FROM “FRIEND ME” TO “HIRE ME”: A GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR JOB SEEKERS

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by
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ABSTRACT OF THE PROJECT

From “Friend Me” to “Hire Me”: A Guide to Social Networking for Job Seekers
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This job search guide is designed for college career centers to distribute to their visitors. It focuses solely on how to use social media to find a job—a strategy given little to no attention in the career center guides currently being distributed. It is intended to supplement their traditional guides and respond to a need for students, employers, and career centers.

My guide differs from other social networking texts out there, because it is written specifically for career centers and their college student/graduate visitors—not the general public. It also includes a step-by-step breakdown of how to create a presence on the top social media sites (Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook), worksheets to guide readers through the process of social networking, and information on how to use blogging to promote one’s brand. Although this information can be found online and in some books, there are few resources that have synthesized all of this information for Gen Y readers. The strategy for each social media channel is distinct. Each chapter focuses on the career-related resources on each site, how to virtually network (particularly with key professional contacts), how to build an online brand, and the etiquette for each site.

Without utilizing virtual networking options, job seekers are limiting the potential of their job search.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My experience in the RWS graduate program has been amazing, and I have grown tremendously as a critical thinker and rhetor. I would like to thank my thesis committee—Chris Werry, Glen McClish and James Tarbox—for taking the time out of their busy schedules to provide their wisdom and guidance on this project. I would also like to thank all of my previous professors, bosses and mentors who have passed the knowledge and skills on to me that were necessary to successfully write this guide.
CHAPTER 1

INTELLECTUAL FRAMEWORK

When I was faced with deciding what my thesis project would be, I began by
reflecting on my career path up to that point and my passions. One of them is working with
college students (which comes from my experience as a writing tutor and instructor) and the
other is professional writing and communication. I’ve been doing both for several years now
and even have a side business writing resumes. In addition to this part-time work, I’ve held a
couple of key writing/editing positions that have shaped me. The first was as an editor at
iGrad, an online community for college students and graduates. As the Careers Editor, I
wrote articles on how to get an internship, ace a job interview, write a cover letter, etc. There,
my knowledge regarding business communication and career development were put into
writing, and I realized I had a passion and talent for it. That job led to my current position
working under a career consultant. I research a wide range of timely career topics, such as
social networking and the New Economy’s effect on the job hunt. I have also had the
opportunity to attend career development conferences. It is in these positions that my passion
for career development blossomed.

So my professional experience is twofold: teaching college-aged people and working
in the career development sphere. When I was contemplating what to do for my thesis, I
knew I wanted it to reflect my professional background. And, I kept coming back to the idea
of taking on some type of career-related project aimed toward educating young adults. I also
knew I wanted to spend my time writing something practical—something that could be
applied to the real world and be used to further my own career goals and the goals of others.
After several months of contemplation, I came up with the idea of creating a job search guide for college career centers to distribute to their visitors. But this guide would focus solely on how to use social media to find a job—a strategy given little to no attention in the career center guides currently being distributed (at least in the dozens I’ve reviewed). My guide would supplement current available material and respond to the needs of students, employers, and career centers.

My status as a digital native with an expertise in social media and career development made me qualified for the task. Plus, I graduated from college just five years ago and vividly remember how overwhelming the job search was. But more importantly, I remember how traditional the job hunt process was as social media was just starting to become a widespread phenomenon. And now, in 2011, graduating seniors are entering a more technically advanced world and daunting New Economy, with unpaid internships galore and competition often in the hundreds for a single job position. My goal is to arm graduates with a guide that will help them conduct successful, more expansive networking through social media channels and create job opportunities rather than waiting for them to be posted on job search engines.

What’s so ideal about this job search strategy is that social media is already a big part of Gen Y members’ lives. It’s become a primary channel for socializing and receiving information—a technology they depend on and love to use. I figured, Why not teach them how to channel this enthusiasm into a more dynamic job search approach?

In creating this guide, I applied the skills I’ve learned in the San Diego State University Rhetoric and Writing Studies program in two ways. First off, I had to teach my reader how to employ rhetorical strategies (various means of persuasion) to network online and land a job. (There is more explanation of this in the last section of this framework.)
Second, the act of writing this guide required me to put the rhetorical skills I have acquired in this graduate program to use. One of the most important strategies I employed was the development of a strong ethos, or credibility as the author of the guide. The fact that I myself got a job (as the career consultant’s assistant) using social media definitely strengthens my ethos and is mentioned in the introduction. In addition, the last chapter in the guide is comprised of several success stories. These real-life accounts strengthen the logos, or evidence, for my argument. I knew I had to leave my readers convinced that using social media to job search is a viable, if not essential, strategy to finding a job in the 21st century.

Along the way, I considered my target audience—Gen Y graduates—and the diverse student bodies across the nation who will hopefully be the recipients of my guide at a future date. Because I have taught at the college level for two years and am Gen Y myself, I believe I’ve created a guide that is appealing to our demographic—it’s fairly short, concise, visually appealing and will be electronic. Plus, the career center guide medium demands these qualities. I will distribute it as a PDF (that I can update as needed) and may try to partner with the National Association of Colleges and Employers to either sponsor the guide or help me reach the appropriate audiences.

Because my readers are inexperienced professionals, I dedicated a page in each chapter to explaining the networking etiquette of each social media site. I also used many practical examples to communicate particular concepts persuasively. The professional world is foreign to most of them, so I wanted to make sure I equipped them with the tools to construct a professional image of themselves in the various social media channels.

I also feel I gave the guide “personality” to make it more relatable, fun and reader-friendly so the task at hand doesn’t seem too overwhelming. It is written in first- and second-
person point of view to add to the conversational, casual tone. I also included “expert quotes,” “true facts,” and “quick tips” intermittently in the side bars to create a balance with the more technical parts of the guide and to serve as another way to build my ethos. I wanted my readers to know that I truly care about their career success, so I attempted to take on the voice of a mentor in the text. Some of them, especially the first-generation students, may not have a real mentor in their lives. (I was in this position five years ago.) In the introduction, I encouraged them to combine my advice with the excellent resources their career center and its counselors have for them as well. Together, we will act as their support system as they enter the workforce.

All of my RWS courses helped fine tune my writing skills and prepare me to take on a project of this nature, especially RWS 600 and 601A. The level of expectation in these classes was high, and I discovered my full potential in rhetorical writing through excellent feedback and trial and error. In RWS 600, I was introduced to a rich toolbox of rhetorical moves I employ every day and learned how to critically analyze the moves other writers make, which has made me a more sensitive reader. And in 601A, I discovered the origins of rhetoric through Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*. His twenty-eight topoi and his philosophy behind how to employ ethos, pathos and logos have strengthened my rhetorical toolbox and my ability to persuade.

There are several key texts that I’ve read in the RWS program that have particularly informed and stimulated this project. I first became interested in the connection between technology and college students when I wrote my final paper in RWS 602 (the first class I took in the program) on using YouTube to teach composition. This project sparked my interest in using social media to aid college students in the discovery of their identity as
members of Gen Y and how they present themselves in the world of Web 2.0 (the community-driven online environment). One of my sources was an article in the journal *On the Horizon* by Marc Prensky called “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants.” In it he states, “Today’s students are no longer the people our educational system was designed to teach.” His basic argument is that digital natives grew up with computers, and because of it they actually think and process information differently from other generations. They prefer the visual and want instant gratification. The slow-moving traditional job search and hard copy resume are predicted to disappear eventually because of technological progress. This has significant ramifications for college career centers. Their visitors aren’t the same students who went to them for advice in the 80s or 90s. Career centers have begun responding to this discrepancy by getting online with Facebook and Twitter to reach out to their student populations. But this isn’t enough to bridge the gap; they need job search tactics designed for Gen Y.

In RWS 640 Research Methods, we had to design a pilot study for our tentative thesis project. I knew I wanted to conduct research surrounding the job search, so I reviewed job postings to see if there has been a rise in positions that require social media skills—slightly different from the route I finally pursued. But much of my research informed the direction I decided to take. I read through several issues of *Business Communication Quarterly*, which is devoted to the teaching of business communications and how to prepare students for the workforce. One article in particular, “Trends in Industry Supervisors’ Feedback on Business Communication Internships,” sparked my interest. In the study, Sapp and Zhang determined that interns were ill prepared in terms of their writing skills, communication skills and taking initiative. They state, “While the results suggest that student interns tend to meet their
supervisors’ expectations in many areas, performance categories such as initiative, writing skills, and oral communication skills require increased attention in the ways we prepare students for their internships and post-graduation employment.” I knew this gap in preparation existed, because I had this same experience when I graduated. This was part of the impetus for my thesis project; I wanted to produce a text that would aid confused graduates in a related gap—how to map out their job search strategy and career path.

There are also dozens of non-scholarly books and articles I’ve consulted that will inform the content of the guide. Two key books I’ve recently read that have heavily influenced this guide are *Me 2.0*, by Dan Schawbel, and *Find a Job Through Social Networking*, by Diane Crompton and Ellen Sautter. The articles and survey reports I’ve been reading over the last year in preparation for this project are from a variety of credible sites, such as *Mashable, Social Media Examiner, The New York Times, Jobvite, LinkedIn, Career Builder, About.com, Careerealism*, and many more.

The acts that make up job searching and interacting on social media are highly rhetorical. The personal brand one projects into the physical and online world is a representation of one’s ethos. My readers must decide, with my help, how they will market themselves online, what their personal brand is, how they will approach professional contacts, and how to prove they are a valuable asset to a potential employer. These choices are all based on building their credibility through their online profiles and the way they communicate with companies, recruiters and other industry professionals.

In the guide, a distinct strategy is laid out for each social media channel in terms of how to make rich connections and broadcast one’s personal brand. For instance, Twitter has a 140-character count limit on messages and status updates. This means that, in following my
job search strategy, my readers will be writing within the constructs of this medium and must figure out how to appeal to their target audiences in just a few words. LinkedIn and Facebook don’t limit word count as strictly and represent two completely different approaches. LinkedIn is for professionals and users’ profiles are basically an online version of their resumes, while Facebook and Twitter are much more casual. And the communities created by these three media are vastly different—LinkedIn being exclusively for professionals and Facebook and Twitter for all ages and work statuses. The user must remember that depending on the effectiveness of their strategy and strength of their personal brand, anyone or no one will read what they have to say.

Every step of the job search process has a rhetorical element—from the resume to the interview to the online profiles that hiring managers will search for. The way one presents oneself and interacts online is becoming ever more important, especially for Generation Y and the current graduating classes. A person’s resume includes claims about themselves that must be validated in the interview and now online in social media channels. The best candidate out there needs to prove it! You must argue for your qualifications and desirability (even just to be someone’s friend on a social network). And without utilizing virtual networking options and mastering their rhetoric, job seekers are limiting the potential of their job search.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

FROM “FRIEND ME” TO “HIRE ME”: A GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING FOR JOB SEEKERS
Introduction

This guide will open up your eyes to the power of social networking and provide you with step-by-step instructions on how to further your career goals on your favorite social media sites. Social networking is the key to setting yourself apart from other graduates in a competitive job market, connecting with companies you want to work for, and broadcasting your brand to the world.

When I graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara, with my B.A. in English five years ago and started job searching, it meant clicking through postings on job search engines and attending job fairs. I actually found my first “real” job as an editor by responding to a Craigslist ad. You’re probably using or planning to use similar tactics in your post-college job search. But I’m here to encourage you to go about it in a more strategic, non-traditional way—through social networking. (And I don’t mean what you’re doing on sites like Facebook already.)

Back when I graduated, Facebook was only for college kids, LinkedIn was just gaining popularity, and Twitter was in the process of being invented. Now, people and businesses alike wouldn’t know what to do with themselves if these sites weren’t there to entertain, promote products, and allow for social interaction. But the irony is that people haven’t realized the full potential of them. I’m here to give you a whole new perspective on social networking.

