiles are found by the employer. It shows employers that the job seeker is social media savvy, and it also makes it more unlikely that they will view the wrong LinkedIn Profile.

Email signature: Add a link to the LinkedIn Profile and other relevant online visibility in the email *signature* file which can be included in every message. Refrain from having email signatures

that are 40 lines long, but do include what is relevant, or at least the basic contact information and LinkedIn Profile URL.

Hopefully, connecting the social media will make it easier for employers to find the job seeker's *real* social proof, but it probably won't preclude them from doing additional Google and social media searching.

Stay Active!

Once online visibility is established, it must be maintained, even when employed (and not officially looking for work). So, continue to be active on:

- **LinkedIn** – “Like” or share professional information several times a week on LinkedIn, in “updates” from the LinkedIn home page.
- **LinkedIn** – Post articles in LinkedIn Pulse to demonstrate both knowledge and communications skills.
- **LinkedIn** – Post relevant content in a LinkedIn Group that is related to professional goals. It can be something original or good content created by someone else but relevant to the profession or industry.
- **Twitter** – Twitter is fun and easy. Follow the appropriate thought leaders, and share their tweets with your followers. Share your own creations too, as appropriate. Automate the process with a tool like HootSuite, but also check in every day.
- **Facebook** – Post good information on Facebook, consistent with the professional image.
- **Slideshare** – Add/update relevant slide shows and other related documents that may be linked to the LinkedIn Profile, resume, email signature, and so on.

We can learn as much, or more, on social media as we share. But, sharing good information increases network size and reach and builds credibility.

A must-do: Defensive Googling

On a weekly basis, we should *all* do our Defensive Googling (5) – a search through Google (and Bing) on different versions of our names. To avoid “personalized” search results, which are not necessarily what someone else would see, make that search an “incognito” or “private” search. (Read the Advanced Google Search article for details on how to do an incognito/private searches).

Bottom Line

Paying attention to your online reputation is *not* optional today, when Google is your real resume! When good, positive information about you isn't found, you have wasted your time applying for the job.

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End Notes

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- (2) **Your Most Important Keywords for Job Search and Careers**, Job-Hunt.org: <http://www.job-hunt.org/internet-social-profiles/your-most-important-keywords.shtml>
- (3) **Profile Photo Guidelines and Conditions**, LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/430?lang=en>
- (4) **Number of Employers Passing on Applicants Due to Social Media Posts Continues to Rise**, CareerBuilder.com: <http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?s=d=6%2F26%2F2014&id=pr829&ed=12%2F31%2F2014>
- (5) **Defensive Googling**, Job-Hunt.org: <http://www.job-hunt.org/guides/google/defensive-googling-method.shtml>

About the author

Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are **Job-Hunt.org** and **WorkCoachCafe.com**. To read more of Susan's articles about Personal Online Reputation Management, read her Job-Hunt column, **The Guide to Personal Online Reputation Management** – <http://www.job-hunt.org/reputation-management/reputation-management.shtml>

Success by Association: Providing Evidence of Credentials in Online Reputation Management

By Chandlee Bryan

Managing one's professional presence online can be similar to rolling a small boulder up a hill of sand: there are mitigating factors that may impede success regardless of time and effort invested. Even if one has a unique name and uses consistent personal branding across websites and social media platforms, the techniques by which individuals are identified and evaluated are heavily influenced by two factors one cannot completely control: whom one knows and what keywords are used by others.

According to CareerXRoads, a job seeker who is referred for a position is three to four times more likely to be hired. (1) Even when applicants apply directly for positions, using relevant keywords remains essential to the getting your resume seen: it is estimated that 75 out of 100 resumes may be screened out by Applicant Tracking Systems. (2) Given these constraints, cultivating a positive online reputation is of critical importance – particularly for individuals who have limited social networks and knowledge of search engine optimization (SEO).

One opportunity for both individuals and employers is to expand the use and marketing of industry-based certifications (IBCs), training programs and digital badges. This article highlights the range of options available and strategies that can be used to promote these credentials as a strategy for positive reputation management.

Skills and industry-based certifications are in widespread existence across fields, from law and healthcare to transportation, operations and manufacturing. As many certifications and credentials are issued only after individuals successfully complete required training and examinations, they can provide both job applicants and employers with demonstrated evidence of skills and knowledge. Moreover, evaluating candidates in light of the credentials they hold can also be seen as an objective benchmark for recruiters and hiring managers, especially since it is illegal for employers to discriminate against applicants on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. (3)

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission encourages employers to “*establish neutral and objective criteria to avoid subjective hiring decisions based on personal stereotypes or hidden biases,*” (4) yet demographic and personal information about job applicants can easily be – and often is – found online.

In many organizations and industries, it is common practice for recruiters and hiring managers to conduct background online research on candidates. From 2005 to 2012, ExecuNet conducted an annual survey of recruiters on how they hire. Year after year, up to 90 percent of recruiters

reported “Googling” candidates, or using online search engines to seek information out that was left off of resumes. (5)

In the 2015 Jobvite Recruiter Nation Survey, only four percent of 1400 recruiters said they did not use social media as part of their recruiting practices. (6) The importance of relationships was heavily emphasized in the report: 78 percent of recruiters say they find their best candidate through referrals. The second highest source of candidates for recruiters (55 percent) was derived directly through social networks.

Despite the widespread use of referrals and social recruiting, there are signs that current recruiting practices aren’t working: 56 percent of respondents cited the lack of skilled or qualified talent as a key stumbling block – and the majority of recruiters surveyed said that improving the quality of hires was their number one priority for the coming year. (7)

Industry-based certifications and standards-based credentials are proven methods through which individuals can attain and demonstrate evidence of knowledge and skill sets. Many of the government agencies, associations, and sponsoring organizations that issue credentials are as well established as top-ranked colleges and universities. The first American professional association, the Medical Society of New Jersey, was founded 10 years before the Declaration of Independence. (8)

French philosopher and historian Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1839) cited the propensity of Americans to join associations as one of the reasons democracy flourished. In *Democracy in America*, published in the 1830’s, deToqueville observes:

“Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations. They have not only commercial and manufacturing companies, in which all take part, but associations of a thousand other kinds... it is proposed to inculcate some truth or to foster some feeling by the encouragement of a great example, they form a society.” (9)

The IRS recognizes over 68,000 non-profit organizations as trade and professional associations. (10) The American Society of Association Executives estimates that one in every three Americans is a part of the U.S.’s association and nonprofit industry. (11)

From law, financial services and IT to manufacturing, operations and healthcare, associations and professional societies set the standards required in many professions. In some fields, industry-based certifications (IBCs) issued by associations and professional societies are required for practice in many fields. A Juris Doctor degree does not allow one to practice the law; attorneys must pass the bar exam in the state where they wish to practice and be certified by the state's board of examiners – or bar association.

Affiliation with associations can help individuals at any career stage, from entry-level to mid- and late career. Training and certification programs facilitate the development of skills and knowledge-based competencies required by many employers. Volunteer leadership opportunities offer association members the opportunity to become visible to other colleagues, at the local, national or even international level. Many associations offer a tiered approach to membership levels corresponding to experience, leadership participation and peer reputation review.

In terms of online reputation management, individuals can leverage their participation in and affiliation with associations in multiple ways. For example, on LinkedIn, one can list:

- Association membership in the Organizations section
- Industry-based credentials in both the Certifications and in the Skills section
- Volunteer leadership positions for associations in the Volunteering Opportunities or Organizations section
- Group participation in online discussions related to their areas for interest.
- Any Publications written for associations in the Publication section

As many employers search LinkedIn for keywords on membership affiliations, certifications and skills the simple task of listing involvement in organization can help expand positive search engine results and increase one's own ranking in other LinkedIn searches com. This is important for search results conducted both on and off LinkedIn. In terms of visibility inside LinkedIn, search results are important in terms of how one's search results show up relative to peers, connections and acquaintances. In November 2014, eMarketer reported that the average U.S. Internet User in the U.S. spent approximately 9.8 minutes on LinkedIn per day. (12)

Search results conducted outside of LinkedIn may also be heavily influenced by internal site rankings: web analytics firm Alexa ranks LinkedIn #14 of all U.S. sites in terms of traffic. (13) This high traffic rank is significant as LinkedIn profile enhancements can lead to greater visibility overall online in terms of general search engine results. Indeed, many individuals who have a custom profile URL and a name not shared with many others find that their LinkedIn profiles are often their top search results for their name online.

While it is easy to say one has experience and expertise in a field or industry, showcasing IBCs or industry-based certifications is a strong approach to personal reputation management as they provide evidence of pre-existing skills and knowledge. Individuals who are unemployed or attempting to transition to a new field may also find that there are funds and or training programs available to them at reduced cost.

The National Skills Coalition estimates that the U.S. currently has over 1,000 sector strategies – *"partnerships of employers within one industry that bring government, education, training, economic development, labor, and community organizations together to focus on the workforce needs of an industry within a regional labor market."* (14)

At the same time, there is also a cry for reform in the practice of credentialing: In 2015, the Lumina Foundation and 80+ organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, joined together to form Connecting Credentials, a national dialogue on building a learning-based credentialing system. In a white paper, organizers of the initiative state define postsecondary credentials as the "currency through which knowledge and skills are recognized...the essential bridge that connects people to jobs, connect educational programs, and define career pathways." (15)

While credentialing is defined as essential, the Connecting Credentials initiative calls for increased standards to evaluate the process of credentialing: "In most cases, there's little clarity about what these credentials mean – their value, their quality and how they connect. And that makes their use difficult – for employers trying to determine whether prospective hires are qualified, and for students trying to navigate an increasingly complex marketplace." (16)

Given the ongoing dialogue on credentialing, individuals with pre-existing IBCs or skills certifications would be well advised to include descriptions and details about any pre-existing or training programs in progress as they present themselves online. One easy way to do this is use visualization tools, such as that offered by word cloud tools such as Wordle or Tag Crowd, to identify key phrases that are relevant for a certification and then incorporate these phrases into a description of the work.

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About the Author



E. Chandlee Bryan, Job-Hunt.org's columnist for the **Guide to Job Search for New Grads**, is a certified career coach, resume writer and co-author of *The Twitter Job Search Guide* (JIST Publications, 2010). She has over ten years of experience working in Ivy League career offices and has also worked as a recruiter, a resume writing specialist for a national Microsoft campaign and as a small group facilitator for a Manhattan based job club. She ran the NYC Job Seeker's Meetup from 2008 to 2011, earning an average event review of 4.5/5.0 and growing the group's membership from 125 over 1100.

After relocating to New Hampshire, she served as the Jobs Expert for Answer.com from 2012 to 2015. Chandlee currently works at the Center for Professional Development at Dartmouth College. She also does a limited amount of freelance writing and work with private clients through her career management firm, Best Fit Forward. She earned the BA in English at Rhodes College and the MEd in Counseling at the University of Virginia. The ideas expressed in this article are informed through her own experience.

Her first job post-college was in membership development with the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA), a professional association in the aerospace industry.

She served as researcher for a book *The A+ Solution: How America's Professional Societies and Trade Associations Can Solve the Nation's Workforce Skills Crisis* (2013). Since 2014, she has been collaborating with colleagues at Dartmouth College on digital badges, piloting her office's first use of badges to drive student engagement.

See Chandlee's Job-Hunt.org column, Guide to Job Search for New Grads, at – <http://www.job-hunt.org/job-search-for-new-grads/job-search-for-new-grads-expert.shtml>

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Plan B: Thoughts on Career Management for the New Era

By Martin Yate

Traditional career management has taught generations of Americans that the path to success begins with a college degree, choosing a career and then settling down with a company, often for a lifetime. This delightful fairy tale ends with a comfortable retirement, in a home you own and a cabin at the lake.

There has never been a Plan B because it has never been thought necessary, despite thirty plus years of accelerating technological disruption and regularly recurring economic downturns that together cause endemic job loss and the vaporization of entire professions.

Traditional career thought replies with, *“Change happens”* and *“Change is for the best,”* and, *“Bless your heart, we’re getting rid of these stinky old bad jobs and replacing them with bright shiny new ones. All you have to do is: choose one of the new careers, get into debt for another education and settle down to it for the rest of your life.”* Or we might add, until that new profession likewise evaporates.

Nowadays hardly anyone makes it through to retirement in the career he or she began; that was for earlier generations. The uncertain times in which we live demand re-thinking our approaches to successful career management; and if ever there was a need for the integration of a Plan B into the mix, it is right now.

Today’s lack of employment security means that if a new approach isn’t introduced and adopted, professional life for most people is going to sputter along from job to job with diminished horizons, and from career to career, with all the financial dislocation and soul-wrenching self-doubt that this causes. Where’s the American Dream in this picture?

The facts are that we typically start to work in our teens and theoretically retire at sixty-five, which is a half century work life that will average job change about every four years including at least three career changes. This continues until age and wage discrimination pushes workers in their forties and fifties out of the professional workforce way before they are financially able to make the transition into a comfortable retirement. The result is that the culmination of a lifetime’s experience is invariably squandered on jobs far beneath that person’s credentials and capabilities.

This causes all working people to experience intense career uncertainties that can manifest with significant emotional and physical problems. The new realities increasingly deny a person’s ability to achieve stability, success, and a sense of fulfillment in life; and these are three building blocks that are foundational to responsible long-term career planning. In response, I, with an increasing number of colleagues, am convinced of the need to embrace a new approach to lifetime career management that focuses on enlightened self-interest.

Enlightened Self-Interest

When an employer dispenses with your services, it's *nothing personal*, the organization is doing what it must do to survive and maximize profit. You and I, and all our clients need to adopt the same business-like approach to the management of our careers: It's nothing personal, we just have to put our personal survival and success above mindless loyalty to employers that are intent on using us up and spitting us out, just as soon as they profitably can.

There is an urgent need for everyone to begin guiding the path of their lives with the same forethought, objectivity, and self-interest with which a corporation plans and executes it's own strategies.

It is time to start thinking as MeInc. You are MeInc, I am MeInc, we are all MeInc in this uncertain world, but what is a MeInc, and how does it operate?

MeInc is the sum of the products and services (think skills and experience) you've accumulated over the course of your working life that together comprise a financial entity that must survive and prosper over the balance of your work life. To do this, MeInc mirrors the approaches of a modern corporation, and will have its own ongoing initiatives for:

Research and Development: To identify and develop products with the maximum marketplace appeal. These products and services will adapt and constantly evolve to fulfill the changing needs of the customer base.

Strategic Planning: You look today's reality and the future square in the face and plan MeInc's strategies accordingly. This includes the timing of strategic career moves that take you to new employers; plans for monitoring the health of your profession and for career change -- all calibrated to your timetable.

Working with **R & D** and **Marketing**, your **Strategic Planning** initiatives constantly monitor professional opportunity and investigate strategies for the pursuit of new revenue streams— such as alternate entrepreneurial endeavors that could minimize recurrent disruption of MeInc's cash flow and maximize the odds of reward for taking responsibility for one's future.

Marketing: The application of Branding and Public Relations initiatives that establish credibility for the professional services MeInc delivers. This work strives to ensure that your credibility becomes visible to an ever-widening circle, first within your current department and expanding outwards through the company, your local professional community, and beyond, as your strategic career plans dictate.

Whatever MeInc's ultimate marketing goals, it begins with the definition and capture of what your professional identity is going to be. Invariably this is achieved with a resume, because it forces the self-analysis necessary and evaluation of professional context needed to establish a viable brand and then echo that brand identity through professional association membership, LinkedIn and other social media platforms – and all you say and do in your work every day.

Sales: With this initiative you constantly develop new strategies to sell your products and services, including staying current with state-of-art sales tools like both passive and active network-integrated job search tactics, polishing your ability to turn job interviews into job offers, and understanding and employing the right tactics to make a job secure and win promotions etc.

Finance: MeInc invests wisely in initiatives that will deliver a Return On Investment that focus on contributing to a successful future, rather than frittering away income on the perceived needs for instant gratification drummed into us by 24/7 media. The results of which keep us in debt and enslaved to disingenuous employers.

Be Smart, Choose a Practical "Core Career"

In this context, considerations for a career, or core career as we will come to see it, must be entirely pragmatic in order to establish a solid foundation on which to base long-term career initiatives.

With all its lack of security, a core career is still the most dependable route to middle-class success. Yet we are out of touch if we offer career advice that tells a client to, “Find your passion, find your bliss, find something you love, and stick with it until you achieve success.” This was always feel-good advice, never practical. Such hopes are indeed achievable, but they are not, and have never been, appropriate primary advice offered as the main moneymaking vehicle for someone’s life.

Needs and desires—the things that motivate us—evolve as we age, and we typically experience significant changes in these wants every 7–10 years. Daniel Levinson’s perennially pertinent work (1) on life’s cyclical changes tells us that whatever rings bells for us today will be replaced a few years down the road with needs and wants more relevant to the changing stages of our life.

In such a context, career choice shouldn’t be about anything remotely like “finding your bliss.” Instead, a more practical approach that responds to the realities of the new world of work is needed, one that looks at core career as a foundation for inevitable change driven by employers’ or our own changing needs.

The work we do dictates the money we earn, and this dictates the quality of life we experience and the things we are able to do when we are not working, which has an impact on every aspect of our lives, for the rest of our lives. As such it is common sense that core career choice should be pragmatic especially when a core career needn’t be the sum of your life, but part of an approach to career management that encourages security and success, while integrating the pursuit of your passions into career planning in a manner far more likely to bear fruit.

While core career choice should certainly take into account personal preferences, guidance on choice should not be made to encourage the outmoded belief that this career will lead to lifelong security, or that it will satisfy all our needs for today and always. So while smart core career choice takes into account skills, aptitudes, and preferences; having come up with a short list of potential career paths based on these considerations, we should also consider:

- The projected health of that profession and / or industry sector
- The projected growth and stability of the target job(s)
- The relative flexibility offered by the combination of degree/job/ profession/industry that allows someone to change jobs, professions and careers in the future.

A profession with good growth projections in a healthy industry sector will deliver more job opportunities and better professional growth in good times and bad. With any profession/industry sector(s) under evaluation, we should consider the health of target jobs in terms of real numbers and projected growth.

For example, the absolute number of people holding the job title on which growth projections are based is important: A projected 20 percent growth rate on a job that already has 3.5 million people holding that title suggests greater security, in both good times and bad, than a job with a projected 20 percent growth rate based on 35,000 job holders.

Taking full advantage of counseling, career choice and aptitude testing, it becomes possible to make considered career choices based on more realistic evaluations of opportunity for job security, success and fulfillment. This makes sense to clients when they understand that this approach will deliver greater odds for achieving their dreams and actually gives them more control and flexibility over how they live their lives and even offer realistic tactics for ultimately living their *bliss*.

Career Choice and Alternate Options

Core career choice should be based on pragmatism, and it can afford to be when a core career won't become the sum of a person's life, but part of an approach to career management that is in tune with the times and supports stability and success in a more holistic manner.

If we want clients to increase their chances of financial independence, a core career is just that: central to success, but not the only path to its achievement. We recommend pursuit of a sensibly chosen core career for the greater odds of stability and success it brings, and because a core career also functions as the training ground for pursuit of alternative career options that can be pursued simultaneously.

The Building Blocks of Career Success and Personal Fulfillment

If we look at a core career as a central to, but not the only path to a secure and fulfilled life, we need to identify and integrate the other paths into a legitimate overall approach. Practically speaking, most people want the ability to generate steady income streams that can deliver financial security and the opportunity for personal fulfillment. There are three paths to achieving this:

1. **Core Career:** Building a career working for companies that pay salary and offer vacations, benefits, and some degree of professional growth.

Core Career reality: There is no real job security, and while professional horizons are increasingly truncated, it is still the most secure route to middle-class success.

2. Entrepreneurial Career: When you work for yourself, there's no employer between you and the money. Scary at first, but the closer you get to bringing money steadily in your own front door, the closer you are to economic security and personal freedom.

Entrepreneurial Career reality: More businesses fail than succeed. Most would-be entrepreneurs rush into a business without skills or preparation, and after that first entrepreneurial failure they give up.

3. Dream Career: It can be anything you want, from writing the Great American Novel and living on the endless royalties, to becoming a cellist in the Vienna Philharmonic.

Dream Career reality: By definition hard to achieve, it should not replace a steady means of making a living until you have turned it into an income stream and hence an entrepreneurial career. And before that, you have to turn a dream into realizable goals and a plan of action: actual steps you can take to get from here to there. Fortunately, a *core career* delivers the education you need to make these things happen.

A dream career should be something that gives you joy, that puts juice in your life. Everything starts with a dream, and stays that way over time as you work steadily toward it. It ceases being a dream the moment you start to make money from it: At that moment you become a creative entrepreneur and your dream career transforms into an entrepreneurial career and when you make it consistently successful it becomes your core career.

A Core Career Is the Cradle of Life for All Dreams

With all its uncertainties, a *core career* is still the surest path to security and success, and while it shouldn't be the only path in such an insecure world, there is a trade-off: Approached wisely, a core career is a complete educational program for the launch of parallel *dream* and *entrepreneurial* careers. Here's why:

Looking into these issues some years ago, there was already some consensus in the professional community, Dr. Paul Green, the behavioral interviewing expert (2) who addressed *transferable skills* as they relate to employee selection. We can also look at how transferable skills, long used as a basis for behavioral interviewing and employee selection, can be equally effective when applied in the context of career management. I talked about the role of transferable skills and their role in success with a core career. However, no comparative studies addressing the skills transferable between *core*, *entrepreneurial* and *dream careers* had, to the best of my knowledge, been done.

I funded three behavioral studies that looked at the learned behaviors / transferable skills needed for long-term career success in core, dream, and entrepreneurial careers. These studies were led by Dr. David Caruso a management psychologist of standing, now with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and with academic oversight provided by the Psychology Department of the University of New Hampshire.

The goal for these three separate studies was to separately examine the transferable skills necessary for success in the corporate world, the entrepreneurial world and the world of dream careers; and then to compare and identify the skills (if any) that these three fields of endeavor held in common.

I was pleasantly unsurprised when the study confirmed a sequence of *transferable skills* that – true to their name – encourage success across all *core careers*, because they are the underlying skills that help us do whatever we do well, at whatever level and in whatever profession we work.

While confirming Green’s foundational work relating to the professional workplace, we also found that these transferable skills had further implications:

- Technical (skills of the job)
- Communication (all eight subsets)
- Critical Thinking (problem solving)
- Multitasking (time management and organization)
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Creativity

The reason? These skills were seen, in both our entrepreneurial and dream career studies, to be equally important to success in each of these fields of endeavor.

How does this impact stability, success and fulfillment in life? By encouraging increasing competency with each of these *transferable skills* in the quotidian grind of a core career, we can

- Increase competency and with it, the potential for core career stability and success.
- Increase marketability when changing jobs and making strategic career changes.

At the same time, when these skills are applied in the pursuit of entrepreneurial and dream endeavors, the same benefits accrue:

Whatever the entrepreneurial or dream endeavor, the odds of success are increased by applying these same *transferable skills* because they remain the underlying skills that help us do whatever we do well – at whatever level and in whatever endeavor we apply them.

At the same time, Core career competency is further enhanced by the application of these skills in different contexts because these experiences deliver a wider frame of reference for the challenges faced in the *core career*, thereby increasing capabilities, and by extension security and success.

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It becomes apparent to anyone who looks, that the people who become successful as entrepreneurs or who turn their dreams into income streams, do not normally do so by stopping a professional career and immediately becoming a successful in another field. Yes it happens once in a blue moon, but with far greater frequency such success is achieved by working to advance these alternate careers in parallel with pursuit of a core career. In a world of professional uncertainty,

simultaneously pursuing alternative options brings MeInc (you) closer to the sources of income independent of employers. It also leads to improved transferable skills and consequently greater odds of success in all one's endeavors.

In other words, the development of skills vital to stability and success in your core career mutually support success in parallel entrepreneurial and dream careers – creating a harmonious and virtuous circle, with our efforts in one career polishing skills that improve the odds of our success in the pursuit of alternate parallel careers. The virtuous circle is completed when such extra labors further refines and strengthens the all-important *transferable skills* necessary for acing the challenges faced in a core career, which benefits both MeInc and an employer.

This is especially relevant when these same efforts are applied to potential dream or entrepreneurial careers, especially when those efforts don't pan out as quickly or as well as we might have wished. This is because honed transferable skills empower the would-be entrepreneur to learn from mistakes and shorten the odds of success in subsequent attempts.

Looked at in this light, a core career is filled every day with OJT (on-the-job-training) opportunities to learn the lessons of business and apply them to our own pursuits, our own enlightened self-interest. This encourages motivation to achieve greater core career competency, which can only lead to greater stability and success, while putting the achievement of our dreams and goals well within grasp.

