

How online networking can help you to land a job

Confused or cynical about using social networking sites to get a job? Please read this.....

If you are then you're not in the minority. **70% of the students** surveyed would not want employers viewing their social networking profiles. "Is it ethical", "why do this" and "who's really using this" you may ask.

Ethics can be debated all day long, the fact is job seekers and professionals are using these sites to make more contacts, new opportunities and get headhunted. In the world of work you are now **conspicuous by your absence** on professional social networking sites.

Employers are using online networks more than ever and will continue to do so. **One in three managers** use social networking sites as **part of their recruitment**, and **one in five** would consider using it as their **only method of recruitment** in the future, according to new research. There are a lot of jobs you can't see on job boards – this is how you get to them.

So *please, please, please* be open-minded and consider changing your opinion if you are cynical.

Remember, **this isn't just a trick to get a job**. Once you start building an online network in LinkedIn the chances are you will use it daily in your work. Registering on a job board website (Monster, Milkround, etc) is a one-off trick to get a job. *Building a network* gives you a huge advantage over the next candidate or indeed employee.

In my previous job as head of sales for FTSE 100 company, almost overnight we started doing an incredible amount of business via LinkedIn. When I say business I don't necessarily mean sales – identifying new employees, learning about other companies/industries, searching for partners, checking out suppliers (I could go on). I often ask contacts in my network questions when I'm stuck. That's what it's there for and people *love* to give their advice. I often get approached by head-hunters just because my profile is there, not because I'm any better than the next person in line.

So, here are a few simple tips to get started:

1. **Register on LinkedIn** – let me explain. Companies (like the one I worked for) buy subscriptions to LinkedIn (we didn't buy or use any other). If you're not in it, you may not be seen, even if you are perfect for the job. Secondly (and more importantly), this is the first of many uses you will get from LinkedIn. When you start work I guarantee you will use it weekly if not daily. Showing potential employers that you understand this and have the proven skills will give you a huge advantage.
2. **Aim to impress with a full profile** – don't be half-hearted. Clearly state your skills and ask colleagues / friends to write you a testimonial. This is your advert and you own your own brand. Anyone looking at your profile will make judgements. Think of building your online profile and network as your first real-world marketing exercise.
3. **If you ask questions and participate in discussions you raise your profile**. You will look proactive, committed and be way ahead of the next student or grad applying for the same job.
4. **Invite anyone you know who could possibly help you to join your network**. Think laterally and be bold! To get going join 'Groups' on LinkedIn. They are a fantastic way to start building your network. You can access the abintegro group from the 'Networking' link in the member area or by [clicking here](#).
5. **Remember 2 things**. (1) This could clinch you the job, especially when a company is struggling to differentiate between 2 or 3 good candidates. (2) This isn't a recruitment trick – you are investing time in a skill and online service you will use every day.

So, please stop worrying and debating the ethics of using social networks for job seeking. I used to be cynical, but having seen the likes of LinkedIn in action at a big company, trust me when I say building your network and treating it like your own brand will be one of the most worthwhile and fulfilling things you do.

If you have any questions, please do get in touch or invite me to join your LinkedIn profile (<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/david-heard/2/bb7/251>).

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