While writing this guide, I got recruited for a job on a social networking site, and I wasn’t even actively job searching. But it’s no surprise. According to Dan Schawbel, author of Me 2.0, “More and more employers are recognizing how cost effective, direct, and personal social networks are as a means to recruit the best possible talent. In fact, 72 percent of companies are investing more in recruiting through social networks, while investing less in more costly and ineffective methods such as job boards and career fairs.” Recruiters not only scan your online profiles to get a better picture of who you are, but they actively recruit potential candidates by surfing social media profiles. In a survey by Jobvite of more than 600 human resource and recruiting professionals, 58.1% said they have successfully hired through a social network.

As you can see in the graphic on the next page, social media has taken the web by storm. Less than a decade ago, when you met someone, you had no idea what kinds of companies or people they were connected to. That’s not true anymore. What does this mean for job searching? You have access to a lot of critical information online that you can use to further your career. More importantly, online networking spans states and industries. You aren’t limited like you are with traditional networking.

Doesn’t it seem as if your resume is going into a black hole when you apply for jobs on a search engine? I feel your pain. Let me help you re-envision your job search strategy and give you more control over your post-college job options.
How to Use This Guide

The point of this guide is to teach you how to use the social media skills you already have, plus a few more, so you can discover the jobs that aren’t on search engines and find the companies in need of someone like you. You are a fresh graduate with fresh ideas and an enthusiastic attitude. People are looking for you, but they can’t find you if you don’t make yourself known.

Here is what this guide will do for you:

- Help you develop your personal brand and broadcast it to the world
- Guide you in creating an impressive profile on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook
- Cover the basics of blogging as another viable networking method
- Give you the tools and tips to expand your network and social networking abilities
Provide you with strategies to catch the eye of important people that are online now

Help you take control of your job search and target companies that you want to work for

As you can see, this job search guide will provide you with the direction to form your social networking strategy. But before you get started, keep the following in mind:

- Social networking is like a job. It’ll be something you have to dedicate yourself to until you get a real job. It may take around six months before your efforts pay off, but I promise that the time you’ll put in will be worth it. (Glance at the success stories at the end to get inspired!)

- Read the whole guide before you actually start networking so you know all of your options and can plan your moves more strategically. Pay special attention to the “etiquette” sections in each chapter.

- The strategies outlined in this guide will work differently depending on your field. Some industries have a more active presence on social media sites than others. Find out where networking takes place in your field. For instance, those of you interested in working for the government should sign up for the specialized social media site, GovLoop, in addition to following the strategies in this guide.

- For those readers who are extra ambitious or really enjoy social networking, I encourage you to read other texts that will go more in depth on topics like exploring your passions, blogging, etc. Your campus career center is another resource you should take advantage of to complement this guide.

If you are serious about your job search and ready to dedicate time to your future, this guide is for you. You are a valuable asset to any organization and should be confident in what you can bring to the table. Don’t be shy. Get out there and start networking.

Good luck!
Chapter 1: Personal Branding
Branding Basics

College graduates need to do two things before they job search: soul search and research. This is true for the traditional job search and also for a social media-driven job search. Before you put yourself out there on the social media channels, you need to do some introspection, or soul searching. Not only does this involve thinking about what career you want to go into and what positions you want to apply for, but it involves reflecting on who you are as a young professional and future employee.

I’m talking about a thing called a “personal brand”—who you are and what you have to bring to the table that’s unique. This chapter will help you discover how to define yours, so you can effectively networking online. It’s an important first step, because your social media profiles and your interactions with others online must reflect your personal brand. Having this confidence with yourself will give you a solid foundation on which to network and make fruitful connections.

As my business communications professor in college would say, “Think about yourself as a product.” Would you buy your brand over another? What would your packaging say? Nutrition facts? Just kidding. Think about successful brands, like Nike, Target, or Costco Wholesale. They’re successful because they have a strong, well-defined brand that represents a product that fills a need. It makes their customers' lives easier. As a job seeker, you need to present yourself in a similar way to a potential employer. How will you make their lives easier?

You already have some sort of idea of what your brand might be. Think about it. You had to develop one when you applied to colleges and wrote your personal statement or essay. Your high school GPA, SAT scores and extracurricular activities were also a part of your brand and the way you were perceived. Hopefully, your brand got you into your top college choice!

Well, now you’re all grown up and entering the professional world. Developing your personal brand is crucial. It’s about stepping back and defining who you are at this moment in time. If you were in the dictionary or, better yet, Wikipedia, what would it say under your name?

Give yourself time to think this through. It won’t happen overnight.
Finding Your Passions & Values

To start to define your personal brand, you need to explore your passions and values. This is a big part of who you are as a professional and an employee. Being talented at what you do is important, but you have to make sure that you also have a passion for what you'll be doing five days a week and that the path you choose aligns with your values. I can’t stress this enough. Picking a path purely out of convenience or a desired salary is often the reason people have a mid-life crisis. Here are some questions to get you started with the soul searching:

**Passions**
What did you want to be when you were a kid?

What are your favorite hobbies or pastimes?

Which college courses were your favorites?

Which college courses did you dislike?

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

What makes you feel whole?

**Values**
Values can be thought of as the personal code upon which you build the foundation of your life. They are created and enforced by one’s culture. They influence decisions you make and the path you follow. It is important to make sure your personal values align with each career choice you make. Here are some common values. Circle your top 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adventure</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Integrity</th>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenge</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Uniqueness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Growth</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Determine Your Brand Appeal

So now that you’ve begun to sort out your passions and values, let’s think more about what you represent and what might make you stand out to “buyers” (aka employers). Penelope Trunk, creator of the social media site Brazen Careerist, reminds us, “The quality of the opportunities you get correlates directly to the work you’ve done building your personal brand.”

To continue the brand development process, here’s a little Q & A. Take your time answering these questions. It may even take weeks to reflect (and maybe even require a little research) to answer all of them.

1. Why can a company count on you?

2. What kind of company culture would you thrive in?

3. Are you a team player? Provide evidence.


5. Are you a leader? Provide evidence.

6. What makes you unique?

7. What skills have you been complimented on?

8. What makes you current? (Think technical skills, knowledge, etc.)

9. Why should a company hire YOU over another candidate?
It’s also important to think about the adjectives that describe you as a person and employee. Here are some examples of the brands of people in the media:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Adjectives that Describe Their Brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paris Hilton</td>
<td>Spoiled, craves attention, irresponsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oprah</td>
<td>Good listener, excellent speaker, well-liked, intelligent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anderson Cooper</td>
<td>Well-spoken, worldly, adventurous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnny Depp</td>
<td>Dynamic actor, hard edged, talented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Jackson</td>
<td>Creative, activist, world-renown, recluse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADJECTIVE CHART**

To help get your creative juices flowing, here are some positive traits seen in employees. Circle the top 5 that describe you (you may have already used some of these words to describe yourself in the exercises above):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambitious</th>
<th>Enthusiastic</th>
<th>Hard working</th>
<th>Open minded</th>
<th>Respectful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approachable</td>
<td>Ethical</td>
<td>Humble</td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge-seeker</td>
<td>Extroverted</td>
<td>Intelligent</td>
<td>Patient</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>Productive</td>
<td>Team player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determined</td>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>Kind</td>
<td>Quick learner</td>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic</td>
<td>Generous</td>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
<td>Unique</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you determine your brand, ask others for feedback, such as your parents, a career counselor, a friend or a past professor. And remember that the adjectives you come up with can and should be incorporated into your personal brand, social media profiles, resume and even mentioned in interviews when you are asked to describe yourself.
Determining Your Online Persona

When you’re online, you will naturally adopt a certain persona, but it helps to think about what that might be before you start interacting with important people. Think about the following aspects of your online persona covered below.

**Be Yourself**
Your resume doesn’t allow for much personality to come through, but social media profiles and status updates do. Incorporate your personality in your overall brand, in your online profiles, and in what you say. If you are witty or have a good sense of humor, use this to make yourself stand out. But make sure to always be business appropriate.

**Be Believable**
When you proclaim your brand to the online world, provide evidence to back it up. For instance, if you say you want to be a columnist for a major newspaper, have writing samples handy. And make sure when your name is Googled some of your writing shows up (blogs count!). Likewise, if you say you’re a graphic designer but have a blog design that lacks creativity, you’re not presenting a believable image of yourself. Another easy way to build credibility, which you may have already taken advantage of, is completing an internship in your desired field.

**Don’t Over Promote**
Social media allows you to start as many conversations as you want and talk to virtually anyone you want, as many times as you want. Be selective and think twice before touching the keyboard. Over promoting will make you look egotistical and is often obnoxious. Instead take the position of a leader who considers each comment thoughtfully before sending it out to the masses.

**Spell Check**
If you are serious about implementing the plan I will lay out in this guide, you’ll be composing a lot of messages and status updates. Make sure you sound articulate. All jobs involve writing in some way, so don’t damage your personal brand by exhibiting poor communication skills and grammar.

**Be Smart**
Avoid sharing information online that might work against you and your success in getting hired. I’m referring to posting inappropriate comments, immature photos, contradictory information about your career goals, etc. Also, to avoid becoming the target of identity theft, don’t share sensitive information, such as your social security number or driver’s license number, with anyone.
Developing an Elevator Pitch

So with all of this talk about personal brand, it’s time to pull all of your thoughts together and come up with one concise statement about yourself. It’s called an “elevator pitch.”

Could you introduce yourself, your qualifications and your career aspirations in an elevator ride, or in less than 30 seconds? Your elevator pitch is an overview of your personal brand—who you are and what makes you stand out. Think about it as a summary of your selling points. It’s crucial that you develop your pitch for two reasons: 1) so you have a solid idea of how you will present yourself to others online, and 2) because you need a short and sweet answer when someone says, “Tell me about yourself.” People don’t want to hear about everything you’ve ever accomplished; that’s when people lose interest.

The audience of your elevator pitch will be anyone who might help you further your job search. This might be a potential employer or someone you meet at a networking event.

Here’s a sample elevator pitch:

“Hi. How are you? My name is Joe Smith. I just graduated from San Diego State University with a degree in accounting. I’ve been serious about financial-related topics since my freshman year. For the past two years, I’ve been closely following financial news, meeting with people in the industry to understand their jobs, and am currently the Chief Investment Officer for a school club. In my internship at Deloitte, I have developed a strong attention to detail and have met every deadline given to me with enthusiasm. My goal is to get hired full-time at an accounting firm. It would be great if we could discuss my goals further at a future date.”

This pitch shows that Joe understands something about the financial industry. He gives specific examples that demonstrate a continued interest in finance. He has practical experience through an internship, dedicates extra-curricular time to expanding his knowledge, and has a strong sense of what he wants to do with his degree.

Draft your elevator pitch here:

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________________________________
Does it take under 30 seconds to read it out loud? Work on condensing it until it does.

Once you get a solid pitch going, ask yourself:

- Is your brand creative (or are there thousands of other people just like you)?

- Does your brand represent someone who is ambitious and welcomes challenges?

- Is your brand an accurate portrayal of where you have been and where you want to go?

Once you have it down, practice it so you’re ready to go once I let you loose on the social media channels.
Checking Your Brand

Not only is the goal to promote your personal brand, but it’s also to protect it. One wrong comment online can ruin your brand forever. One aspect I will cover in each chapter is the proper etiquette for each particular social media site—the unstated social rules that will preserve your reputation. But here are a few more tips to ensure your brand remains strong. Check them off as you confirm them.

- **Facebook check.** Make your Facebook profile private to anyone who isn’t your Facebook friend. We’ll go over this in detail in chapter 4.

- **Google yourself.** Does anything pop up? Articles you’ve written? A blog you’ve started? Your brand is weak if nothing comes up or if poor work comes up. But don’t worry; by the end of this guide, you’ll have a few profiles that pop up.

- **Set up a Google Alert.** This means you’ll get an email when your name is mentioned online. This way you can monitor what people are saying and/or posting about you.

- **Be recognizable and trustworthy.** Are you consistent with the image you are projecting? Don’t create confusion by using a variety of profile pictures or presenting contradictory facts. We’ll work on this in subsequent chapters.

