

Tweet, post & connect...but beware of pitfalls! Professional communication is key to a successful search

In today's job market, it is really important for job seekers to cast a wide net. While visiting various types of job searching sites is important, it is your utilizing your network that will most likely land you a position.

Everyone has a network. Through Facebook friends, LinkedIn connections, Twiterville contacts and much more, you can potentially connect with hundreds if not thousands of people. But be careful. As helpful as these resources are, they can severely damage your job search and your professional reputation.

By now, students and job seekers know to keep their privacy settings high so only "friends" and "connections" can view them. But what about photos you are tagged in others can see? Or your posts on friends walls? You never know who your friends are connected to. With thousands of recruiters, hiring managers and the like on these sites (whether for professional or their own personal use) it is important to realize that what you post to your friends will not only be seen by them, but their friends, friends of friends, etc. The most damaging part: what goes out, never really comes back in. Once a picture of you is posted/tagged, someone else can save it and publish it elsewhere. You have lost control of what is on the internet about you!

The same goes for your blogs and tweets. Once it's out there, it's there for better or worse, so make sure that you would be comfortable with your boss, professor, admissions representative for a graduate school or even your grandmother seeing what you wrote. A good example of how this can be harmful was recently published on yahoo.com. A candidate was offered a job at Cisco and tweeted to her friends that she took the offer because of the paycheck and was not really excited about the work. Someone from Cisco saw the post and responded accordingly. This is not the best first impression to make with your new employer!

Be very cautious about what you post and what company/organization names you use. We all have opinions, but they can have serious negative effects. It is way too easy to be callous, dismissive and sarcastic with tweets and status updates on Facebook or elsewhere.

The lines between professional and personal are becoming much more transparent with these technologies, and the use of them at work and for work--for self-promotion, professional networking and for showing your active participation in the latest technologies--can be a marvelous, efficient tool.

With that in mind, do not be afraid to use these networks in your search. Most companies have a Facebook page, are associated with a LinkedIn group and are in Twiterville. Post information about what you would want potential employers to know such as "a

marketing position utilizing my strong writing skills.” Remember not to be too specific as it may turn certain employers off to you. Keep casting that wide net!

Communication is key

Professionalism is always key in your communication with employers. Students can be removed from a candidate pool based on their emails, phone conversations and even outgoing voicemail messages. Some hints are below about how you can communicate effectively with employers. Remember, you should NEVER send an email to an employer from your Blackberry/iPhone or the like. Take time to type messages from a PC or laptop.

Email Etiquette

The use of email is a common tool in the job search process. Please note that many employers pay close attention to how a potential candidate communicates via email. When using email in the job search process be sure to:

- NEVER send an email to an employer from your Blackberry/iPhone or the like. Take time to type an email on your computer and SPELL/GRAMMAR check it before you send it. Type the email with correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar (avoid common email abbreviations: ttyl, u, etc.).
- Use a proper and professional email address (not a nick name, etc.).
- When sending your resume via email, (unless otherwise noted) attach it as a Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF Document.
- Be sure to include your cover letter or a note in the body of the email that explains that your resume is attached.

Voicemail Etiquette

During the job search process, please have a way for an employer to contact you and leave a message. If an employer calls you and gets your voicemail, you should have a voice mail that sounds professional (see example below). You should be sure to check your voice mail once daily and return calls within a 24 hour period.

Voice Mail Example

Hello. You have reached the voicemail of Francisco Garcia. I am unavailable at this time. Please leave a message including your phone number and the best time to contact you and I will respond to your message. Thank you for calling and have a great day.

Cell Phone Etiquette

Cell phones are very convenient but have been known to cause issues during the job search process. Because of the instability of the connection of cell phones, calls can be disconnected while you are talking to an employer. Also, the reception and voice quality

can be distorted when a person is in a bad receiving area. Please note the suggestions below if you plan to use your cell phone to communicate with employers.

Cell Phone Tips

- Let the employer know that you are talking to them on a cell phone, and explain to them if the call drops, you will call them back (so get the appropriate phone number and extension).
- Be sure to note the geographic areas where you do not get good reception and avoid those areas when talking to employers.
- Answer each call professionally.
- Monitor the battery power/strength so that your cell phone battery is charged when talking to employers.
- Avoid areas with lots of background noise when talking with an employer and only answer the phone if you are able to have a professional conversation.
- NEVER send a text message to an employer from your cell phone. It is completely unprofessional and will tell the employer that you do not care enough about the job to even call or send an email.