It's Good to Have Goals in Life

Your dreams, everyone's dreams, change as the years pass. As Levinson has taught us, what seems a worthwhile pursuit in your twenties changes to something new in your thirties, and so on. Most people decide to pursue their dreams when young and without any professional experience or skills. Then not surprisingly they fail, fold their dreams and put them neatly under the bed, consigned to dust and disintegration. Meanwhile, the dreamers and entrepreneurs who ultimately become successful, don't admit defeat as the end of the game, they own their mistakes, lick their wounds and do better next time; they don't quit, no matter how long it takes.

There are countless examples of success that comes only after seemingly endless tribulation and failure. Henry Dow of Dow Chemical, one of the world's largest companies, went bankrupt five times before getting his dream off the ground. What did Edison say about inventing the light bulb? That he knew more ways not to invent a light bulb than anyone on earth. Laura Ingalls Wilder, the author of *Little House on the Prairie*, didn't get published till she was sixty-five years old.

My old friend Ross Wetzel, who drew Mickey for Disney and worked on *Fantasia* back in the nineteen thirties, was subsequently successful as a Don Draper in Advertising and a successful artist and just a few years back he started a new philanthropic venture at ninety-two, each career overlapping another. On a far smaller scale, I've written 82 editions of 17 career books over the last 30 years, but it took me 20 years, three failed businesses and countless rejections before I got that first book published. Meanwhile, I pursued an arguably successful professional core career.

The Secret? Make the Time to Try, and Never Stop Trying.

When we commit to achieving our dreams no matter the time and effort, we learn from our mistakes and then that crazy idea that didn't work out in our teens or twenties doesn't prevent us from trying again armed with the skills and knowledge that comes with more experience.

The more clearly you can identify and define the many small steps, taken day-by-day, that will bring alternate career ideas to life, the greater odds you have of manifesting them. And it's all made possible by the application of those transferable skills we apply daily in our core careers. We give ourselves increased opportunity for achieving our dreams when we apply them to the goals of MeInc rather than merely for the benefit of an uncaring employer.

You Have the Time, *If* You Have the Commitment

This simultaneous pursuit of multiple parallel careers over time addresses the need to develop potential alternate income streams to compensate for the climate of uncertainty in which we live. And as we can see, the construct for doing so is built on the firm foundations of the transferable skills that underlie every successful *core career*, and as it turns out, every dream and entrepreneurial career as well.

A career no longer has to be about either/or choices: "I want to be president of the company" and "I want to be president of my own company" aren't mutually exclusive. Anyone can realistically have multiple career goals and expect to achieve a number of them over time: goals for climbing the corporate ladder, for having an antique shop or your own white-water rafting company, for writing that book or showing your sculpture at MOMA. It is not only okay to have goals in life beyond a successful core career; it's good for your emotional well-being and simple economic common sense.

A Successful Career Is Not a Sprint

New paths down which we can pursue success, stability and personal fulfillment represent long-term commitments that probably won't spring into bloom this coming spring. They will take time, sometimes years, before they bear fruit, so building networks in the fields of our entrepreneurial endeavors gives us support groups that speed our learning curves, while delivering ongoing exposure to how brands in these areas are developed and blossom. Because building a better mousetrap is only one part of the equation, you have to brand and sell it too.

A successful career is a marathon, not a sprint; so whatever the goals, the sooner we start toward them the better. These are all invariably long journeys with the hardest step being the first. Every day we wake up on the right side of the grass we, and our clients, have the opportunity to work towards living life on our own terms by using the tools we already have in our hands to bring our dreams to life and as a result, living a fuller, more secure and successful life.

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End Notes

1. Daniel Levinson et al, *Seasons Of a Man's Life*.
2. Based on Dr. Paul Green's behavioral work related to behavioral interviewing and employee selection. It was P.G. who introduced me to transferable skills as they relate to employee selection.

About the Author



New York Times bestseller **Martin Yate** CPC writes the 17 book ***Knock Em Dead*** career management series, collectively published in some 63 foreign language editions. He is considered the father of the new career management. Martin's work unfolds a new and unique approach to getting what you want out of life, rather than living as a drone in some high-rise salt mine. As Dun & Bradstreet says, "He's just about the best in the business." In his spare time, Martin is the columnist for 2 Job-Hunt's Guides: Guide to Effective Resumes and Guide to Successful Job Interviews.

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Mind Your Online Reputation: The Personal Branding Social Proof Paradigm and Two Little-Known Ways to Master It By Meg Guiseppi

Here is an undeniable truth too many job seekers dismiss or don't understand:

With the advent of the digital age, job search has become a whole new ball game, requiring personal branding and online presence for social proof . . . and a lot more preparation, planning, and hard work.

A good-looking, well-written resume used to be king and, along with a strong network, just about all one needed to land a job. A great resume alone just won't cut it any more. Besides, these documents don't look, read, or work the way they used to either.

Social recruiting is now the norm. According to Jobvite's 2015 Recruiter Nation survey (1), only four percent of recruiters ***do not*** use social media to source and assess candidates.

Although LinkedIn is now, by far, the most important place for job seekers to be online, according to Jobvite's 2015 Job Seeker Nation survey, only 40 percent of job seekers using social media use LinkedIn.

If it's been five or more years since someone has been job-hunting, they may think things will happen the way they did the last time they changed jobs.

They dusted off their resume, looked for job openings, and reached out to recruiters. Or they were lucky enough to have a streaming pipeline of opportunities coming in from recruiters throughout their careers. Or a job just fell into their lap through some connection.

These things can still happen, but these days job seekers shouldn't expect to slide into a new gig so easily . . . *especially if they're neglecting personal branding and online presence.*

And yet, all too often I hear job seekers say self-sabotaging things like:

- “Personal branding is not for me. I'm not a brand, I'm a person. And I don't like to brag about myself”.
- “I don't want to 'put myself out there' online”.
- “I don't have time for LinkedIn or any other social networking”.

Job seekers may resist, but three cold hard realities impact today's job search and the ability to land faster:

1. Personal Branding Is No Longer Optional

Much as been written about personal branding. Much of it fails to hit the mark. A few words on what personal branding is *not*:

- A passing fad soon to be replaced by the next best thing.
- The way to position oneself as an expert in their field.
- Ego-stroking . . . an opportunity to brag about oneself.
- A nifty tagline for one's resume and email signature.
- The ticket to making big money.
- The path to becoming famous.
- A so-called brand statement simply stringing together functional areas of expertise.

Simply put, personal branding for job search is all about:

Defining and knowing what makes one unique and valuable to the employers they're targeting, and clearly communicating what differentiates their ROI (Return on Investment) when they network and interview for jobs, through brand communications (verbal, digital, and on paper) that resonate with them. Differentiation is the key to helping them stand out and above their competition in the job market.

Their brand is their authentic self. It's their reputation . . . the things that people rely on them to always deliver . . . the things that they're the "go-to" person for . . . the combination of personal qualities and hard skills that represent their good-fit qualities for their target employers.

Personal branding helps them generate chemistry for themselves, and makes their personal marketing content (resume, LinkedIn profile, biography, etc.) a more interesting read.

Personal brand-building begins with targeting and researching specific employers so that they can build content for personal marketing materials (resume, LinkedIn profile, biography, etc.) that position them as a good fit to help those employers meet their current pressing needs.

My 10-Step Executive Personal Branding Worksheet outlines all the steps.

2. Having an Online Presence Is No Longer Optional

Executive recruiters and hiring decision makers have new, Internet-driven strategies to source and assess candidates. Most turn to LinkedIn first, and then other online platforms, to find and

assess candidates based on what exists about them online. Ignoring LinkedIn, in particular, for reputation management and personal brand-building can be career suicide.

Job seekers who have a diverse, compelling online footprint are more attractive to recruiters and employers, than those who have little or no presence online.

Those who are not visible and at least somewhat active online, may never be found by the very people they need to be smack dab in front of. If Googling *their name* yields little to no search results, they'll likely be passed over for someone who has a vibrant, diverse online footprint.

The more web pages associated with their name, the stronger their candidacy, and the stronger the likelihood they will be a person of interest.

When writing content to build online presence, job seekers must always be mindful of their personal SEO (Search Engine Optimization). This involves identifying and including in brand reinforcing content the relevant keywords and phrases that will help them be found by recruiters and hiring decision makers.

How do they uncover these critical personal SEO keywords and phrases? By carefully researching each company and industry they're targeting.

3. Social Proof Can Tip the Scales in The Job Seeker's Favor

Recruiters and hiring professionals Google job seekers' names before reaching out to them. They're looking for social proof to validate the claims they've made in their resume and other career documents, and to corroborate their personal brand. They want to verify that they are who they say they are, and to learn more about them.

When people post information about themselves online, they're less likely to stretch the truth. We all hesitate posting anything online, for all the world to scrutinize, that isn't accurate and can be outed by colleagues, employers or others who know better. Of course, discrepancies between the documents job seekers provide employers and what they find about them online can red-flag their candidacy.

Social proof helps reinforce their good-fit qualities and positions them as up-to-date social media-savvy candidates who know how to operate in the digital age.

Two little-known tips to master online reputation and personal brand management By now, most job seekers should be aware of the well-known places to build their brand and online presence – LinkedIn, a personal website or blogsite, Twitter, other social networks, etc. Information about these things abounds. Here are two little-known, but powerful, strategies that job seekers should add to their brand communications plan:

1. Write Posts on LinkedIn's Pulse Publishing Platform

I've found that many job seekers either don't know about this feature, or don't know that they have access to it.

LinkedIn offers this powerful platform to post articles that demonstrate subject matter expertise, express opinions, influence people, manage reputation, build online branding, and stay top of mind with people.

This platform is almost as good as running one's own blog, but without the hassles of maintaining a blog. And it has added benefits:

- Each article posted becomes part of the member's professional profile, and is displayed on the "Posts" section of their LinkedIn profile.
- Posts are shared with connections and followers.
- Out-of-network members can follow the writer from long-form posts to receive updates of new posts.
- Each post is searchable both on and off LinkedIn.

Although it may not be available to everyone yet, LinkedIn is slowly rolling out the Pulse platform to all members. If the *"Publish a Post"* button is visible on the home page of their profile, to the right of the *"Share an Update"* button, they're ready to start writing a post.

Coming up with topics to write about can keep many from using this strategy. Here's a tip – they should go through the list of the relevant keywords and phrases they're using in their personal marketing communications (resume, biography, LinkedIn and other online profiles, etc.), and write articles about those topics. These keywords represent their areas of expertise, so they should be able to write about them fairly easily.

2. Write Book Reviews on Amazon

Writing reviews of relevant books and publications on Amazon (or Barnes and Noble, and other sites with very strong link weight) packs many benefits:

- The branded personal profile the job seeker should create on the site represents a valuable search result for their name.
- Any book review posted becomes another powerful search result.
- Carefully crafted reviews support the job seeker's subject matter expertise and thought leadership..
- Reading the right books can only improve the job seeker's breadth of knowledge, and possibly strengthen their skill set.

To write the best reviews, job seekers should:

- Choose books relevant to their areas of expertise, so the reviews will demonstrate their subject matter expertise.
- Choose books their target employers' decision makers are likely reading.
- Look for books written by people whose radar they want to get on. Authors will notice all reviews posted.
- For personal SEO, make sure reviews include the relevant keyword phrases that target employers search to find candidates like them.
- Be sure to get relevant keyword phrases in their Amazon profile, to support personal SEO.
- Link to their reviews in LinkedIn updates, LinkedIn's Pulse platform, tweets, Facebook updates, and other social media.
- Without being too self-promotional, mention in the review if they're an authority on the subject. *"As a[type of] executive with more than 20 years' experience in [area of expertise], I agree with the author that . . ."*

While actively building their online footprint, job seekers need to safeguard their online reputation by keeping an eye on what happens to search results for *their name*.

Self-Google Once a Week

It's up to each of us to monitor and safeguard our reputation (or personal brand), and keep it free from *digital dirt*. Without self-Googleing regularly, job seekers will never know what people are finding out about them.

What if there is someone with their name involved in nefarious deeds, and people assessing them assume it's the same person?

What if someone has posted something negative about them (whether or not it's true), that damages their reputation and could sabotage their chances?

They could be out of the running without even knowing it.

Job seekers need to get into the habit of self-Googleing about once a week. If negative search results for their name appear, they should do whatever they can to have them taken down. If that's not possible, they should work hard to build positive, brand-reinforcing search results, that will push the bad ones down beyond the first page.

Here's what job seekers should look for when they Google *their name*:

- Do they *own* the first several search results?

- Do they *own* most of the first page of search results?
- Or does it take several pages of results before getting to anything related to them?
- What information will people find about them when they click on those search results?
- Is the information they find what they want employers to know about them and their potential value to the companies or organizations they're targeting?

A tip for accurate search results:

Google personalizes results based on our search history, so it's a good idea, from time to time, to use someone else's computer to self-Google. Different results may appear. Also, it's best to be logged out of any Google accounts (Google+, Gmail, etc.), before self-Googleing.

[Or, use the "private" or "incognito" search technique recommended in Chapter 6, Advanced Google Search.]

What Employers Want to Find

Beyond social proof, here are some of the things recruiters and hiring decision makers at target companies are looking for:

Social Media Engagement

Is the job seeker's social media presence non-existent, dabbling, moderately active, or super active? At the very least, they need to have a fully-populated LinkedIn profile. And they should consider having at least some kind of presence on other platforms – Google Plus, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.

The vast majority of executive recruiters use social recruiting (social networks and social media) to source and assess talent. They're online, looking for people like you. If you're not there, they're going to wonder whether you are social media savvy and know how to operate in the digital world.

A Professional Photo

Studies have shown that people relate to content better when it's associated with a photo of the author. The photo should be a professional-looking, close-up headshot that is looking towards the content.

Reasons to Rule You Out

If hiring decision makers are inundated with an overload of candidates, they'll set the bar higher to whittle down the candidate pool. Unfortunately, that can mean that some great-fit candidates will be ruled out if "digital dirt" exists. They may never be given the chance to dispute the negative search results, if they're untrue.

In a competitive job market, employers demand (and get) the very best of the best candidates, who have squeaky-clean online footprints. Everyone must be diligent in building and safeguarding their online reputation.

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(1) Jobvite **2015 Recruiter Nation Survey**:

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About the Author



Meg Guiseppi, Job-Hunt's columnist for **The Guide to Personal Branding**, is author of **23 Ways You Sabotage Your Executive Job Search and How Your Brand Will Help You Land**.

Meg has been partnering with senior-level and c-suite executives for 20+ years to help them differentiate and strategically position their unique ROI for today's executive job search, and Land a Great-Fit New Gig!™ The Personal Branding Expert at Job-Hunt.org, a leading Internet job search portal, she has been featured and quoted in *Forbes*, *Huffington Post*, *Fast Company*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Inc.com*, *Fortune*, *CMO.com*, *PBS' Next Avenue*, and others.

Meg earned the BA at Rutgers University, and continues to expand her knowledge base of job search, personal branding, online reputation management and career management by earning credentials and participating in several prominent careers industry professional associations. She has earned 10 professional certifications, including Reach Certified Personal Branding Strategist, Reach Social Branding Analyst – LinkedIn Profile Strategist, and Certified Executive Resume Master. She owns two executive job search and personal branding related blogsites: Executive Career Brand (owned since 2009) and Executive Resume Branding (owned since 2008).

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Use Social Media to Manage Your Online Reputation and Support Your Brand

By **Debra Wheatman**

Now more than ever it is critical that business professionals, whether or not they are searching for new opportunities understand and leverage social media appropriately. The ubiquitous presence of social media and online tools has provided companies, hiring managers –anyone who has interest the ability to view information about another person. From Facebook and LinkedIn to Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube we are living in a fishbowl.

Despite myriad articles and discussions about the need for some privacy, people continue to post messages, pictures and share too much information about themselves, their families and friends. We have become numb to this onslaught of information, first reading voraciously the recent news about a friend's divorce, the prayers for sick relatives and the flashier headlines concerning celebrities or local villains who committed some abominable crime against an innocent. We might shake our heads and take a few minutes to share the atrocity of the situation with our spouse or loved-one before moving on to the next headline.

How do these stories, many of which are insipid and hardly worth our time become part of what people use to judge the basis of our professional abilities? It all comes down to the online world and social media. You are what you post, or Tweet or chat. In light of all the platforms available for this flurry of data, information, and most of all opinions here is some information to help you manage, maintain and grow a positive online presence, one that you can be proud of having developed. Not only will you be seen as a pundit in your field, but you will also be able to deftly expand your network and your sphere of influence. I can assure you – your brand and your career will thank you. Aside from these obvious benefits, you will find that you will be pursued for new opportunities or engagements. Instead of having to aggressively pursue new things, people will seek you out for those situations where your expertise would add value.

We all know you can't be everywhere, and you can't be everything to everyone (to coin a phrase from the popular Weezer song). To be successful on social media, you have to build a presence and a reputation. That takes time and commitment. With that said, here are some of the most well-known social sites and some tips regarding what you should and should not be doing to ensure you develop and promote a polished, well-represented brand image.

Facebook

Facebook, like other social sites, is a platform from which you can promote yourself. Facebook is a terrific place to do this because unlike other sites like Twitter where you have 140 characters to Tweet, Facebooks provides a forum from which you can share ideas – even lengthy ones, showcase pictures, highlight your interests (or lack thereof), share your musical and reading

tastes, penchant for rich or exotic foods, and any number of other topics that provide a window into who you are as a person.

Also, it is quite easy to connect your Facebook account to your other social sites to conceivably create one “network” linked to you. The ability to create so much content on Facebook and share the dynamics of your personality, life and interests makes it an awesome brand building tool. Here are some tips to help with establishing that positive and productive brand message:

You Are What You Post

When thinking about what message you want to send on Facebook, first you need to understand and define yourself. What type of information do you want to share with the community? Do you have a particular interest or skill from which others might benefit? If so, that is a great starting place.

We all have interests and beginning with something that you enjoy and feel passionate about will make it easier for you to share on Facebook and engage your “*friends*” and followers. This does not mean that you need to post about one topic. One of the great things about Facebook is that users can share information across a vast landscape of topics. However, when used for brand building and establishing yourself as an “*expert*” in your area of focus, you will need to spend a considerable amount of time posting on topics related to the message you want to share. By doing so, people will view you as an authority and pursue information on your page for that reason.

You can create a custom URL on Facebook to serve as a distinguishing factor. For example, if your interest is creating sweet treats and sharing the recipes that you develop, you could make your URL www.facebook.com/sweettreats or something similar. This is yet another way to help you brand yourself. When people see that, they will know that it is you. Similarly, make sure you take a nice photo and use that as your Facebook image. Using the same sweet treat example, your photo might be taken of you in a kitchen baking a confection. The point is that everything should be tied back to the brand image you are promoting to others.

Facebook has a privacy area where you can control what others see about you and how to keep your account secure. With social media, you’re on stage – all the time. Therefore, it is critical that you take some precautions to keep yourself safe.

As a good general rule of thumb, keep a neutral position on topics that tend to cause heated debates like, politics, sex, and religion. For starters, getting into arguments with people online will not benefit your brand. You will appear combative and could generate some negative press in addition to the nasty and negative comments you will receive on your page. Also, because the people you are arguing with are hiding behind a screen, comments are, for the most part, nastier. People are far more brazen when they are not standing in front of you.

Finally, the 15 minutes of aggravation you just scored will not change any minds or provide a resolution to world hunger. You will have just lost 15 minutes of time that you can never recover.

Think of it this way: that 15 minutes could have been time you spent nurturing your positive brand image!

Keep your Facebook, and all posts positive, engaging and endeavor to provide interesting and valuable information as you engage your audience. Soon you will see that you will be the *go to* person on your topic of choice. Your brand will continue to develop and appeal to what will no doubt become a growing following of people that seek your opinion and knowledge.

You might wish to consider setting up two profiles, one for your brand and one that you may use for more personal communication with real world friends and family. That way you can post more personal items without diluting your brand.

Twitter

Like all social platforms, you must first define the strategy you are going to employ to build your brand on Twitter. After you secure your handle, which is your Twitter name, for example: @DebraWheatman, you will then complete your profile with a picture and short bio that should complement your other social sites.

Twitter is like a blog in 140 characters or less. They are in the process of building a new product that will allow for longer tweets. In the meantime, you have a small window in which you can share information. Don't be fooled – Twitter is a great way to build a following. According to Statista.com, as of the 3rd quarter of 2015 there were 307 million monthly active users on Twitter. How's that for a potential audience?

Tweet with Purpose

When growing your brand on Twitter you should keep your messages simple and to the point. If you want to share more information with your audience than the 140-character limit allows, you can easily link to an article or another site.

Also, you can and should include pictures in your Tweets. Pictures, as they say, are worth a thousand words. Pictures evoke emotion and serve to engage users in a way that words cannot. To build your brand, you should use all of the resources available to establish your presence and grow your followers.

One of the most important things to remember when Tweeting is to share good quality content. Nobody likes to have their time wasted, so when delivering your information make sure you think that it is worthy of your audience and that it adds value. Consider this question: If you read the Tweet in your Twitter feed, would you appreciate the content? If you can answer yes to that question, then Tweet away.

Keep in mind, Twitter is about engaging not preaching or selling only. I can assure you, if all you do is self-promotion, you will lose followers faster than you gain them.

Once you begin sharing your information and generating followers, others will begin to share your content, and you will start to build brand recognition. You will likely begin getting comments. When you do, respond to the people in the community that reposted your Tweet or engaged with you. The process of interacting and engaging with your followers will help you grow your followers.

On the other side of the coin, you also need to be prepared for some negative comments. Everyone is entitled to an opinion. The best way to maintain the positive brand you are in the process of developing is to respond that all opinions are welcome and appreciated. By taking the high road, you will show that you can maintain your composure – even when someone else is rude – a further testament to your professionalism and grace and a consummate quality for brand building.

Make sure you are active within the Twitter community and return the favor to other people. Don't be shy about liking or sharing others' content. The give and take will help you grow your followers and build your brand. Your kindness, supportiveness and graciousness will benefit you. Also, don't be afraid to offer advice.

LinkedIn

With more than 400 million members, LinkedIn is the world's largest business social network and a great platform from which you can execute a whole host of brand building activities. Building a profile on LinkedIn is easy.

Once you have populated the basics of your profile, you should begin connecting with others and building your network. It is important to include a professional-looking picture on your profile. Choose a photo that is well lit. You should be the only one featured in your photo.

For the sake of consistency, use the same photo across all of your social profiles. With any of the platforms, it is critical that you present information in a crisp and cogent manner, and there should be no grammatical or spelling errors. If you need help building your profile, there are professional resources available to help you develop a compelling message that showcases your talents and supports your brand building efforts.

Meaningful Interactions & Connections

The best way to establish connections on LinkedIn is to be authentic. People appreciate engaging with others that present themselves in a positive and honest manner.

Personal branding is not about selling; it is about highlighting what makes you unique – what expertise are you seeking to share with others. Avoid clichés that don't deliver a compelling message. It is easy to say that you are a “team player” or “strategic thinker.”

With the limited amount of time that people have to review your profile, you need to strike fast and strike hard. Create a compelling headline that differentiates you and write content with meaningful examples that reveal your talents. When creating your profile, think about why you

are writing it. Show people via the things you have done that establish your credibility. You will build your brand and connect with your intended audience.

Maintain an active presence on LinkedIn by updating your status with your current projects. Engage in group discussions, which will help bolster your brand throughout the LinkedIn community. Share your opinion on things in your sphere of interest and influence. Showcase your passion in your brand not just explaining who you are, but also what you do.

Dedicate a set amount of time every week to focus on your LinkedIn presence so that you can share your information in the forum, which will keep you relevant and top of mind. It is not advisable to join too many groups as you want to be able to contribute in a meaningful way. If you spread yourself too thin, you will not make a positive or lasting impression.

Are you the recipient of awards or certifications? If so, make sure you showcase them on your profile.

A great way to generate activity on your profile is to get recommendations. Written recommendations help to validate your brand and serve as wonderful support of your expertise. Any testimonials of your work should contain relevant keywords related to your industry and skills to make the recommendation more applicable to your connections.

Pinterest

A very popular and engaging image-collecting site, Pinterest has established a strong foothold in the world of social media. By using Pinterest, you can help your brand grow via compelling visual imagery.

Your boards become a representation of the things that you find inspirational and engaging. Your portfolio on Pinterest will provide viewers with information about who you are and in what area you are an expert. Through your pins, you can delight and inspire others. You can “pin” photos and videos and use text, connect them explicitly or implicitly to one or more of your interests. For example, if you are an expert in event planning, you would pin items related to event venues, photographers, or food items.

Pinterest will help reinforce your brand via your pin boards. Describe your pins and use keywords to help others find you. Share frequently to ensure that your pins are making their way to the Pinterest community. The more you pin, the more traction you will get. Think about what brand message you want to deliver, then find and pin the images to support those efforts. With complementary keywords, you will be well on your way to a delivering a lasting and positive brand image with your followers.

