

MASTER SOCIAL MEDIA

USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER ONLINE TOOLS TO DISCOVER EMPLOYERS AND FIND INFORMATION TO ENHANCE YOUR JOB SEARCH.

Your social media presence could put you in the right place at the right time in front of the right audience.

LinkedIn is a professional networking platform with over 600 million members. Start by connecting with people you know – this will build the foundations of your network. Then search for alumni from your university. Perhaps start with those who've studied your subject and find out what careers they've followed. To broaden your network, it's helpful to do some research before you make requests and to personalise each one. Mention why you're reaching out; did they study at the same institution as you? Are you both members of the same LinkedIn groups? Do they have a professional blog you like, or did they just write an article in the industry journal? Focus on shared interests or experiences and why you'd like to connect. Are you looking for information about the sector or organisation that they work in, or would you like to know more about how they used their degree in their career so far? Also think about what you can do for your connections; relationships should be reciprocal.

Networking varies across different social media platforms. On Twitter you can start a conversation with anyone. Employers may host live chats on Twitter and Facebook Live for some job areas, which allow you to hear from people working in the field and ask questions. For example, PhD researchers chat using the hashtag #phdchat, and librarians and information professionals use #uklibchat.

Commercial awareness

Understanding and talking about key issues and trends in the industry will help you stand out when networking or at interview.

LinkedIn groups offer access to sectors or roles that you're interested in. You can use them to find out about the issues facing that role or industry, and to get an idea of culture and priorities of those professionals.

Additionally, you can research companies by looking at their LinkedIn pages for news they've posted and from the career paths of their employees. A helpful feature on LinkedIn is that company pages usually indicate alumni from your university who work there and/or former colleagues, which can help your research and networking with that organisation.

Twitter is extremely useful for your commercial awareness. You can follow employers, professional associations and experts in the field of work you're interested in. The immediacy of Twitter means that you can find out the latest issues in your industry even on the way to interview. It might be helpful to use a feature like Twitter lists to collate a news channel of content for yourself in order to help you keep up to date with information and developments.

Using tools to the max

- Twitter lists can be useful for sorting the people you follow into groups or separating out different sectors you're interested in. Other people's lists can also provide useful ideas of who to follow.
- Hootsuite is a platform that helps by managing multiple social media accounts in one place. You can filter your feeds into columns according to keywords or hashtags. Tools such as IFTTT can automate job or keyword searches online and send you the results in your preferred format, saving you lots of time.
- When you're publishing on social media make sure you use the best platform for the format of your content. It might go without saying but if you want to share your design work then Instagram might be more effective than Twitter. If you're writing articles discussing current financial regulations, then WordPress or Medium might be more suitable than Tumblr.

Creating a digital footprint

Some 57% of employers reject a candidate after reviewing their online presence (Career Builder, 2018) so make sure your digital footprint presents the best version of you.

Consider whether a comment or photo is something you want an employer to see now and in a few years' time. Site owners have a habit of changing privacy settings so check yours regularly to see if there's anything on your profile you wouldn't want employers to see.

Google yourself – what are your top results? Do they refer to you or someone else with the same name? Would you be happy with an employer seeing the content? Regularly invest time to maintain your online presence and you'll reap the benefits. Creating a LinkedIn profile that rates well will raise your profile in search engine rankings.

You can show commitment to your subject matter and develop your audience by blogging or vlogging. Produce content related to your interests and aim to demonstrate critical awareness and other skills where appropriate. Remember to share and distribute your content on the appropriate social media platforms.

Creating a positive digital presence is not just about producing your own content though. Support other job seekers by sharing vacancies and promoting their content.

Ultimately, improving your digital presence achieves two things: it improves your visibility online and establishes your credibility with the right audience. This is a long-term development however, so don't expect overnight and instant success. 

See 'Getting LinkedIn with employers' PAGE 23

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