Remember, everything you post on your Facebook, Twitter, or other profile is public. Your connections, or anyone in the world in some cases, have access to copy, paste and post that information elsewhere online—and even make fun of it! Make sure you always represent yourself in a positive light. You only get one first impression. And a bad first impression online is sometimes a permanent one that you can’t remove (like a picture of you doing a keg stand that resides on Google images).

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**TRUE FACT**

In a 2009 Careerbuilder survey of 2,667 hiring managers, 53% said they use social networks to conduct background checks on job candidates and 40% didn’t hire someone based on what they saw online in about 30 seconds.
Wrap Up

Knowing your personal brand is a crucial step before jumping onto social media sites and networking. Being aware of who you are as a person and future employee, why you’re valuable, and what you want in your career is a must. This self-reflection isn’t easy, but the more time you spend doing it, the more confident you will be when approaching other professionals.

Also, keep in mind that once you build your brand, you have to continuously update and improve upon it as you steer down your career path and mature professionally. Your specific passions, and (hopefully) your skill set, will also develop over time.

Takeaway points:

- Brands need consumers—don’t forget the needs of others, such as employers and other professionals you interact with.
- Know your passions and values, and don’t lose sight of them.
- Have your elevator pitch memorized, and keep it updated as needed.
- Always stay true to yourself and your brand to maintain credibility.
Chapter 2:

Twitter
Twitter Basics

Although it seems celebrities have taken over Twitter, especially with the so-called wars between people like Ashton Kutcher and CNN to get to a million followers first, many everyday people use Twitter to further their careers and expand their social networks. It’s a convenient way for friends, family, and co-workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent messages. People write short updates, often called “tweets,” of 140 characters or fewer. These messages are posted to their profile, are seen by their followers, and are searchable on Twitter’s search tool. Twitter has been around since 2006 and currently has more than 200 million users across the world from a wide variety of industries.

Twitter is different from Facebook and LinkedIn, because conversations are kept simple with the length limit on messages, and it is much easier to connect with people. Your friend request does not need to be accepted—you can follow whomever you want, and they won’t mind because they get followed by strangers all of the time. For this reason, it facilitates public conversations more naturally. Dan Schawbel, author of Me 2.0, explains: “You can directly network with hiring managers. It has destroyed hierarchies and created a place where everyone has the same privileges and opportunity to be part of a larger community.” In other words, a recent graduate with no work experience living in the middle of nowhere might have the unlikely opportunity to network with a CEO in Manhattan by simply following them on Twitter. Not too shabby.

Twitter has a lot of interesting vocabulary associated with it, unlike other social media sites. Get familiar with the terms below as I will mention them throughout:

**Tweet Speak**

**DM:** A private “direct message” between users.
**Favorite:** To mark a tweet with a star.
**Following:** The act of “subscribing” to another user’s tweets.
**Handle:** One’s username and the accompanying URL (e.g., @michellebarbeau).
**Hashtag:** The symbol (“#”) used to mark keywords or topics in a tweet. Tweets across Twitter that are marked with the same hashtag are grouped together.
**Lists:** Users can create “Lists,” (seen on the right side menu of the homepage) that groups the people they follow into certain categories (e.g., “marketing gurus”).
**Mention:** Mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the “@” symbol followed directly by their username is called a “mention.” This also refers to tweets in which your username is included.
**Reply:** A tweet posted in reply to another user’s message, usually posted by clicking the “reply” button next to their tweet. The tweet will always begin with “@username.”
**RT:** A “retweet” is the act of forwarding another user’s tweet to all of your followers.
**Tweeters/twitterers/tweeps:** Twitter users.
Setting Up Your Account

1. **Sign up.** Go to Twitter and click the yellow button.

2. **Choose a professional username.** It should either be your full name, first name and profession (e.g., JoethePlumber), or a pseudonym based on a formula of [Adjective][Profession] (e.g., InspiringTeacher). You may not get your first choice, but keep trying. Also, consider using a variation of your name that might include initials.

3. **Don’t follow your friends.** On the first sign up page, Twitter will ask if you want to “let others find you with your email address.” Unclick the box and wait to do this. You want to create an impressive profile before letting anyone know you’re on Twitter.

4. **Don’t add your interests.** For now, skip this section by clicking “Next step” at the bottom. You can figure out who you want to follow later on when I go over that.

5. **Don’t add contacts.** Twitter will again try to connect with your email service at this point and see which of your contacts are on Twitter so you can follow them. Click “skip import” at the bottom to avoid this for now. You can do this once your profile is complete.

6. **Upload a profile picture.** Now, you can see the bare version of your profile. It’s time to fill it in. First, choose your profile picture, or avatar. This is the picture you should use on all the social media sites you sign up for, so you have a recognizable face and a consistent brand across all sites. The best picture for job seekers is a clear headshot in which you are smiling and wearing something professional. Some people get away with using silly pictures to brand themselves, but I advise playing it safe and keeping it professional.

7. **Create a professional wallpaper.** The settings tab is in the top right corner. This is where you can add a profile background and color scheme. There’s lots of space you can use to promote yourself. You can get pretty creative. Check out sites like TwitrBackgrounds and Twitrounds for free options. And there are also instructions on how to design a personalized background using PowerPoint. No matter the route you go, make sure it’s professional, and not tacky or inappropriate. Sticking to a solid color might be your best bet.

8. **Write a short bio.** You have to be very strategic with this. You only get 160 characters, which includes spaces. Mention that you’re available for hire and include your career objective. You can use your resume and elevator pitch to help you write it. Don’t forget that there is a separate section for your name, website (I recommend a link to your blog or LinkedIn profile, which I will help
you set up in a later chapter) and location. Make sure to list your full name and location, because those are important details for recruiters and employers to know.

Here are two Twitter profiles of recent grads that are effective. Notice their educational background and career goal are clearly stated.

**Brian Shamberger**  
@BrianShamberger  
Durham, NH

*Recent Psych grad from U. of New Hampshire. Looking for career in I-O Psych. Intern for career advice/perspective blog - Careerealism*

http://www.careerealism.com

**Shauna Gallagher**  
@shaunagal  
Philadelphia, PA

*Recent Temple University grad in love with PR and looking for a permanent job in communications.*

Practice writing your Twitter bio in these 160 spaces:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Setting Objectives

In order to make your time on Twitter productive, start off by setting short-term and long-term goals. Here are some questions to get you started:

Who is your target audience?

____________________________________

____________________________________

What kinds of people do you want to connect with?

____________________________________

____________________________________

What themes do you want to tweet about?

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

What keywords might you use in your tweets so people who aren’t following you yet can find them?

_______________________________    ______________________

_______________________________    ______________________

_______________________________    ______________________

_______________________________    ______________________

How many followers do you want to have 3 months from now? __________

6 months from now? __________

A year from now? __________

How many lists do you want to be on 6 months from now? __________

A realistic goal is about 50 followers per month and maybe a list or two a month.
Tweeting/Getting Followers

**Tweeting**
A tweet is like a status message on Facebook. It’s the box labeled “What’s happening?” It can be about what you’re doing, a link to an interesting article you read, a question for your followers, etc. The main thing to remember is that Twitter statuses can only be 140 characters. This keeps conversations simple but means you have to be crafty with your words.

Pick topics related to your industry and tweet about the issues concerning it. Show you’re an expert. Here’s an example:

Take some time to observe the types of tweets recent grads and experts in your industry are posting. Get a feel for the type of content that gets retweeted and replied to, because that means it is obviously being well received. Try to model your tweets after them.

Before you start following your friends and other people, tweet a few times so they can see what you’re all about when they go to your profile. (They will get an email that alerts them that they have a new follower, and most people will check to see who that person is.) I recommended tweeting about 5 times a day.

**Getting Followers**
Follow 5-10 new people every day. Interact with at least one of them each day by:
- Retweeting something they wrote,
- Responding to a question or comment they’ve tweeted,
- Complimenting their work and/or website, or
- Asking them a question
These generous actions will make you likable and encourage others to follow you because of it. For instance, always thank new followers in a tweet with their handle in it.

Building relationships with your Twitter friends and showing you are willing to spread their message means they will do favors for you in return. And when they hear about a job opening that you fit, they'll be more likely to think of you!

Be a value adder. It’s very easy to tweet every thought that goes through your head, but try to show some restraint while job searching. A “power user” tweets about 15-18 times per day, and that includes retweets and links. If you overtweet, your tweets lose value and people will get annoyed and unfollow you. Like almost everything in life, it’s all about quality, not quantity. Try to post interesting items that will pique people’s interest and links that people can’t resist clicking on.

Become an expert in your field by being added to someone’s list. Tweeters create lists (see the right-hand column of people’s pages) that keep track of who they think are the go-to people for a certain topic. For example, you might see a list name like “marketinggurus.” The number of times someone is listed is often more impressive than the number of followers they have, because it means they are qualified. Remember this when deciding who to follow. Also, try to get experts in your industry to list you by adding them to your own lists.

Once you build a following, you can tweet about your job hunt. Your fellow tweeters need to know that you’re job searching. If you have a job search question, ask it. Post updates on your job search tactics to see what people think. But ALWAYS remember this person could be a potential employer, so don’t say anything that could jeopardize your brand or make you look desperate.

This tweet was posted by a graduate (@layalzgh) looking for a job in film production. As you can see, it is to the point and full of keywords, and she politely asked for it to be retweeted. She got her wish!

Advanced Strategies

- **Find the best time of day for conversations.** When do most of your Twitter contacts get online? Are they in different time zones? You may want to set up a daily tweeting schedule. You can use free tools, such as HootSuite or
TweetDeck, to schedule and organize your tweets and your interactions on all of your social media profiles all in one spot.

- **Get the Twitter phone app.** Once you become an avid tweeter and you start to get the hang of it, get the Twitter app. They have it for smartphones, BlackBerrys, the iPad, etc. It’s important to always stay connected, so you can be the first to reply to a job opportunity that pops up.

- **Shorten your URLs.** Since there is a character limit on messages, it helps to create shorter URLs for the links you want to share with your followers. There are websites that will allow you to do this in a matter of seconds. A popular one is [http://bit.ly](http://bit.ly).
Who to Follow

Twitter makes it pretty easy to find people to follow with a recent advance in late 2010 that recommends people to you in the side box labeled “Who to Follow.” These suggestions are based on who the people you follow follow.

But here are some other some tricks for connecting with relevant people:

- Use Twitter directories like Twellow or Listorious to find the right people to follow. Search by keyword (e.g., financial planners, Nike Marketing Manager).
- Go through a follower’s Twitter feed and check out the profiles of the people they follow and interact with.
- Check out the “lists” of valuable people you follow and see who’s on them.
- When reading blogs related to the job search or your industry, add the author on Twitter if they have an account. Also, see who is commenting intelligently on their posts and try to find them on Twitter.
- See who else is retweeting your favorite posts. You probably have similar interests as them.

Key People
Two groups you should follow are the top people in your industry and the top 5 or 10 companies you want to work for. Try to follow the hiring managers or the people on the team you want to be a part of. Conduct a Google search or LinkedIn search to find out who these people are. We’ll talk more about this in the chapter on LinkedIn.

Career Experts
Another way to find valuable people to follow is by searching by general keywords like “employment,” “career expert,” etc. Also, look for recruiters who specialize in your desired field and location. Here are 10 popular career experts to follow who give general advice:

@MichelleBarbeau (me!)
@DanSchawbel
@AlisonDoyle
@TweetMyJobs
@Animal
@UndercoverRec
@mscareergirl
@cornonthejob
@drwoody
@jtodonnell

Who to Avoid
If someone has a much higher number of people they are following versus people following them, take it as a red flag and don’t follow them. They are probably spammers, which means they’ll be clogging up your news feed with advertisements and scams.
Networking

Twitter (at least for job seekers) is about making initial contact through a follow and then creating an opportunity out of that new connection. There are several ways you can do this. Here are the main ways:

**Replies and Mentions**
An @reply is a public message sent from one person to another, distinguished from normal updates by the @username prefix. Reply publicly to any status message on Twitter by using the @username format. Following is not necessary to reply to someone, which makes it a great way to publicly connect with hiring managers and other VIPs. Tweets starting with @username are replies, and tweets with @username elsewhere are considered mentions. Mentions are the way to go if you want to acknowledge someone for something (like retweeting something you posted) or to get their attention if one of your posts is something they might be interested in reading.

