



Job Search

Your Social Media Presence Can Help You Land (or Lose) a Job Opportunity

by Rebecca Knight

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Summary. Your digital footprint and online activities can have a big effect on how attractive and visible you are to potential employers. How do you notify your network about your job search without sounding too desperate or needy? And if you're currently... [more](#)

Your [social media presence](#) can make or break your job search. Tapping into your network's connections and ideas can give you an edge, but it's critical to be savvy and maintain professionalism. So, how do you post about your job search without appearing desperate? What's the best way to showcase your skills to ensure

your contacts think of you for opportunities? If you're currently employed, how can you subtly signal you're open to a new job without raising red flags at work? And if you're a new grad just entering the working world, where do you even start?

What the Experts Say

The traditional hiring model is shifting towards a more targeted approach. "Organizations are no longer waiting around for candidates to apply to jobs," says Matti Laukkarinen, doctoral researcher at the University of Jyväskylä in Finland. "Instead, they're proactively recruiting and headhunting talent online using social media platforms and predictive analytics." The implications for jobseekers are profound: Your digital footprint and online activities can have a big effect on how attractive and visible you are to potential employers. That's why, when you're searching for a new role, it's important to strategically manage your presence on social media, according to Lisa Orbé-Austin, a psychologist, executive coach, and coauthor of *Own Your Greatness*. The objective is to "think like a social media manager and curate" a professional, engaging, and tailored profile that resonates with target employers. Here are some tips on how to do that.

Scrub your socials. Before starting your job search, a digital spring cleaning is necessary. "With AI tools, recruiters can data-mine everything," warns Laukkarinen, which means that you need to take extra precautions to ensure potential employers see only what you want them to. To protect yourself from bias and discrimination, review your public accounts and remove any sensitive information, such as your relationship or disability status. Make your personal social media accounts private, and be deliberate about everything you post. (More on that below.) "I advise clients to scrub their socials of any personal information," says Orbé-Austin. "Ask yourself, 'Do I want an employer knowing

this about me?’ Because if you’re using your real name, it’s discoverable.” What you share online can work both for and against you, she adds. “And the world is a small place.”

Optimize your profile. Next, focus on increasing your visibility to potential employers by optimizing your profile on [LinkedIn](#) and [other networking sites](#). The key is to strike a balance that appeals to both [recruiters and algorithms](#), according to Laukkarinen. In other words, it should highlight your experience and expertise in a way that’s “accessible to humans, but straightforward enough for a machine to interpret.” To achieve this, he recommends analyzing job postings from your target companies and incorporating matching keywords into your profile and summary. Orbé-Austin notes that as your career advances, your [approach to your profile](#) should adapt. “When you’re younger, you give more detail about your jobs and responsibilities,” she says. As you progress, your profile should become more streamlined and “feature job titles, a strong summary of your accomplishments, and relevant keywords,” she says.

Expand your reach. Developing your professional network on social media is a process that you’ll refine over the course of your career, not just during active job searches. [Laukkarinen’s research](#) highlights the importance of both quantity and quality: a larger number of contacts increases your visibility to potential employers by amplifying your searchability through search and recommendation tools, while strong interpersonal connections are more likely to endorse you when opportunities arise. Orbé-Austin advises job market newcomers to make use of LinkedIn’s networking capabilities during job searches. “LinkedIn is where you reach out to anyone under the sun with whom you are

remotely associated,” she says. It’s a platform to link up with people like, say, your friends’ parents — a concept that might be unimaginable on Instagram or TikTok — who are likely well-connected and can provide insights and potential leads. Studies show that these “weak ties,” casual relationships, occasional social encounters, or friends of friends, are the key to unlocking job opportunities.

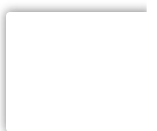
Craft a compelling narrative. Announcing your job search on social media is a popular and efficient way to involve your network in helping you find new opportunities. Orbé-Austin recommends customizing your message based on your career stage for maximum impact. “Develop a curating mindset,” she says, and consider two essential questions: “What audience am I trying to reach?” and “What message am I sending?” Here are a few suggestions, based on the career stage you’re in:

- **If you’re a new graduate:** Include your degree, special skills, accomplishments, and preferred job types. Strike a balance between specificity and openness to various opportunities. “You don’t want to be too narrow or niche,” notes Orbé-Austin. Express humility and ask for guidance, using phrases like, “I’m open to advice and suggestions, so please DM me if you know of any openings.” Young applicants often receive support when they’re looking for their first or second jobs as “people have a lot of empathy for that stage of life,” she says.
- **If you were just laid-off:** Maintain professionalism and focus on your career goals rather than dwelling on the past. The post should be free of raw emotions and bitterness toward your former employer. Instead, highlight your skills, accomplishments, and the types of opportunities you’re seeking. Be cautious with features like LinkedIn’s “open to work” banner, as it may unintentionally convey desperation, says Orbé-Austin. “If you’re on LinkedIn, you’re open to new

opportunities,” which makes the banner unnecessary. “It pretty much just says: Unemployed.”