[See Chapter 21, Add Pinterest to Your Client Support Repertoire by Kathleen Lyons for more information about how to use Pinterest for job search.]

YouTube

Video can be a great way to promote your brand and it's a great way to showcase the authentic you. YouTube is the second biggest search engine behind Google (and it is owned by Google).

Keep in mind video is not for everyone. It takes time to get comfortable in front of a camera especially because you don't have a live audience – meaning that there are no people sitting in front of you. It's just you and the camera and the message you are delivering. It might take some practice to get moving, but once you do, YouTube can be a highly effective mechanism for you to position yourself and manage your online identity.

Your 60 Seconds (or Thereabout) of Fame

Do you have something interesting to share? If you want to promote your ideas or educate others on a particular topic, creating a YouTube video just might be the thing for you.

Video helps to create a personal connection between you and your intended audience. Through video, people can see your body language, hear your voice, and connect with you on a deeper level than possible with a blog, 140 characters on Twitter, or via static posts on LinkedIn and Facebook. Video allows your personality to shine through because engagement is more personal. You don't need a lot of fancy equipment. Some people even use their smartphones to record the video.

As you get more comfortable with YouTube, you might invest in some additional equipment. One of the most important components of your YouTube video is that your audio is good quality. You need to ensure that your audience can hear the message you are delivering. If you are particularly aggressive, you can try your hand at live streaming via Periscope or Blab, other tools that allow you to form a personal connection with your audience.

The Bottom Line

Consistency, focus, and patience are the keys to success when it comes to building your brand. Coca-Cola, one of the world's most visible, stable, and valuable brands took years to develop. They are constantly honing, tweaking and evolving the brand. Your commitment to your brand necessitates an organized and thoughtful approach. With all of the tools available, it is easy to become distracted.

Creating a calendar of your activities will help keep you on track and organized to ensure that you are dedicating your time accordingly. Based on the growth of your fans, connections and followers, you will understand where your efforts are making the greatest impact. Analytics and other tools should also be employed to help you understand your reach, providing you with valuable information as to where you should be focusing your efforts, or what might need to change.

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About the Author



Debra Wheatman, CPRW, CPCC a columnist for 2 of Job-Hunt's guides: **The Guide to Company Research** and **The Guide to Building a Successful Career**. Debra is the president of Careers Done Write, a marketing and personal branding company she founded in 2005 to provide a comprehensive service to job seekers and professionals who are proactive about managing their professional development and career planning efforts. With her background in corporate human resources for well-respected financial services, advertising, and media and entertainment companies, she guides her clients in establishing and reaching goals that are aligned with their professional needs.

She specializes in packaging clients' skills, abilities and interests in a creative and distinctive brand style to generate interest on behalf of decision makers at leading corporations. She supports her clients in the areas of career management, leadership strategy, interpersonal engagement, change management, performance in post-M&A environments and managing the dynamics of life. She earned the Bachelor of Arts in Communications at Adelphi University. She is a Certified Professional Résumé Writer and Certified Professional Career Coach.

Debra has been featured on *Fox Business News*, *CNBC*, *Forbes* and in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Washington Post*. She is the publisher of the Careers Done Write blog. She is also a contributor to articles on other online sites, including CEO.com and SheKnows.com. She is a regular speaker to local job support groups and at career-related industry events. She volunteers her time to Dress for Success where she presents on topics related to interviewing and career planning to help women get back to work. She presented at Gartner's security summit in Washington, DC in June 2016.

See Debra's columns in Job-Hunt.org --

- Guide to Company Research –
http://www.job-hunt.org/company_research/company-research.shtml
- Guide to Building a Successful Career –
www.job-hunt.org/career-building/career-building.shtml

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LinkedIn as Your Online Professional Home

By Ed Han

LinkedIn's success to date has been extraordinary. On October 29, 2015, the world's largest and de facto only professional networking site announced gaining its 400 millionth member. This was an extraordinary milestone: the total population of the United States that day was 322,054,746. ¹ The achievement was light years from the five-person team that famously began in founder Reid Hoffman's living room.

LinkedIn's Best Friends: Recruiters

From those humble beginnings, the growth of the site's revenues can only be described as meteoric. The past five years of revenue segmentation puts the matter in startling clarity.

Net revenue by product (in thousands) ⁱ	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Talent Solutions	\$1,877,195	\$1,327,737	\$ 910,257	\$ 546,585	\$ 260,885
Marketing Solutions	\$ 581,328	\$ 454,500	\$ 311,777	\$ 235,275	\$ 155,848
Premium Subscriptions	\$ 532,388	\$ 436,530	\$ 306,511	\$ 190,449	\$ 105,456
Total	\$2,990,911	\$2,218,767	\$1,528,545	\$ 972,309	\$ 522,189

Total revenues for 2011 were US \$522 million, with Talent Solutions (3) comprising nearly 50 percent of the revenues at \$261 million. Fast forward five years, and in addition to revenues from Talent Solutions in 2015 exploding an eye-popping seven fold, the percentage of total revenues also grew to almost 63 percent. At approximately the same time, spending on professional networking sites increased from 4 percent to 12 percent of recruiting budgets. (4) And this focus by LinkedIn on recruiting has yielded results: 96 percent of all recruiters use social media and, of those, 87 percent use LinkedIn. (5)

And the online world continues its inroads into the recruiting profession: in five years' time, the proportion of money spent on professional networking sites quadrupled. Further, practically all recruiters are on social media (96 percent of respondents). Indeed, the last several years have seen the introduction of certifications for recruiters relating to sourcing 6 candidates online.

Taken in conjunction, it is clear that LinkedIn is a vital component in the hiring process and hence an indispensable tool in any job seeker's toolkit.

Given this focus on the online world, it seems clear there must be an intersection valuable to job seekers. The truth is that in 2016 and beyond job seekers need--for lack of a better term--an online professional home. This represents a single source over which a job seeker can control the messaging for his or her professional brand. There are many accountants on the site but an online professional home helps an accountant stand out from the crowd.

By controlling the messaging, not only does it help a specific professional stand out, it also helps eliminate ambiguity among those who happen to share common names. In some cases, one person who holds the name makes it famous--or infamous. But the vast majority of job seekers lack the technical skills and/or interest to establish and maintain a personal website or blog.

That online professional home for job seekers exists: LinkedIn. After all, networking is the site's *raison d'être*. Various figures indicate that the greatest single source of hire is networking. The most commonly-cited figure is 70%, and is purportedly based upon data from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Merely having an account is insufficient. In order to realize results from making LinkedIn an online professional home requires a modicum of investment to attain a complete, robust profile.

LinkedIn Profiles and Completeness Thereof

Like any other website in which registration is required, users provide information to tell others about themselves. However, no other website allows users anywhere the detail that LinkedIn does. Depending upon how much of a user's profile data is provided, the profile is evaluated by LinkedIn in terms of its *completeness*, meaning that a name, location, current and previous position, profile picture, education, and several other factors are present.

With certain obvious exceptions (e.g., profile photo), LinkedIn profile elements correlate strongly with the information on a classic chronological résumé. That said, it is important to understand what roles LinkedIn performs well and which it performs poorly in order to help job seekers maximize the usefulness of the site and truly make it their online professional home.

Professional Networking

The word "*networking*" means many things to many people, but most definitions involve an authentic connection between two people for mutual professional advantage. Whether in the form of advice, an introduction, or something else, an exchange of information is a means of establishing or deepening a connection, and the site is designed to facilitate this through its Groups, Company and School pages, and Messages.

Since work experience and education are fairly significant elements of a LinkedIn user's profile, it only makes sense that there is some means of identifying all users who have worked at a given employer, or attended a particular school. Most Companies and Schools have pages on LinkedIn, which serve as the chief vehicle whereby those institutions have a voice on the site. Both types of pages are often used as extensions of their websites, sometimes even including open positions. When a user views the page of a company or school, the site also reveals how many LinkedIn users are associated with it as either current or former employees or students.

By searching for other LinkedIn members who also worked at the same employer or attended the school, a clever job seeker can identify particularly interesting prospects for networking, especially if those prospects are in positions of influence with that institution.

Through Groups, LinkedIn members can discuss subjects of interest to their members, which may or may not be visible to non-members.⁷ The groups of LinkedIn are a means whereby members who share an interest or experience can communicate. There are literally millions of groups on the site, including a group for verified former contestants of the game show Jeopardy. There are many groups for curating job search content for job seekers. And in many such groups, members of the group also share open positions.

The *Message* system on LinkedIn changed September 17, 2015, transitioning from an emailcentric metaphor to a chat-centric metaphor. The implication of this change is clear: substantial or meaningful exchanges should not take place through this system. However, once two users are connected, in LinkedIn parlance, they can see one another's email address by viewing the profile page and looking at the contact information for that connection. Because LinkedIn only permits connections to send messages, the vast majority of the 400 million+ users cannot be messaged ever.⁸ This requires an exploration of what the site refers to as connectedness.

Connectedness

Although the six degrees of separation principle is well-known, LinkedIn recognizes only four degrees:

First: A first degree connection is someone with whom an invitation to connect was sent and accepted.

Second: A user who is a 1st degree connection to one connection but not a second is a second degree connection to that other user.

Third: A user who is one step further removed than above.

Group: This represents LinkedIn members whose sole connection is one (or more) Groups. Since LinkedIn members can currently join 100 Groups, this is an excellent way to increase visibility

Because you can only message only your first degree connections, LinkedIn has an option called InMail. These are messages that can be sent to any member on LinkedIn, irrespective of lack of connectedness. InMails can be purchased individually, and they are bundled into various premium accounts on the site.

A user can always request an Introduction to another member when they are a second degree connection. Although it's possible also to do with a third degree connection, the method whereby that process can be facilitated is cumbersome.

LinkedIn does allow up to 15 messages per month to be sent for free to people who share a LinkedIn Group, even if not connected.

Other Basics

A keyword-rich profile Summary is important to help bring a user's profile to the top of search results if someone is seeking his or her skills/experience. Also aiding prominence in search results are a Skill list and Recommendations. The object is for LinkedIn to evaluate the profile as All-Star. One element that precludes All Star status is a current position.

For active job seekers who are not currently employed, this is problematic as they do not have current employment. However, having a current position in a LinkedIn profile need not relate to employment. Various alternatives involve citing volunteer activity, consulting, or some version of *"actively seeking new opportunities"*.

Receiving Recommendations will likely require requesting one. The most prized Recommendations are a glowing assessment from a former manager or supervisor, but the value of Recommendations from one's reports, customers, or peers should not be underestimated.

Those who have managed a team are all too aware of how difficult and time-consuming year-end reviews can be. A request for a Recommendation can be similarly time-consuming. To facilitate the process, users may find it preferable to make helpful suggestions when requesting a Recommendation. Language suggesting a specific even or circumstance which connects with a clear metric of success can be a time saver for the person receiving the request, and may be used as is.

Like other forms of social media, LinkedIn allows users to post a status update. Because the site is first and foremost about professional networking, suitable status updates might relate to conferences or training a professional is attending. There are a number of certifications that require a formal test such as the SPHR certification for HR professionals or the three level CFA for financial analysts, so a status update relating to preparing for the exam is also an excellent update. It demonstrates continuing investment in the job seeker's career, which is always a good way to use time.

A user's public profile is visible to any other user on LinkedIn but many users do not realize that the URL (9) can be customized. By default the URL is a long alphanumeric string which is difficult to remember. When customized, it is an excellent addition to a résumé, email signature, or business card.

Taking LinkedIn to the Next Level

The reason for making the site--or for those who prefer, the mobile application – a job seeker's online home is to control the messaging about their unique value proposition. Like any website, having a profile is important, but that's hardly the end-all, be-all of a user's experience with the site: it's merely the starting point. Networking with people who are credible professionals and a rich LinkedIn profile helps to establish a user as someone with whom networking is worthwhile.

Employers interested in attracting the right talent recognize the value of having a LinkedIn company page on which they can share their press releases, provide some information about the organization, and describe their corporate culture, whether actual or aspirational. This is valuable to a job seeker in two ways:

1. Understanding whether this is a good fit for his or her own temperament, but also
2. Optimizing their attractiveness to the employer in terms of traits or qualities to model in their interactions with the organization.

Beyond that, a savvy job seeker approaches a former employee and gains invaluable insight into what it's really like to work there. And if the former employee has reason to trust the job seeker, the intelligence can become quite detailed.

When that same job seeker gets an interview, he or she might once again turn to LinkedIn to learn about the hiring manager or interviewer. By reviewing that person's work history and past education, any number of commonalities can be determined. Further, reviewing the Recommendations that a given person has received and given can provide insights into the traits he or she recognizes and values, which in turn can only help a job seeker optimize his or her appeal.

Far More Than a Resume

LinkedIn is not a résumé replacement. Admittedly, the profile bears a strong resemblance to the classic chronological résumé. There is a summary section, the 21st century version of the dated objective. There is an employment history as well. And there may even be contact information. But it is not a résumé because a résumé demonstrates a candidate's strong cultural and skill fit for a specific opportunity. Despite the strong superficial resemblance to the classic chronological résumé, this fundamental difference means that no recruiter or HR professional will ever be satisfied with a LinkedIn profile in lieu of having an actual résumé. It is a highly-specialized, limited focus document.

By contrast, a LinkedIn profile is vastly more than a resume/CV:

- No résumé can include whitepapers or insert examples from a professional's portfolio. There is no CV that can incorporate all the files that can be shared via DropBox or SlideShare, which are easily shared in a LinkedIn Profile.
- No summary of qualifications will ever allow a professional to share an intriguing article with their network. Nothing but a LinkedIn profile will allow a professional to participate in conversations with peers in real-time as they discuss an emerging issue in the industry or field, perhaps the impact of new legislation.

These are the ways in which a professional controls the messaging about his or her unique value proposition, professional brand, or whatever term is preferable. Taking these steps on LinkedIn puts the power of the site to work for the user 24/7.

It remains for the user to determine how best to furnish and decorate their online professional home.

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End Notes

1. Source: United States Census Bureau.
2. Source: LinkedIn Annual Reports, 2014 and 2015.
3. Talent Solutions refer to products such as job postings appearing on the site or the premium accounts used by the employer's or a recruiting agency's recruiters.
4. Source: Talent Acquisition Factbook 2015, Bersin by Deloitte / Jennifer Krider, Karen O'Leonard, and Robin Erickson, Ph.D., April 2015.
5. Source: Jobvite Recruiter Nation 2015.
6. Sourcing: recruiting jargon for identifying prospective candidates through a variety of resources.
7. This depends on whether it is a member-only or open group, in LinkedIn parlance.
8. LinkedIn restricts the size of a member's network to 30,000 connections. There exists an entire class of users who identify themselves as Open Networkers, or more commonly LinkedIn Open Networkers (LIONs).
9. Uniform Resource Locator: the website address to a specific webpage.

About the Author



Ed Han, a contributor to Job-Hunt's **Guide to LinkedIn for Job Search** column, is a recruiter and wordsmith with a passion for networking and helping professionals return to the workforce. As a veteran of several industries including publishing, financial services, and fashion, he has a keen understanding of and appreciation for the skills and traits valued in a wide range of environments, from Wall Street to fashion and to publishing. Although he came to recruiting only in the past several years, he is active in the community where he helps facilitate the job search group NJ JobSeekers in Princeton, NJ.

Ed has previously served as the Executive Chair of the PSG of Mercer County and as the online community manager for the HR networking group Whine & Dine.

Currently, Ed is the Recruiting Manager at Mercury Systems Inc., an IT solutions and staffing firm based in Princeton, NJ where he leads a terrific team of recruiters sourcing and selecting

top-shelf talent for the firm's clients. He finds the diversity of his prior work experience a boon in connecting with candidates and understanding the needs of clients.

In 1993, he earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in English literature at Albright College in Reading, Pennsylvania. He is an avid social media fiend.

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www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/LinkedIn-job-search.shtml

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How the LinkedIn Profile Should (and Should Not) Align with the Resume

By Laura Smith-Proulx

With LinkedIn firmly established as a means of sourcing new candidates, job seekers must build an effective Profile containing sufficient content to attract attention and clarify personal brand value.

Yet many professionals are confused as to the content that can be used as a means to attract attention online – and job seekers typically spend hours crafting a resume, with little attention paid to the LinkedIn Profile.

Even if a job seeker wants to add all of his or her resume text to LinkedIn, character limits throughout the site prohibit this practice. In addition, resumes are typically developed for either electronic / email attachment and hard copy viewing, while a LinkedIn Profile can be viewed as a mini website, complete with keywords important in recruiter search strategy (otherwise referred to as LinkedIn SEO).

A minimally filled-in Profile will also negatively impact professionals in search of a new job. Some job seekers add only a few snippets of data, such as a degree and current job – making it nearly impossible for employers and recruiters to find them based on keyword searches.

Therefore, most professionals will benefit from creating a LinkedIn-specific writing strategy that reflects their value proposition, adjusted for keyword content and condensed to fit the site's requirements.

Pinpointing the Overall LinkedIn Strategy

Before modifying the resume text to fit on LinkedIn, a step back is needed to identifying the optimum strategy and purpose of the Profile, answering these questions:

- What industry experience is relevant to the job seeker's career goals?
- What does the job seeker's ideal job title (lateral, or a step up) look like?
- What specific credentials do they possess that will pique employer interest?
- What skills do you see in the Profiles of competing candidates?

The answers to these questions will be of valuable use as keywords (skills, job titles, and certifications) on the LinkedIn Profile, added for emphasis in order to increase keyword density.

In addition, these terms can also be used to reinforce the message of brand value and fitness for the candidate's job goal.

In simple terms, keywords are what employers use to find similar candidates and they are also the terms and skills listed in job descriptions. By identifying important keywords and then sprinkling them throughout a LinkedIn Profile, the job candidate will receive more online traffic.

Filling in the Experience Section

Using the keywords identified in the previous step, the Experience section can be tuned to both maximize resume content and increase keyword density. (Even when resume data must be condensed to fit the Profile, keywords will often be more valuable than the original resume text.)

As an example, a sales professional might identify "*Business Development*" and "*Named Accounts*" as key areas of expertise, with these differences in resume vs. LinkedIn content:

Resume

Secured 13 new accounts representing 43 percent annual revenue gain.

LinkedIn

Business Development: 13 new accounts representing 43 percent gain (23 percent rise in named accounts).

While the second example is longer, it also pulls in keywords crucial to this candidate's job goals – more strongly attracting employers in search of a business development professional.

Developing a LinkedIn Headline

Similar to the title (or objective) in a resume, the LinkedIn Headline is a prominent piece of information defines a job seeker's goal and career level. However, unlike the resume, the Headline on LinkedIn is a strongly indexed field that is quickly shown under a user's name each time they are referenced in an activity or update.

It should be noted that LinkedIn will automatically fill in the Headline with a default value of the current job title. While this is a common practice, job seekers often benefit more from populating this field with specific job titles or career goals, plus industry keywords and skills that affect their ability to be searched and found within the site.

Since the Headline is limited to 120 characters, including spaces, job seekers will need to carefully arrange the text to incorporate as many keywords as possible, as shown in these examples:

VP Finance, CFO. Strategic Growth, Capital Funding, IT Upgrades, Cash Flow
Improvement in Private & Public Companies

Enterprise Account Executive & VP, Managed Services. Business Development, Partner Relations & \$40M Channel Sales

Note that these Headlines show job titles that reflect multiple job goals, plus specific achievements and industry emphasis.

Writing the LinkedIn Summary

Many job seekers mistake the LinkedIn Summary for a resume Summary (or Qualifications Profile). However, there are critical differences between these items:

- A LinkedIn Summary can contain 2,000 characters (including spaces), which is longer than most resume summaries
- While a resume Profile is usually written in third-person, a LinkedIn Summary developed in first-person promotes more social engagement
- A resume Profile is also traditionally built as a long paragraph, rather than the short sentences needed for effective online navigation
- A LinkedIn Summary, while devoid of font, color or graphics available in a resume, can (and should) employ basic lines and bullets to separate text

Because of the placement of the LinkedIn Profile Summary (beneath the fold of the expanded view of a Profile), an easy-to-digest snapshot of job titles, achievements, keywords, and statements of brand value are important.

Consider this example of a traditional resume Qualifications Profile:

Executive rainmaker and team driver credited with quick assessment and turnaround of underperforming teams—leveraging technology and marketing insight to correct sales methods and product direction. High-energy leader who thrives on the “thrill of the sale” and structures teams for productivity and high morale.

Along with achievements from throughout the resume, in addition to the keyword strategy needed for a sales leader, the matching LinkedIn Profile would look like this:

Sales VP - Director of Sales - Sales Leader

=====

As a recognized rainmaker and sales team leader, I’ve often corrected sales methods used by underperforming teams, using advances in technology and structuring sales teams for high productivity. As a result, I’ve created up to 300 percent increases in annual sales revenues and nearly \$7M as EVP of Sales.

My abilities extend to:

- Sales Team Coaching & Building
- Market Share Increases
- Sales Automation
- New Market Entry Strategy

Examples of sales performance and revenue growth include:

- **Sales Revitalization** – Rapid 37 percent year-over-year increases by coaching sales force on consultative strategies to promote new products
- **Target Market** – Strong results and market adoption by focusing on solutions to customer environmental needs
- **Competitive Advantage** – \$8.4M+ results from positioning ABC Environmental Systems ahead of competitors with market research and best-in-class sales training
- **Sales Team Productivity** – Better revenue and accountability with restructured teams, plus new CRM and sales automation tools; strengthened engagement among disillusioned employees by conveying vision and setting clear sales goals
- **New Quoting System** – \$100K to \$13M results as Business Development Manager and Sales VP, cutting quoting cycle from days to minutes with simplified CRM system
- **Sales Impact** – #1 territory formed after taking over team at just 60% of quota, with sales rep coaching to aggressively cultivate relationships

I'm continually on the lookout for improvements in sales strategy (I thrive on closing new opportunities and leading teams to do the same) and often structure my teams for optimum productivity and morale.

Connect with me at **John_Smith_Sales@gmail.com**.

John Smith, VP Sales

Populating the Skills & Endorsements Section

The Skills and Endorsement section of LinkedIn is one of the best places to use the keywords identified at the start of this article. To obtain the maximum value from this section, add as many keywords as possible from job descriptions that reflect the candidate's goals, even if the resume text (used in the Experience section) already contains some of these keywords.

As an example, an IT Director resume may already use *Enterprise Security*, *Data Centers*, *Business Transformation*, and *Networking* throughout the document. To further promote this candidate's experience, job descriptions can be examined to produce additional keywords,

yielding terms such as *Operations, Risk Assessment, Disaster Recovery, Digital Security, Help Desk, Storage Networks, and System Administration.*

The full list from both areas can be added to LinkedIn's Skills & Endorsement section, with the idea that as these terms are used on the Profile, the job seekers connections can then endorse the candidate for these terms. As the volume of Endorsements go up, it is thought that the keyword density of the Profile increases.

Adding Non-Traditional Resume Elements

While candidates have been urged to remove photographs and portfolio elements (such as addendums showing projects or speaking engagements) from a resume, the LinkedIn Profile can easily accommodate these elements.

Many recruiters now prefer to see a professional headshot on a LinkedIn Profile, considering it a requirement for serious consideration of each candidate. However, photographs are only included on a resume in cases where the candidate's appearance is relevant to the position (such as an acting role).

The LinkedIn Summary and each job entry in the LinkedIn Experience section will accept rich media attachments, including video, PDF documents, presentations, or images. By including these elements, the Profile will display additional color and a graphic representation of important projects – items not typically attached to a resume.

Conclusion

In summary, a job seeker's LinkedIn Profile will benefit greatly from incorporating keyworddense text, bullets and borders, a new Summary, rich media attachments, a photograph, a strongly written Headline, and first-person writing style.

Each of these elements will serve to reinforce a strong personal brand message, help the reader to navigate the Profile content, and make the candidate more easily findable in employer searches.

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End Notes

How to Double (or Triple) Your LinkedIn Visitor Traffic with Keywords, Job-Hunt.org: www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/linkedin-keywords.shtml

Seven Ways Your Resume and LinkedIn Profile Should Differ, USNews.com: <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/2013/07/09/7-ways-your-resume-and-linkedin-profile-should-differ>

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About the Author



Laura Smith-Proulx, CCMC, CPRW, CIC, TCCS, CPBA, COPNS, CTTCC, is a columnist for Job-Hunt.org's **Guide to LinkedIn for Job Search**. Laura is the CEO of An Expert Resume and a multi-credentialed executive resume writer, job search coach, interview coach, and LinkedIn enthusiast. She is Job-Hunt.org's columnist for the Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search. The author of *How to Get Hired Faster: 60+ Proven Tips & Resources to Access the Hidden Job Market*, she has been recognized with 27 honors and 15 awards in the global Toast of the Resume Industry Awards held through Career Directors International, with work published in 10 career bestsellers.

