Using Social Media to Enhance Your Employability

Used effectively for activities such as research and self-promotion, social media can dramatically increase your chances of landing that perfect job. However, if used carelessly, social media can significantly damage your chances in the job market. Here are some ways you can put your best foot forward on social media, while avoiding major mistakes.

**Portray the Right Image**
Employability isn’t simply about getting your next job. It’s also about your ability to develop and manage a satisfying career.

Through social media you have the opportunity to promote yourself for the right reasons and maintain an impressive professional identity. When you apply for a job, your potential employer is likely to search for you online to find out more about you, so the image you present is vital.

Make sure nothing is visible that you wouldn’t want employers to see when they search for you. Many professions such as nursing, teaching and law also have guidelines on the use of social media that emphasize the need to behave professionally online. Do some research online for relevant examples of guidance from the areas in which you’re interested and tailor your own social media image accordingly.

**Stand Out From the Crowd**
We know from employers that being distinctive and strategic online will help you stand out from other applicants, so consider what makes you different, then back it up with examples. For example, if you have a niche area of knowledge, share interesting articles and participate in discussions around that topic. If you have a particular skill, demonstrate it.

**Develop a Strategy**
To stand a better chance of success with finding a job and attracting employers, you need to be pro-active. This might include:

- Researching employers and thought-leaders in your area, and staying up to date with news from your industry.
- Searching for vacancies—employers are increasingly using LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter to promote job openings.
- Making connections by linking with individuals working in your area.
- Following employers, making contact and asking them questions to get a greater insight into an organization while promoting yourself.

**Decide Which Social Media Tools Will be Most Useful**
Each social media tool has its own strengths and applications. Be clear about what you want to achieve.
and how you are going to go about it. Find out which tools are used by those working in your subject area or industry, and research why and how they are used.

- Consider how much time you want to devote to social media. It’s better to be regularly and purposefully active on one or two platforms rather than spread thin across many platforms with out-of-date content. It also helps to be consistent across your professional profiles and link between them to present a coherent picture to potential employers.

LinkedIn
This is much more than an online resume. Creating a LinkedIn account will help ensure that a professional profile appears in any Google search by potential employers.

Use LinkedIn to:
- Research company information and follow key influencers in your chosen sector.
- Identify the skills that employees in your sector need to possess.
- Demonstrate your interest in a sector by joining and participating in discussion groups.
- Make connections and develop your network.
- Find out what previous graduates from your course have gone on to do by using the “Alumni” tool.

Twitter
A carefully worded profile can attract followers, including potential employers.

Use Twitter to:
- Follow employers, influencers and commentators in your area of interest.
- Keep up to date with news and events in your sector.
- Raise your profile and demonstrate your interest by joining discussions.
- Draw attention to your activity on other platforms—for instance, when you have posted on your blog or added to your e-portfolio.

Facebook
Consider whether it’s better to create separate personal and professional profiles and not link them together. Remember that personal profiles are often public by default unless you set them otherwise.

Use Facebook to:
- “Like” relevant companies’ Facebook pages and receive updates from them.
- Join groups relevant to your job search, post comments and participate in discussions.
- Post content relevant to your career and your job search.

Other Social Media Tools
The range of tools changes frequently, and you should be able to find out from your friends and tutors which ones are used in your subject area.

For example:
- Pinterest, Instagram and Snapchat—visual platforms, good for showcasing your work and for research and collection of resources.
- Blogging sites such as WordPress, Medium or even LinkedIn—good for establishing your online identity and demonstrating your interests and skills.
- Dribble, Behance and Art Rules—for the creative sector.

Find Out More
There’s more help at eStudentServices.org in our Resources section. This includes ideas for using social media for learning and how to use social media responsibly.

For more information, be sure to connect with us:
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