**Direct Messaging**
Once you network publicly with someone, you should feel comfortable contacting them privately through a direct message. Seize any good opportunity to directly message a staff member at the company you want to work at.

Explain who you are (your brand) and how your interests are related to their company. By the third or fourth message, you can make your objective clear. Discuss why you want to work for them, explain how you could positively impact their company and ask if there are any open positions. If there aren’t, ask them to please keep your resume in mind or on file.

**Informational Interviews**
Informational interviewing means contacting someone in your desired industry, not necessarily get a job out of it, but to find out information about a certain career path and build a network of contacts in that field. You are the one asking the questions.

**Tweet Ups**
A “tweet up” is an in-person get-together with fellow tweeters. This might mean meeting someone for coffee or lunch to discuss a job opportunity. Just be careful! There can be strange people lurking online, so meet in public.

**Keeping the Connection**
Last but not least, don’t forget to follow up! Whether it is someone who gave you a job lead or help on how to find a job in a certain industry, don’t forget to thank the person for their time. Check in a few months later (even just to ask how they’re doing) to keep your “brand” in their memory. And, if someone doesn’t get back to an email or call right away, don’t get discouraged.
Furthering the Job Search

A Job Search Engine
Twitter itself is one big job search engine. Check out the following outside sites that compile all of the postings and let you search for them by keyword:

- Tweet My Jobs
- Twit Job Search

Hashtags
Job search by hashtags too. For instance, #hirefriday is when job seeker’s tweet their username/job title/location/industry/descriptive keywords/and a link to their online resume. The goal is to get others to retweet what they’ve posted in hopes to gain exposure to a hiring manager. And #FF (“Follow Friday”) is a hashtag that identifies tweets in which users make suggestions as to who other people should follow. Career Rocketeer has a list of popular hashtags for job seekers.

Twitter for Career Advice
Don’t forget that there are plenty of people out there who may not be able to offer you a job, but they can offer priceless career advice and direction. Some people are on Twitter to do just that! You can also ask people for feedback on your profile or resume.

One great place to get feedback and advice is in Twitter chats—when a group of people virtually meets for a certain time period (usually an hour) to discuss a specific topic. It’s a great place to learn and find key people to follow. Some chats designed for job seekers are listed in the chart below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Chat</th>
<th>Day/Time</th>
<th>Average #/Type of Participants</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#HFchat</td>
<td>Fridays 9 am PST</td>
<td>164 job hunters, career experts, and recruiters</td>
<td>A chat by the same creator of #HireFriday that answers 4-5 pressing questions to advance your job search.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#jobhuntchat</td>
<td>Mondays at 7 pm PST</td>
<td>233 job hunters, career experts, and recruiters</td>
<td>Career advice based on four questions a week.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEFINITION**

“Hashtag”
A symbol (#) that groups certain conversations together according to a topic, such as “#simplerecipes.” Just insert the hashtag in your tweet. You can create your own hashtags, but if you use ones that already exist, you will become a part of an established Twitter community.
#careerchat
Tuesdays at 10 am PST
82 job hunters, career experts, and recruiters
Hosted by Manpower, the leaders will answer a wide range of career-related questions.

#u30pro
Thursdays 5 pm PST
173 job hunters, career experts, and recruiters
Chat that focuses on issues surrounding professionals under the age of 30.

To participate in a twitter chat, go to the website TweetChat at the designated time and enter the proper hashtag in the search box.

Also, search around for chats specific to your industry.

Here’s an example of the kinds of valuable tweets you might see in a chat:

```
jasonhparker For those students without internships participating in #DrWoodyChat ... we're still searching for the right one for @brazencareerist in #dc - 9:09 AM May 27th, 2011
```

Most career-related tweets, blog posts and other types of online resources will be helpful, but read everything with a critical eye. Think about who is giving the advice, if they have the expertise to give that advice, and whether or not the person/website is a respected source.
Twitter Etiquette

Don’t only promote yourself. Generosity is part of the social media culture. Promote others through retweeting some of their posts, such as their job search objective or a new blog post. More importantly, share the favorite advice you’ve learned or resources you’ve found with your fellow job seekers.

Make sure to say thank you when people retweet your stuff (especially your #HireFriday post) or tell others to follow you during Follow Fridays. Also, make sure to acknowledge when people “mention” you. This way you continue the conversation someone has started with you!

You will get a lot of advice on Twitter. When you get a response to a question, make sure to show some appreciation. And if you get a job offer or interview that you aren’t interested in, make sure to thank them anyway. Showing you’re grateful makes you more likable, and it shows potential employers that you are good at building relationships.

Don’t set up an auto direct message that will get sent out to new followers. Twitter is about relationship building; you do not want to come off as someone who doesn’t care about giving someone a few seconds of your time. Even if it is just a simple, “Hey, Sarah. Thank you for following me.” Engage your new follower! You never know how they might help your job search out in the future.

Moral of the story: Tweet others as you want to be tweeted.

Before you write anything on Twitter, think to yourself, would I be ok with a potential employer seeing this? If you make a mistake and post something you regret, quickly delete the message before your followers see it!

Here’s an example of what not to write as a job seeker on Twitter:

```
looseygoosey
Even though I am almost a college grad, I am still incapable of spelling "sophomore" right the first time. #thingsthatmakeusad
13 minutes ago ⭐ Favorite t Retweet Reply
```

Last but not least, proofread everything you write on Twitter—especially your bio! If it isn’t well written, you’ll lose respect and your message might be misinterpreted. The good news is that Twitter has a built-in spell checker for tweets.
Wrap Up

Twitter is an important part of your social networking strategy. It presents a more casual way of making connections, which is why it’s so powerful. The best part about it is that you can follow whomever you want. The trick is to get that person to follow you back!

Takeaway points:

- Make your career goals clear in your bio, to your followers, in Twitter chats, etc.
- Always have your objectives in mind, so you can keep track of your progress.
- Position yourself as an expert.
- Don’t be shy. Direct message people who might be able to help you in your job search, and always express your gratitude.
Chapter 3: LinkedIn
LinkedIn Basics

LinkedIn is an indispensible asset to add to your social media-centered job hunt. It is strictly for professionals and currently has more than 100 million users from around the world—about 8 million business decision makers, 4 million corporate executives, and 2 million recent graduates. And it encompasses all types of industries and career paths, from circus performers to morticians, seriously.

You’ve probably heard about it before and may have a profile page already developed. It looks very similar to a resume, with some added bonuses, including a list of the LinkedIn communities you belong to. But having a profile is just the beginning of being an active LinkedIn user. This chapter will teach you how to use the site to actively network and seek out career opportunities that you can’t find on traditional job boards.

This is because recruiters and hiring managers exclusively turn to LinkedIn to post jobs, research candidates and find candidates. It’s a win-win for job seekers and recruiters alike (as long as you have a profile and its professional). In a 2010 survey by Jobvite of 600 human resource professionals, 78% said they use LinkedIn to recruit candidates. They search for people like you to place in more than 150 industries. In fact, nearly two thirds of Fortune 100 companies use LinkedIn to search for talent.

Moreover, LinkedIn is a great way to meet people with similar professional interests and see what they’re discussing and posting articles about. Did you move to a new city after graduation? Then the site is especially helpful for you to identify companies to work for in your area, people to know, and events to attend.

As an added bonus, once you get a job, it’s a great way to connect with your new co-workers and stay connected to the rest of your network. In the meantime, you’re supposed to keep your LinkedIn page up-to-date and accessible, because an even better opportunity may come along.
Setting Up Your Account

If you don’t already have a LinkedIn page, the first step is to sign up. Even if you have a LinkedIn page, read through these instructions to see if there are certain portions of your page that could use some beefing up.

1. **Sign up.** Go to LinkedIn and fill out the box on the right.

2. **Use your full name.** Do not use nicknames. This is a professional site!

3. **Choose “looking for work.”** Whether you’re a senior or a recent graduate, when you’re prompted on the next screen, click that you’re “looking for work” and choose the industry that best fits your career goals.

4. **Skip finding contacts.** As on Twitter, wait to connect to your email account to find your contacts. You can do this once your profile is complete.

5. **Consider going premium.** A basic account is all that you need to use LinkedIn to network and job search. However, the advantage to upgrading for $24.95 per month is that you can view the profiles of and send messages to people you aren’t directly connected to. But, if your financial state is anything like mine when I graduated, you don’t have the money for that.

Now, it is time to fill out your LinkedIn profile—the closest thing to the online version of your resume. You can start by finding someone you admire in your industry and reviewing how they “styled” their LinkedIn profile. But here are some general tips for the recent grad:

**Profile picture:** Upload the same professional photo you chose for Twitter to keep your online image consistent.

**Headline:**
Your headline (the line that appears under your name) should be based on your immediate career goals, because recruiters looking for recent grads won’t be looking for a company name; they’ll be looking for a skill or general field of interest. Consider what industry you want to go into and what makes you unique. For instance, “recent graduate looking for work in public relations” or “aspiring actor trained at prestigious performing arts school.”
This recent grad has a strong headline with a straightforward objective:

![Brandon S. GROUP](See Full Name)
Recent College Graduate Seeking Entry-Level Building Information Modeling Position
Greater Boston Area | Architecture & Planning

**Summary:**
This section should provide a snapshot of your brand, which you developed in Chapter 1. It should include the types of positions you are seeking and can be in paragraph or bullet point format. The main strategy in this section is to infuse it with keywords. Put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter. What would a recruiter type in to find someone like you? Some examples of this language might be:

- Job titles (like “assistant editor” or “marketing intern”)
- Degrees (like “B.A. History”)
- Skills (like “Adobe Photoshop” or “Twitter”)
- Popular acronyms in your industry

You'll want to insert those buzzwords into as many parts of your profile as possible. Refer to job postings in your industry and the LinkedIn profiles of people in your industry for inspiration on what to write.

**Specialties:**
This should be a list of words that represent your specialties, separated by commas. It might be short at this point in your career, but it’s okay. Here is my summary and specialties:

**Summary**
I consider myself an editor, writer, teacher and life-long learner. My editing background is diverse (web and print) and my professional writing background encompasses resumes, grant proposals and career-related articles. I am committed to learning and thrive as a higher education teacher and tutor of composition and the GRE. My experience includes:

- 3 years of editing experience
- 5 years of professional writing experience
- 3 years of career development experience
- 6 years of teaching/tutoring experience

**Specialties**
List three of your specialties below:

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

Experience:
You might think you have little to list here, but get creative. List volunteer work, extracurricular activities, internships, on-campus jobs, other paid positions, and any leadership or student organization positions.

You can use bullet point or paragraph format to describe your duties at each position. Make sure to start every sentence with a verb. For instance, “Traveled to New York for a Community Affairs Board conference” or “Interned at a small publishing firm and assisted with manuscript review.”

Let’s practice drafting one of your past work experiences by filling out the next few lines:

Company/Organization Name: ________________________________
Job title: _________________________________________________
Dates you worked there: _________________________________
Description (of duties):
  ▪ [Verb + explanation] ______________________________________
  ▪ [Verb + explanation] ______________________________________
  ▪ [Verb + explanation] ______________________________________
  ▪ [Verb + explanation] ______________________________________

Once you’ve perfected it, add it to your profile, along with any other positions you’ve had. It is important to be thorough and list everything, because LinkedIn uses your work history to recommend connections to you. And their recommendations are usually spot on!
You can also import your resume and LinkedIn will pull your information from it and transfer it to your profile. But it seems easier and cleaner to just type everything up yourself the way you want it to appear in its online format.

Education:
In this section, only list your post-high school education. (I think listing high school makes you look really young.) So you’ll probably only have your undergraduate degree. If you minored in something, make sure to include this. Many times a minor can turn into an entire career—mine did. It’s also appropriate to include study abroad programs and activities and clubs you were involved in. These make you look more well rounded. Under “additional notes,” list your GPA if it was more than a 3.0.