She partners with C-suite and rising leaders to land positions at Fortune-ranked companies, market leaders, and startup companies. A frequent careers industry columnist and speaker on topics including LinkedIn and resume branding, job search techniques, and interviewing, Laura has been quoted and featured in media sources including ComputerWorld, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal FINS, The Denver Post, CBS Moneywatch, CIO.com, ITWorldCanada, SHRM, Recruiter.com, Career Rocketeer, MinnesotaJobs.com, CareerBuilder, and SmartBrief. She is the National Resumes Examiner at Examiner.com, the LinkedIn Job Search Expert for Job-Hunt.org, and an approved Career Expert on resumes and personal branding for Careerrealism.com.

Laura earned the Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Management Information Systems and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire.

A former IT manager and recruiter, her background in software consulting, database development, and project management includes work with Motorola, Resources Trust / TD Ameritrade, IBM, Boston Market, University of Minnesota Hospital, and other firms in healthcare, transportation, retail, restaurant, financial services, and technology industries. She is an active member of The National Resume Writers' Association, Career Directors International, Career Management Alliance, and the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches.

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How to Combat Ageism in a LinkedIn Profile

By Laura Smith-Proulx

Even though LinkedIn is used by many job seekers to promote their value to employers, most professionals think more strategically about the content of their resumes than their digital identity.

As an example, most professionals will trim work history from a resume past the 10-15 year point – ensuring that they’ve employed a sound strategy to provide information on past jobs, while not fully disclosing their exact age.

One reason that similar strategies are rarely applied on LinkedIn Profiles is that the Experience section requires From and To Dates on each job entry, making it difficult to provide a full career history without going into specific detail. In addition, many recruiters have urged job seekers to provide a headshot on LinkedIn, but this step often causes angst for professionals who fear being judged based on their age.

Some candidates also use outdated practices when leveraging social media, resorting to obsolete language that *dates* their experience, rather than building a competitive online presence.

However, there are steps job seekers can take to help ward off the effects of age bias, particularly when building a LinkedIn Profile. The idea is to both mirror the resume strategy (especially in cases where the resume has been crafted to minimize ageism) and take the focus off the candidate’s age by emphasizing experience tied to employer needs.

Presenting a Consistent Message of ROI

In place of the generalities often used when describing their career experience on LinkedIn, job seekers of all ages fare better when providing specifics on their value proposition to employers. Examples of too-vague terms in the LinkedIn Profile include *versatile*, *adaptable*, *mature*, and *experienced* – none of which reference the hard skills employers typically seek.

Job seekers who include technical capabilities such as *project management*, *grant writing*, *application development*, or *P&L* will be better able to prove their value. These skill-based keywords will also gain more traffic on LinkedIn, as the site has become a search engine used by recruiters to source candidates with desirable competencies.

To find these valuable keywords, job seekers can look up the terms commonly spread throughout job postings for their ideal roles. Keywords are also easily researched by viewing the LinkedIn Profiles of competing candidates.

In addition, the use of metrics such as **dollar figures, percentages, or ranges** will be valuable in showing the results of the candidate's work. In some cases, mature job seekers are not accustomed to providing these figures and may rely on the outdated practice of supplying job duties or descriptions, rather than accomplishments. By quantifying achievements, these candidates can present a competitive edge, decreasing the likelihood that they will be questioned about the value of their work experience.

These examples show how a too-general accomplishment statement can be quantified with metrics that illustrate the extent of the candidate's abilities:

- Saved heating and cooling costs with new vendor agreements.
- Saved 32 percent in utilities expenses by renegotiating 13 vendor service agreements. and
- Implemented new IT systems for the Accounting department.
- Implemented IT systems that cut monthly accounting close processing time 43 percent.

In today's talent marketplace, job seekers of all ages will need to compete with others who prove their brand value through quantifiable, metrics-driven achievements. This practice will benefit applicants who use it on both the resume and within each section of the LinkedIn Profile.

Incorporating Lengthy Work History

Job seekers with career histories spanning 20 years or more may possess relevant experience that occurred early on, such as a brief stint in military service. Rather than adding these early-career roles into LinkedIn's Experience section, where the From and To dates can influence age bias, there are better strategies that allow use of the same data.

As shown in this example, below, the last position listed in the Experience section can be used to pull in older work experience, using a heading of *Additional Experience* without dates (and incorporating the older job details within this position description):

Account Executive
1990 to 1995

Prospected new clients through cold calling, relationship-building, and in-person contact at networking events.

*** Additional Experience: ***

US Army, 13th Infantry Division: Company Commander
Led intelligence group and flight operations staff, requiring strategic planning and project execution according to tight deadlines.

By incorporating relevant job history from farther back in their careers, professionals can benefit from showing a record of promotion and incorporate details such as teams managed, key projects

completed, or authority for complex operations – without the concern of dates past the 10-15 year mark.

This approach also allows the job seeker to benefit from keyword hits on specific terms (such as military experience, which is valued by many employers), without listing dates.

Describing Years of Experience in the LinkedIn Summary

Within the LinkedIn Summary, job seekers have additional ways to convey their personal brand messages – more so than the traditional resume summary. Often written in first-person to build rapport with the hiring audience, the LinkedIn Summary can be used to focus on the candidate's career goals, while conveying stature and describing career progression – while still not resorting to the standard *30+ years of experience* phrase shown on many resumes. One strategy is to list the number of years of experience in each specialty, spelling out these details in the Summary. For example, a professional with a long history in the real estate industry could state:

My experience in land development, construction, and master planning includes:

- Negotiations for developments of environmental / community impact (4 years)
- Collaboration with municipal officials to create metropolitan districts (6-7 years)
- Construction project turnarounds for \$3.5M & \$3.7M commercial projects (2 years)

Showing Progression at a Single Employer in the Experience Section

When a job seeker has risen through the ranks at a single employer for several decades, they can still reference this experience to show fresh and relevant skills. Typically, the last 3 to 5 positions are the most interesting to employers, and should therefore be highlighted (which also implies previous experience in the same industry).

For example, an administrative assistant with work history dating back to 1985 can tell a story of progressive responsibility in LinkedIn's Experience section without noting every role, as shown here:

Company XYZ
Executive Assistant to CEO
2007 – Present
(description)

Company XYZ (same employer)
Executive Assistant to Senior Vice President
2004 – 2007
(description)

Company XYZ (same employer)
Executive Assistant, Director of Operations
2001 – 2004
(description)

Company XYZ (same employer)
Administrative Assistant
1998 – 2001
(description)

By using this strategy to avoid showing every role dating back to 1985, this candidate can promote the value of frequent promotions without listing the entire tenure.

Providing a Total Number of Years in the LinkedIn Summary

A candidate's entire career may not be relevant to employers, especially in cases where they have switched industries or went back to college for a different career track.

As an example, a professional with 10 years in the automotive industry and a career change into sales (with an additional 14 years in the new profession) might write this sentence in the LinkedIn Summary:

I enjoy all facets of the sales process, from prospecting to closing the deal with major accounts, using my previous experience in the automotive industry to work with large suppliers for the past 14 years. As a sales and business development resource, I have touched all facets of the delivery process, ensuring customer satisfaction with my knowledge of distribution, project management, and post-sales service.

Alternatively, this approach shows how a candidate could describe relevant work experience that spans only a portion of the career history (which, in this case, represents more than 20 years of experience, with reference to only the most recent 13 years):

My career in the land development and real estate management industry has included master planning, real estate operations, development negotiations, land use considerations, and tax district oversight, with overlapping resort, land, mixed-use, and multi-unit development experience over 13 years.

Presenting a Fresh Look for the LinkedIn Headshot

Many employers prefer to recruit candidates who've added a photo on LinkedIn. While this can seem to pose a challenge to mature job seekers, professionals of all ages must assess their image against other candidates, taking careful note of clothing, hairstyle, and other choices that can affect the overall brand message.

Before adding a LinkedIn photo, candidates can opt for a makeover or brand image consultation to identify potential changes. Even a slight modification in dress, makeup, or grooming can show that a candidate is willing to present an up-to-date, energetic appearance (which may also be required when meeting the employer's clients or serving as a role model to team members).

In addition, the headshot photographer can be made aware of the purpose for the new photograph, which allows them to arrange lighting and backgrounds for the best professional look.

A recently updated photo that puts the job seeker's best professional image on display – rather than an outdated picture from decades ago – will serve the candidate better, especially upon arrival at the interview.

Updating the Education Section with Relevant Facts

Graduation dates on degrees are not required on LinkedIn's Education section; site users can merely skip the prompt for dates of attendance.

However, candidates must consider the impact of omitting dates, even in cases where the resume has purposefully left out the same information (as is often done in the technical fields, where degrees are quickly outdated due to changes in technology practices).

Some employers and hiring authorities will look at these omissions with skepticism, while others may be accustomed to the practice.

Since LinkedIn's updates are captured in real-time, a job seeker can test the market by removing graduation years and note any difference in response from employers.

Conclusion

As employers seek candidates who can solve their business problems and maintain current knowledge, there are numerous ways to pull out relevant facts and demonstrate results throughout each section of LinkedIn. These strategies will also help to de-emphasize the timing of career milestones.

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End Notes

Career Myth: Always Put a Picture on Your LinkedIn Profile

<http://www.avidcareerist.com/2014/03/30/myth-always-linkedin-profile-photo-discrimination/>

Fighting Age Discrimination with LinkedIn <http://www.careerealism.com/age-discrimination-linkedin/>

Overcoming Age Discrimination When Job Hunting

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140930175533-165022-overcoming-age-discriminationwhen-job-hunting>

About the Author

Laura Smith-Proulx' biography may be found on [page 147](#). Her website is AnExpertResume.com and her articles in the Job-Hunt is Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search –

<http://www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/LinkedIn-job-search.shtml>

How the Unemployed Can Leverage LinkedIn

By Susan P. Joyce and Laura Smith-Proulx

LinkedIn is an extremely useful tool for those who are unemployed, one might even call it *unavoidable* if the unemployed job seeker is a professional looking to continue in that role. Whether someone is newly unemployed and facing the first steps getting back into the job market or unemployed for several months (even years), the best approach is to dive into LinkedIn and get rolling.

Like it or not, LinkedIn is among the first websites used by recruiters, employers, former colleagues, or industry insiders to check someone out. Many consider a person *invisible* if they don't find at least a LinkedIn entry reflecting career stature, credentials, education, and work experience. And, being *invisible* is like wearing an *out-of-date* tag today, eliminating the person from consideration for many jobs since being able to effectively leverage the Internet is not optional for most professional jobs today.

Employers Spend Considerable Time Sourcing Candidates Using LinkedIn

You may be surprised to hear that professionals and executives can find someone on LinkedIn long before that person has crafted a resume, submitted an application, or met them at a business event. People who are skilled at finding individuals with specific skills are called *sourcers*, and they are well-paid to dig qualified job candidates out of LinkedIn and other Internet sources (Facebook, etc.).

Being *find-able* by those sourcers is one of the major benefits of LinkedIn. So, having a solid LinkedIn Profile is essential today, and it can be done without putting someone's privacy at risk.

Haven an *All-Star* LinkedIn Profile

An *All-Star* (complete) LinkedIn Profile is necessary to increase visibility in LinkedIn search results. Without a complete profile, someone is invisible in LinkedIn to nearly everyone but their direct (*first level*) connections. To have an All-Star LinkedIn Profile, the Profile must meet these minimum requirements:

- An industry and location

- An up-to-date current position with a description
- Two past positions
- Education
- Skills (minimum of 3)
- A profile photo

- A minimum of 50 connections

Increase the number of connections as much as possible. Fifty is the minimum, but stopping at 50 is a mistake. More is definitely better in LinkedIn because the number of connections increases the visibility in LinkedIn search results for people using the free search function.

Focus the Keyword-Rich Headline on the Future

The LinkedIn Professional Headline is the tagline that usually accompanies the name and photo in all visibility inside LinkedIn. By default, LinkedIn will use the current job title and employer as the Headline. If there is no *current* job title, *Unemployed* may become visible. EEK! NO! Even without a current position, a keyword rich Headline is possible simply by editing it. Whether unemployed or not, having a keyword rich headline is highly recommended because it is great personal marketing inside LinkedIn. The keyword-rich Headline also attracts more attention from those *sourcers* and others looking for people with specific skills and experience.

Which person do you think would be more appealing to a potential employer looking for someone with *consumer products marketing experience*?

A. Mary Smith

Unemployed

----- or -----

B. Mary Smith

Experienced Marketing Professional

----- or -----

C. Mary Smith

Consumer Products Marketing (B2C) Analyst w/five Years in
Market Assessment and Competitive Positioning

Not even a close contest is it? Example A probably wouldn't show up in a search for *consumer products marketing*. Example B might show up in the results but not very high since only one of the keywords is included in the Headline. The last example would not only be included in the search results; it would probably be fairly high up on the first page.

Carefully Choose a *Current Position* (or Not)

Profiles without a *Current Position* are at a competitive disadvantage in LinkedIn because they are somewhat less visible in a LinkedIn search result and also less visible to sourcers who specify a current position in their search criteria. Remember, LinkedIn requires only years in the *from* and *to* dates; skipping the months is acceptable.

So, the options for no current position include:

1. No Current Position

Give the current position an end date (using only the year is acceptable to LinkedIn). This is a totally honest approach. It will cost visibility because the Profile will not be considered *All-Star* by LinkedIn. But there will be less need to do any verbal *dancing* about a nonexistent current job in job interviews and subsequent discussions.

2. Leave the Former Current Position Active

Don't give the current position an end date, increasing attractiveness to employers. Particularly if the person is technically still *employed* because they are receiving severance pay or using vacation time, this is basically honest.

However, bit of *dancing* around the topic may still be needed in job interviews or when discussing start dates after an offer has been received. The true situation may be revealed when/if references are checked.

On the other hand, if the job ended many months in the past, this is a less honest representation. Obviously, it has a benefit in search results and appearing to be a *passive candidate* in employers' eyes, but it may not provide an impression of honesty, a very important issue for most employers. If used, much more diplomacy will be required in job interviews to maintain the impression of current employment. When/if references are checked and the former employer is contacted, job end dates are one of the few pieces of information that may be revealed without fear of lawsuit. So, the correct information from the former employer's perspective could be the end of the opportunity.

During a job interview or when accepting a job offer, sharing that the real end date of that job is several months in the past can be a very tough discussion in a job interview, without a predictable outcome. Some employers will end the discussion there. Others may appreciate the reason and be more forgiving. Hard to tell which response will happen, but recognize the risks associated with this approach.

3. Create a Job Title That Matches the Goal

Filling in the *Current Position* with the goal is another option that doesn't damage placement in search results, and has the advantage of being an honest response. For example, the job title could look like this, *Sales Rep Pursuing Dealer Sales and Distribution Opportunities*, assuming that was appropriate for the individual.

Since LinkedIn won't allow a new current job to be added without an employer name associated with it, these are some of the options to consider:

- Name the target industry, like *Medical devices*.
- Use the term *Seeking a new position*.

- Make up a generic employer name, like *Car Dealer* or whatever is appropriate or desired as a target employer without using the name of an actual employer.
- Use the term *Currently open* or something similar.

This approach provides the advantage of a current position as well as not causing the need for an awkward discussion in job interviews or in case references are checked.

4. Work with a Temporary Employment Agency

Particularly if money is short, working with a temporary agency can be a good solution. The agency is the current employer and the job title is the title of the job done most often. The *start date* is whenever the person signed up with the agency.

5. Use a Current Volunteer Position

If the job seeker is currently volunteering in a role closely related to their profession and/or job goal, the volunteer position may be used for the current job. Volunteering has many advantages in getting the person out of the house (and away from the computer) as well as increasing networking opportunities and the good feeling that comes from being useful. Indicating the position is unpaid is not necessary.

Expand the Descriptions of Previous Jobs and Employers in the Experience Section

Increase LinkedIn traffic by fleshing out details for each job in the Experience section. The content for each job (which should look similar to the resume!) will help inject more keywords into the Profile and make it more easily found by recruiters seeking candidates with that background.

Unlike a resume, LinkedIn Profiles offer plenty of room to describe your accomplishments (and add more keywords). Break up the descriptions of each past job into sections like: Responsibilities and Accomplishments.

Use bullet points, not fat paragraphs, to highlight each of the responsibilities and accomplishments for each previous job, like this:

Responsibilities:

- Support of a 5-member sales team with sales lead generation through content marketing efforts.
- Managed corporate Twitter account.
- Revision of editorial content for all sales/marketing and technical documentation.
- Publication and distribution of monthly newsletter for all customers, through AWeber.

Accomplishments:

- Sales increased 40 percent; increase to \$2 million per quarter.
- Sales team job satisfaction improved by 20 percent.
- Customer retention increased by 18 percent.
- Twitter account followers increased by 400 percent.

Also find something to brag about for each past employer, like: *“Number twenty-nine on the Fortune 500 and number two in the Computer Industry with over 120,000 employees during my time there.”*

Increase LinkedIn Group Activities

According to LinkedIn, Groups *“provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business contacts, and establish themselves as industry experts.”* (1)

LinkedIn members may belong to up to 50 LinkedIn Groups, but typically people belong to 9 or fewer (2), which is an enormous wasted opportunity. Simply being a member of a Group, even an inactive member, means that the person may be found by recruiters searching through the Group members for people with specific skills, job titles, locations, education or other credentials.

LinkedIn Groups offer excellent opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and communications skills to the recruiters who belong to as many Groups as they can. Using tact and good grammar and spelling, job seekers can become very visible to people in their industry, profession, and/or location.

Groups a job seeker should join:

- Groups for their industry
- Groups for their profession
- Groups for the location (or target location)
- Groups for their school(s)
- Groups for their former employers (“corporate alumni”)
- Groups for their hobbies
- Groups for job seekers

Simply clicking the *Like* button for someone’s post in a Group generates an *update* to that person’s LinkedIn Profile, which raises their visibility to everyone following them.

Care should be taken to always present a professional image in comments and discussions on LinkedIn, because such behavior can be observed.

Bottom Line

These five steps above can be the foundation of a solid LinkedIn presence that serves as personal SEO and personal online reputation management for many years (or as long as LinkedIn lasts). Be sure to read the other articles in this Journal issue, particularly Susan Joyce's and Laura Smith-Proulx's other articles about LinkedIn and Personal SEO.

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End Notes

(1) **Groups – Getting Started**, LinkedIn:

https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/1164/~-/groups---getting-started

(2) Average number of groups that LinkedIn users are a member of, as of May 2015, statista.com: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/264109/group-memberships-of-linkedin-users/>

About the Authors

Susan P. Joyce's biography appears on [page 15](#). Her websites are [Job-Hunt.org](#) and [WorkCoachCafe.com](#).

Laura Smith-Proulx' biography may be found on [page 147](#). Her website is [AnExpertResume.com](#) and her articles in the Job-Hunt is Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search –

<http://www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/LinkedIn-job-search.shtml>

Using Social Media for Personal Online Reputation Management

By Debra Osborn, Adam Miller, Shae McCain, and
Jacqueline Gabbard Belle

Introduction

Social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter are becoming increasingly popular in the last two years and can be seen as “*tremendous vehicles for connecting with others, be it socially or professionally*” (Jencius & Rainey, 2009, p. 22). For example, according to ebizmba.com, as of February 1, 2016, Facebook has over one billion users (<http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-networking-websites>).

Social media are socially constructed. The sites are flexible allowing the user to create their own functionality. For example, some users may use them to increase their social connections while others may use them to network with employers and other professionals (Strehike, 2010). These sites are unique because they “*enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks*” (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 211). This allows other users to easily search for and create connections to others, facilitating connections between people that wouldn’t ordinarily have been made (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

Social media appears to be a natural platform for networking because anyone with access to the Internet can create a personalized profile and post information that others can access (Strehike, 2010). Networking is a key component of job searching, but prior to using social media for job search, user profiles must be created that emphasize a job seeker’s skills and experiences. In the following sections, we will discuss various social medias that provide opportunities for creating and managing one’s personal optimization reputation in powerful ways.

Facebook

Facebook launched in February of 2004 as a result of an endeavor by Mark Zuckerberg and his associates to connect students at Harvard University. However, the web site was eventually extended to include individuals from all over the world with a total of 400 million users to date (Boulton, 2010). Registering as a Facebook user allows individuals to create a profile, connect with friends and colleagues from around the world, share photos, videos, and web sites, and post statuses to keep those within your network up-to-date on occurrences and happenings within one’s life.

Facebook has experienced an exponential rise to fame within the last ten years as a means of connecting people from around the world. Originally intended to be a way for professionals to network and connect with each other, the use of Facebook has extended beyond the realm of professional networking to include connection and interaction within non-professional settings (About Facebook, 2016). However, this paradigm shift has brought about, for some, a problem for some professionals who use Facebook as a means of social connection in non-professional settings.

Facebook offers professionals many opportunities for promoting their personal brand (About Facebook, 2016). For example, individuals can create a professional page in which they can display their personal brand, and connect with professionals around the world. In doing so, the individual's network of industry-related contacts expands exponentially allowing for more opportunities to emerge. In general, there are two types of professionals who utilize Facebook as a way of promoting their personal brand: those who are seeking employment from companies, corporations, or organizations and those who are attempting to start their own company. For those wishing to attract employers and have it serve as a method of *portfolio-ing* accomplishments and experience, a professional Facebook page is an excellent option.

Facebook has made prospective employees easily accessible to employers looking to gain a deeper insight into an applicant's personal life. In some cases, this can lead to discoveries that are unbecoming of the type of person the employer is looking to hire. Therefore, it is extremely important for professionals to maintain a positive, social media presence that promotes one's personal brand in a manner that piques an employer's interest in hiring an applicant.

For those attempting to *kick-start* their personal brand to promote their own business or organization, Facebook offers many options for business owners to utilize in order to market their product to individuals around the world. One of the most common examples of this is the option to utilize FacebookAds to promote one's professional page and products/services being offered for purchase. FacebookAds range in price based on the frequency of appearance as determined by the business owner. Essentially, a budget is set and the ad appears on Facebook to a number of viewers based on the budget set forth by the account holder (About Facebook, 2016).

Whether one is looking to use Facebook as a means of social networking, professional networking, or a combination of both, Facebook offers many types of profiles that appeal to these different needs. For business owners and professionals, Facebook offers a professional profile in which customers and users can *like* one's professional page and keep up-to-date with products and happenings with the business. It is not recommended for professionals to have the same profile serve as both their professional and personal profile (About Facebook, 2016).

Professionals who have a personal profile should always be mindful of their online presence and the materials on their Facebook profile available for others to view. In order to ensure that personal profiles are secure and contents are only available to audiences with whom the account holder wishes to share videos, photos, and postings, users should utilize the privacy tool options within Facebook account settings and set their personal profile to private. Even though

professionals separate professional profiles from personal profiles on Facebook, users should nevertheless be mindful of postings to personal profiles as photographs and videos associated with one's Facebook may appear on search engine results when one's name is *searched* within a search engine.

Twitter

For someone trying to reach out to promote their personal or professional brand, Twitter may be a quick and effective way to access large amounts of people. According to Forbes.com, Twitter, founded in 2006, is a global platform that individuals can use for microblogging and social networking services (#1,605 Twitter, 2016). In addition, the website acknowledges that Twitter can be used for business and marketing purposes. Twitter accessible to all individuals for free and can be accessed via computer and mobile devices.

Since its founding in 2006, Twitter has seen its usage grow immensely and integrate with other popular forms of media. According to Albanesius (2009), Twitter saw seven million unique visits to the website for the month of February 2009. Comparatively, according to Twitter's website, as of the end of 2015, the social networking site has 320 million active monthly users. What's more, they report over one billion unique visits each month to websites that have tweets embedded into the page (About Twitter, 2016). These figures may even be larger as Twitter's website does not require one to be an active member to view all tweets. Given the sizable increase of active user on the social networking site and the integration of tweet posts on other websites (e.g. Facebook), utilizing Twitter may be an effective to increase brand visibility and social media traffic.

Recognizing that the potential of its platform for small businesses, Twitter has created resources with the intention of helping small business to best utilize the social networking site as a means to increase their brand. Two such resources that Twitter has created include The Twitter Small Business Blog and Twitter Analytics.

Reading blogs within The Twitter Small Business Blog can provide you with valuable tips and suggestions that are designed to help someone to promote their small business, but also appear to be applicable to promoting your own personal or professional brand. These blogs cover many themes and topics including but not limited to using the Quick Promote to gain attention on Twitter (Wadlington, 2016), the use of emoji's in business promotion (Stecyk 2016), or simply explaining different functions like how to embed a tweet on a blog or website.

