

Chapter 1

The Lowdown on Social Media for Job Hunters

In This Chapter

- ▶ Realizing why you need to have an online presence when searching for a job
 - ▶ Showing recruiters and hiring managers what makes you uniquely qualified
 - ▶ Using social media sites to host your résumé and manage your online reputation
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Social media, sometimes called *social networking*, is nothing more than a technology that facilitates human interaction. Different than a website or a résumé, which are strictly one-way forms of communication, social media sites allow users to comment, share, or chat with each other, often in real time. Further, social media tools have lowered the barrier to publishing content online itself, and an army of bloggers, video producers, and article writers have found a voice. Social media has even given ordinary people a chance to build an audience or interact with their favorite celebrities.

Social media has also become an important tool for job seekers due in part to the new ways people are finding out about (and earning) jobs. As you may already know, most jobs come about through networking, not applying on job boards or aimlessly sending out résumés. Social media tools make networking much easier and much more powerful due to their interactive nature. Thus, when a job seeker really learns to use social networking well, his chances for finding opportunities multiply exponentially.

Nowadays, social media also plays a part in how hiring managers are conducting their research on candidates. More than 80 percent of recruiters use LinkedIn. Additionally, 50 percent of hiring managers can determine whether a particular candidate's personality is a good fit for their company just by seeing that person's social media presence.

In this chapter, I help you grasp the bigger picture of why having more than a basic online presence is essential. I also help you figure out how to do all the prep work necessary for job searching with social media, including discovering your personal brand and getting your résumé online. I even offer direction on

where to go when you're ready to expand your online presence and how to keep your job search proactive with the help of various social media tools. Well, what are you waiting for? The job for you is out there — you just need to know how to find it and position yourself as the right person for it!

Discovering Why Having an Online Presence Is Important

Information for just about everyone can be found online by someone who knows how to conduct the right search. That's right. Personal information such as your name, address, and phone number are on the Internet. But if you really want to use social media as a tool to land your dream job, then you need to be willing to expand your presence online beyond just the basics. I explain why in the sections that follow.



Whether or not you can do the job you're applying for will certainly help you pass screening and get your foot in the door. However, final decisions about your employment will come down to your personality. Surveys have found over and over again that *fit* is the primary reason for hiring one person over another. And one of the best ways to prove how well you can fit in at one of your target companies is by using social media sites to reveal your personality. A printed-out résumé (or even one viewed on a computer screen through a word-processing program) can only witness to your skills; a profile on a social media site can demonstrate your passions, your personality, and your uniqueness.

Recruiters will Google you



Regardless of whether you search for your name online to see what comes up, you can bet that someone else will — namely the hiring managers at most (if not all!) of the companies you apply to. Recruiters from almost every field and industry take classes each year to find out about advanced Google techniques that can help them find and screen talent. In fact, many recruiters I've interviewed have told me that conducting Internet searches (mostly through Google) on the people they're placing is part of their due diligence and responsibility. In other words, they wouldn't be doing their jobs if they *didn't* investigate your online presence.

The unfairness of this situation is that most people don't know how to manage what information is found out about them online. So although you may be making a huge splash with great Google results from social media sites, your online presence may actually be a very serious liability. The solution? Proactively manage your online reputation by using the steps I show you in Chapter 7.

A job-searching-with-social-media success story

In January 2011, I interviewed Kathy for my blog *not* because of some lucky circumstance that befell her but because the story of how she got her latest job was a great, everyday example of how to use social media to run a job search. She strategically used social media to get her next job and did many of the things I show you how to do in this book. Here's how she did it (or if you'd rather watch the interview, head here: bit.ly/Kathy-Job):

- ✔ **Growing a network:** Kathy spent the majority of her job-search time growing her LinkedIn network, fixing up her profile, and meeting new people in person. When she met new people face to face, she added them to her online networks right away.
- ✔ **Staying on top of contacts' activities:** Kathy monitored updates to her network on social media sites daily. She knew what her new contacts were doing and was able to maintain and even grow her relationships by sharing information with them.
- ✔ **Using a social media-enabled job board:** Kathy used Simply Hired, which didn't just list job openings, it also listed who she knew on Facebook and LinkedIn at each of those companies (see www.simplyhired.com).
- ✔ **Applying the right way and following up with a contact:** Kathy followed the company's rules and applied for the job online. After she applied, she e-mailed one of her LinkedIn connections who worked at the company. Because she had developed enough rapport and trust, Kathy was able to ask this person to pass her application directly to the hiring manager and bypass HR screening all together.