Additional Information:
- **Websites**: Here you can list a link to your blog. (I’ll help you get one started in a later chapter.) But it’s totally fine to leave this blank as a recent graduate.
- **Twitter**: You can permanently link your Twitter account to your LinkedIn account, but I don’t suggest you do this. LinkedIn is not a place to update people on your day-to-day experiences or annoy them with several status updates a day. Instead, I would include “#in” in your tweets that you do want posted to your LinkedIn page.
- **Interests**: Keep this to interests or hobbies that are industry related or exemplify leadership or dedication. For instance, participating in triathlons would look good, but playing video games probably wouldn’t. Separate each item with a comma.
- **Groups and associations**: Here you can list school or professional organizations you are or were a part of. The logo of the groups you join on LinkedIn will also appear here.
- **Honors and awards**: Hopefully you can list at least something here. If not, get working on it!

Personal Information:
I recommend leaving this section completely blank to avoid spammers and strange people. If someone wants to get a hold of you, they can send you a message. And they really don’t need to know your birthday or relationship status to network with you.

Contact Settings:
This last section of your profile allows you to list the reasons people can get in touch with you. Click as many as you feel comfortable with or that apply to you. At the very
least, make sure “career opportunities” and “getting back in touch” are checked. This way people feel welcome to connect with you.

Advanced tips:

- **Get the app.** As with other social media sites, LinkedIn has a phone app. Get it so you can always be connected and be the first to reply to a job lead.

- **Get recommendations.** Having at least one recommendation will set you apart from most other unemployed grads on LinkedIn and shows you have the savvy to ask someone for this favor. Ask people who really know your work ethic, such as a past supervisor at a job or internship, co-worker, or professor. Customize each recommendation request with a polite and personalized note, and provide the person with a few words outlining your accomplishments or qualities to give them some ideas on what to include. And, of course, make sure to thank the person. Another way to get a recommendation is by writing one for someone else out of the kindness of your heart. LinkedIn will alert them and ask if they want to write one for you in return, and they just might.

- **Make your profile public:** To make your LinkedIn profile easy to locate, adjust your public settings. Click “Settings” under your name at the top of the screen and then “Edit your Public Profile.” You can select which parts of your profile the public can see. Keep in mind that LinkedIn is a professional site for networking and job opportunities. For this reason, I suggest making your profile “visible to everyone.” Then, customize your public profile URL. This will change the confusing URL to something like linkedin.com/in/michellebarbeau so others will remember it when looking for you. Use your middle initial if your first and last name combination is unavailable.

- **Include common misspellings of your name:** Under the summary section, list alternative spellings of your name if it’s hard to spell. That way, you’ll never go undiscovered by a recruiter.

- **Import your blog:** Or at least include a link to it. (We will get your blog started in a later chapter.)

Always keep your profile up to date! When you get a new job, receive an award, etc., make the appropriate changes to your LinkedIn profile and your resume. Your LinkedIn profile and resume should always match.
Getting Connections

You Know People
Now that your profile is complete, it’s time to find some friends. Don’t think you know anyone you can connect with? Well, I guarantee you do. Start by clicking “Add Connections” in the top right corner of your page to allow LinkedIn to scan your email contacts to see if any of them are on LinkedIn. Then, search for the following people that may not have been found:

- Professors and college career center staff
- Parents and relatives (It’s not Facebook, so go ahead and add them!)
- Friends/classmates
- Internship supervisors and colleagues
- Connections from extracurricular activities
- Me! (Make sure to explain how you know me.)

Name 5 people you can search for today:

1. ________________________________________
2. ________________________________________
3. ________________________________________
4. ________________________________________
5. ________________________________________

Inviting People to Connect
When requesting to connect with someone, or as LinkedIn calls it “add the person to your network,” change the generic message LinkedIn provides to a message that reminds the person how they know you and explains why you’re interested in connecting.

Include a personal note: (optional)

Hey Robb,
I met you at the networking event at SDSU last week. I was wondering if you want to connect and share tips on the job search. Hope to chat soon.

- Michelle Barbeau
Joining Groups

Another great way to find connections and get job advice is to join several alumni, industry-related, or young professionals groups. Search for groups to join in the “Groups Directory” (find it under the “groups” tab) that have a healthy number of members (500+) and are active (have been posted in within the last week). Some are specialized groups dealing with a narrow topic or industry whereas others are more general.

As a member, you can comment on discussion threads, find exclusive job listings, meet people who share common interests, and contact people directly without having LinkedIn’s paid premium membership. See if any of your Twitter connections have groups on LinkedIn. Also, connect with what LinkedIn calls the “top influencers” of the groups you participate in. These people will be identified in the right side bar.

When deciding how many groups to join, keep in mind that it’s about quality not quantity. Which are most relevant to your field and career goals? How many members do they have and are the members credible people? How many groups do you think you have the time to actively participate in? You have the opportunity to participate in discussions, ask questions, and respond to people’s questions and comments.

As with Twitter, look for companies and VIPs at those companies you want to work at and join the groups they’re in. Once you have created a name for yourself in the group, find the hiring manager or recruiter for their company and a way to interact or get connected to them.

When you find a group you want to join, note that groups that have a lock icon next to their name means it’s a members only group. You have to join these to view the activity in the group. For some groups, the creator has to approve your request to join. It may take a few days for them to approve your request, but don’t get discouraged.

LinkedIn will also prompt you to make a few decisions about your connection to that group. One of them is whether you want an email digest of the group’s activity sent to you over email. I suggest signing up for a weekly email so as not to be bombarded with emails but still keep up with the activity in the group. You can always adjust your settings later.

EXPERT QUOTE

"Be a fly on the wall, and then start to build visibility and credibility," says LinkedIn spokesperson and career expert Lindsey Pollak. “By posting a thought-provoking question, you can show that you have a voice in the community.”
Also, choose to have the group logo show up on your profile. This will make your profile a bit prettier and more impressive.

10 groups for young professionals:

1. **JobAngels**: Non-profit job search network of professionals helping other professionals find job advice and opportunities, specific to the area you live in.

2. **Indeed**: Official job search group on LinkedIn for Indeed.com.

3. **LinkedIn Students and Recent Grads**: Exclusively for college grads interested in getting their careers off the ground in tough times.

4. **Personal Branding Network**: For all professionals looking to build powerful personal brands. Led by the author of *Me 2.0*.

5. **Career Rocketeer – Career Launch Network**: A network for career search, career development and personal branding, bringing job seekers and employers, recruiters and career experts together.


7. **A Job Needed – A Job Posted**: A place to search for employment or recruiters who help members find employment.

8. **JibberJobber – Career Management**: A network for executives, professionals, students and all those involved in the career services industry, including counselors, coaches and resume writers.

9. **ResumeMaker Career Network**: A forum that connects qualified job seekers with hiring managers and corporate recruiters, as well as allows candidates to discuss and share career opportunities.

10. **Project: Get Hired!**: A motivational support group exclusively for job hunters to share creative strategies and stay motivated.

The ultimate goal with groups is to get noticed by the company you want to employ you.
Giving/Getting Info

Giving Info
LinkedIn status updates, entered from your homepage, should be updated once a day at most and once a week at a minimum. As with Twitter, they can be up to 140 characters long. I recommend changing your settings to allow your first-, second- and third-degree contacts to see your updates since a status update might spark someone’s interest in connecting.

All posts should be 100% relevant to your field. The best status updates resemble sound bytes from a networking conversation: quick notes about events you’re attending, accomplishments you’re proud of, articles or books you’ve read and professional announcements, like a new position you’ve landed. DO NOT post announcements about a job interview you have or an offer you turned down, etc. That’s bad etiquette. Plus, you might not get the job!

Here are a couple examples of appropriate posts from recent grads. They are professional and career-related:

![Marian Schembari](image)
**Marian Schembari** My to-do list is short, but heavy. Getting an early start to the day! via Twitter
57 minutes ago • Like • Comment • Send a message

![Daniela Anavitarte Bolzmann](image)
**Daniela Anavitarte Bolzmann** Anyone who has ever been a server can relate to this, GREAT article> Behind the scenes at restaurants [http://l.co/IOV3jsZ](http://l.co/IOV3jsZ) via Twitter
4 days ago • Like • Comment • Send a message

Getting Info
There are a variety of resources on LinkedIn for job seekers, from articles people post to the details on your dream company. Some of these resources are priceless. For instance, two articles I recently came across were titled “20 Biggest Booming Industries” and “Top 10 Companies Hiring This Week.” You’ll see resources like this everyday. Here is a list of the types of people and industries sharing articles according to LinkedIn:

**Top 10 Titles**
1. Business Owner
2. Director
3. Marketer
4. President
5. Editor
6. Vice President
7. Chief Executive

**Top 10 Industries**
1. Marketing and Advertising
2. Internet
3. Information Tech and Services
4. Online Media
5. Computer Software
6. Public Relations and Communication
7. Writing and Editing
LinkedIn Answers
This feature, which is similar to WikiAnswers and Yahoo! Answers, allows users to ask questions for the LinkedIn community to answer. The difference is that LinkedIn is more business-oriented and the identity of the people asking and answering questions is known. This is a great place to get career-related advice. Take a look around. The questions are grouped by topic.

The more active you are in Answers, the more people will view your profile and want to connect with you. But whether asking a question or providing an answer or any other thing you might write on LinkedIn, make sure to sound articulate and professional! A potential employer might come across what you've posted. If you make a mistake, delete the message immediately.

Research Career Paths
You can research companies you might be interested in working for by viewing their “company page” on LinkedIn. There are more than 150,000 companies that have a page. When typing the name of a company in the search box, statistics about the company are provided, such as the year it was founded, who they have recently hired, and the size of the company. Click on the bar graph icon on the right to see more detailed information, such as how fast the company is growing employee-wise, the breakdown of positions within the company, and the amount of experience employees have.

You can also use this feature to get familiar with a company before an informational interview or real interview. See what the person’s interests are or where they’ve worked. That way you’ll be better prepared and can ask more insightful questions.

Also, get strategic bits of news about the company, such as new job openings, sent to you by following them. Look at your various “stalking” options in the graphic below:
A new tool on LinkedIn called Career Explorer will make researching companies much easier, but it was launched in early 2011 and is still in beta mode. It was designed to help recent grads determine their career path and find the best people and companies on LinkedIn to know. I’ll cover this tool in more depth in later versions of this guide.

**Search for Job Openings**
LinkedIn is so much more than a job search engine, but this is still one of its most valuable features. It not only lists jobs posted on LinkedIn, but it compiles the postings from many other major sites like Monster and Yahoo. At anytime, there are around 40,000 job listings on LinkedIn.

To access the search engine, click the “Jobs” tab at the top of the screen and then select “Find Jobs.” You are able to search by keyword and bookmark jobs you want to apply to as well. This will keep you organized. You can also narrow your search to “entry-level” jobs, which is handy for recent grads.

When you find a posting that fits your background, LinkedIn will tell you if you have any first, second or third degree connections that work at the company. If you do, next to “apply now” will also be a button that says “request introduction.” When you click it, a graphic like the one below will appear. The hiring manager at this company is a third degree connection of mine. Two of my connections are listed, because they are connected to one of her connections and can introduce us.

![LinkedIn Compose introductions](image)

**LinkedIn Apps**
There are a variety of apps to add to the LinkedIn experience listed under “More.” One, called Company Buzz, allows you to view a constant feed of everything people are saying on Twitter about an organization. This feed will become part of your LinkedIn homepage feed. This is helpful for gathering up-to-the-minute news about a company the night before an interview!
Networking

This section provides the real scoop on how to meet VIPs. One of the most important strategies is to learn how to unlock the power of your extended network. There are three levels of connection in your network:

1\textsuperscript{st} degree network: This person is your direct connection. You are probably friends or have worked with them before in some capacity. For this reason, you are able to directly contact them either through LinkedIn or email. Their email address is listed at the bottom of their profile.

2\textsuperscript{nd} degree network: The staff at LinkedIn says that this is where the power lies. When you find the hiring manager for a position you want, see if you have a 2nd or 3rd degree connection with them. (You’ll see a small blue bubble above their name with “2nd” or “3rd” in it.) What this means is that you can use your first-degree connection as a “middle man” who can put you in touch with the desired contact. You just have to ask your connection to introduce you by clicking “get introduced.” The fact that the person is being approached by someone they trust makes networking with a stranger much easier.