Twitter has developed Twitter Analytics as a tool for small businesses and users to track data regarding twitter postings and how users interact with those postings. Twitter Analytics allows you to track specific data on how your followers are viewing and interacting with specific content on your Twitter feed. For each tweet, analytics can track the amount of impressions (times the tweet was viewed) and engagements (times the tweet was interacted with, including replying, following, liking, as well as clicking on hashtags, links, usernames, etc.) There are several other resources that allows individuals to best target their respective audiences. Stecyk (2015) suggests several means of best use of twitter analytics. She points out that with using

audience insight, users have the ability to understand the commonalities of followers as well as their major demographic information. She also points out that users can get monthly analytic reports, and feedback on who seems most engaged in your tweets. It also provides feedback on when a particular tweet may be gaining large enough attention, and with quick promote, you can advertise that tweet to a larger audience.

According to Osborn, Kronholz, Finklea and Cantonis (2015), many job seekers may use Twitter as a means of searching for and following companies, notable individuals, or professional associations. In addition, they stated that seekers may participate in *tweetchats* or *tweetups* as a means of searching for and following companies, notable individuals, or professional associations. In addition, they stated that seekers may participate in “*tweetchats*” or “*tweetups*” as a means of connecting and interacting with other active users. As someone hoping to promote their personal or professional brand, this may be an effective means of connecting with individuals or small and large companies for networking purposes.

Many articles and resources can be found online that give suggestions about using social networking for branding, and this could especially be said with regard to Twitter. Where many articles may focus on improving one’s brand, others may focus on things to consider and avoid when using Twitter. In an interview with an individual specializing in social media and marketing, Whitler (2015), a *Forbes* contributor, highlighted things to consider when attempting to strengthen one’s personal brand on Twitter. The article suggests creating clear separation between one’s personal views from that of your company or small business, even by placing a disclaimer on your personal Twitter account, avoid religion, politics or other hot-button issues, be consistent on the topics you tweet about instead of bouncing around different topics, and when interacting with twitter followers, do not be reactive to any negative comments. Instead, walk and come back and respond once you have a chance to calm down.

YouTube

According to the About YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/>), YouTube is a video sharing website with billions of users that was launched in 2005 and is owned by Google.

YouTube provides a platform for people to connect, share media, entertain, and educate others on various topics across the globe. Additionally, YouTube serves as a host for advertisement and promotion, which is often paired with original video content. Users can subscribe to their favorite video channels, which allows them to see new video content by that person or group in the subscriptions feed on their homepage. Users can also create playlists containing groups of videos they select to watch at any time. Users who wish to subscribe to video channels and post their own content must sign in with a Google account.

On the homepage, YouTube provides a *Trending* category, which allows users to see videos that are popular on any given day. The Creator Studio function is for individuals who post videos, and contains tools such as the dashboard, video manager, and analytics. The analytics tool allows users to view and create reports based on the performance of their videos in several categories such as *performance metrics*, which calculates watch time and number of views.

Video creators can also access audience engagement metrics, compiled based on data such as number of likes, dislikes, comments, and shares from other YouTube users. Another interesting analytics metric allows publishers to view demographic data based on gender and reported location of users. These functions can be viewed in greater detail by visiting the following website:

https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/1714323?hl=en&ref_topic=3025741

YouTube can be applied to personal online reputation management in a number of ways. This site is of particular interest because it provides a platform for individuals to display his or her values, interests, skills, and personality in video format, along with the opportunity to interact with a large network of users. According to the Hootsuite blog posted by LePage (2015), professionals can create a visual brand with social media tools like YouTube. To create a brand, the user must decide on the qualities, skills, or values that the individual wants to express in video format. This is known as identifying the *brand voice*.

The next step involves choosing the content for video posts. LePage (2015) suggests that it is better to select specific topics rather than creating general posts. Professionals could focus on topics that are related to their chosen or desired occupation, or industry area. For example, teachers and educators could create videos demonstrating mastery of certain instructional techniques or examples of creative lesson plans.

Job seekers can create videos to showcase their resumes and relevant experiences in a more interactive format, using examples of their skills and qualifications, while also demonstrating excellent communication skills and presentation abilities.

Employers could post recorded information sessions with an overview of the company and what they are looking for in potential applicants for available positions. The branding component can be enhanced by using consistent pictures, names, and titles within the video posts which are connected to the individual who created the content.

Video posters can also embed links to their other social media sites and blogs within the video posts to encourage users to follow and view their content on other platforms. For professionals, this might include the web address for the person's LinkedIn page or professional Twitter.

YouTube offers plenty of options to engage with and track the participation of a large audience of potential viewers. Professionals can respond to appropriate comments, subscribe to relevant channels, join groups of likeminded individuals, and create reports using the analytics functions.

As noted by Clay (2014), information gained from interacting with the online community can be used to judge whether or not content creators are achieving their goals and reaching their target audience. One example might be looking at the total number of views, shares, and likes for a particular video. From this data, the professional who created the post can decide what factors may need to be adjusted for the next video, both in terms of content and how the videos are shared.

A job seeker who is looking for work in Florida could view the demographics data to see if viewers from that state are watching the video that the individual posted to demonstrate relevant skills or qualifications. If the number of viewers from the desired state is low, the professional may decide to share the video link with other social media pages or job search websites that are based in the preferred employment area. Additionally, the user may wish to create new posts on a semi-frequent basis, depending on the individual's goals, in order to hold the attention of subscribers and obtain more viewers. Professionals should consider how much time they can devote to maintaining their YouTube channels and participating in audience interaction.

As with other social media tools, users should be aware of protecting personal information and keeping private content separate from that which is made public and available for sharing. Furthermore, users should request permission and maintain confidentiality before involving others in published YouTube videos. Professionals should also be aware of YouTube's company policies, procedures, and copyright rules. Lastly, since YouTube is a video-based platform, screening for technical errors is advised. Factors such as tone and clarity of voice, professional dress, video background, sound and video quality, use of props, and reduction of external noises that could distract viewers should all be tested to ensure that the published video meets the appropriate standards for production and marketability, and ultimately helps the creator to reach his or her professional goals.

Miscellaneous Tools

Many of today's websites have a social media component. Articles often have a place for users to comment, and sites that once used to be strictly for one activity, such as job boards or uploading pictures, have evolved into interactive sites where repeat users form an online identity and virtual relationships with other users. Examples of these sites and ideas for using them for personal online reputation management are presented below.

Instagram

Instagram was released in 2010 as a photo/video-sharing social networking mobile tool and currently boasts over 400 million users (iTunes, 2016). It works with many platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Flickr.

As with many other tools, while Instagram is used to share pictures and videos of one's life with followers, it could also be used in a professional way. Starting strategies for doing this include creating a professional name (e.g., debosborn_counselor_educator) and profile, such as: *"Counselor educator who aims to inspire students to explore the use of technology to enhance and expand counseling services to all."*

For personal online reputation management, an individual should view Instagram as an online photo album of evidence of skills and experiences. In addition, pictures often reflect personality and professionalism. One should look their best, but also reflect with whom they are being pictured (or who is absent from pictures, such as different ethnic groups, ages, etc.), and what message that may possibly send. To portray multiple skills, an evaluation of how well each of the skills is represented is recommended.

Pictures don't need to all be of the individual; they can be of one's work, such as a book or a presentation, or even a PowerPoint slide saved as a picture that outlines a research agenda or teaching philosophy.

Pictures should be captioned and hashtags used so they can be found through the system's *Explore Tab*.

Tumblr and Other Blogs

Tumblr is similar to Instagram in that it is a social networking site in which most users choose to upload pictures and GIFS (graphic interchange formats) and accrue followers. It differs from Instagram in that Tumblr is designed to work as a blog.

Founded in 2007, as of February 1, 2016, Tumblr hosted over 277.2 million blogs and 555 million visitors each month (About Tumblr, 2016). The strategies mentioned in the previous section for Instagram also apply here. Individuals interested in personal online reputation management should create a professional user name and profile, and use Tumblr to showcase skills, experiences, and professionalism.

In addition to pictures, though, a user can also incorporate more text, preferably about professional matters that all point to the individual's area(s) of expertise. If the user wants to highlight engineering knowledge and skills, for example, they might blog about a controversial article that was released, or provide a link to a model they've created and describe the rationale behind it. Because blogs on Tumblr have the option to be liked or re-blogged, users should make sure to regularly post material that followers find *re-blog worthy*.

Many other blog sites exist, such as WordPress, Wix, Weebly, Blogger, and SquareSpace. Interested bloggers can find recommendations for best sites to start a blog on sites such as <http://www.dearblogger.org/blogger-or-wordpress-better>. To use blogs in a way that optimize one's online image, in addition to following strategies mentioned throughout this paper of posting relevant information often and using professional media and text to demonstrate skills, bloggers should also seek to create a sense of community among their followers. This translates into inviting and responding to comments, as well as acting similarly to other bloggers (follow them, post comments on their sites). Bloggers will want to mix up their format on a regular basis. Reading repeated lengthy text entries will lose a follower's interest quickly.

Meerkat, Periscope, Snapchat, and Vine

While these are not strictly social media sites, used in connection with social media sites, especially ones in which people are regularly monitoring updates, such as Twitter, these live web video tools can be very powerful. An example of using these tools for professional purposes would be in demonstrating a specific skill. For example, showing how one teaches a complex topic, or one's speed and accuracy in creating origami. Even though the intention was to capture live, in the moment behaviors, there is an option for users to replay a video. In addition, to make the most of the live broadcast, users should use other social media to alert their followers that a demonstration will be happening and provide relevant information about how to see it.

Snapchat is a mobile app in which users upload pictures or brief videos that are available for viewing for a pre-determined amount of time (generally 10 seconds), and then disappear. Snapchat also has a story option that allows users to compile images (“snaps”) into a chronological storyline, available for 24 hours.

With seven billion videos being watched on Snapchat each day (Lunden, 2016), some employers use this tool as a screener for personality prior to viewing a resume (<http://www.inc.com/grahamwinfrey/how-to-hire-through-snapchat.html>). Individuals wanting to use Snapchat to increase their PORM should make sure that their pictures and videos walk that balance between being professional and personal, and showcase work-related skills.

Vine is similar to these other tools in that users upload six-second videos that loop and can also be shared on other social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. Users set up a profile and a brief description. The number of people they are following and the number of followers they have are included on the profile, as well as a link to an external website if desired.

While demonstrating any skill in six seconds may be challenging, it can be done. An artist might be able to showcase a painting, or demonstrate musicianship with singing or playing a difficult segment of music; a dancer could show complicated dance moves, and so forth. In fact, it is possible to create a six-second resume (<http://mashable.com/2013/02/21/vineresume/#8VIDdjTUS055>) by listing skills and/or experiences.

Reddit

Any site in which individuals can offer ongoing commentary about a topic is a venue for employers to preview potential job candidates. Reddit is a social media site that focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on entertainment and news. A search box can yield thousands of posts on specific topics by users. Clicking on a user’s name links to all of their posts and comments. While there is no user profile to maintain, information is provided about how many comments and links are made by the individual, how long they’ve been a member, and any “*Reddit*” awards the personal might have won for their posts. In addition, a “*subreddit*” site, /r/iama (<https://www.reddit.com/r/iama>), is where a user can share their professional story and answer questions from other Reddit users. There is also a /r/forhire site (<https://www.reddit.com/r/forhire>) in which users can post their skills for potential employers. Similar to other social media tools, the key with using Reddit to increase PORM is to make sure posts and comments are professional, regularly updated, and centered on a theme, such as one’s areas of interest and skills.

Summary

Social media tools such as the ones described in this paper allow individuals to express themselves and connect with friends, acquaintances, and even strangers around the world. Given that networking is one of the most common ways people find work, the initially strange marriage between social media and job searching begins to make greater sense, as strategic use of social

media has the potential to create opportunities for individuals to present themselves in professional ways to potential employers.

Personal Online Reputation Management (PORM) requires that an individual be strategic about the images and information they are posting on social media sites, and to be diligent in managing their profiles in a way that accentuates their best skillsets and experiences. While some of the social media presented in this paper may become extinct over time, and new ones emerge, the strategies presented on PORM are likely to remain.

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About the authors



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Add Pinterest to Your Client Support Repertoire

By Kathleen Lyons

Pinterest is a powerful SEO and personal branding tool for career counselors, job seekers, career changers and entrepreneurs.

“Food, fashion, and fun – that’s Pinterest”.

“It’s for shallow chicks, brides-to-be, and Mommy bloggers with too much naptime on their hands”.

Those are just a few of the misconceptions about one of the most high-impact social media vehicles on today’s congested digital highway. Pinterest is the sleeper – the media platform savvy marketers are using with much success. Second only to Facebook as a revenue driver for serious businesses, Pinterest now has over 100 million users; more than 30 billion pins have been posted and shared since its inception in December, 2009.

Pinterest, no longer the new kid on the social media block, is proving to be a valuable element of the personal branding strategy that highlights a job candidate’s unique qualifications and character. A carefully crafted Pinterest presence distills a broad range of personal attributes, interests and skills into a visual portfolio; it reveals the pinner’s unique style in a multidimensional way. Becoming a player on Pinterest can bolster the impact of a job seeker’s personal branding statement, a standard quickly becoming a requirement for digital portfolios.

This article discusses the purpose and function of Pinterest, and its value as a personal branding tool for career counselors and job seekers. It presents a rationale for using Pinterest as one of many ways job candidates can strengthen their online reputation and search engine optimization (SEO), to increase visibility to potential employers, customers and recruiters. It is not a primer for how to set up and populate a Pinterest business account; that information can be found in Pinterest’s help area (1). With some investment in thought and time, developing and growing a Pinterest account can be a strong contributor to improved visibility for yourself and your clients.

Fast Facts

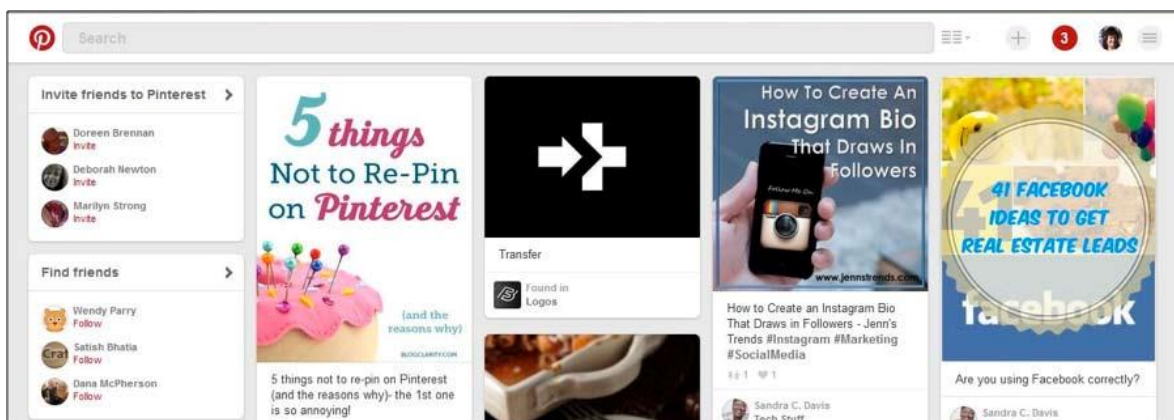
People unfamiliar with Pinterest often underestimate it. But the facts are impressive.

- Particularly for entrepreneurs and job seekers with a personal website, visibility in search engine results can make a notable difference in the success of a business venture or job search. Hubspot reported (2) that 75 percent of web visitors don't go beyond the first page of their search results. Pinterest’s highly effective approach to SEO sees individual pins often appearing on page-one search results.

- Pinterest acts as an adjunct to a candidate’s resume and LinkedIn profile; smart job seekers use common keywords that can be shared throughout all elements of their online portfolio.
- A job seeker’s social media presence can be viewed as an extension/expansion of the currently-popular minimalist resume. Pinterest boards deepen the candidate’s story as told in the restrained space of the resume and LinkedIn profile. Not limited by verbiage alone, she uses Pinterest’s graphic boards both to curate the content that defines her, and to convey the breadth of her work and life interests. Pinterest gives the candidate a way to shine, to differentiate herself from those with similar skills and experience.
- Carefully chosen images with clear descriptions can help build a visual archive relatively quickly: just 15 minutes per day of effort on Pinterest will soon boost visibility and generate followers.
- A compendium of statistics about Pinterest include 176 million registered users with 100 million of them classified as “active users.” (3)
- New grads and possibly graduate students might already be familiar with Pinterest: others, not so much. There’s a lot to learn, and it can be daunting to an anxious job seeker to master another time-sucking media channel. But believe it: career changers, older workers, veterans, entrepreneurs and consultants can all benefit from the power of Pinterest.

The Pinterest Ecosystem

Pinterest is not your average social network. The emphasis is on images, but people love images (notice how many we all share on Facebook), and they tend to notice images more than plain text. This is how Pinterest works.



Pinterest’s homepage with Search box, latest pins and profile options areas.

- **Visual:** Pinterest’s infrastructure – attractive images with brief, keyword-rich descriptions linking to external media assets such as webpages – lends itself to scanning by humans, while text descriptions and image filenames are indexed by search engines and other bots. An added advantage: its image-based format, coupled with succinct descriptors for each pin, is well suited to the burgeoning mobile environment.

- **Archival:** unlike Facebook and Twitter, Pinterest content persists over an extended period of time – material is shared and reshared at a higher rate than other platforms.
 - Users report that some pins posted 3-4 years ago are still being discovered and repinned by new users.
 - Pinterest’s Comment function allows dialogue between users that can lead to further engagement and information sharing.
- **Focused:** Pinterest boards that are carefully selected and titled, with board descriptions containing the candidate’s relevant keywords, add SEO punch. As a personal branding strategy, the username on a Pinterest account should be your own name. Profile, board descriptions and pin descriptions should be optimized by including both principal and long-tail keywords, and by writing close to the maximum number of characters allowed.
- **Forward-looking:** Pinterest boards are created as repositories for dreams, wishes and intentions. Where Facebook generally chronicles past events and Twitter reports on what’s happening now, Pinterest is geared toward the future. Pinners gather inspiration, aspirations and plans and curate them into a visual portfolio that bears the unique stamp of the owner.

How Pinterest Can Benefit Career Counselors

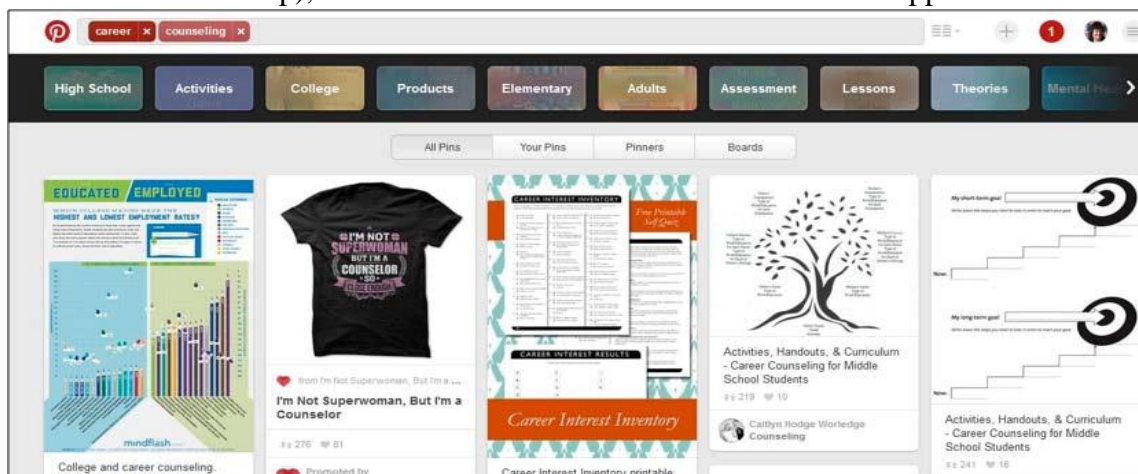
Career counselors can leverage Pinterest to build their personal brands and online reputations. They can also use Pinterest to help their existing clients, attract new clients, and help the world in general be more informed about career issues.

- Add Pinterest to your client education toolbox: select pins that link to timely career information from sources and industry experts you trust. Colorful and engaging Pinterest boards can augment and even replace lengthy factsheets and resource lists, and they’re easy to maintain or modify.
- Design your own pins that point job seekers to instructional materials you have already developed -- a great way to promote your brand identity.
 - Create a pin image template in Photoshop, PicMonkey or Canva.
 - For the template base, use a background image congruent with your brand colors and logo design.
 - Overlay the base image with a text box or banner tailored to the specific content of your pin.
 - Make sure a version of your logo appears on each self-created pin.
 - Upload the finished pin image to the appropriate board and link it to a specific blog post, online article or tutorial on your website.



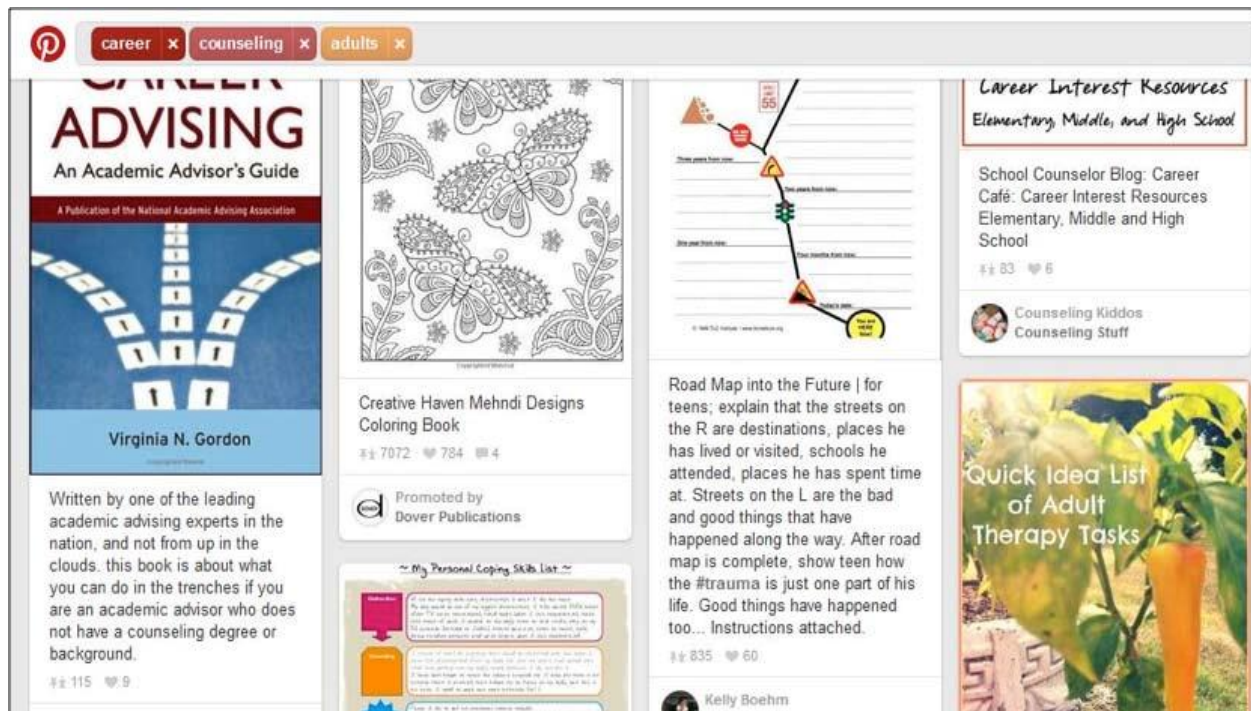
Branded pin images using an image template

- Create boards for the more intangible elements of your counseling mission: psychological support, self-help advice, dress-for-success pointers...and more.
- Assist job seekers in formulating a social media game plan, including setting up a Pinterest account and curating the content most likely to benefit them. This added consulting service could become a new revenue stream.
- Learn to make use of **Pinterest Guided Search** (4) to discern trends in keyword search by the vast (100 million) population of pinners. Enter a few high-level keywords (the example below is *career counseling*). Drill down by selecting a subtopic (the colored boxes below the search terms at the top), and be amazed at the volume of content that appears:



Pinterest will display the most-searched topics and relevant search terms.

Drilling down to the *adult* subtopic, more specific pins are displayed containing relevant keywords.



Boards worth following and potential networking opportunities can be found and shared.

How Pinterest Can Help Job Seekers

For job seekers, Pinterest offers excellent personal branding, personal SEO, and even personal online reputation management opportunities:

- Demonstrate the job seeker's grasp of a diverse range of online resources in addition to LinkedIn and Facebook. Social media skills are valuable in most work environments.
- Encourage job seekers to create their Pinterest account as a business; this allows them to track pins that are linking to their personal website(s), and also to take advantage of Pinterest Analytics (5).
- Job seekers can build their online reputation and personal brand by creating Pinterest boards around their keywords – they do have a collection of their most important keywords, right?
- Job seekers can add their relevant keywords to image tags, descriptions and comments to bolster their personal branding efforts. Good SEO practice on Pinterest can be startlingly effective in raising their online profiles. Make sure the image filenames contain keywords; pin frequently, and link to their own websites or even to their LinkedIn Profile if they don't have a website.
- Use Pinterest's Guided Search feature to find and share meaningful content that gives readers a clear idea of who they are and the job you're aspiring to.