Within days, Kathy was on the phone with the hiring manager, and a week later, she started her new job at that company.

Hiring managers are cheap

During the great recession of 2008 and 2009 (and arguably longer), organizations made some serious cutbacks. The first people to go at many companies were the HR recruiters, which meant the responsibility of finding and screening new talent shifted to the *hiring managers* — as in the people who make the final decision about your employment and typically become your boss after you come onboard. In other words, hiring managers' jobs are primarily not about hiring new employees; their day-to-day role usually has little to do with hiring because they're paid for their performance at other functions.

What does that mean to you? Simply that hiring managers aren't going to spend tons of their department's time and money on fancy recruiting tools, databases, or placement firms. Most job boards are outside their budgets as well. Instead, they're going to rely on the cheapest and fastest ways of getting a stack of résumés, which often means leveraging their employees' referral

network, LinkedIn, and maybe even Twitter. They want to get through the process of finding the right candidate as quickly as possible so they can focus on other priorities.



Having a positive, consistent presence on various social media sites makes it easier for hiring managers to find you. Plus, with all the relationships you're building through networking, an employee referral may take your résumé to the top of the pile.

Generic résumé blasts don't work

If your next boss is using social media to find talent, then you need to be on social media sites, too. If all you're doing is sending your résumé out to numerous companies via job boards and hoping for a phone call, I'm not certain you'll make it past the screening process at most companies or organizations. Why? Because the company may be wading through hundreds of other generic looking résumés. And when candidates send out general applications without really reading about the job, they can even get blacklisted.

An HR consultant friend of mine was hired by a large pharmaceutical company who wanted her to send three qualified candidates to fill a specialized role. She posted the job on a large, well-known job board. Each week she received an e-mail résumé from this lady who was so completely unqualified, it was like having a taxi driver apply to be a surgeon. After four weeks, my friend called the woman to find out why she kept applying to a job she was so shamefully unqualified for. The woman said, "I've never even heard of your company! I get a list of job opportunities and push a button that applies to all of them at once." The moral of the story? Don't start your job search with the job boards. Instead, spend time building your network on various social media sites, such as LinkedIn (see Chapter 9), Twitter (see Chapter 12), and Facebook (see Chapter 13).

Getting Ready to Start Your Search

Job seekers of earlier generations had one main tool at their disposal: the résumé. But thanks to the hundreds of social media sites out there, you have access to a lot more tools that can aid you in your job search — if you don't become distracted. If you've ever spent hours on Facebook by accident, checking out the "social" aspect of social media, then you know just how easy it is to forget all about why you got online in the first place. Fortunately, you can keep yourself from becoming distracted (and, therefore, take full advantage of social media sites and make progress toward finding a job) by doing a little prep work before you begin your job search.

First, establish clear goals for yourself. Start with your end goal (getting a job interview), and then work your way backwards, step by step. Each step must be clear and not complex to complete. By breaking down your goals into smaller chunks, you're less likely to feel overwhelmed. These smaller steps become the basis of how you spend your time, so every time you sit down to work, you know what to do.

It also helps to have some ideas for how you're going to manage your time. One way to go about that is by looking at your job search as a job in itself. Define the hours of the day you plan to work on finding a job and figure out how much time you're going to spend on certain tasks, such as profile writing, researching, or reaching out. I share a few time-management techniques in Chapter 2.

Naturally, you also need a way to keep all the information about your various contacts organized. After all, you're going to be meeting new people in person and adding them to your LinkedIn contact list, and then you're going to use Twitter and Facebook to discover what your network is up to. This information is a lot to stay on top of, but I help you figure out how to manage it in Chapter 3, which walks you through the basics of online networking.

Making Yourself Stand Out with a Personal Brand

Personal branding — the art of communicating what makes you unique — has been around for a long time. Everyone has a personal brand, even you, because everyone is unique. But not everyone is good at expressing this differentiation. Those people who are seem to prosper in any economic situation.

To figure out your personal brand, you need to take a serious look at your core existence. Really strive to understand your values, passions, and strengths. In other words, figure out what makes you you. (I present some exercises to help you with this in Chapter 4.)

After you're able to articulate what makes you unique, you can transform that knowledge into a value statement that expresses your worth and fit to prospective employers (I tell you more about value statements in Chapter 5). By expertly communicating your value statement across several different mediums, you can grow your credibility and your brand.