3\textsuperscript{rd} degree network: This means you are removed from a person by two people. You can only view their first name and last initial (unless you have a premium account). To get in touch with this person, you have to go through your first and second-degree contacts, making it a three-step process, but one that is worth it.

I have just over 100 connections and look how many people I’m technically connected to!
Targeting People
If you are unsure who you want to get introduced to, start by searching for the company you want to work at and see a list of who works there. The people with a “2nd” or “3rd” degree bubble next to their name are the ones you can reach through your first-degree network. Click “1 shared connection” to see who this person is. This is the person you would request an introduction through.

Requesting an Introduction
When requesting an introduction, you’ll be prompted to write a message to your mutual connection and then a separate note to the person you want to “meet.” Draft a compelling subject line and a short note that introduces you and explains why you hope to connect. If you are looking for a position at their company, explain what makes you qualified and why you want a job in this particular industry. You might take snippets from your personal brand from Chapter 1. Show you’ve done your research and end with a clear statement about what you want from the person—to forward your name along, set up a quick phone call, etc. Your connection will, in turn, decide whether to forward the message on to the desired recipient.

Here’s an example of an expertise request:
Advanced People Search
Another way to target people is by using the advanced search to find the top people in your industry by keyword, title, etc. These are people you might want to connect with, share ideas with, join the same groups as, or copy the profile components of. Get to it by clicking the “advanced” button on the top right side of the page where the icon of the magnifying glass is. You can perform an advanced search for any of the drop-down categories, such as groups, companies, etc.

Getting familiar with the types of people in your industry and where they work is a great way to develop the list of the top companies you want to work for. This will help you figure out who to target on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and any other social media site.

Finding Mentors
College alumni are usually anxious to help other young alumni from their respective schools. To find these potential mentors, search for your college name and the job title of your desired position (e.g., “Cornell + ophthalmologist”). This person shares your career path and achieved the goal you are aiming for. Who better to ask for advice on how to proceed in your job search?

Networking Events
Having trouble finding an industry event to attend? Click the “More” tab at the top of your profile page and then “Events.” Within this section of the site, you can let your connections know of the professional events you’re interested in attending and find new events you didn’t know about, such as conferences and seminars. You can also see if there are any upcoming events your friends are attending, this way you can share travel expenses with them or just have a sidekick.

QUICK TIP
Want to avoid having to go through one or two other people for an introduction? Join a group the person you want to talk to is in, because you are allowed to send messages to fellow group members.

QUICK TIP
Watch videos on LinkedIn’s YouTube channel for more suggestions!
LinkedIn Etiquette

**Be patient:** There is no guarantee that everyone you want to connect with will want to connect with you. Or that someone you message will message you back. If you haven’t heard from someone in over a month, it’s okay to send that person a follow-up email. If that doesn’t work, move on to people who are more interested or responsive.

**Be open-minded:** Don’t be too critical when deciding whom to accept as a connection. Remember, you become connected to all of the contacts that a new connection has. One exception is if someone you don’t know sends you a message offering you a job right from the get go. I had someone whom I didn’t know offer me a sales job (which doesn’t even match my experience) and decided to ignore the message. If you don’t know the person, you can either reply with, “Hi - can you remind me how we know each other?” or you can click “archive” to ignore the request. If you want to report someone as a spammer, then click “I don’t know this user.” Users who have this happen to them several times are removed from LinkedIn.

**Be reliable:** Try to log in to LinkedIn everyday and post at least once a week. It is crucial to respond to messages and other interactions promptly. When LinkedIn sends you email updates, make this your reminder to log in and leave your mark for the day.

**Get physical:** Show that although you’re young, you’re not intimidated to leave your computer screen. Set up phone calls, meet someone for lunch, and send thank you cards when someone on social media lends you a hand.

**Never ask directly:** You can ask someone to keep you in mind or consider interviewing you, but never directly ask for a job. It is aggressive and typically unwelcome.

**Check your spelling:** As with Twitter, display strong writing skills. What’s wrong with this headline?!?
Wrap Up

LinkedIn is one of the best social networking resources out there, because it is meant specifically for professionals. Its benefits go beyond just networking. It includes a built-in job search engine, detailed information on companies, and rich industry-based discussions. Most importantly, it offers a behind-the-scenes look at your extended network.

Takeaway points:

- Your profile needs to be complete, detailed and keyword-rich. Without a strong profile, there is little reason to be on LinkedIn.

- Take advantage of the opportunity to exchange meaningful conversations with other professionals. Don’t be a fly on the wall.

- Always check to see how your extended network is connected to the job opportunities you’re interested in.
Chapter 4:

Facebook
Facebook in the “Real World”

Over the course of the last few years, Facebook has expanded to include a larger demographic of users and to offer additional features that job seekers can use. Plus, there are over 600 million people on Facebook. (This is almost double the population of the U.S.!) Why not take advantage of the largest pool of people on the net? I think you should, but in a bit of a different way than you might expect.

Some job search guides and career experts advocate the use of Facebook for networking with strangers, but for recent graduates I think this is unrealistic. Facebook is a place to post funny pictures, like friends’ posts, keep people in the loop, and stalk your crushes. The beauty of Facebook is that it is an escape from the so-called real world—a place for pleasure, not business. So as far as online networking goes, I honestly think your time is better spent on LinkedIn and Twitter, where the professional side of you will fit right in.

With that said, you still need to prepare your Facebook profile for the job search and use it to network with people you are already friends with. I want you to start viewing your Facebook social circle as a network of soon-to-be professionals. I think over the next decade or so (I know that sounds like forever, but it’s really not!), as you and your friends all move up in the workforce, Facebook will naturally transform into a less casual, more professional online space.

The best part about this shift is that it’s much more comfortable to approach a friend for a job lead than a purely professional contact you may not know very well. This is what sets networking on Facebook apart from networking on other social media sites.

Here, I will focus on how to leverage your friends and how to use other resources on Facebook, like advertisements, to further your job search. We’ll start with a sort of “remodeling” of your page and privacy options to get your profile ready to go.
Updates for Your Page

In this section, I'll jump into explaining how to safeguard your profile so job opportunities aren't lost. (I won't bore you with a run down of how to set up a profile on Facebook and how to navigate the site as I did in other chapters, since you're probably already a user.)

Privacy

This is the first order of business. Before you start job searching, you need to prevent your page from being "Googleable" by potential employers. Unfortunately, Facebook doesn't make the process very intuitive or the options very clear, so I'll go through it all in depth.

Even if you are familiar with privacy options on Facebook, let's go through your setting options again. There are several levels of privacy involved and the settings change all the time. Let's make sure everything is how you want it to be as you begin your post-college job search.

The first option, and the one I recommend, is to make your page only viewable by friends. To do this, click “Account” and then “Privacy Settings.” Click “Friends Only” to ensure that only people you are connected to can see each component of your page.

Existing photo albums and videos must be individually set to private. To verify that they are, click “Customize settings” at the bottom and then “Edit privacy settings for existing photo albums and videos.”
The second and more complicated option is to maintain customized lists, such as “Family” and “Coworkers,” in which certain groups of people can only see certain aspects of your profile. You might have one titled “Professional” for people tied to your professional interests and career objectives. These are the people you don’t want seeing every picture that is tagged of you, etc. To do this, go to “Account” and then “Edit Friends” then “Create list.” Type in a name for the list and select all of the people that fall under it.

But you’re not done yet. Now you have to go into your privacy settings. Click “Customize settings.” Now click “Customize” from the drop down box for the sections that you want to block certain groups, or lists, from being able to view. Type the list name into the “Hide this from” box, and most importantly, save the setting!

![Custom Privacy Settings](image)

**Content**

Now that you’ve made your page private, we have to go through the content and clean it up a bit. Although your Facebook profile doesn’t need to be as professional as your LinkedIn profile, there are a few tweaks you should make in case a potential job contact comes across your profile.

You might be wondering how this would happen if your profile is private. Well, let’s say you meet someone in a social setting that you have interest in and you add them on Facebook. What if they just so happen to be in HR at your favorite company? You may not think a VIP is coming your way, but as you get a bit older, you will start meeting people like this all the time.

The point is that you’re an adult now, so your Facebook page should be toned down a bit. I suggest the following changes:
Consider removing your political and religious views. You’re in the workforce now, and this could have an effect on how willing someone is to network with or hire you.

Remove your birth year. There isn’t any reason for people to know your age. This will protect against age discrimination in your job search. As an added bonus, it might help deter identity theft.

Fill out education and work history. You are a graduate, so rep it! List the college you graduated from and a brief outline of your most recent work history. Adding employment info to your profile helps your network get to know more about your experience and the industry you’re looking for work in.

Clean up your contact info. You don’t need to list any contact info, because someone can just message you. But if you do, you should probably just stick to listing your email address and phone number. I wouldn’t let acquaintances know where you live.

Clean up your photos and videos. Honestly, ask yourself…do my photos make me look like a party animal? Even though you may treasure these pictures, it’s time to clean up your albums a bit. It’s okay to have a few pictures with a drink in your hand, but save the drunken keg stand and kissy face ones to your desktop and delete or de-tag them from your profile. Go through every picture and every video. People will dig these up. I speak from experience.

Maintain the cleanliness of your wall. Go through the last few pages of your wall and delete any posts that are inappropriate. From here on out, monitor everything people post to your wall. If you have Facebook on your phone, this should be easy. And if you have a friend that tends to post inappropriate or embarrassing comments on your page, you should consider letting them know that it’s tainting your reputation a bit.

Would you tell this guy about a job opening that fit his experience?

Still aren’t taking me seriously? Here are a few recent news headlines that illustrate the importance of taking precautions to protect one’s online brand:

- “Teacher Fired for Posting Picture of Herself Holding Beer on Facebook”
- “Facebook Photo of Dead Woman Gets EMT Fired”
- “Pittsburg Pirates Fired a Mascot for Unacceptable Facebook Post”
Fan Pages

Company Pages
Many companies are using their Facebook fan pages as a primary method of marketing to customers and attracting potential employees. Search for the companies you want to work for and “like” them. This way their updates will appear in your news feed. This is just one more way to learn about the companies on your prospect list and stay up-to-date on their news, events and job openings.

Once you’ve “liked” them and taken a look around their page a bit, start leaving your mark on their page. The more involved you are, the more gung-ho you’ll look about standing behind their cause and wanting to work there. Reply to posts and provide your input when they ask questions. Keep in mind that you can engage with them on LinkedIn and Twitter too. Figure out which of these sites they seem to be the most active on and interact with them there.

Other Pages
There are also many pages of career consultants and other popular career bloggers you can consider “liking” for career tips. This is also a way to find people on Facebook that you can become friends with for informational interviews and other career advice.

Here are some good ones to “like”:
- Corn on the Job
- Brazen Careerist
- Ms. Career Girl
- Tim’s Strategy

Creating Your Own Page
It is becoming more common for recent grads to start their own businesses. If you decide to go the entrepreneurial path and start your own company, you should create a fan page for it once it is established.

Here are some resources from Social Media Examiner to help you get a fan page going:
- How to Create a Facebook Fan Page
- 9 Ways to Enhance Your Facebook Fan Page
- 10 Ways to Grow Your Facebook Page Following
Advertising Your Hunt

The most unique way to use Facebook for the job hunt is to create an advertisement that promotes your job search. This is a pretty direct way of viewing yourself as a product, as we practiced doing in Chapter 1. In the “Success Stories” part of this guide, I'll tell you about a recent grad who did just that and made it work. Here is a preview of what her ad looked like when she posted it back in 2009 and targeted major publishing companies in New York:

The idea is that your ad would be targeted to employees at specific companies. When an employee at one of your target companies clicks your ad, they would be directed to your LinkedIn page or a snazzy webpage with your resume on it. We'll go over how to create a simple blog that you could link the ad to in the next chapter.