- Communicate with other pinners to expand their job search network. Commenting on pins they like is a great place to start.
- Follow pinners who are influential in their field; comment on their pins, and they may respond.
- Budding entrepreneurs and independent consultants can leverage Pinterest to increase visibility, share resources and promote their products and services. Being pro-active can establish a unique niche within their industry, then use Pinterest to educate their audience and build a following.

Starting on Pinterest: The Mechanics

Getting started on Pinterest is easy. Follow these steps.

- **Create a Pinterest account** (6), preferably using your own name or your business name if relevant.
- **Create boards that reflect your business focus**, personal interests, aspirations, charitable activities, philosophy and local community. Curate a board specifically for your existing business, target industry or the job role you are seeking. Include your keywords in board titles, board descriptions and pin descriptions. Pinterest Guided Search is a great way to find keyword phrases that readers are searching for.
- **Populate your boards with pins**, either gleaned from others' Pinterest boards and websites, or linked to a blog post or page on your own site(s).
- **Use the powerful Pinterest search features** to give substance to your boards and link to content that complements your personal branding profile. Start by searching on your relevant keywords, major and minor.

These Five top Pinterest elements drive SEO and personal branding success:

1. Username and profile name: your own name is best. Verify your account as a business to gain access to Pinterest Analytics (<https://business.pinterest.com/en/confirm-your-website>).
2. Board titles: Use keywords, make the title engaging yet descriptive.
3. Board descriptions: Add keywords to your board descriptions wherever possible.
4. Pin descriptions: The most effective pins have descriptions between 200 and 300 words.
5. Image filenames: Boost SEO by adding your name and a keyword to each image filename that you upload: mary_smith_career_guru_ebook_your_successful_career.jpg

Do:

- Select pins for visual appeal: longer pins are more effective. One major image is best rather than a collage. Remember that many users will be looking at your pins on a mobile device. Information on optimal image sizes and aspect ratios is available at AuthorMedia.com. (7)
- Always check a pin's provenance before posting on your board, to avoid spam content and inappropriate links – click through to the source of each pin to verify its authenticity.
- Add a Pin-it button to any websites you own to facilitate pinning from your pages and posts.
- Pin about ten items from other sources for each one you upload that links to your own site.
- Limit photos of people: people-free pins generate more click-throughs.

Don't:

- Create pins or boards that might cause you to be ruled out as a possible employee: unless you're looking for a job as a politician or pastor, showcase your religious or political views somewhere else.
- Distract readers from your central themes – think of your Pinterest boards as windows into your philosophy of life, skill-set, main interests and future aspirations. No cute kitties, please.
- Add too many pins to the stream at one time – better to add five pins per day than a huge batch once a month -- that turns followers off.
- Underestimate the value of commenting and answering the comments of others: it's a good way to engage with like-minded pinners.

Built on a robust development environment, Pinterest has emerged as a worthy challenger to the might of Facebook, Twitter and other social media powerhouses. The appealing visual format of Pinterest, coupled with its archival quality and rabid fan base, seems to mark it, if not for greatness, then for long-term value as a personal branding tool.

Incorporating the best practices of personal SEO (8) and branding strategies, Pinterest holds great promise as a prime social media platform for job seekers and career counselors alike. Try it!

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About the Author



Kathleen Lyons is president of FastNet Media, a consulting firm that develops staff training and online marketing systems for government, non-profits and entrepreneurs. Since 1994, FastNet Media has worked with small and large organizations to integrate technology and innovative media platforms into their daily work routines. A proponent of *just in time* adult learning, she keeps both development and maintenance in mind when creating websites, social media campaigns and other online media assets for clients. She started out in the hospitality field after earning a BS at Isenberg School of Management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

With a knack for computers inherited from her systems analyst father, she quickly became an early adopter of innovative tech tools, and in training frontline staff in their use. A mid-career shift into the healthcare industry saw her honing her skills in integrating technology into all aspects of patient records management and service delivery.

Kathleen earned the M.S. in Public Health/Nutrition at Framingham State University, and also completed significant graduate work in Instructional Design at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, to better address the learning needs of an increasingly diverse work force.

After a decade in public health program management and training, she turned to consulting, and has planned and executed training programs for clients such as Tufts University Medical School, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the State of California, and Framingham State University. Her curriculum design and facilities plan for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Learning Center won an Award for Excellence from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Kathleen has authored or co-authored articles in medical journals, as well as periodicals both in print and online. She completed three major public-health feasibility studies for training a broad range of health care workers from all backgrounds. She has planned training conferences for up to 6,000 attendees, and has been a trainer and speaker on Interactive Multimedia learning for the United States Department of Agriculture, the Massachusetts Dietetic Association, the California Public Health Association, and others. FastNet Media's services to small business include needs assessment, web development, online marketing planning, and strategies for social media campaign design and maintenance.

An evangelist for Pinterest as a prime marketing tool for entrepreneurs, her online course and e-book: ***Pinterest in 15 Minutes a Day***, will be launched in October 2016.

Visit Kathleen's Job-Hunt.org column Guide to Job Search for Green Jobs – <http://www.job-hunt.org/green-jobs-job-search/green-jobs.shtml>.

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What Good Is Your Work if Only Your Manager Sees It? Build Online Visibility Through Portfolios

By Hannah Morgan

The old method of submitting a resume to open job postings is no longer the only strategy for finding employment. The new hiring practices require job seekers put themselves out there online.

There's an important hiring trend impacting candidates. According to a 2015 CareerBuilder annual social media recruitment survey (1) of over 2,000 Human Resources professionals, 35 percent say they are less likely to interview job candidates if they are unable to find information about that person online. Furthermore, 51 percent of hiring managers research candidates using search engines and 52 percent report using social networking sites to research candidates. This points to the importance of a branded online presence for all job seekers looking for work today.

Glassdoors' 2013 Talent Warrior winners (2), recognized as innovative and socially-savvy recruiters and HR professionals, provided suggestions for job seekers to impress company recruiters and stand out. Carrie Corbin, Associate Director of Talent Attraction at AT&T suggests job seekers *"look at creating an online portfolio of your work and including that link in your application/on your resume. Actual examples that showcase your awesomeness sell me and show me you're the real deal."* Steve Fogerty, Senior Manager of Employer Branding & Digital Recruiting at Adidas Group says that *"candidates are getting more and more creative with getting attention. I've been impressed with several candidates recently who have built infographics, videos and even full blown websites to convey their experience!"*

Given the increasing rate at which recruiters are using the Internet to source and vet talent as well as the fact that employers say it is becoming more difficult find qualified talent, having a strong branded online presence is a smart and proactive strategy for long-term career success.

Create an Online Portfolio

Creating a personal website containing brand-supporting materials has become easier and is accessible to anyone with minimal technical experience. There are many different options for job seekers to build a portfolio from WordPress to SquareSpace and the investment required to host a website is under \$20 a year. Job seekers can secure their name as a domain and build an online portfolio under that site.

LinkedIn, as the largest professional network, contains all the elements needed for a strong portfolio, however, LinkedIn and other social networks are notorious for changing terms of service and features. It isn't enough to rely on these platforms as the only means of establishing

an online presence. Creating an online portfolio helps ensure the right, branded results will appear in search results and personal control over the portfolio's content.

A study by Branded.me research (3) reports that 70 percent of respondents said that their personal website/online portfolio is either very important or important for attracting new opportunities and 70 percent believe that employers are reviewing them online before being interviewed. Armed with this information, today's careerists would be wise to invest in owning their own online portfolio containing pages for their experience, testimonials, work samples, blog, bio, and contact information.

Show Experience and Tenure

Recruiters evaluate potential job candidates by their past experience. In the majority of cases, recruiters want to know a candidate has the experience to do the job. A portfolio should contain a designated page to make it easy for recruiters to find a candidate's online resume. This page should be labeled as *resume* or *CV*. To cater to the recruiter's needs, it is advisable to provide a pdf or downloadable version of the resume as well.

Infographic resume as a marketing tool. With attention spans shorter than a gold fish, using infographics to summarize complex information, such as a resume, can be a stand-out differentiator. Let's be clear, the infographic resume is not as a replacement for a text resume and should not be used when applying through an applicant tracking system (ATS). Instead, use an infographic as an introduction to a networking meeting, link to it in outreach to a specific employer through social media, or bring it to the interview for WOW factor.

It is going to take more than slick graphics to entice the reader. Any wording used must be concise and address requirements of positions the job seeker is pursuing. Strong accomplishment-based bullets always work best on today's resumes versus the old fashioned job responsibility bullets. Bear in mind that recruiters still want to be able to find the traditional resume elements on an infographic resume so be sure to include a header with name and contact information, a branding statement, highlights/achievements, a skills section, experience timeline, education, and outside interests/volunteer activities.

Embeddable Proof

An online portfolio should include samples of work and other concrete proof to illustrate the job seeker's level of skill and expertise in their field.

One way to ensure the materials meet the needs of future employers is to review job postings for target jobs for frequently used requirements. For example, if job postings frequently request *manage project details*, the job seeker could include a project timeline, Gantt chart or other examples of work used to organize and manage project details. Or if the postings require certain technical skills, the job seeker should include work samples using those tools.

Job seekers should organize these embedded examples on their website under a clearly labeled page titled *work samples* or *portfolio*.

Work samples: Job seekers have created reports, work instructions, work flow diagrams and other content during their time on the job. While they may not be able to use the actual documents, they could create a mock-up to share. Depending on the job seeker's occupation, they may have samples of code developed, case studies, executive summaries, awards or a list of clients served.

Video is another way to demonstrate expertise. Job seeker can create a *how to* video, career summary or a day-in-the-life documentary. Other video ideas might include showcasing photos or images. Not everyone is comfortable in front of a camera, but the video doesn't have to feature the job seeker. For example: screen casting tools can be used to record a demonstration on how to create pivot tables, or how to create project plans, or how to organize email. Once filmed, upload the video to YouTube and embed it in the online portfolio. Just remember to keep it short.

Most ads run under three minutes.

Lacking Proof?

When moving into a new career direction, it can sometimes be difficult to come up with relevant material. If that is the case, there are several ways someone without experience can show skills.

- Create a mock up or sample report, summary, or flowchart.
- Use personal samples (budget, calendar, website, etc.)
- Volunteer with a non-profit, family, friend, or neighbor to work on a project and document that with permission.

Want to take it a step further? More job seekers are adding visual elements commonly associated with marketing such as infographic resumes, or slide decks showing career progression and benefits for future employers. A slide deck could contain information similar to that of a cover letter. One way to make the slide deck easily embeddable on a personal website is to upload it to SlideShare which will provide an embed code as well as unique URL. This also makes it simple to share as a status update. Posting branded content on other sites can help increase the likelihood of its showing up in search results and improve online visibility.

The resume is not the only way to demonstrate experience. If job seekers lift ideas from corporate marketing, they can launch self-promotion campaigns. Not only does this demonstrate expertise and skills, it also demonstrates creativity, another quality many employers look for. Today, there are many ways to publish content and create a robust, engaging representation of who the candidate really is. An infographic is just one example.

Testimonials

Often job seekers ask for and receive letters of recommendation which typically reside in a folder only to be presented when asked. And what happens to the emails from satisfied customers,

clients or managers? Those also are filed away. Social proof, in the form of public recommendations, becomes an important differentiator for job seekers to highlight. Rather than keep these testimonials private, why not feature the quotes on the online portfolio? It is important to ask permission to use the quotes or testimonials before publishing them to the Internet. If obtaining permission is difficult, a work-around is to eliminate the person's name and/or company name, though this doesn't hold as much weight.

Blog

A blog provides job seekers the opportunity to share their voice and connect with the reader. The blog can be used to highlight events, updates, or to communicate relevant career stories. A wellwritten blog shows communication skills and helps the potential employer understand the job seeker's priorities, values, and much more.

Bio or About

A bio or about page provides the job seeker with an opportunity to show her personality which is often challenging to do on a traditional resume. While there are many different styles, a common trend is to write the bio in the first-person. This sounds more personal and some experts believe it helps establish a greater sense of connection and trust. The bio should answer questions a recruiter might have about motivation, work style, fit with the corporate culture and manageability.

Contact options

Make it easy for someone to contact you by providing different options such as a contact form, listing email address, active social media profiles, Skype handle or even phone number. Some recruiters still prefer to reach out via phone so don't overlook this option.

Who Should Use Online Portfolios and Why

Using an online portfolio and social media are ideal job search tactics for new college grads without a lot of experience. It allows this set of job seekers to utilize their familiarity with technology. It also encourages them to focus on the power of a relationship to open the door.

The older job seeker can debunk the myth they are slow to learn new things and adapt by showing off their digital savvy.

Hiring Trends

The number one source of external hiring according to CareerXroad 2014 report (4) is referrals. In other words, 19 percent of external hires came from a recommendation from an employee. Not only that, research by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and MIT in 2014 found that while referrals only made up about six percent of total applications, they resulted in more than 25 percent of new hires. Additional research has found that referred candidates perform better and last longer in the job. Employers also report that it costs less and is faster to hire referred candidates. Employers often reward employees for these cost-effective hires. These trends have led more companies to invest in referral hiring.

If job seekers solely rely on responding to vacancies on job boards to get in front of an employer, they will likely be overlooked or miss out on opportunities that only insiders know about. Job seekers need to understand how to tap into the power of social networks to expand and maintain their connections with company insiders. This long-term networking strategy along with an online portfolio will help proactive careerists keep connected with their network and maintain visibility outside of their current role and company.

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About the Author

Hannah Morgan's biography may be found on [page 37](#). Her website is [CareerSherpa.net](http://www.CareerSherpa.net) and her Job-Hunt column is the Guide to Job Search Navigation at --
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Best Practices in Online Reputation Management for New Graduates

By **Laura Smith Proulx**

Today's newly minted college and vocational school graduates need more than a resume, cover letter, and interviewing skills. Nearly every major employer will vet early career professionals on not only their communication skills, but also their online reputation.

New graduates, much like experienced professionals, will benefit from forming a personal brand that exemplifies a strong career value proposition. This brand message is formed by gathering a robust picture of professional qualifications such as achievements, educational accomplishments, skills, and competencies. The applicant's personal brand can be displayed throughout every social media activity, allowing employers to gauge the job seeker's suitability as a potential new hire.

In 2016 and beyond, it is estimated that the overwhelming majority of recruiters and job seekers alike will spend significant hours on social media. Recruiters and other hiring authorities tap LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, in particular, to gain insight on and vet candidates.

Therefore, job seekers will fare best when carefully controlling the images, information, and demeanor displayed through social media. Even if a job seeker doesn't actively point employers to these sites, most hiring authorities will comb these venues to glean more information on applicants.

In short, job seekers cannot afford to ignore the impact of social media on the hiring process, and must prepare to leverage and navigate multiple sites in order to both manage their personal brand message and attract the attention of employers.

LinkedIn

Why New Graduates Need a LinkedIn Profile

Even if a job seeker uses other forms of social media, LinkedIn is a critical part of the online reputation and branding process. Many recruiters and employers not only scan LinkedIn for fresh talent, but they will quickly verify a candidate's brand message on the site, looking for alignment with the resume.

Employers are drawn to LinkedIn based on the hundreds of millions of registered users, many of whom are promoting themselves for networking and job searching purposes. LinkedIn allows employers and recruiters to purchase upgraded memberships that allow searches for potential employees, based on keywords such as skills, geographic location, education, and credentials.

By creating a LinkedIn Profile, new graduates can show employers they are serious about offering value to employers. The new Profile can be used to describe the applicant's education, work experience, and extracurricular activities. In addition, early career professionals can add information on the challenges they anticipate handling for employers, demonstrating an understanding of business problems.

Building a Branded LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn's new-user registration makes it simple to build a new Profile. From the initial page, professionals can choose "Join Today" and enter new login credentials to get started. From there, LinkedIn will prompt the user to enter Experience, Education, Certifications, Skills & Expertise, Summary, and other personal information.

A new LinkedIn user can quickly add an outline of personal information, then edit the Profile to more fully populate each section. Some areas may not be applicable for a new graduate and can therefore be updated later. However, it is important for job seekers to quickly create a Profile that can be referenced by employers, as the lack of a LinkedIn presence can deter hiring managers from seriously considering an applicant.

Using Keywords on LinkedIn

When creating a LinkedIn Profile, keywords such as skills, courses studied, or job titles will help new graduates be found more readily in employer searches.

Job seekers at all levels will benefit from inserting job-specific terms into the Profile, paying special attention to the Headline, Experience, Education, and Certification fields. While the site will index almost every piece of information, some fields (such as the Headline) are more heavily indexed according to LinkedIn's search algorithm (although this is subject to frequent change).

When used frequently throughout the Profile, keywords will also increase the strength of the user's findability. Therefore, new graduates will be in a better position on LinkedIn if they include job-specific terms in the Summary, Experience, and Skills & Expertise section.

Examples of keywords include:

Accounting
Nursing
Management
Marketing
Financial Analysis
Applications
Project Management
Mergers

Trade Shows
Web Development
Sales
Relationship Management
Documentation
Prospecting
Case Management

Creating the LinkedIn Summary

The LinkedIn Summary section is often the first area read by visitors to a LinkedIn Profile. With 2,000 total characters available for use in this section, users can build a strong and cohesive picture of their strengths and career goals.

To engage effectively with other users, it is common to write the Summary in first-person, allowing professionals to build engagement and rapport. By using a friendly, yet professional tone (similar to a cover letter), the Summary can entice employers to read more about the candidate's achievements, credentials, and professional motivation. This section should also make liberal use of white space for easy reading, allowing employers to quickly skim for relevant details.

For example, a new graduate pursuing a sales role could use the Summary to state:

"I majored in psychology and business in order to gain a picture of the complexities of the sales process. With an outgoing personality and a solid grasp of the emotions behind buying decisions, I have positioned my skills to fit the demands of a sales role.

My college curriculum was designed with this career target in mind, including studies in business psychology, materials resourcing, accounting, and marketing.

In addition to my professional studies, I've earned sales roles in summer positions, working my way up to Department Associate at Macy's, where I observed senior sales staff working in a consultative manner with customers in deal making and closing."

Note that the above example includes keywords specific to a sales role, including deal making, buying decision, marketing, consultative, closing, and accounting.

For a LinkedIn Summary designed to attract employers seeking a financial analyst, an early career professional could elaborate on analytical skills, as in this example:

"Having studied data set analysis and extraction as part of my Mathematics and Accounting degree, I'm well-versed in evaluating and reporting financial data of use to corporate stakeholders.

In addition, I learned how to effectively manage projects and maintain progress against deadlines as a Financial Analyst Intern at XYZ Company, where problem solving and performance tracking were required skills."

Adding Work Experience to LinkedIn

Even without significant professional experience, new graduates can add details of internships, summer jobs, and part-time employment in the Experience section.

For each job entry, 2,000 characters can be used to describe the duties of the position, as well as achievements. By keeping these details relevant to the role they are pursuing, new graduates can sum up limited work experience and show the tie-in to a new, post-graduate role.

Rich media, such as video, article links, or presentations can be added to either the Summary or Work History, helping to inject a dose of color and reinforce the job seeker's personal brand message.

Updating LinkedIn's Education Section

LinkedIn allows users to enter school names, degree programs, courses, and curriculum details.

While the site contains From and To dates for educational programs, these need not be populated (which works well for current college students). Seminars, certificates, and other types of training can also be entered on the site.

Advanced Brand-Building on LinkedIn

Much like Facebook, LinkedIn users can share links to articles and other user updates of professional interest. In addition, LinkedIn offers a Publishing platform (also called Pulse) that allows any user to post original content, demonstrating knowledge in a professional or industry-related area.

While the use of content publishing is not a requirement for job seekers, doing so can elevate an applicant's presence and solidify the personal brand message.

By searching for companies (using the top-of-page Search function) that fit desirable criteria, new graduates can identify prospective employers and follow these companies to get a feel for hiring activity.

Professionals can also check LinkedIn's Find Alumni section to see employers who commonly hire graduates of the same university.

Facebook

Important Considerations for New Graduates on Facebook

Employers often scan Facebook to learn more about applicants, looking for insights into the personality and professionalism demonstrated by job seekers. If an applicant has issued negative information on Facebook – particularly in reference to work, school, or other career-related topics – hiring managers can reject the candidate based on a perceived pattern of unprofessional behavior.

For new graduates who have been avid users of Facebook, this poses a particularly complex challenge, as they will need to manage both past posts (which may have been issued prior to considering the impact on a post-graduation job search), plus future entries on the site.

Facebook Privacy Settings

To prevent employers from viewing past posts, job seekers can alter Facebook Privacy settings (found under the Settings menu option), using an option called Limit Past Posts. This setting can be adjusted to restrict all past updates to current Friends (or Facebook contacts), effectively cutting off access to old information for anyone not in the user's network. However, previous posts will remain searchable by Friends, even when not visible on the user's Timeline.

For all new posts, job seekers can decide whether to continue posting publicly on Facebook (setting new posts to Public view), or restrict this information by setting new updates to Friends only. For public updates or posts, new graduates can build a strategic and brand-focused stream of information concentrated on career-related interests.

To ensure new posts are employer-friendly, job seekers can post links to articles of professional interest or launch a dialogue with like-minded users on a topic relevant to their field.

Best Practices in Public Posting on Facebook

Job seekers who have opened their Facebook identities to employers must take care to tune photos, personal information, and work history in alignment with the personal brand message.

This information should also match the new graduate's resume or other social media profiles. Some hiring managers use Facebook to gauge a job seeker's use of grammar and language before calling for an interview. Therefore, Facebook users should proofread all posts in order to demonstrate strong communications skills.

New graduates can also link status updates to a portfolio of projects, blog posts, or articles, taking care to select information tied to their professional brand.

Other Uses of Facebook

New graduates will quickly see job postings on Facebook by reviewing employer pages. Depending on the company's hiring practices, job listings or employment ads may even be issued more quickly on the company's Facebook page than its website.

Facebook can also be a valuable resource when evaluating company culture. Job seekers can review past company postings, follow employees of the company, and gain insight into company practices by reviewing related social media activity.

Twitter

Why New Graduates Should Consider Using Twitter in a Job Search

While Twitter has become a forum for casual observations and status updates, it is also used by employers to vet and search for candidates. Some employers issue job postings on Twitter, while others will look through applicant Twitter feeds to gauge their understanding of communications and social media.

Getting Started on Twitter

Twitter will guide new users through setting up a username (handle) and password, providing a profile that can be updated with a photo and personal information. Like other social media venues, the information shared on Twitter is completely public and can therefore be tuned to represent a job seeker's professional brand.

The Twitter bio – 160 characters used to describe a user's occupation, interests, and expertise – should be set up to align with resume and other social media information. As an example, a Twitter bio for a new graduate interested in marketing jobs might read:

Psychology graduate, ASW. Passionate about sales, marketing, business operations, real estate. Enjoy analytics & consumer insights. Runner & horse enthusiast.

Using Twitter

After establishing a Twitter login, users can follow any other Twitter profile to *listen* for their tweets, as well as issue Tweets of their own.

However, job seekers can create a Twitter presence for the sole purpose of searching for postings, merely reviewing Tweets (to get an idea of growth or hiring trends), rather than issuing status updates. Following a company's Twitter feed will also allow an applicant to network directly with contacts at the employer site.

In addition, several Twitter-related applications exist for the purpose of finding and reviewing job postings, such as TweetMyJobs.com. Many organizations participate in "chat" discussions on specific topics of professional interest to job seekers. SocialTimes.com (<http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/find-twitter-chats/495814>) has issued several resources for finding Twitter Chats on specific topics.

Issuing Tweets

Job seekers can send private notes to others in the same industry or ask well-known professionals for advice. In addition, new graduates can create content (similar to Facebook or LinkedIn) by sharing articles or ideas of interest to potential employers.

While Tweets seem to scroll by quickly, users must remember that all posts are public and permanent, with no way to restrict information or set privacy controls. By keeping posts professional in nature, job seekers will encounter a more favorable reaction from employers combing the site for candidates.

New graduates using Twitter for job search will also benefit from showing some restraint in the amount of time spent on the site, as this can demonstrate a lack of dedication to professional activities. Here, tools that automate the use of Twitter, such as HootSuite.com or SocialOomph.com, can help new graduates stay active, while multitasking elsewhere.

Bottom Line

In summary, the social media and online personal branding will have a considerable impact on new graduate job searches. Candidates who adjust their activity to present a polished, professional image and who identify employer contacts using social media will fare better in landing that important first job.

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About the Author

Laura Smith-Proulx' biography may be found on [page 147](#). Her website is AnExpertResume.com, and her column on Job-Hunt is The Guide to Using LinkedIn for Job Search – <http://www.job-hunt.org/social-networking/LinkedIn-job-search/LinkedIn-job-search.shtml>

Online Presence for Mature Job Seekers: Getting Started

By Phyllis Mufson

Many mature job seekers assume their age is a barrier to finding a job, and that employers look on older workers negatively.