Blogs make an excellent medium for communicating your value statement because they also allow you to share your knowledge and opinions about topics that matter to your particular field of interest. An added bonus of blogging? Employers who see you passionately turning out articles, videos, or

slides in the area of your expertise will see that you're truly passionate about your work and have a depth of knowledge that may help their organization. Also, not many other candidates are brave enough to put themselves out there and share their opinions. For pointers on blogging as a way to communicate your expertise to the social media world, flip to Chapter 6.



A huge part of branding is making sure your brand is represented accurately and consistently at all times. You, therefore, need to manage your online reputation by taking charge of the results that come back when someone does an Internet search for your name.

Here are the basic steps for managing your online reputation (for full details, head to Chapter 7):

- 1. Assess your online appearance from the perspective of a hiring manager.**

Try Googling yourself or searching for your name in a free, background check website like www.pipl.com.

- 2. Build up enough content over time so Google's search results fill up with more relevant content.**

Publish old slideshows or articles you've written to social sharing sites so that Google has more relevant content to display for your name.

- 3. Monitor your reputation monthly.**

If someone says something bad about you, you need to know about it right away. The only way to do that is by periodically searching for your name and seeing what pops up.

Putting Your Résumé Online

An online résumé can be searched and discovered by recruiters looking for talent, so having several of them increases your odds of being found. (Believe me, receiving a random call from a recruiter who found you online and who was so impressed that she wants an interview is a very nice feeling!) The beauty of online résumés is that you don't have to be a web designer to enjoy their benefits.

At the very least, you should have a LinkedIn résumé and a video résumé. If you want to have more than just these two online résumés, good for you! Head to Chapter 11 to find out about some additional online résumé options.



Writing an online résumé is very different than writing a résumé that you intend to print out and hand to someone. Don't think you can just copy and paste one into the other. (If you try that, your online presence can look stuffy, old fashioned, and hard to understand.) I give you the full scoop on the key stylistic differences in Chapter 8.

Why LinkedIn?

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) happens to be the highest-leverage tool for professional networkers today — period. With it, you have access to more information about companies and people than previous generations ever did — even if they paid for it! Study after study has shown that LinkedIn is the primary resource for hiring managers and recruiters to fill positions. If you aren't using it daily, you're making a huge mistake.



Of course, if you aren't using LinkedIn the right way, that's also a mistake. First, you need to make sure your profile is 100 percent complete (meaning it shows your photo, at least three recommendations, and all the details about your work experience and education). You also need to make sure the following parts of your profile are as appealing and informative as possible because these three parts are where recruiters look first (for help getting them in tiptop shape, see Chapter 9):

- ✓ Your profile picture
- ✓ Your professional headline (the line of text that appears below your name)
- ✓ Your profile summary (the larger text block that appears below your personal information)



To get the most benefit out of LinkedIn, don't just treat it as an online résumé. Instead, treat it as a professional networking tool. In fact, use LinkedIn as your networking hub. Sure, it may be easier to cruise job boards, but by regularly adding new people you meet to your network and getting so familiar with LinkedIn that you can use it in your sleep, you're going to have a better shot at finding a job at your target company.

Why video résumés?

Not every recruiter or hiring manager is going to spend time watching video résumés for fun. However, if someone already likes your application and wants to know more about who you are, offering him a video résumé is a great way to demonstrate your personality and communication skills.



The ideal video résumé addresses three key questions (I reveal the best ways to answer these questions in Chapter 10):

- ✓ Who are you?
- ✓ What motivates you?
- ✓ Can you do the job?

After you've produced a résumé that addresses each of these points, you're ready to upload it for hiring managers' viewing pleasure. In particular, I recommend uploading your video résumé to TubeMogul (which posts to YouTube). TubeMogul (www.tubemogul.com) allows you to share your video résumé on multiple sites with one simple uploading process, and YouTube is the second-largest search engine today.

Expanding Your Online Presence



As your online presence grows, so do your chances of getting discovered by a recruiter and receiving an unsolicited call. The more engaged you are online, the better off you'll be.

But where exactly do you start when you're looking to expand your online presence? Getting yourself on Twitter and Facebook, if you aren't already, is worth your while. Twitter (www.twitter.com), which I cover in Chapter 12, is hands down one of the most active recruiting tools (aside from LinkedIn, which I fill you in on earlier in this chapter). Not a day goes by that some HR recruiter or hiring manager doesn't hit up Twitter searching for talent. As for Facebook (www.facebook.com), which I cover in Chapter 13, you can discover the personality of the organization you're interested in by "liking" its Page, and you can even start engaging in conversation with it. That's a shortcut way to stand out from the crowd.