Creating Your Ads
To create an ad, go to your homepage and click “Ads and Pages” in the left side bar. You’ll have to decide on the image and content of your ad first. For the image, you can use the same headshot you’re using on Twitter and LinkedIn. Content-wise, you’ll want to tailor the ad to a specific company and create one for each company you want to target. Don’t just say, “Looking for a job at a non-profit.” Say, “I want to work at American Red Cross.” See Marian’s?

Also, make sure to include a “call to action” within the text, so you are directing the person to do something. In this case, you want them to click the ad to see your resume.

You get 135 characters to convince the person to click the ad. What might your ad say?

__________________________________________________________
The next step in the ad creation process is to define your demographic. As I mentioned, the most important part is to identify the company you want to target. Your ad will show up on anyone’s page who has this company listed as their employer. This is a unique way of getting your personal brand in front of the people employed by the companies you want to hire you.

Notice the graphic on the right. If you were targeting American Red Cross employees, your ad would show up on 9,420 pages! Crazy, right? The goal is to get people to click the ad and view your resume. Facebook will track how many people have clicked your ad. To be more strategic, you might want to target companies that have positions open.

It does cost a little bit to run an ad, but you can choose the length of time your ad will be displayed and the type of ad that will match your budget. Marian budgeted $100. She ended up getting a few job interviews out of it and an offer for a freelance writing position. Worth the money, I would say!

One last thought. The point of this strategy is to get your foot in the door; you’ll still need to put some work in to sell your brand in the interview and land the job. Nobody is going to hire you just because they saw your ad.

Facebook offers some great advice on creating and maintaining a Facebook advertisement. Read it here.

And here’s a great blog post about Facebook ads.
I scoured the web to find the best Facebook applications for young job seekers and found one worth mentioning—BranchOut. Launched in July 2010, this popular application turns Facebook into a kind of LinkedIn. The professional version of your Facebook page resides on BranchOut (only the work information carries over), and you can connect with people through BranchOut without adding them as a friend on your main Facebook page. Pretty awesome if you ask me!

BranchOut is similar to LinkedIn in the following ways:

- It reveals your second degree contacts
- You can search their database for jobs
- Contacts can “endorse” you (the equivalent of being recommended)
- Keywords are crucial to include in your profile so that recruiters can find you

Here’s a glimpse of BranchOut:
BranchOut compiles all of your Facebook friends and their places of work into an easy-to-read list. This makes forming your networking strategy that much easier. I tested it out with my 400 or so contacts and found several friends that work at companies I have applied to or want to apply to.

The more friends you invite to join BranchOut, the larger your immediate and extended network will be. Once they join, their network of friends is revealed to you.

To use BranchOut, do the following:

1. Search for “BranchOut” in the search bar of Facebook.
2. Once you’re in BranchOut, upload your LinkedIn profile to fill out your basic information.
3. Make your profile keyword rich.
4. Explore the possibilities of BranchOut.

As the next year or two unfolds, more and more of your friends will join the workforce and the potential of BranchOut will increase. For now, get on BranchOut to show others that you are on the forefront of technology.
Wrap Up

Facebook isn’t necessarily meant for professional networking, but that doesn’t mean it should be disregarded in your overall job search strategy. Your personal brand is just as apparent on Facebook as it is on other sites. Plus, close friends are often the best contacts you’ll have, because they have a vested interest in your success.

Takeaway points:

- Secure your Facebook profile so you can socialize in private.
- Remember that your friends and their networks are potential contacts for jobs.
- Creating a Facebook advertisement is a creative way to be seen.
- BranchOut is an excellent application to take advantage of on Facebook.
Chapter 5:

Blogging
Blogging Basics

Another way to get involved with social media and spread your personal brand is to become a blogger. Blogs, if you’re not already familiar with them, are basically online journals on a certain topic that get regularly updated. The difference is that the writer is able to share their content with the public and interact with readers. Also, many blogs are designed and published for professional purposes. As you may know, many companies have a blog to strengthen their brand and build a stronger fan base.

As a young job seeker, you can use a blog as a platform to voice your opinions on a certain topic and make your personal brand public. From there, you will build a community of readers who will become part of your social network. As Dan Schawbel states, “Blogs are about clearly showing your voice and opinion on various topics. Once you establish trust with your readership, you will have community of ambassadors that can help you find a job.” You can also refer potential employers to your blog to show off how passionate and knowledgeable you are about your field.

This chapter will outline how to start a blog and keep it running. However, blogging isn’t for everyone. I suggest blogging to people who 1) have decent writing skills, 2) feel they know a healthy amount about their topic to keep the conversation going, and 3) have the time to dedicate to blogging.

Whether or not you choose to blog really depends on what your personal job search goals are. However, at the very least you should be reading and commenting on the most popular blogs in your industry.

After reading this chapter, if you decide blogging is something you want to commit to, I recommend doing online research and reading books on blogging. There are some excellent in-depth resources out there, such as Copyblogger. This chapter will only scrape the surface of the many possibilities of blogging.

Blog Speak

Blogroll: A list of fellow bloggers that a blogger recommends, usually located on their homepage.

Blogosphere: The space or community of bloggers online.

RSS feed: A format for distributing and gathering content from sources across the Web. Each incoming feed usually includes a headline/title, link and summary. It allows information to be easily shared across sites.

Syndicate: To share your blog posts on social media sites and other websites, so a feed of your new content shows up on your page or status updates. You are syndicating your content when you create an RSS feed. It’s a great way to reach a larger audience.

Widget: An application or side bar box on a website that offers users additional interactive features. Popular widgets are Twitter feeds, blogrolls, subscription boxes, etc.
Setting Up Your Blog

Finding Your Niche
Before you can begin blogging, you need to think long and hard about what your niche, or expertise, will be. Although you’re a recent grad with little or no work experience, you have your own perspective on issues and something unique to say. Pick a theme in which you feel comfortable discussing a variety of issues that fall within it. Your blog should also be representative of the personal brand you developed in Chapter 1.

Let’s say you graduated with a degree in Computer Engineering. You might start a blog about current events in IT (Informational Technology) and offer your own opinion on these events as someone just entering into the industry. This way you can build a following of other recent grads and people in your industry.

Before you make any decisions, read blogs in your industry to get a feel for the topics people are covering and the way they write about them. To find these blogs, perform a search on Technorati.

And don’t forget that Google can make almost anyone an expert. You can write about anything you can research. As long as you make sure to cite everything and quote the experts when appropriate. The greatest part about blogging is that, in the process, you’ll become more educated in your field.

Almost every topic already has blogs on it, but what you need to do is take a popular topic and put your own spin on it. Just make sure your niche isn’t so narrow that you run out of topics to talk about. Take some time to answer the following questions:

What industry do you want to target?
______________________________________

What types of people do you want reading your blog?
______________________________________

What topic will your blog center on?
______________________________________

What will make your blog different from other blogs on the same topic?
______________________________________
Creating Your Site

There are a variety of sites that offer blogging services—some are free and some aren’t. I’m going to focus on using Wordpress, since I’ve had a good experience using it. Although it’s not the only option, it’s a popular one. Its limitation is that users can’t customize their site too much, but it’s perfect for beginning bloggers. If you have blogged before or have web expertise, you may want to consider a more advanced publishing platform.

If you decide to go with Wordpress, here is a step-by-step on how to get started:

1. **Go to** [Wordpress.com](http://Wordpress.com) and click the big orange button.

2. **Pick your URL.** Your URL should represent the topic of your site. You want something short, catchy and easy to spell. You also have the option of using your first and last name. Do a Google search for the name before you choose it, in case there is already a really popular site with that title.

3. **Pick a theme.** Wordpress offers many free options as far as the colors and set up of the blog go. Some themes have a younger feel, while others are more plain and professional. Think about your focus and how it might best be represented. Some themes allow you to upload your own header too, which gives you the opportunity to add your own touch.

4. **Decorate.** Under “appearance” on the left-hand side of your “dashboard” (the behind-the-scenes portion where all of the settings are for your blog), you can customize some more. I recommend adding some widgets. This is where you can add an archive of your posts, a box where people can subscribe to your blog, etc. The “Links” widget is the blogroll one.

5. **Fill out the “About” page.** When you click “Pages” in the left-hand side bar, you’ll notice that one of your pages is titled “About.” This is the page your bio should go on. Outline your background, accomplishments, etc. Mention that you are looking for a job and include your contact information. Infuse your personality into all aspects of your blog by starting with the About page.

6. **Explore.** There are many other tools you can play around with on Wordpress. Explore the site and see which of them appeal to you.
Writing Posts

You’re now ready to write your first post! To do so, click “Add New” on the left hand column under “Posts.” Here is what you should now be looking at:

Here are the three basic components of a blog post and tips for each one:

**Title**
The title is critical. It’s the first impression and represents a promise to the reader in regards to what they will gain by reading the post. Draw your audience in. Make your headlines catchy and short. Using numbers in the title, such as “5 Easy Ways to Go Green,” usually gets a good response. Titles that start with “how to” also attract a lot of attention. Make the title explicit so reader knows exactly what they will get out of reading the post.

**Image**
Although not required, I recommend always including an image with each post. You can do so by clicking the first icon to the right of “Upload/Insert.” Try to find something that is funny or might pique someone’s interest. This way the thumbnail will catch people’s attention. I find the best posts with the most personality have images that are only vaguely related to the actual content of the post. If finding an
image is the issue, I usually do an advanced search in Google images and under “Usage Rights” choose “labeled for commercial reuse.”

Content
It’s important to have a mix of personal and professional posts and serious and not-so-serious posts. Here are some options:

- **Conduct an interview.** Interview an expert in your industry. You can even include an audio file. Try using a question and answer format.
- **Record a short video or podcast.** This might be of yourself or a video you found of someone else. You would then provide a short bit of text to accompany it.
- **Provide instruction.** Explain step-by-step how to do something related to your niche. For instance, if you’re a graphic designer, you might explain how to retouch a photo in Photoshop.
- **Present an opinion.** Interesting blogs take sides. This can be in response to a fellow blogger’s post or another issue. Feel free to disagree with another blogger. Just be careful to do it in a respectful way and base your argument on evidence.
- **Provide information.** Comment on a current event or news item in your industry.
- **Review a book or product.** Review something related to your field.
- **Tell a story.** People love stories. This story might relate to your industry or job search.
- **Profile someone.** Profiles focus on a particular person. The person profiled can be someone well known in your field or a newbie. Explain this person’s background, the impact they’ve had on others, what they are working on, etc.
- **Write a response.** Find an intriguing comment from one of your reader’s that begs for a reply or explanation.

Other Tips

**Keep it short and sweet.** People have short attention spans and may not even read an entire post, especially if they subscribe to a lot of blogs. I suggest that your posts should be between 200-500 words. Don’t try to tackle too huge a topic—break it up.

**Use formatting.** Bullets, numbering, subtitles, bolding and other reader-friendly formatting options are a nice way to organize information for readers.

**Be opinionated.** People like controversy, and they like someone who is willing to stand up for what they believe in. But the trick is to back yourself up with credible articles, statistics, etc. and provide a link to these outside sources.

**Use keywords.** As with your LinkedIn profile, use keywords in your posts. What might someone trying to find that information type into Google? Keywords are
directly related to the level of traffic you’ll get. There are entire books on this topic, so if you find yourself becoming a serious blogger, you should get educated!

**Be honest and open.** Write in first person and stick to your brand. Remember, the reason you are writing this blog is to broadcast your brand to the world, make connections and find a job.

**Keep writing.** The first few posts might feel awkward because you won’t have an audience and may not have found your voice yet. Don’t be too hard on yourself. Let the early stages of your blog be about discovering your voice.

**Write often.** Plan on writing 1-2 posts a week to keep your site active and higher up in Google’s search results.

Here’s an example of a strong post from Jenny Blake, creator of the popular blog, *Life After College*. Notice the strong headline, image and content.

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**Secrets of a Stingy Scoundrel: Interview with Phil Villarreal**

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Phil Villarreal – one of the funniest (and most supportive) people I’ve met through my blog.

Phil recently published his book, *Secrets of a Stingy Scoundrel*, after seven failed manuscripts over seven years. I admire his persistence and sense of humor. As one reviewer describes him, “Phil is a devious mastermind. He’d be the Lex Luthor of tightwads if Lex Luthor was hilarious.”