The reality is more complex. Studies show that while employers and hiring managers have assumptions about Baby Boomers and other seasoned workers, many of the assumptions are positive - and they also have real concerns.

Employers praise older workers' depth of knowledge, excellent interpersonal skills and great work ethic. These traits are seen as significant advantages.

However; many employers presented with mature candidates will also wonder if they are technically up to date. Other related concerns will be on their minds. Some of the unspoken questions are: Is your client continuing to learn and grow - or do they have a 'been there, done that' attitude? Are they vital and energetic? Are they keeping up with new developments in their field? Will they work skillfully with co-workers of younger generations?

How you help your client create an online presence will go a long way to creating the right impression – that although some seasoned professionals may be tech-averse and behind the times, your client is not one of them.

This article outlines a plan to allay your client's fears about being online and to create a robust online presence that highlights the wealth of experience they bring to work.

Resistance

When I deliver job search workshops to audiences of baby boomers I'm surprised by how many are anxious, and occasionally even hostile, about presenting themselves professionally online and, in particular, about using LinkedIn.

Some are fearful about exposing personal information online and becoming a victim of identity theft. Many don't know how to present themselves in the best light and are hesitant about learning something they see as technical and difficult. There are also many who are resistant because they don't believe it will be worth the effort.

It's helpful to encourage your clients to air their concerns, and then allay their fears before trying to move forward.

- **Present information.** For example, explain basic online safety, and how to recognize scams.

- **Emphasize the upside.** Stress the enormous benefits of presenting themselves and their qualifications online to their job search. Share success stories.
- **Limit time/attention required.** Relieve their feelings of overwhelm by pointing out that while there are many social media sites and new platforms, apps, and services are continually being developed, it is not necessary to learn them all. In fact, it is better to focus on one platform and add more only if you have the time and desire to do it well.
- **Create excitement.** Most importantly, do whatever you can to move them from narrow, fear-based thinking to feeling in control and excited about their future. Even if your clients aren't expressing fear, assume it's there.

Our culture is permeated with negative, incorrect and out-dated ideas about aging. There is also enormous publicity about age bias on the part of employers. Many clients who wouldn't say 'no one will want to hire me because of my age,' will still suspect that their prospects are limited and job search will be very difficult. Listen for negative assumptions behind your client's words and actions. Bring these assumptions out into the open where you can question their validity and forward the conversation to actions your clients can take to advance their search.

The Benefits

Describe the benefits of online visibility in these ways:

Credibility

Ninety percent or more of recruiters, hiring managers and company leaders are searching for candidates and checking their qualifications and reputations online: 94 percent check LinkedIn, 66 percent check Facebook, and 52 percent check Twitter.

When employers receive a resume, they will look online for background on the candidate. If your client is not online, employers will assume he or she hasn't kept up with the times, possibly has outdated skills, and all the rest of the negative stereotypes about older workers.

Standing Out

Recruiters and employers have heartily embraced social media for attracting and vetting candidates while older job seekers lag behind. Only 22 percent of job seekers aged 40 to 54, and 9 percent of those 55 and older are using social media in their search. If you factor in those using mobile devices to find and apply for work where 22 percent are aged 40 to 54 and only 6 percent are 55 or older, it's easy to understand how powerfully using social media will help your clients stand out.

Better Networking

Older workers have had the time to develop layers and layers of personal and professional relationships with people who trust and respect them. These deep and broad networks are a considerable advantage in job search. Online social networking sites are designed to multiply the

depth and breadth of these connections. This is an area where your clients can shine. Very briefly:

- **Facebook** is ideal for finding personal connections and networking; and particularly for reconnecting with old friends.
- **Twitter** is a global twenty-four hour a day conversation where it is easy to find people who share interests and the most fluid site for developing relationships with people at every level in a field.
- **LinkedIn** is the professional connection power house.

You can import **e-mail** connections and then add connections from past business associates and colleagues and members of alumni and professional groups.

Connecting with someone who can refer you to an open position or finding someone to ask for an informational interview is easy when you can see who second and third degree connections are linked to. Using these referrals triples your clients' chances of connecting successfully.

Social Proof

So many resumes include inaccurate and misleading information that part of the goal of a first interview is to check if job candidates are really as presented on paper. LinkedIn is particularly strong in providing social proof, a forum for client's connections to write recommendations, endorse their strengths and skills, and celebrate their accomplishments. This *social proof* provides important validation of the accuracy of your clients' presentation of self and experience.

Research

Social media sites are ideal for finding employers to target, and research their employees. For example; on LinkedIn a straightforward search unearths the skills needed for a new role, or the professional background of a recruiter, hiring manager or employer. Because of this ease, employers expect interviewees to know more. The bar is raised and candidates who don't have this information appear less professional.

If your clients want to be considered current, they must present themselves online.

Get Started Creating an Online Presence

Step 1: Do an audit of your client's current online presence. Google them.

Check if and where they show up and also if they have any *digital dirt*. More than 90 percent of employers research potential employees online, and 70 percent state they have rejected candidates because of negative impressions they received. So you must vacuum up that *digital dirt* or bury it in Google search results.

- If you find information on social sites that is negative, or simply too personal, change profile settings to *private*.

- Push any harmful data further and further back in search results by generating positive professional content using the methods below. Most people will not search past the third page on Google.
- If your client has a common name or shares a name with someone famous or notorious choose a distinctive version of their name, like adding a middle name or initial, and use it in all communications, on or off-line.
- Set up a Google Alert with their name. Your client will get email notification every time he or she is mentioned online, which will be exciting confirmation that your efforts on their behalf to build their professional reputation are working. Go to Google.com/alerts to get started. See the Personal Online Reputation Management articles for more details.

Step 2: Craft a 100 percent complete (“All Star”) LinkedIn profile.

According to LinkedIn, professionals with complete profiles are approached with career opportunities 40 times more than those with incomplete profiles.

LinkedIn’s current requirements for a complete profile are: industry and location, current position (with a description), two past positions, education, a minimum of three skills, at least fifty connections, and a profile photo.

There is great information available on how to create a branded professional profile on LinkedIn, including the LinkedIn learning center where you’ll find step-by-step articles, videos and classes.

This article will focus on issues particular to seasoned workers.

Profile Photos

When I lead LinkedIn workshops for older workers I see:

- Profile photos that are so heavily retouched that I’ve asked, "Is this a photo or a drawing?"
- Old, dated photos.
- Dark glasses, caricatures rather than photos, large hats shading faces, and on...
- And most commonly, no photo at all.

Many older workers are self-conscious about the changes age has brought to their appearance and also concerned that the way they look will keep employers from choosing them.

I think it’s important to overcome this reluctance and include a photo, because of the benefits of having a 100 percent complete profile. Also, without a photo viewers will wonder why it was omitted. Does this person have something to hide? Or, is this person behind the times?

Some career professionals do not agree with me. They reason that without a profile photo employers won't guess their client's age and they will be more likely to be chosen for an interview. Once in the interview their client will be in a better position to win the employer over.

In my view, if employers are expecting a younger candidate, an older candidate will be a shock. It's possible your client can overcome that first impression, but if the employer actually has a bias against older workers, or just really wants to hire someone younger, they will. Your client's time will be wasted and their confidence will be stressed.

The Best Profile Photo

Encourage your clients to have a professional photo taken. To reduce the cost consider hiring a professional photographer for your workshops. Your clients will be grateful.

If not, a friend who is a talented amateur will get good results when they take many photos. It's been suggested to shoot as many as one hundred frames to allow the person to become comfortable being photographed and present the natural shifts in expression that create the best images.

In creating a positive impression the best profile photo conveys competence and friendliness (and when appropriate, influence). The following are most important in order to express these qualities:

- **Eyes:** Make eye contact with the viewer. Look in the direction of the camera and focus beyond it. This will create an impression of immediacy.
- **Smile:** A smile is important. Show a few teeth if that feels natural.
- **Dress:** Dress professionally and simply in a current style.
- **Double chins:** Double chins and sagging jaw lines can be camouflaged by moving the jaw forward while holding the face steady.
- **Crows feet and other lines:** You can lessen the impression of facial lines use light photo editing.

Photos can be uploaded to PhotoFeeler.com for unbiased feedback on which photo is most effective; with ratings on friendliness, competency, and influence.

LinkedIn Text

The main issue in writing a LinkedIn profile for an older worker is the same as in writing a resume; there is so much experience to write about. The strategy you choose will depend on your client's goals and background, and also how comfortable they are about revealing their age.

LinkedIn only requires a profile to have a current and two past positions. Therefore it's fine for clients who want to downplay their age to focus solely on relevant recent experience. Shorter profiles will still bring the benefits associated with being *All Star* or 100 percent complete.

Others will want to portray their whole work history and this can also work well, particularly for clients who want to build a case for a direction that references skills gained earlier in life.

In choosing achievements to write about look for accomplishments that highlight breadth of knowledge and skills, reliability, maturity and professionalism, problem-solving ability, mentoring experience, and comfort in working with differing personalities and different generations. These are all highly valued benefits that seasoned workers may bring.

LinkedIn presents more of an opportunity to write a narrative than a resume does, however; downplay buzzwords like thirty plus years of experience, proven track record, expert, etc. and focus on the skills, achievement and results gained through that lifetime of experience.

Edit to remove reference to obsolete technology, skills, and jargon. Also avoid dated or too personal e-mail addresses. Newer e-mail platforms like gmail or e-mails related to personal websites are best.

Some of your clients actually have stale skills. Perhaps they have been unemployed for a long time, or were coasting in their jobs, not keeping up with their professions. Encourage them to begin updating their skills immediately. Fortunately, free and low-cost options for training are plentiful, including LinkedIn's partner Lynda.com, which offers unlimited online classes for a monthly fee. Add these trainings and classes to your client's profile.

Do list volunteer activities: 65 percent of recruiters say that finding information about volunteering and charitable donations creates a positive impression of a candidate.

Here are some additional ideas to add clout to LinkedIn profiles and demonstrate relevance and expertise.

- Add a resume, SlideShare, white paper, or multimedia presentation to the profile, as appropriate.
- Use "Status Updates" to write about attending a conference or professional event, share a newsworthy article, etc.
- Use LinkedIn as a blog and write long-form posts.
- Join LinkedIn industry groups and participate in questions and answers.
- Give and collect testimonials.
- Share and accept endorsements.

Step 3: Add other social profiles.

Now that the hard part of creating a LinkedIn profile is complete, the same information can be used in other online venues to showcase additional aspects of your client's expertise, for job search, or for a stronger online *footprint*.

- **Personal Website or Online Resume:** Services like Branded.me, ResumUP.com and strikingly.com allow you to export LinkedIn content as the basis for web and online resume pages (including infographic resumes) that are easy to maintain and optimized for mobile.
- **Portfolio Site:** In some fields, particularly creative fields, an online portfolio to show off designs, writings, or other projects, is a powerful demonstration of capability to potential employers.
- **Life Reimagined for Work:** This site from AARP has many facets, all designed to help experienced job seekers. Clients can register with Life Reimagined and use it together with LinkedIn Work to connect with employers who have committed to recruiting with employees of all ages.

The following suggestions provide additional credibility to employers that your client is keeping up with industry developments and also create a larger footprint, which is desirable.

Step 4: Comments

Write comments (signing full professional name for SEO) on newspaper articles and respected blogs in their field.

Step 5: Book Reviews

Write reviews of books in their field, always signing their full professional name.

Step 6: Articles

Clients who like to write can consider starting a blog. Those who don't want to commit to a blog can write articles as a 'guest blogger' or pieces for article directories like Ezinearticles.com.

For professional polish consider the following:

Step 7: Business / Networking Cards

In addition to name, cell phone number and email address, add addresses for LinkedIn address and other major online profiles as well as a job title or tag line that expresses your clients' strongest skills.

Step 8: Email Signature

Consider an expanded email signature. In addition to name and contact information, give readers the option to learn more by adding an occupation and links to LinkedIn or other sites.

An app like WiseStamp <http://www.wisestamp.com/> makes it possible to add this information, plus a profile photo, easily.

Conclusion

Age bias is real, but you can reassure potential employers that your clients are not tech-averse or behind the times by developing their online presence.

Start with a complete LinkedIn profile that says to employers *"My depth of experience and up-to-date skills make me the best person to solve your problems."*

Encourage your clients to be active online; researching potential employers, expanding their networks, arranging referrals to people who can connect them to open positions, building their reputations as experts. You'll get messages from happy clients like these: *"This process is truly valuable."* *"People are so willing to help."* *"Just got a really interesting referral."* Then enjoy celebrating the results with your clients.

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End Notes

Jobvite 2014 Social Recruiting Survey - https://www.jobvite.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Jobvite_SocialRecruiting_Survey2014.pdf

Jobvite 2015 Job Seeker Nation Study - https://www.jobvite.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/jobvite_jobseeker_nation_2015.pdf

About the Author



Phyllis Mufson, Job-Hunt.org columnist for the **Guide to Job Search for Boomers and Over 50**, is a Catalyst for Personal and Professional Growth. She is a career coach, with more than twenty-five years in career management: at Right Associates, as director of the Locks Career Center for Women in the Arts at Moore College, and currently in private practice. Following an early career in marketing and public relations, she trained as a coach and was awarded certification through the Coach Training Institute where she completed training in Co-Active Leadership.

Phyllis has assisted hundreds of career changers and job seekers to choose and develop careers in that sweet spot where their passions and skills find an audience and income. Her insights into best practices have been quoted in many major publications. She frequently presents to professional organizations on how to create work with meaning. She has served on the United States board of the Association of Career Professionals and of Business Women's Network. She earned the Bachelor of Fine Arts at the San Francisco Art Institute and the MA in Interdisciplinary Creativity at San Francisco State University. Earlier in her career she was a

textile artist. Now, in addition to her coaching practice, she is a jeweler. She is a winner of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Visit Phyllis' Job-Hunt.org column, Guide to Job Search for Boomers and Over 50 –

<http://www.job-hunt.org/boomer-job-search/boomer-job-search.shtml>

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Coaching Veterans to Understand the Value and Proper Usage of Social Media

By Patricia Frame

As you've noticed reading this edition of the Journal, many things have changed dramatically with the change in technology used by recruiters. The traditional methods used to find jobs are just not as effective now as they were, even a few years ago.

While most transitioning military learn about job search basics in their transition programs, these basics vary depending on instructor and the attention an individual gives the issue. Many military members focus on learning about resumes because they *know* they need one. While they learn something of social media options in their transition programs, they often also have heard about all its dangers from their bosses.

Periodically, military commands have put out fear-stoking articles about the use by terrorists of social media to track down military members and families with the intent to target them. Military bosses, who often have no social media experience, pass this on unfiltered to their troops. And certain military career fields have restricted online activities for years; hence, people in those fields who want to stay in government or government contracting are especially suspicious of social media. So when a contractor in a transition class talks about the importance of LinkedIn, many will ignore the advice.

Add to this that many transitioning military members have little understanding of networking combined with a belief that they have no contacts useful to their careers.

Your challenge thus becomes how to reach them effectively so that they make good decisions about the value of social media to career development and job search. Many need to learn:

- The value of social media in job search and career development.
- How to use social media effectively without compromising one's privacy.
- What social media can be used for in career and job search terms.
- How to select the right social media for career development.
- How to use social media with military friends for job search.
- How to build more connections to help with job search.
- How to explain military experiences so that they support future goals.

If you can begin to help with several of these issues, most military members will be quite responsive. They are used to computer-based training and work involving many computerized and mobile applications, so the issue is not that.

Many do have family members who keep in touch via Facebook, although few see how it can be used for job search. Others have spouses who use social media for work or pleasure but most do not even think to ask a spouse for such assistance. Most have some experience with YouTube, although not with its career videos. Few know much about Twitter, unless they are in a public relations role.

Understanding the Value of Social Media for Job Search

Social media has been used by companies extensively in recruiting for over five years. Surveys show that most recruiters and companies are using it consistently now. Recruiters (internal and external) use LinkedIn and Facebook as a major part of the recruiting process. Companies and corporate (internal) recruiters use LinkedIn, Facebook plus Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest as a way to enhance their brand as employers, build connections with potential candidates, and to post jobs. Many encourage their employees to use social media to assist in their efforts to attract and develop employee referrals, which are a top source of new hires now.

Some of the 2015 usage statistics from JobVite (1) are so high that they are unlikely to grow much more.

- LinkedIn is used by 95 percent of recruiters to search for candidates and to contact candidates with 79 percent reporting hires from such searches.
- Nearly as many recruiters (93 percent) review applicants' profiles on LinkedIn before interviewing them.
- 92 percent of recruiters post jobs on LinkedIn.
- 66 percent of recruiters use Facebook for search.
- 48 percent of recruiters post their jobs on Facebook.
- 26 percent of recruiters report hires from their Facebook searches.
- 95 percent of recruiters post jobs to Twitter.
- Over 70 percent of recruiters use social media to enhance employee referrals.

Over half of hiring managers and recruiters report reconsidering an applicant based on social media reviews. Most of these are tied to evidence of alcohol or drug abuse, comments which indicate potential illegal discrimination issues, and significant discrepancies between a resume and a social media profile. This is an important coaching point.

Veterans also need to learn how to research themselves online and what to do about any issues they find.

Managing the Privacy Issues

Veterans often have heard about the dangers of social media usage but rarely know much about ways to protect themselves. Basics, such as omitting addresses and turning off geographic

locators when posting pictures and items, may be totally unknown. Helping them to get over this hurdle is critical to ensuring they understand the career development value possibilities.

Encourage job seekers to explore the settings in each social network to learn how to protect their privacy. The settings differ by network and are also frequently changed. We won't go into details here because those details would be out-of-date soon.

Basics of Protecting Privacy

Personal information to share publicly:

- **Email address used for job search.** This needs to be available to the job seeker regardless of where they work or live. Google Mail (a. k. a. *gmail*) is used most often, and can be configured to feed into Outlook for the comfort of a familiar set up.
- **Phone number for job search** can be very handy for recruiters seeking to contact someone very quickly. This should definitely not be the home phone because that may be easily traced to the associated address. The work phone may be appropriate, if currently on active duty and not in violation of any unit policies or procedures.

Often Google Voice is a good solution (2) since it provides voicemail and has *apps* for both Android and Apple smartphones. A job-search-only cell phone is another option.

- **Birthdays** should *never* be shared in social media -- even without the year (too easy to guess the year)!

When someone knows a person's birthday, stealing that person's identity is much easier, so birthdays must always be carefully protected.

Facebook requires a birth date be provided and LinkedIn would like to know your birthday. If Facebook already has a birthday, digging through Facebook help (or Google) can provide the process for changing the dates. It can and should be changed, even on Facebook.

The best solution when a date is required, provide another date that is important and easy to remember -- the birthday of a sibling, friend, favorite celebrity, or spouse, for example. Or another date like April 1 of the year five (or more) years after (or before) the real birth year.

Using the month and day but omitting the year is not sufficient protection! The year is *very* easily guessed (less than 10 options for most people).

Using Social Media for Careers and Job Search

Few veterans understand the direct job search aspects of social media. Most veterans need to learn about how social media can support career development and professional growth. Most do not know how much information about careers is available, much less how to find target employers and learn more about them. Even fewer understand how they can make connections with people in their target fields to learn more about the career field and employer realities. This

also hinders their understanding and usage of keywords for their resumes and social media profiles. It tends to lessen their ability to present themselves effectively to potential employers which hinders employment and increases dissatisfaction with the first few jobs following their military service.

The wide range of groups and articles on LinkedIn, for example, often confuses veterans and many give up even trying to learn how to use the platform. Meanwhile, military specific alternatives to LinkedIn are growing and some military find them far more comfortable but do not realize what these lack in terms of their information for successful transition and career selection/ development. Many would benefit from information and coaching on how to find career information on the major social media platforms, how to assess sources and select the best matches to one's goals, and how to grow and develop within such groups. Learning how to find and follow Pulse writers, beyond the narrow selection of *Influencers*, is another useful aspect of learning how to effectively tap into career resources.

Select the *Right* Social Network to Use

While LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the largest current social media for career and job search information, the face of social media and the number of options changes constantly. Veterans need help in understanding how to select those media which are the most effective for their career choices. This includes coaching and development activities which demonstrate the value of each of the major social media options as well as how to assess new ones and how to keep learning over the course of one's career rather than solely focusing on the current job search.

LinkedIn, by virtue of its size and focus and use by companies, may be the best entry point for many. Coaching and information resources or guides dedicated to explaining the main aspects of its value are important to veterans – and potentially useful to a wide range of others seeking career advice. Most of the other sites are simpler to learn about since their options are fewer.

Learning to manage one's social media use is also critically important to many. This ranges from what one posts to how to control the amount of time spent on each. In the early stages there is both enthusiasm and the need to get a lot of work done: setting up or updating profiles, making connections, learning the aspects most relevant to one's career choices. This can rapidly peter out if it crowds out other valuable activities or is not seen to produce much quickly. Understanding the process and how to work and manage it effectively is a new skill for many people, including veterans.

Building Out a Military Network

Often it is most comfortable and thus easiest for a veteran to start building their online network among military friends. Yet many do not see this as having any value in job search and so do not do it. Teaching veterans how they can leverage their previous network can help to start this process in a way which enhances early success. Such uses include:

- Reconnecting with previous supervisors and managers who may provide a reference.

- Connecting with peers and managers who can add further information useful to the person's self-evaluation of potential careers and target employers.
- Connecting with those who have already successfully moved into new civilian careers for insight on successful approaches and what they learned from their mistakes.
- Connecting with those who now work for target employers or in target career fields for information and assistance.

Starting in the comfort zone and then moving out into the civilian world can be the easiest transition.

Making Connections

Like civilians, many veterans have limited experience with networking. Some even see it as only being a way to ask for a job. Focusing on how to effectively build long-term career connections online, and then move them offline is an important skill to master.

Coaching or networking guides which show a wide range of options and how to use each can significantly enhance success. These might start with the value of building connections in their current situation - people they are in school or other programs with and how to take these into the online world. The use of LinkedIn, for example, as a way to connect with people they meet in seminars, at presentations or meeting, and via professional events is not natural to most military folks.

Veterans recruiting program managers report that less than 10 percent of the veterans they meet at events and give their cards to follow-up with any form of contact. The third prong of this is also important - how to use the groups and Pulse on LinkedIn, for example - to directly contact people who seem to have useful information or ideas and build connections with them to support career development long-term.

Efforts to help transitioning military to make such connections also must include information on how to effectively build on such connections. This includes what to ask, how to grow and maintain connections, and ways to 'feed' your network. Insight into ways to develop deeper connections with selected people by more direct contact are also important.

Developing Profiles

The difficulty of translating military experience into private sector terms is quite high. Sure, there are online translators. But these provide limited help and are most effective if a person wants to stay in the exact same work as they did in the military. Most coaching and career support cannot give the time needed to understand in detail a specific veteran's experience and guide its translation to their desired career choices.

A valuable contribution is to show the person how to do this themselves. Social media play an important role in this.

1. The job listings and employer information available through such media, as well as job boards, offer insights into the job requirements and employer issues that can translate into understanding needs. This makes translating past experiences a clearer process.
2. The information available in articles posted supports better understanding of specific employment issues and trends. It also points a way to meeting people who can assist in understanding a career field's realities.
3. LinkedIn Groups offer both targeted information and links as well as places to ask questions and seek advice. YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook and similar services also provide a wide range of both employer information and specific careers information which can assist in understanding and translating experiences to support future jobs' requirements.

Learning the *civilian lingo* frightens many military, who have forgotten the effort it took to learn military lingo when they first entered military service. It is important for coaches and career services personnel to also understand that each service has its own very specialized language. Even both the authors of this article who are veterans but of different services have to clarify what we mean by some terms to each other.

Start with LinkedIn

Speaking *civilian-ese* as clearly as possible is essential both to be understood, and also to be found by recruiters or employers searching through LinkedIn.

Establishing the profile isn't difficult, but making the profile effective for job search is a challenge. Hopefully, service members preparing for transition understand that a LinkedIn Profile is one of the essentials required for most civilian jobs currently. However, like most job seekers and LinkedIn users, they may not understand the importance of the exact words they use in their profiles, particularly when describing themselves and their skills and accomplishments.

The best advice for these job seekers:

Focus on what you do that employers want, using the language that employers use to search LinkedIn (and Google).

Assume the job seeker was a master sergeant in the United States Marine Corps, how many civilians understand the role of a master sergeant well enough to know to search on that job title? Very few civilians understand those terms these days. So, describing the job -- in terms of the target job when possible -- is the best approach.

