



USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE JOB SEARCH

Social media has quickly changed the face of recruiting, making online resources, networking tools, and personal branding of primary importance in the job/internship search. There are many online tools which can be extremely helpful during the job search process. Knowing what sites are out there and how to use them effectively can dramatically increase your success in landing the position you want. Just as social media sites have become key to networking online, creating a personal brand, and finding opportunities, employers are using these same tools to find and screen candidates.

Personal Branding

Personal branding is a way of controlling your reputation, image, and perceptions while at the same time helping others develop a clear understanding of who you are and what you want to be known for. By creating your personal brand you can establish yourself as an expert and build a solid reputation that will make you stand out to employers.

Have you ever googled yourself? It's important to know what comes up when someone types your name into Google. Currently, up to 85% of employers google candidates before ever speaking with them. This number is expected to increase and recruiters are looking for candidates whose personal brands are in line with their organizations' mission and goals. Being able to use social media to develop your own personal brand has become almost essential in the job search process.

Here are ways to get started:

- Create profiles on social networks and directories such as LinkedIn. Ensure that all profiles link to each other.
- If you have a common name, use a middle initial or middle name—and be consistent about using your name in that way everywhere.
- Join groups and activities related to your field or that demonstrate leadership and teamwork skills. Join professional associations in your target field. These affiliations will come up when someone searches for you online.
- Read blogs related to your field of interest and make comments about the posts. Be sure to write informed responses that demonstrate your knowledge of the area.
- Write book reviews (such as on amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, etc.), particularly regarding books that are related to your career interests.
- Create a PowerPoint presentation and post it on Slideshare.net. This is a free website that allows you to create content in your field and look like an expert: <http://www.slideshare.net/>.
- Host your own radio show. You don't even have to be an expert for this one; you can simply ask the experts in your field to be guests on your show. This is one of the best ways to grow your presence in your field. Free to use: <http://www.blogtalkradio.com/>.
- Broadcast your own TV show. This is considered one of the best sites out there: <http://www.livestream.com/>.
- Visit brand-yourself.com to learn more tips to enhance your online image.

Professional Networking Tools

By most estimates, approximately 70-80% of jobs are found through networking. While you may have heard of the importance of meeting others in your field, you might not know exactly how to go about finding and connecting with those individuals. Fortunately, it's easier now than it's ever been, thanks to social media tools.

LinkedIn.com is currently the most popular and potentially effective online networking tool out there. The power of this site lies in its function of showing you your contacts' contacts—up to three degrees. You can browse your friends' contacts to see who they happen to know or search by company or organization and see if any relevant names come up and how they are connected to you. There are many resources available to learn how to use this site, including books such as *I'm on LinkedIn, Now What?* and *42 Tips for 24-hour Success on LinkedIn*. Here are some simple steps to get started:

- Create your profile and complete it entirely. Use the information from your resume, and the same guidelines for the paper version apply online.
- Import all of your contacts from your email (Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, etc.).
- Use the search box at the top right to find people who work in a company or organization that you are targeting.
- Search for alumni by typing “Yeshiva University” in the search box, and any names within three degrees of connection who have YU in their profile will appear.
- Browse your contacts to see who they know, and if someone interesting comes up, ask (politely) to be connected. Be sure to personalize your introductory message.
- When asking someone to make an introduction, never directly ask for a job or internship. Start with requesting information or guidance ONLY. See the tip sheet on “Networking and Informational Interviewing” for more on this topic.
- Use the “LinkedIn Groups” feature to connect with others who have a common background (such as Yeshiva Alumni) or by topic area.
- Browse for companies. You can simply skim through contacts' profiles to learn about organizations which could be of interest.
- Use the “Jobs” section to find jobs. It will show you if you are connected to the hiring manager who posted the position.
- Consider using your LinkedIn profile URL to add to your email signature, so people can learn more about you. You can personalize this URL right on your LinkedIn profile page.

Social Networking Tools

While most social networking sites were not developed with anyone's job search in mind, recruiters are using these tools to find and learn more about candidates. In addition, as with professional networking sites, students can use social networking sites to reconnect with friends or colleagues who might prove to be helpful in their job search. Be sure to use caution, however, as these sites have the largest risk for students presenting content that is not appropriate for future employers to see. Therefore, it's critical to be cautious about what you publish and pay attention to privacy settings. Here are some social networking sites that you can use to your advantage:

- Facebook.com
- Twitter.com (check out Twitter feeds of job openings here: <http://jobmob.co.il/blog/twitter-job-openings-postings-leads/#us>)
- Meetup.com

When updating your “status” on these sites, try to be clever—send links to articles relevant to your field and write about your job search. It’s much more important to show off your knowledge about an industry than to share with the world what you ate for dinner.

Additional Tips for Using Social Media to Get the Job

- Identify the top 5-10 companies you want to work for and use sites such as LinkedIn to find employees of that organization. Connect with them and ask them for an informational interview (again please refer to our Networking and Informational Interviewing handout first).
- Start a blog or create a website (try tumblr.com, wordpress.com or blogspot.com, offering free platforms). Write about your desired industry so that you sound knowledgeable and informed (not a blog about your favorite ice cream). Writing a blog is a commitment, so only start one if you’re confident that you can update it regularly.
- Follow recruiters in your desired companies on Twitter. You can learn a great deal about organizations this way.
- Stay organized—use sites like JibberJobber.com to organize all of your new contacts and keep track of with whom you connected, when, what occurred, etc.
- Create an online presence with a free Google Profile www.google.com/profiles
- Keep up-to-date with any topic of interest with Google Alerts. Google Alerts will actually email you with new information on any topic of your choice taken from the entire internet. www.google.com/alerts

For assistance using any of these tools or to talk about personal branding, contact the Career Center for an appointment with a counselor. Take the time to browse these sites first and learn as much as you can about how they function and how they can help you with your job search.