Phil is a contributing editor at Consumerist and a reporter for the Arizona Daily Star. His personal blog is called *Because I Told You So* (Free PORN – Pretty Original Rants n’ Stuff).

In this interview, Phil talks about:

- Wanting to be fired
- Why he will never be able to pull a fast one on his wife
- His love of criticism (complete with protesters at his first book signing)
- How he made his publishing dream happen after seven years of failure
- How to use aspects of yourself that you are ashamed of to your advantage
Interacting with Other Bloggers

Subscribing
Start by subscribing to ten or so career advice blogs and industry blogs. This is a great way to get educated. Become a part of others’ communities.

Here are some of the career blogs I subscribe to that I suggest:
- Life After College
- Wall Street Journal Hire Education
- MsCareerGirl
- Careerealism
- Small Hands, Big Ideas

To find good blogs in your industry, check out Technorati and Alltop to search for them. These sites rate blogs in a variety of categories.

Commenting
Commenting on relevant blogs is a great way to increase brand awareness and get your name out into the part of the blogosphere you’re targeting. Try spending 30 minutes to an hour a day reading and responding to other people’s blogs, especially ones with a lot of traffic. It’ll give you inspiration for your own blog posts. Plus, your name can include a link to your blog, so if other readers are intrigued by your comments, they might visit your blog for more, hence leading to more site traffic.

After you comment, if the actual author of the blog responds or if you have something you’d like to say directly to them in private, consider following up with the author of the blog over email. Introduce yourself and thank them for responding or providing their input. Often times, the author will subscribe to your blog and comment on your posts.

Guest Posting
Although it’s hard enough to find time to write for your own blog, guest posting on someone else’s can generate a lot of traffic, as long as it’s a fairly popular blog. Bloggers are typically more than happy to let others guest post, because it means less work for them to maintain the blog. This is also a great way to earn brownie points with the VIP bloggers in your industry who may connect you to a job opportunity in the future. When contacting other bloggers, let them know of a few topics you’d like to write about. Try to find something they haven’t touched on in past posts. And when you submit your post to them, they’ll probably edit it a bit. Don’t be offended! This is standard. Make sure to include a link to your blog in your bio! This is one of the reasons you are doing the guest post in the first place.

QUICK TIP
To maximize the benefits of guest posting, only write for blogs with a traffic ranking of 5 or higher. Go to www.prchecker.info to find this out.
Other Ways to Gain Traffic

5 Traffic Building Tips

The previous page outlines some ways to engage with your community, build connections and bring you one step closer to landing a job. Here are some more tips to keep your blog traffic steady:

1. **Use keywords.** Search engines love keywords. They are one major aspect to SEO, or search engine optimization. Keywords should be inserted early in your post and in your subheadings to optimize their potential. It also helps if the categories by which you organize your posts have keywords in them. When deciding on keywords, consider the vocabulary of your audience and also the keywords you put in your LinkedIn profile.

2. **Syndicate your blog.** Another way to get your blog noticed is to syndicate the content to other social media sites. To do this, click “Sharing” under the settings section of the dashboard. You’ll see that you can “publicize” your blog posts by connecting with your other accounts, such as Facebook and Twitter. This means your new posts will automatically be shared with friends on these sites. Although not yet an option, you’ll want to share your posts on LinkedIn as well. Toward the bottom of the page, you’ll see an area where you can add share buttons to your posts. This will make it easy for readers to share your writing with their own networks. To maximize exposure, make sure to choose “posts, pages and index pages” from the drop-down menu for where your share buttons will appear.

3. **Promote through email.** Once your blog is all set up and you’ve written a few posts, send an email to all of your contacts to let them know about your blog. Include a link to your blog and encourage them to comment or subscribe to it.

4. **Link your blog to other sites.** When you include links to articles, other blogs, book reviews, etc., your posts will rank higher in Google. Also, it might inspire other sites to return the favor when they notice you’ve cited them.

5. **Submit to directories.** Although it may not generate much traffic, it can’t hurt to add your blog to online directories. I recommend adding your blog to the lists on Technorati and Alltop.

**Monitoring Your Traffic**

One nice feature of Wordpress is that it monitors your blog traffic for you. Under the “stats” chart on the dashboard, you can see how many visitors you’ve had each day, what your most popular posts are, and the top terms people search for that lead them to your blog.

Lastly, it takes months to build a solid blog following. Keep writing, and don’t give up!
Blogging Etiquette

**Offer something valuable.** Make every post count! Offer something valuable and vary the type of content in each post.

**Be organized.** Create a blog post schedule if need be. Post once or twice a week. Your readers will expect content from you, so deliver if you want to keep them coming back.

**Be cautious.** Before you publish your posts, look at them from the perspective of a potential employer. Does anything contradict your resume or represent your brand in a negative light?

**Return the favor.** As with recommendations on LinkedIn, when someone gives you a hand, like adding you to their blogroll or writing a guest post, try your best to return the favor at some point in the near future.

**Interact with the community.** When people comment on your posts, reply to the comments! Interact with your visitors to keep them coming back.

**Be a smart commenter.** When you comment on a blog, it becomes permanently archived online and may show up when someone searches for you on Google. Be mindful of what you write. Make sure it is insightful and consistent with your brand.

**Check your spelling.** Last but not least, make sure your writing is largely clean of errors! A mistake here and there might be okay in a blog, but you want to look educated.

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**EXPERT QUOTE**

Dan Schawbel, author of *Me 2.0*, estimates that “By 2012, 67% of the Internet population will be reading blogs at least once a month.” Don’t get left behind!
Wrap Up

Blogging isn't for everyone, but for some, it’s an excellent way to show off your expertise (without any word count constraints) and gain a community of supporters. You can get really creative with a blog, but know that it will be a pretty big time commitment.

Takeaway points:

- Subscribe to industry blogs that are educational and entertaining.
- Take the quality of your writing seriously. It’ll make or break your blog.
- Don’t forget that guest posting is the best way to build connections and gain traffic to your blog.
- Your blog has little value if you have no listeners. Create valuable content to keep visitors coming back.
Chapter 6:

Success Stories
Success Stories

So now that you've come this far, here is some inspiration to keep you motivated. Detailed below are a few stories of people who have used social networking to successfully land a job. I met each of these people through social networking. How else? They each used a completely different strategy, but all arrived at the same goal—landing their ideal position. First, I'll start with my own story.

Brazen Careerist

When I was just starting to develop the idea for my job search guide, I decided to ask for feedback on my idea from community members on a site called Brazen Careerist. (This site is like LinkedIn, with a few added perks, such as “networking roulette.” I recommend checking it out.) Well, I got a lot of feedback, including a comment from a guy named “Dr. Woody.” See below:

Michelle Barbeau So for my graduate thesis, I am going to create a job search guide for college career centers to hand out that's social media savvy, more Gen Y geared, etc. Any suggestions on interesting, non-traditional topics to cover?
48 weeks ago from GenYJourney: Tips, Insights, Experiences For Young Professionals

Dr. Woody: Hey Michelle, I was the Keynote speaker last week for the Florida Career Professionals Association and I had some great conversations with Florida college career center directors. Feel free to drop me an e-mail if you'd like to hear some ideas: www.DrWoody.com

Well, his comment intrigued me. I asked him if he'd be okay with chatting on the phone about his ideas (always better than an impersonal email). He ended up being a career consultant, so we had a lot to talk about. By the end of the conversation, after he learned about my background in writing and career development, he hired me to be on his team! Not only did I get a part-time gig out of a random online conversation, but Dr. Woody offered me excellent direction on my project. The funny thing is, I wasn't even trying to get a job. Now imagine if you were actually trying...
Nicole Crimaldi

*Blogging and LinkedIn*

How the heck did a girl with a Finance degree end up heading the marketing department of a startup by age 26 with no “real world” marketing experience? Thank you, social media.

My transition from “suits and spreadsheets” to “jeans and big ideas” started with my blog, MsCareerGirl.com in November of 2008. I started the blog as a “passion project” since I wasn’t totally passionate about my day job. Ms. Career Girl allowed me to share the honest trials and tribulations of being a young professional woman. My hope was to empower women by revealing that most of us were going through the same things.

I had no knowledge about social media or blogging when I started Ms. Career Girl, but the more Twitter followers and compliments I got, the more motivation I had to learn as much as I could about this whole new online world. I met anyone I could for coffee or on Skype. I wanted to learn from people who were smarter and more experienced than me. I emailed bloggers I admired. I read every book recommended to me on the subject of social media, online marketing, etc. I took Internet Marketing classes through the University of San Francisco to get a deeper understanding of online marketing metrics, planning and strategy.

One of these coffee meetings I set up was with a guy who connected with me on LinkedIn. He was a founder of a few companies here in Chicago. He liked my blog and wanted to see if we could synergize in some way (he was doing recruitment consulting at the time). We met for coffee across from my towering office building (JPMorgan Chase) and the last thing he said to me was, “Ms. Career Girl, I just don’t see you working there in finance. Someday I’m going to find a way for us to work together.”

Sure enough, I got a phone call from Michael several months later. He said, “Hey, its Michael. I found a way for us to work together” as if no time had passed. After several rounds of interviewing, making a marketing plan, project plan and doing several other assignments to prove my worthiness, I’m now the Community Marketing Manager at the company where Michael is the CEO. I’ve been tasked with building out a Marketing Department at YouSwoop.com and I’ll be part of taking the company into several new markets this year.

I am living proof that blogging, networking and using social media can lead you to your “dream job.” Step One: Take your online relationships offline. Step Two: never for one second doubt that you can pursue any career or dream you want. Anything is possible with the help of a strong personal brand, conviction to learning and consistently expanding your circle.
Marian Schembari

Facebook Ad

When I graduated college, I knew I wanted to work in the publishing industry. The first step of my Project Hire Marian campaign stemmed from an idea I read about in *Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters*—the idea was to target employers via hyper-targeted ads. Facebook ads are great in that you can hone in on people with certain interests, activities, musical preferences and… workplace.

So I created my ads – I targeted HarperCollins, Random House, Penguin, Rodale, Macmillan, etc. The ad linked to my website, which had my resume, references and work portfolio. And I got responses! At least one person from every publisher I focused on emailed me to tell me they passed my resume on to HR, wanted to meet, or even just to say they liked my idea. The encouragement was fantastic.

The best part, however, was a blog post that was written about my little campaign on the HarperStudio website. Debbie Stier, Associate Publisher and Director of Digital Marketing, wrote: “The publishing industry desperately needs people with these skills: creative, innovative, risk takers who know how to work the tools of the Internet and aren’t afraid to use them. I discovered Marian Schembari yesterday when I noticed her ad on my Facebook page saying she wanted to work at HarperCollins. How clever. I clicked through on the ad and found the most awesome, ’2009‘ resume.”

The article goes on to talk about hyper-targeted advertisements, as a friend of Debbie’s found my ad “scary” because I knew she worked at HarperCollins. The thing is, she had HarperCollins listed as her employer on her profile. Scary? Maybe. But I like Debbie’s point – isn’t it better (if you’re going to be bombarded with ads anyway) to be targeted for something specific rather than a generic advertisement you care nothing about?

The results? The ads led to an almost immediate freelance job with the now defunct HarperStudio. Two weeks later and I was working full time at a book publicity firm in Manhattan due to someone at Rodale seeing my ads who used to work at said studio. One thing led to another and a few months later, I was freelancing full-time. The ads had done so well that people assumed I knew lots about social media and started hiring me to do it for them. Two years and a move to New Zealand later, and I'm working as a Digital Account Manager for a marketing agency in Auckland. And just the other day I was writing up Facebook ads for a client. Don’t you love it when things come full circle?
References


About the Author

Michelle Barbeau is a 20something professional writer and instructor. She has her B.A. in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her Master’s in Rhetoric and Professional Writing from San Diego State University. Her experience spans magazine editing, grant writing, project coordinating, and teaching at the college level.

She writes resumes and LinkedIn profiles and provides career consulting to recent graduates on the side. She also loves chatting about social networking and the job search.

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