

# Managing Your Social Networking & Online Presence

## ***What Can Employers Learn About You?***

Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and other social networking sites are fun ways to connect with friends and family. Did you know that those may not be the only people 'checking you out'?

More and more employers are signing on and checking out the social profiles of employment and internship candidates and using what they find as one factor for determining whether or not they will make a job offer.

3,100 employers surveyed nationwide reported using social networking sites as a screening tool, and 34% of them reported finding content that caused them to dismiss a candidate from consideration.

Specific reasons included that the candidate: posted information about drinking or using drugs, posted inappropriate photographs, had poor communication skills, bad-mouthed a previous employer or fellow employee, used discriminatory comments or racial slurs, had an unprofessional screen name and was linked to criminal behavior.

If you are an active internship or job seeker who uses Facebook, MySpace, Friendster or other social networking sites, consider checking that your profile and chat content reflects the image you wish to portray, setting your account settings to 'private', removing questionable photographs or statements, and Googling or Yahooing yourself to see what employers may find out about you.

*Information adapted from careerbuilder.com, Sept. 2008*

## ***Get LinkedIn for Real Career Networking!***

While many students use Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, for connecting with online friends with shared interests and activities, they are less involved with valuable professional networking sites that can assist in furthering their career goals.

**LinkedIn** is a business-oriented networking site for professional networking. Anyone from students to CEOs can join. Students can maintain a Contact Network or Connections they know which can be used to gain an introduction to someone else they wish to know—either personally, or more importantly, professionally for potential career leads.

A Contact Network includes your direct connections, connections to their connections, and connections to second-degree connections. Students can use these connections to gain an introduction to someone they wish to know (such as a hiring manager!) through a mutual, trusted contact.

**LinkedIn** can also help students:

- find jobs, people, and business opportunities recommended by someone in their contact network.
- review profiles of hiring managers for potential introduction from contacts in the student's network
- join Bryant's alumni groups or industry groups of interest for further networking opportunities

With over 80% of employment opportunities coming from career networking, using a tool such as LinkedIn can be a crucial part of the job search process with an endless variety of contacts to take advantage of.

# Will Your Social Networking Profile Get You Hired or Fired?

*Selena Dehne, JIST Publishing*

Many of us have heard a handful of horror stories about how a person's online profile wrecked his or her job search or career. Yet, every day people swarm social networking Web sites making the exact same mistakes.

"Having an online identity is becoming increasingly important as a way to establish your credibility and personal brand and to attract career or business opportunities," say Ellen Sautter and Diane Crompton, co-authors of "Seven Days to Online Networking." To ensure that people create a profile savvy enough to help them land a job, they offer the following tips.

## How to get hired

**Be consistent from site-to-site.** Too often recruiters and hiring managers get mixed messages about job candidates based on their online profiles. For example, you might have a LinkedIn profile that portrays you as a driven go-getter with an excellent sales background, but your MySpace profile portrays you as someone who lives the life of an 80s rock star. Make sure that every profile you create portrays the same person -- someone who's respectable, professional and high achieving.

**Master a brief sound bite.** When looking at your profile, hiring managers want to learn more about you. The "About You" section of your profile offers the perfect opportunity to briefly describe your work history, strengths and notable achievements. This paragraph should be similar to a thirty-second elevator speech you may have already prepared about yourself.

**Showcase your skills through links.** You should include links to your blog, webfolio or web site, if they are relevant to your career. If you don't have any of these things, consider including links to any projects or work you might have been involved in that can be viewed online.

**Strategically use keywords in the "Tags" section.** Similar to using keywords in a résumé, this strategy allows you to list words that help other people in your network or search engines find you. These words can include your area of expertise, job titles, industries, hobbies and anything else that defines you as a professional.

## How to protect your online presence

- Use the privacy settings to protect your identity.
- Avoid posting scandalous photographs or comments.
- Refrain from posting derogatory comments about current or previous employers.
- Don't include a link on your resume to any site which includes inappropriate content.
- Do not post crucial identity information such as date of birth, social security number or address.