

The Job Board is Dead, Long Live Social Media...

Are you one of the 300 million registered users of LinkedIn? Or one of the billion people active on Facebook? Or one of around 100 million people who regularly tweet? These numbers are staggering right?! Now think of it from the perspective of job hunting - how many people can you reach or how many people can reach you? The possibilities are endless and it's relatively easily to manage if you do it right

Where Are You?

Don't have a LinkedIn Profile? Not active on Facebook or Twitter? You probably should be, especially if you are looking for new employment. More and more employers and recruiters are using sites such as LinkedIn to find the talent needed to make businesses better.

First off, can you be found? Try Google-ing yourself by name now. What came up? Anything? If you're on LinkedIn, your profile will likely be in the top 5 – 10 results; a good thing if people are looking to find out more information about you. Now try doing the same using keywords from which you'd like people to find you, like "awesome VP Sales for startups". Did you appear in the results now? Possibly not but think about how you'd like people to find you when writing your LinkedIn profile and Headlines.



Profes-social Networking

Whilst LinkedIn is a networking tool, you could really think of it as a professional but social job board. One of the other cool things about LinkedIn is that it's pretty reactive; you're not necessarily advertising yourself as looking for a job but you should know that most search executives spend a lot of time looking for people on there. Therefore, you get to hear about some of the best jobs that aren't advertised or otherwise known about. It really is great for networking and finding new business opportunities but finding new employment can be as simple as

updating your status to say 'immediately available for work', if your profile is up to date and you have plenty of information about yourself added you will be found.

Another positive for these sites is its easy for you to keep up to date with your connections, every time you login, your personal news feed is right there, people will see your updates on their newsfeed too. Follow your preferred new employers, follow recruiters you've dealt with in the past, most if not all will update new opportunities whenever they come up.

If you have ever spent a significant amount of time looking for a job, you probably had to register your details on lots of different websites like Monster, TotalJobs, Seek as well as many recruitment company websites. Well, with LinkedIn etc., all that is not necessary! Signing up to email alerts are a thing of the past, LinkedIn even has a 'apply now' button where you can apply for a job within seconds, but you have to have a LinkedIn account first! But it's free (to have a basic package at least!) so why wouldn't you?

And don't think it's just LinkedIn that are cutting in on Monster, SEEK and other job boards, Facebook are also rumoured to be getting in on the act, <http://www.ere.net/2011/10/20/is-facebook-about-to-offer-free-job-listings>. Given the size and popularity of Facebook, it's difficult to see how that wouldn't be successful.

Doing your Research

These social networking sites aren't just handy and indispensable for job hunting; they are also a great tool to do some research on the company and the people you are applying to. Before applying for a role, look up the hiring manager or the recruiter on LinkedIn, have they got recommendations? Read them, get an idea of the person you are about to send your details to. Check out Facebook, how is their profile? What are their interests? Support the same sports team as you? Great, mention it in your initial message; you're more likely to be noticed and it shows you've done your research.

Prior to an interview, search these sites for the person interviewing you, the more information you have the more confident you will be and the more the interview will flow. Perhaps the interviewer worked for a previous company of yours or went to the same university, all good talking points and it shows you've taken the time to prepare; invaluable at an interview.

Is it all Good?

It's not all bad but, of course, this research method works both ways. The negative side of social networking: too much personal information out there for anyone and everyone to see! If your LinkedIn profile picture is Homer Simpson, you aren't doing your chances any good. Facebook is more of a social site but be careful what you post; you don't know when your potential new boss is looking, or your current boss for that matter! We've all heard the horror stories.

In Conclusion

Overall, using Social Media to source, or to be sourced for, your next career move has far more positives than negatives and nowadays there are lots of privacy settings on most sites to make sure that people only see what you want them to see.

Many of you will have profiles on the sites we've mentioned but how up to date are they? How appealing do they look? Look at them from an outsider's point of view, would you contact the profile if you were hiring? No? Then you have some work to do, but trust us, it's worth it!