To cast your social media net even farther, start participating in some of the lesser-known networks. Your options range from general professional networking sites to niche networks, such as those for creative professionals and people seeking international employment. I share a wealth of such sites to explore in Chapter 14.

Going Proactive, the Social Media Way

Social media is pretty empowering to you as a job seeker. Think about it. Thanks to Facebook and corporate blogs, you can gather all kinds of research about companies to determine which companies (and positions)

you really want to pursue. LinkedIn allows you to see how you may be connected to people who work at your target companies. If someone you know directly happens to know someone at one of those organizations, you can ask for an introduction to that contact. When you get it, *boom!* You now have a relationship with someone who, as long as you nurture and don't manipulate that relationship, can provide you with some real insight into XYZ Company.

Clearly, social media can be a job hunter's best friend — if you have a game plan for using it properly in your search for work. Fortunately, I'm here to provide you with just that. Here's how to conduct a proactive job search using the various social media tools at your disposal:

1. Find companies (as well as people and opportunities) you want to target.



If you want the best results, you need to be very specific about what you're targeting in your search, whether that's a company or even a particular position at a company. You also need to know *who* in those companies you should be networking with. Fortunately, social media, as well as the tips I provide in Chapter 15, make it easy to hone in on your target company and identify potential decision makers.

2. Get to know what the company and/or contact cares about and considers to be relevant.

Have you ever watched a good spy movie? The agent profiles his asset so he can understand what makes him tick. That's what you need to do in order to get noticed by very busy hiring managers in a very competitive job market. Start reading up on industry news, follow the company's various social media sites, and understand where you can add value. (For more specific advice, turn to Chapter 16.)

3. Track down someone who's willing to give you time for an informational interview.

Just doing web research on the needs of your target audience isn't enough. You really do need to talk with other, low-stakes people at a target company. Use your network to bring your conversations offline. Talk to real people over coffee about what working there is like or set up time to converse on the phone if your contact is in a long-distance location. Ask them what about working for the company keeps them up at night. For in-depth guidance on tracking down the right contacts and conducting an informational interview, see Chapter 17.



After you meet these info interview sources, add them to your social media networks (if they aren't there already). Doing so brings you one step closer to getting connected with a decision maker.

4. Start interacting with people who have the power to hire you.

The people who are going to be making a decision about hiring you are hanging out online. Now that you're armed with great information, you can reach out to them directly online and be confident in your ability to make a good impression. (For the full scoop on interacting with hiring managers online, head to Chapter 18.)



When you're reaching out to hiring managers, you still don't know whether you're a fit for the organization. So don't say, "I know I'd be a great fit for this job." Such a statement may easily turn off someone with the power to hire you. Remember that you're still in the process of gathering information, so just focus on making your interactions professional.

Conquering common objections to using social media in your career

If you have little to no interest in social media and are only reading this book because a friend or colleague thought you should, trust me when I say that numerous positive reasons exist for using social media in your career. For one thing, when you're trying to find a job, you need to be where the hiring managers are — and I guarantee many of them are using some form of social media.

Following are some common objections people pose to the idea of using social media in a career, as well as my thoughts on why those objections just don't pan out:

- ✔ **Social media is for kids on cellphones.**
Au contraire! The fastest growing demographic on Facebook is 55 and older, and the average age of a Twitter user is 35. Also, all social media sites have desktop interfaces, so using your cellphone to access them isn't the only way.
- ✔ **I'm concerned about identity theft.**
Honestly, you have more chances of getting your identity stolen from mail than from

hacked social networks. Plus, you don't have to give people your whole life story on social media sites. If you're smart about the information you reveal, you won't need to spend as much time worrying that an identity thief may steal your precious personal info. **Remember:** Keep the following to yourself at all times: your Social Security number, your mother's maiden name, and your birth date.

- ✔ **I don't have a lot of time, and I don't need another distraction.** Setting up your accounts on various social media sites may take some time, but from there on out, staying on top of social media shouldn't take that much extra time out of your schedule. If, however, time management is a serious concern for you, then turn to Chapter 2 for some tips and tricks.

Remember: My ultimate advice is to forget whatever judgments you have about social media and approach it with an open mind. Chances are you'll be pleasantly surprised by the results!