Beyond being someone who is leaving the military, knowing what the person wants to do in the civilian world is essential and must be conveyed clearly. One of the key fields in LinkedIn Profiles is the *Professional Headline*. The headline is the tagline following a name and photo in most visibility on LinkedIn, including the search function.

Doing a LinkedIn search for the term *master sergeant* or *captain* offered an interesting range of responses:

- Master Sergeant at US Army (the LinkedIn default headline -- current job title and current employer)
- Maintenance professional
- Transitioning military seeking civilian employment
- Retired at US Air Force
- E8 Senior Master Sergeant at United States Air Force
- Maintenance Manager with experience in military logistics: proven leader of teams (3 to 300), project manager, team builder

Which person would show up in a recruiter's search of LinkedIn? Not many recruiters searching for an *E8* or a *Master Sergeant* because they don't understand the terms, and a few might search for *transitioning military* but not many. If an employer is looking for a maintenance manager for their organization, who from the list will be contacted?

Security Clearances and References to Classified Information

Classified information, including tasks performed, technologies, and security clearances must be protected. Focus on the work done, without reference to the classified nature:

- Your direct reports managed (the people who reported directly to you without any other supervisors in between)
- Equipment used, maintained, or managed
- Skills used (analysis, IT/telecom, research, writing, etc.).

The focus should be on the work, achievements, and skills that are relevant to civilian jobs. Even the pilot of a spy plane (if there are any) can describe his or her flying skills (hours in the air, etc.) without revealing the specific nature of the flights or other classified information.

In general, the best strategy is to omit any references in social media, including LinkedIn, to clearances held. Unclassified clearances can be included on resumes submitted in response to job postings requiring specific clearances or to employers focused on classified work.

The Bottom Line

In summary, the use and value of social media is quite high for most veterans. But barriers erected when they were in service and lack of knowledge of many aspects of social media mean

most are not using it effectively in their career development. Coaches and career services personnel who can demonstrate effective ways to use social media will be able to provide important support to transitioning military.

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End Notes

(1) *Jobvite 2015 Recruiter Nation* survey: [www. Jobvite. Com](http://www.jobvite.com)

(2) *Google Voice*, Google: [https://support. google. com/voice/answer/115061](https://support.google.com/voice/answer/115061)

(3) *Transition GPS program*

<http://jko.jten.mil/courses/tap/TGPS%20Standalone%20Training/start.html>

About the Author



Patricia Frame, Job-Hunt.org columnist for the **Guide to Job Search for Veterans**, is an experienced management consultant, speaker and author on human capital issues. A United States Air Force veteran, she began her civilian career at A.T. Kearney and General Electric. Later she worked with several private and public mid-size high-tech companies to enhance organization capacity through more effective human resource management. She earned the BA in History and Political Science at Purdue University, the MA in International Relations at University of Arkansas (Europe), and the MBA at The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

Patricia founded Strategies for Human Resources (SHR) in 1993 as a consulting firm specializing in meeting the human resources needs of small to mid-size organizations to help them thrive. She has consulted for knowledge-based companies, associations, non-profits, retail, and service businesses. Careers and career development – from entry to encore – have been a passion for years. She speaks regularly to local groups and national conferences on career development topics.

Patricia writes for Job-hunt.org as their Veteran's Expert, on LinkedIn Pulse on Military to Civilian transition, and for ClearedJobs.net on all aspects of job search. She has blogged for many years in a variety of publications on career growth, job search, and starting one's own business including for DC Web Women, WomenGrowBiz, and (State)jobs.com. Her videos on job search topics for ClearedJobs.net may also be seen on her own careers site: www.PatraFrame.com.

Patricia has been a seminar leader and guest speaker for a wide range of professional conferences including: 115th Annual NCPA Conference, ASTD 2009 International Conference, Society for Scholarly Publishing, Special Libraries Association, Top Management Roundtable, Help Desk Institute, Idealist's First Annual Nonprofit Human Resource Conference, HRA-NCA' Annual

Conference and chapter meetings, 2nd Annual GrowSmartBiz Conference, Virginia Women Veterans Conference 2014, and CyberMaryland 2014.

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<http://www.job-hunt.org/veterans-job-search/veterans-job-search.shtml>

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Social Media Branding for People with Chronic Illness

By Rosalind Joffe

According to the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, a "chronic" illness is one lasting three months or more. Chronic illness includes many different and relatively common conditions: allergies, asthma, chronic fatigue, cystic fibrosis, depression, diabetes, epilepsy, heart disease, migraine headaches, and obesity, among many. Some babies are born with a condition, but many of us develop one (or more) of these conditions at later stages in our lives.

As defined, few people could be considered completely free of any chronic illness. Fortunately, for most of us, those chronic illnesses are largely invisible, and do not inhibit our ability to have successful careers.

However, for many, finding and keeping a job while having one of the more serious conditions can be a challenge. A major part of the solution is developing skills demanded by the current job market. Then, for career and job search success, those skills must be combined with a strong personal brand marketing those skills and the associated accomplishments.

Social Media Participation

Participating in social media is essential today for most careers because employers and recruiters use them relentlessly to find and screen job candidates. Social media has proven to be effective in helping some chronic illness sufferers to cope with their illness. However, over-sharing in social media can cause problems, as many have already discovered.

Unless your goal is a career associated with your chronic illness, the best strategy is probably to avoid associating your name with your illness in social media or, in fact, anywhere on the Internet.

LinkedIn

Currently, LinkedIn has 45 LinkedIn Groups associated with the topic of "chronic illness." The purposes of these groups range from helping individuals to personally manage their illnesses to aiding counselors to be more effective in helping people with chronic illness. Few recruiters probably scan those groups, unless they are searching to fill positions associated with treating those who have chronic conditions.

The Groups to help people manage their own diseases are not particularly popular, for a good reason. *Advertising* your chronic illness on LinkedIn is probably not wise since it may discourage some employers and recruiters from approaching you.

Facebook

Facebook, not surprisingly, has much more content associated with chronic illness -- from living with illnesses to treating it (both as a professional and as a person with a chronic illness). While getting help with personally managing your weight loss (or other condition) is probably a good idea, making that need visible to the world on Facebook is probably not. Given Facebook's record for changing their privacy settings without notice, mentioning your own chronic conditions is probably **not** a good idea.

When you do this as thoughtfully as possible while understanding the strengths and limitations of what you are doing, you are more likely to create career success that will allow you to thrive, rather than just survive.

Experiencing and Beating the Imposter Syndrome

It's not unusual to hear people who live with chronic illness express a keen desire to be seen as more than their illness, regardless of age, race, or gender. But it's often even more difficult for those same people to view themselves in this light.

Debilitating symptoms can consume time, energy and resources, diminishing confidence in a person's abilities to perform even simple tasks. For this reason, many experience what we think of as "*the imposter syndrome*" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Impostor_syndrome), a condition in which, despite external evidence, a person does not believe he or she deserves the success they have achieved.

When you live with unpredictable and debilitating symptoms that impact what you do and the way you do it and you have hidden this from others, it is easy to perceive yourself as an imposter. This is just one reason that managing your brand and your reputation when you are in a job search that much more difficult for those living with chronically difficult health.

In my experience working with many hundreds of people living with difficult chronic health conditions in which symptoms typically wax and wane unpredictably, there are several issues to consider.

You can avoid the *imposter syndrome* when you can do the job well as it is currently designed. That requires an honest self-assessment that includes what you can do, what's not possible, what type of activities vary depending on symptoms. Finally, with that in mind, identify what you need from a work setting to get the job done well.

It seems obvious that when you can do the job that you have been tasked to do you are more likely to feel confident about what you deliver. But it's tempting, whether you are starting out in the job market or a seasoned employee who is desperate for a job, to take whatever you are offered and convince yourself that you can work within the existing structure. That's a recipe for disaster. If you need flexible hours for whatever reason (to get to healthcare appointments, because there are times of day in which you function better or simply to take breaks) and this job

or the organization doesn't offer this, then you need to look elsewhere because you will not be able to do your best.

You Are More Than Your Illness

The perception that you are more than your illness puts the emphasis on what you can do rather than what you can't do. And that statement is just as true for healthy people.

If you are a web designer, you would build your brand based on your web design skills and experience. If you don't write copy or build websites, there would be no reason to mention it.

Similarly, if you're a lawyer who cannot type on the keyboard due to a physical disability but you successfully use voice recognition software, you would design your online brand to reflect your legal skills and experience without mentioning such work arounds.

Just like the web designer who would most likely not apply for a job requiring writing or web building, you would not apply for a legal job that requires using a keyboard rather than voice recognition software. When you normalize your situation by recognizing that there are universal challenges and they vary in degree, you are less likely to feel stuck and sorry for yourself.

When you focus on what you can do rather than what you can't, you showcase your strengths to yourself and others.

Managing Online Identity

Your online identity must be managed according to all of your needs. Take charge where it is possible, and accept where it is not. Consider what you want to include and what you do not want to include. Again, this is true for healthy people but even more complicated and important for you.

You might want to be honest about what you live with but given the nature of social media and the short time frame that people spend on any given site, this might not be the right place to feature certain information. Unless, of course, you want this to be part of your brand.

This sounds simple enough but it can easily become a source of anxiety and undermine your efforts. For instance, a client who was a recent college graduate was applying for jobs that often listed *passionate* and *committed* in the job descriptions. Her only volunteer experience was extensive fundraising for a disease organization. Although her symptoms do not impact the way she works or her performance, she had decided that she would not include anything about living with illness.

Although there are many people who are active in disease organizations and don't live with that disease, she worried that if her involvement was featured on her profile, people would make assumptions that she lives with this disease. But her fear hurt her ability to showcase important strengths. It helped her to ask these questions so she could figure out what was in her best interest:

How could this information advance or harm my job search efforts?

What might I have to give up if I include -- or don't include -- this information?

On the other hand, when you choose to omit the kinds of activities referred to in the above example on your profile, it could lead to surprising and unexpected questions. One client found this out when the hiring manager saw her tagged as a speaker in a photo at a national disease organization event. When he asked why she'd not mentioned this and his questions seemed to her to become more pointed, what had been a pleasant interchange became difficult as she increasingly went on the defensive.

In retrospect, as we discussed it, it is impossible to know what his agenda was but we did know that my client did not feel comfortable about the topic and that became a problem for her. The point is not whether she should or should not have mentioned her activities to a prospective employer or online. I've seen people fail to create a LinkedIn profile because they worry about what to include. Others have chosen to not post a highly worthwhile event that showcased their fundraising strengths or passionate commitment on Facebook because they didn't want prospective employers to worry that they might live with this disease.

Face unexpected questions with the same resiliency you rely on to respond to the unpredictable symptoms with which you live.

Online Invisibility or Careful Visibility

Finally, when you are searching for a job and want people to find you, the last thing you want is to be invisible. When you live with chronically difficult health symptoms, it makes sense to keep some aspects of your life invisible. Deciding what that is and how much is the key. If you choose to make some of your illness related focus or activities public, then manage what you how you describe your limits.

All references to your life with illness should focus on your functional capacity and your positive, *can do* spirit. Keep the tears to yourself and offline. If you choose not to disclose this in any way in your job search (and this only works if there has been no history of such material online), keep all posts and photos that could encourage others to wonder or to be suspicious that you are hiding something, away from online visibility, even if this means avoiding such activities. Be as private as you need to be and as public as you want to be.

In many ways, social media make it more difficult than ever to keep certain information private or even to be able to massage the message in the way that people would prefer. But in other key ways, the web and social media offer tremendous opportunities to those of us who need to work with flexibility and to connect to a wider audience.

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End Notes

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About the Author



Rosalind Joffe, one of Job-Hunt.org's columnists for the **Guide to Job Search for Those with Chronic Illness**, is passionate about giving people who live with a chronic health condition the tools and support they need to thrive. She built on her own experience in living with several chronic illnesses (including multiple sclerosis, ulcerative colitis) and related conditions for over 35 years to found the coaching firm, ciCoach.

She is co-author of ***Women, Work and Autoimmune Disease: Keep Working, Girlfriend!*** published by Demos Health. She was part of a research team, funded by the IOC, studying the impact of short term coaching on stay-at-work, published in the ***Journal of Occupational Psychology***.

A recognized national expert on chronic health challenges and their impact on career, Rosalind is a widely quoted and sought after speaker. She has been quoted in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, MORE Magazine, Fast Company, The Boston Globe, The Washington Post, WebMD, AARP, ABC Radio, msnbc.com, Investor's Business Daily, as well as regional and national media outlets, disease organizations, and health journals. A patient advocate, she sits on the Board of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners and chairs the Patient Engagement Council of Massachusetts Health Quality Partners.

Rosalind earned the BS in Communications and the MEd at Boston University. She is a certified mediator, has advanced training in Focusing Practice and is an ICF accredited coach.

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A Grad School Parable: What Could Have Been By Kate Duttro

*This is the story of Jane Parable (actually a composite of grad students I have worked with and known). It's **what she could have - should have – would have done differently**, had she known then what she has learned since.*

The gold-standard traditional tenure-track academic jobs for doctoral recipients were scarce the year she finished her degree, and she found herself a casualty of statistics – no job. More than 50,000 doctoral degrees were granted in the US in 2013, and less than a third found tenure-track jobs.

Jane's Story

Jane didn't recognize that she could be developing her future career while she prepared for it in grad school. She was too busy balancing work with courses and research to think about it – that time seemed so far away, and she assumed that everything depended on her grades. An excellent student, she loved learning, focused on pleasing her professors with consistently excellent work, and received praise and recognition in her academic department.

When she finished classes and started the dissertation, she began to feel twinges of uncertainty about a job search, but her advisors wanted her focused on her research, so she redoubled her efforts and finished the writing, graduating *almost on time*, (3+ years from her Master's).

She soon discovered that, despite following her advisor's advice, she was not among the top candidates for the various tenure-track jobs open that year – or the next.

Why No Tenure Track?

Here are some of the factors that she later came to understand contributed to her jobless state.

- She didn't really know what skills she should be getting (and articulating) while she was in grad school, and she had little concept of what was happening to the academic market for those in her discipline.
- She had no online presence. She had no *profile* and did not indulge in *social media*. Neither Google nor colleagues could find the real Jane. (Several others on FaceBook share her name.)
- Her *network* was shallow and limited to face-to-face acquaintances, and she found the idea of *networking* distasteful and mildly degrading. No one who could hire her actually knew her.

- She had not cultivated strong professional relationships with peers, colleagues or mentors at her university, within her field, or beyond.
- She had little job experience beyond part-time jobs and assistantships. Expecting to be a professor, she had only a general idea of what her *transferrable* skills were – research and teaching?

After various failed applications over two academic years, she began to lose confidence in herself and her academic job search stalled. She didn't know where to start searching for non-academic jobs. What else could/should she have done? -- What can you do?

Actively Build Your Future Career While You Are in Grad School

Had she known the qualities she needed to demonstrate as an academic candidate, she could have focused on making sure she had them, and that others knew it. Jane should have documented the strengths and skills she was acquiring during her PhD training. Being aware of the current job market in her field may should have helped her keep potential back-up plans in mind also.

Had she prioritized her efforts, Jane could have had more meaningful discussions with her faculty advisors, in terms of what was important to her and how that could guide her decisions – instead of simply following their advice. Jane hadn't realized she was following the career they wanted for her.

Become Visible as a Professional "Brand"

Jane was dismissive of the idea of *branding* herself, feeling it was sleazy to *sell* herself, especially as she was *only* a student. She was also protective of her privacy, because she was concerned about having her personal life spread about the Internet.

She had chosen the university because of her mentor's good reputation in the field. Ironically, Jane hadn't noticed that a *brand* and a *reputation* are the same thing. She should have recognized the importance of becoming known, even as a grad student learning to be a professional in an academic field.

Jane had confused privacy with online invisibility. When she graduated, she was still essentially invisible beyond her department, with no reputation as a developing professional, either online or off. She hadn't noticed that *keeping her nose to the grindstone*, and avoiding all *social media* could hurt her professional reputation by hiding it. Eventually, she came to understand that professionals can build their brand/professional reputation) online, and even use social media, yet keep their personal life relatively private.

Recognize Transferable Skills and Articulate Your Strengths

Jane should have been more aware of the skills she was acquiring – not just the facts she had memorized about her field, but recognizing and articulating the skills she had picked up while

doing the tasks she most enjoyed. She hadn't really thought about how they could be applied beyond the university.

Documenting those skills online was equally important. For example, she had been analyzing the history of complex social situations that spanned national borders and cultures that led to explosive socioeconomic pressures and eventual change. She had learned to explain those issues in lucid prose. Verbally, she could respond extemporaneously to student questions at a vocabulary level they could understand, without “*dumbing down*” the answer and eliminating the complexity of the situation. *All of those tasks contain skills*, and could be applied equally to academic jobs as to analyzing current issues for professional positions beyond academia.

On her own, beyond her classwork, she had also developed an extensive quantitative database of important information in her field. It was useful to several faculty within her department, who praised her creativity and hard work in developing it. Even she saw its value to others in her field, but she thought that talking about herself would be boasting or bragging. Thus, she unwittingly limited her job search, because *no potential employers knew of her abilities (or could discover them in an online profile)*.

Establish Your Reputation/Brand

Jane could have started professional *profiles* on the important social media platforms when she began grad school, such as Academia.com (for academic careers) and LinkedIn.com (for careers beyond academia). She could have documented the progress of her developing skills by posting her classwork papers and noting her progress for her mentors and other professionals.

A professional profile automatically helps you to accumulate the keyword terminology of the field that recruiters and hiring managers use to search online for employees and colleagues within the field. When you make an effort to match the keywords in a job description and your application/resume, it is called Search Engine Optimization (SEO), because you are optimizing your chance of being found by the search engines, such as Google.

Those commonly used terms are likely to accumulate naturally in your profile as you document your progress through grad school. By articulating the skills and abilities you are developing within the field, especially if the terms are similar to those used beyond the academic world, you are increasing your chances of being found online by colleagues and employers looking for your skills.

Even if Jane's ill-fated resumes and applications had survived the initial keyword screening, she lost out when HR departments found no online profiles that backed up her CV/resume. (We now know that many recruiters don't trust applications/resumes unless they can find the same information elsewhere online, particularly in LinkedIn profiles and other portfolio websites. They assume that resume information can be *fudged*, but freely available information online is so public that it *has* to be true.)

Develop Relationships with Colleagues and Mentors

Unanticipated opportunities often arise simply from other people knowing the quality of your good work. If your excellent work is not known, the opportunities can't happen.

For example, one student chatted with a famous visiting scholar after her talk at a university. He learned years later that she was impressed enough with his questions that she would have invited him to apply to a fellowship with her department. Because he never followed up with her, he lost a potential opportunity that he never even knew existed.

Jane could have Googled colleagues and mentors whose papers she was citing in her own work, contacted them and asked questions, or sought their opinions. She could have engaged with them about the topics that matter in the field. She could have gotten to know experts in fields related to hers and they would have come to "know" and respect her abilities.

Jane complained that *social media* took too much time, but if she had seen it as a strategy for developing professional relationships with colleagues, and not as a social toy or a substitute for television, she could have set limits for herself. By spending just 15-20 minutes a week posting her academic work, perhaps even as a blog that documented her learning, or contacting colleagues she had not yet met, she could gradually become perceived as a thought leader in her field. She also had worried that posting her work would allow competitors to steal it, but by posting at least the outline of her work online, she would have established the growth and ownership of her thoughts, as well as the publication date of her work.

Develop a Network of Colleagues

Jane's network was woefully inadequate because she assumed that it meant handing out business cards at the *networking* meetings she hated. She didn't understand that networking really should focus on contributing - you become known because of what you have done to advance the profession and other colleagues, as well as adding to the larger community.

For example, she didn't understand why grad students in another department began their own biannual regional conference. It was a ton of work, and they did most of it using email and a conference website, but by the time they graduated, hundreds of colleagues (both fellow students and older, established professors) knew their names and their work. Several of them developed important mentor relationships in the process, and other colleagues wanted to work with them on publications and other events because they had discovered common interests as they got to know each other. They were also able to demonstrate their leadership capabilities, as well as having managed a complex project.

People say that who you know is important, but Jane came to see that what is far more important is who knows you and your work. Networking means becoming known for your work, and your reputation as a contributing professional is as important online as it is in person. By focusing exclusively on her work, avoiding online exposure and not developing relationships with colleagues, Jane was decreasing her own chances of being known for her work.

While none of the above issues **alone** caused Jane's problem, the accumulating series created an effect large enough to derail her. (Admittedly, I've stacked the deck against Jane in this story, in using most of the mistakes I've seen graduate students make when approaching job search. It's unlikely that everyone will personify all of them, but neglecting one's online reputation is common among academics, yet it can be easily changed with simple awareness of the consequences.)

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Useful Websites

Websites for posting academic papers/articles - Academia.com, Chronicle.Vitae.com

Websites for posting more general papers/articles - LinkedIn.com, Plus.Google.com

Website for Q&A and discussions of issues relating to academic to non-academic careers - VersatilePhD.com, CheekyScientist.com/

Coach website with relevant information on academic careers - TheProfessorIsIn.com (Karen

Kelsey), with useful blog posts on CVs and resumes, and academic job search and careers

Coach website with relevant information on non-academic careers - FromPhDtoLife.com

(Jennifer Polk), useful blog posts on all things academic, and resources for career transition and other resources for PhDs. Two other coaches who work specifically with academics, MaryBeth Averil, <http://writeonmba.com/> and Hillary Hutchinson, <http://www.transitioningyourlife.com/> and my own website is CareerChangeForAcademics.com

JibberJobber.com is a free website that allows you to maintain your contacts and track/store all your job search activities

Career portfolio websites - Portfolium.com - PortfolioGen.com - Oystir.com – VisualCV.com

Also, Goshen College provides a list of free eportfolio resources, primarily for students <https://www.goshen.edu/careers/eportfolio-resources/>

Useful Books

Getting What You Came For, by Robert Peters (1998)

The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career, Goldsmith, Komlos and Gold

From Student to Scholar: A Candid Guide to Becoming a Professor, by Steven Cahn

Black Hole Focus: How Intelligent People Can Create A Powerful Purpose for Their Lives, by Isaiah Hankel, 2014

So, What Are You Going To Do With That? Finding Careers Outside Academia, 3rd Edition, 2015, by Susan Basalla and Maggie Debelius

About the Author



Kate Duttro, DEd, columnist for Job-Hunt's Guide to Careers for Academics, began her private practice as a career consultant and coach when she retired after more than a decade at the University of Washington as a career counselor, where she loved helping thousands of undergrads, graduate students and alumni. As a Master Trainer in the Dependable Strengths Articulation Process, she specializes in strengths coaching, in particular, helping recovering academics (from grad students to post docs and adjuncts) to find and get work in careers based on the strengths they excel at and love to use.

Kate's website for recovering academics is CareerChangeForAcademics.com. Her current work is informed by experiences with her own varied earlier careers, ranging from traditional university teaching (anthropology, field archaeology, English composition, and career exploration) to sheep farming, freelance writing/editing and training/consulting for corporate clients, small-town economic development and career coaching.

Kate earned the Doctor of Education in Anthropology in 1978, the MA in Anthropology (1973), the BA in Anthropology (1968) and the BA in Latin American Studies (1968), all at The Pennsylvania State University. She taught at several Penn State Campuses, as well as at James Madison University.

She co-authored *Seattle Job Source* (2002) and edited the *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal's* Special Issue on The Influence of Bernard Haldane (2003). An award-winning writer, she has written for magazines, newsletters, commercial newsletters and businesses. She has blogged for Job-Hunt.org, CareerThoughtLeaders.com, and her own blogs. A Career Development Facilitator (CDF) Instructor for the National Career Development Association (NCDA), she offers the training necessary to the CDF certification through NCDA at SeattleCareerTrainer.com.

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6. References should use the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association format, as follows:

For books:

Author(s) last name, initial(s), (date of publication), **title**, city, state, publisher. Example:

Gysbers, N.C., & Moore, E.J. (1987). *Career counseling skills and techniques for practitioners*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

For articles:

Author(s) last name, initial(s), date of publication, title of article, publication **name** and **volume**, (number), pages. Example:

Henton, J. N., Russell, R., & Koval, K. E. (1983). Spousal perceptions of midlife career change. *Personnel and Guidance Journal* **61** (5), 287-291.

7. Avoid the use of the generic masculine pronoun and sexist terminology. Aim for a readable, approachable, immediate style, avoiding the passive voice and the detached tone of typical academic journals.
8. Do not submit material that is under consideration by another periodical. If you have published an article in another publication that you believe is of merit, you may wish to submit it to the Career Planning and Adult Development Network Newsletter for consideration as a summary or abstract. We accept review copies of books, but do not guarantee that we can find a reviewer.
9. Manuscripts should not exceed 4,000 words. A typical article would run from 6 to 12 pages of double-spaced, word-processed copy. However, please do not let length inhibit you from expressing your ideas.
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11. Submit manuscripts, ideas, or questions to:

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