- **If you’re actively looking, but you don’t want your boss to know:** Be discreet and don’t publicly post about your search. Instead, Orbé-Austin suggests maintaining confidentiality by adjusting your LinkedIn settings to notify recruiters that you’re looking without making it visible to your current employer. This way, when recruiters perform searches, they can filter candidates based on availability. “It’s a way to signal on the back-end that you’re open to opportunities,” she says. If you prefer to play it safe, Laukkarinen recommends the old-fashioned route of reaching out to your network offline. “That way, there’s no paper trail,” he says.
- **If you’re mid-career:** A post may be useful in some cases, but Orbé-Austin recommends directly messaging key contacts or creating smaller audience groups for tailored announcements. Instagram, for instance, allows you to form targeted subgroups within your network for those most likely to assist your job search. Networking and reconnecting with former colleagues and bosses through social media might feel daunting, but “don’t hesitate,” says Orbé-Austin. Reach out with a genuine message that compliments their achievements and expresses interest in talking about your job search. “Do it in a relational way and without any shame,” she says.

Be social. A singular post about your job search is a fine start, but the point of social media is to be, well, social. Posting consistently — at least weekly — will keep your network informed about and invested in your job search, says Orbé-Austin. Your posts should create interest and spark conversation. “The more engagement you get on a post, the better the reach it will have.” Ask questions



about your field and industry and encourage dialogue. Share updates on your activities, accomplishments, and perspectives on relevant topics. Maybe you were on a panel, or are taking an online class. “People want to see things that are personal and offer a window into the world,” she says. “And your network will enjoy celebrating your wins.” Be sure to engage with others’ content, too. “You’re trying to build a community; be communal.”

Be mindful of your tone. Seeing others vent on social media about job search struggles or company interview processes may tempt you to publicly share your own frustrations. But don’t. You need to be mindful of your tone and how potential employers may perceive your posts, says Orbé-Austin. “It’s fine to be honest and talk about hard things, but frame it around what you’re learning and how you’re growing,” she says. Strive to come across as optimistic and upbeat and showcase your resilience in overcoming obstacles. No angry tirades or rants. “If you go out there guns blazing, there can be severe long-term consequences,” she says. Laukkarinen concurs, pointing to research that suggests recruiters respond unfavorably to potentially damaging content. “When recruiters screen candidates through social media, even small red flags can have large outcomes,” he says.

Sustain your social media presence. Many people neglect their social media presence after securing a job, according to Orbé-Austin. However, staying active on platforms like LinkedIn can showcase your professional growth and keep your network engaged. Sharing work updates and accomplishments, such as new projects, initiatives, or promotions, not only demonstrates your value to your organization but might also capture the attention of potential hiring managers. An added bonus: You’re sharing about your company, so your employer appreciates it. “It may look as though you’re simply posting about your day-to-day work, but it’s interesting to recruiters and it’s creating a record of your accomplishments.” Which will be helpful when you’re



looking for your next new job.

Principles to Remember

Do:

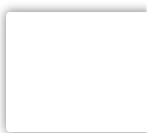
- Optimize your profile across professional networking platforms by incorporating relevant keywords to appeal to both human recruiters and algorithms.
- Embrace social media's interactive nature by creating posts that spark interest and encourage conversation.
- Strive to come across as optimistic and upbeat when posting about your job search — your future employer is watching.

Don't:

- Overlook the importance of tidying up your online presence; remove sensitive information, secure personal accounts, and be deliberate about what you post.
- Limit developing your professional network to active job searches; instead, continuously refine your connections over time, focusing on both quantity and quality.
- Neglect your social media presence once you've secured a job — keep your network engaged by sharing work achievements and updates.

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Rebecca Knight is a journalist who writes about all things related to the changing nature of careers and the workplace. Her essays and reported stories have been featured in The Boston Globe, Business Insider, The New York Times, BBC, and The Christian Science Monitor. She was shortlisted as a Reuters



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