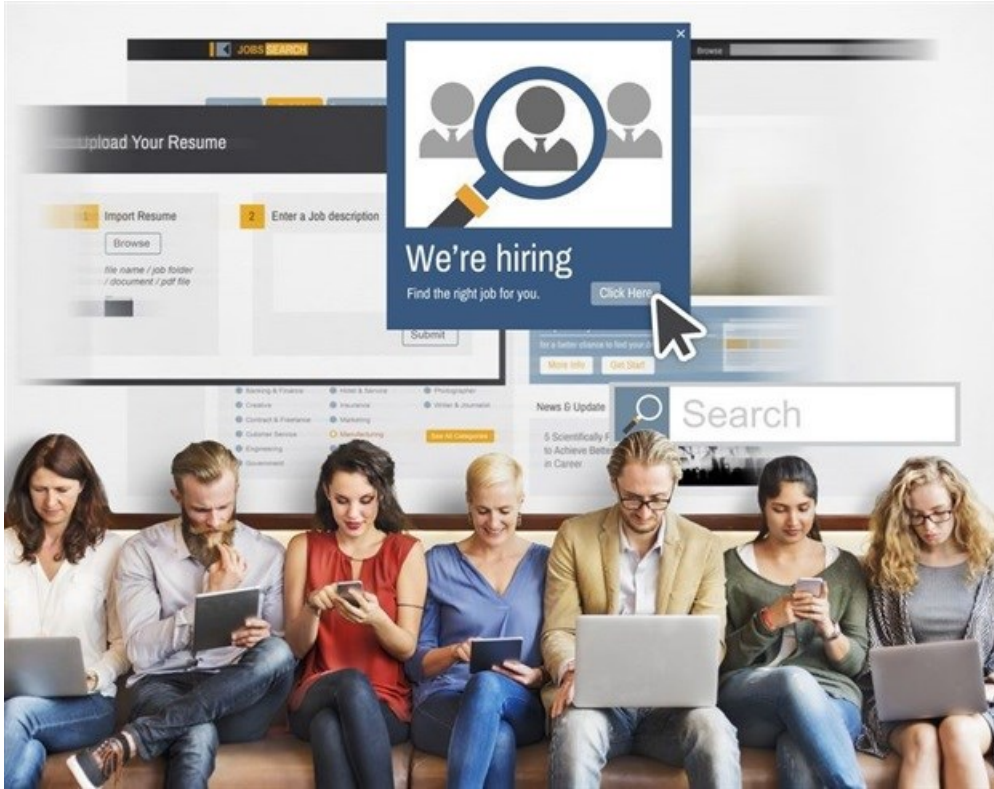


How to leverage social media to assist your job search

Technology can be either a benefit or a liability when seeking a new job. Job seekers need to ensure their social media profiles put their best face forward to potential employers.



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LinkedIn may be the first social network most people think of when it comes to a job search, however, branding through social media can take place on any platform, from Instagram to Twitter. Lyndy van den Barselaar, managing director at ManpowerGroup South Africa explains that social media platforms have become a crucial part of the modern job search, by allowing individuals to establish their personal brand, identify job opportunities and network online.

“As competitiveness in the job market continues to grow, social media is becoming an increasingly necessary part of the job search and recruitment process,” says van den Barselaar. According to the IOA social media report 2017, over 60% of employers screen candidates using social media platforms to determine if the job seeker presents themselves in a professional manner and whether the candidate will fit in well with the company culture, whilst 45% of employers want to learn more about the candidates’ qualifications. The IOA report also revealed that more than 40% of employers are less likely to interview job candidates if they are unable to find information about the candidate online.

For job seekers, there are certain ways to maximise positive exposure through strategically using social media channels.

Complete a social media audit

First, scan the landscape of your social media footprint and take note of all the places where you show up. Are your social media profiles public or private? Did you stop updating your blog years ago? Do you post content that showcases your talents or interests? These are questions you should have in mind when you start combing through your online presence.

Consider what your social media profiles say about you to someone who has never met you and if you are satisfied with the image it portrays. “If not, then you have some work to do on editing these profiles to ensure they are in line with the

personal brand you are building for yourself,” says van den Barselaar.

Optimise your profiles

“Maintaining a social media presence can be time-consuming, and it is important to filter and think about the type of information you want others to know about you,” says van den Barselaar. This means taking action; for instance, you may want to make certain profiles private, create secondary accounts or start purposefully sharing content that matches the job you are seeking.

Reach out to others – when relevant

What’s the etiquette for social media messages regarding a job search? It’s no different than using any other channel. A personal message to someone who can help make a connection or introduction can be welcome – as long as it’s relevant and professional, and doesn’t come across as spam. Do your research prior to firing off a direct message to show that you’re interested in talking to this person specifically, rather than spamming your network.

Grow professionally using social media

Whether a job search is active or passive, social media can always be leveraged to grow, learn and make on-going connections. For example, YouTube is a trove of tutorial videos that can teach coding skills, networking tips or countless other important career skills. Instead of wasting time on social media, use it to your professional advantage.

“Social media use not only shows that an individual is up-to-date with the latest technology, but it also provides candidates with a way to convey their personalities and personal brands beyond a CV,” says van den Barselaar. Social media is just one tool in a job search, so don’t only post or tweet at the expense of networking, polish your CV and continue to develop your skills. It’s been proven that combining traditional career advancement with social media can accelerate your job track and consequently improve your chances of being hired.

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