

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOR JOBSEEKERS

The growth of social media in recent years has been massive and the internet is now a daily reality in all aspects of our lives – from how we obtain our news, how we shop and increasingly how we look for another job. Traditionally, jobseekers have used job seeking websites to be connected to jobs and employers, but the growth in use of social media sites has led to a new way of connecting to potential employers. Social media offers great opportunities for job seekers – but often there are some pitfalls.

Here is Agenda's overview of the main sites and some general dos and don'ts.

### LINKEDIN - WWW.LINKEDIN.COM

With over 150 million members worldwide (and growing), LinkedIn is the UK's largest professional networking site, offering members the ability to 'connect' with their colleagues and contacts – share knowledge and information and connect to job opportunities and potential employers. Users can upload a summary version of their CV, and build a network of contacts. They can also ask their trusted contacts to 'introduce' them to contacts they want to connect with.

#### DO

- Ensure that your online CV is up to date and accurate.
- Dedicate some time to writing a good summary of your skills and experience.
- Join groups and discussions relevant to your line of work and contribute to the online community.
- Reciprocate if you receive requests for introductions from your own contacts – using social media is a two-way process of communicating and assisting others.

#### DON'T

- Readily accept invitations from contacts you do not know.
- Be too aggressive or controversial in your contributions to discussions, you don't want to alienate people.
- Think that LinkedIn will replace more traditional forms of networking such as telephoning people or meeting face to face.

### TWITTER - WWW.TWITTER.COM

With over 175 million registered users and 140 million tweets per day, Twitter is a treasure trove of information or information overload depending upon your point of view. With users being able to 'tweet' information to their followers (using 140 characters or less), Twitter offers a way of imparting concise information in a direct way. Where jobseekers are concerned, employers use Twitter to notify people of new job vacancies and to engage with their customers and clients in a direct way.

#### DO

- Search for employers that interest you and 'follow' them. Any news or job vacancies they post will then appear in your Twitter feed, and usually direct you to a corporate website to apply.
- Search for other organisations relevant to your job search (e.g. those offering industry news and updates) as this could provide useful information also.
- Be honest with the agency – if a job they present isn't appealing to you, explain why and don't be afraid to tell them about other job applications you are making independently.
- Be professional in your dealings with them and listen to any feedback they provide if you have attended interviews.

#### DON'T

- Bite off more than you can chew. Be selective in the number of employers, groups (and celebrities) you follow as otherwise the important information you are seeking will get lost amongst all the daily chatter.

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### FACEBOOK - WWW.FACEBOOK.COM

With over 28 million UK users (over a billion users worldwide) – Facebook has been revolutionary in how many people now communicate with their friends and families. Not wanting to be left out – corporations wanted to be involved with Facebook too, which means that many employers (from global multinationals to small private companies) now have a company page set up on Facebook.

Communication on Facebook is usually less formal than on LinkedIn so employers use it as a way to engage more actively with its customers, users of its products and potential new recruits. If you are job hunting, it can be a good tool to find out about employers and what message they are trying to put across.

#### DO

- Remember that if you have a personal Facebook page, potential employers may check out your profile if you have applied for a job with them. Before you start job hunting consider what pictures of you are posted online, what information is on your profile and how you communicate via your status updates. This could ruin opportunities for you if an employer takes offence to any bad language you use, for example.
- Check your privacy settings closely – and if necessary change your settings so only your friends have access to your information.
- Search for employers you are interested in to see if they have a Facebook page. This can often be a good source of information, especially if they post details of job vacancies.

#### DON'T

- Post anything onto your Facebook page that is unprofessional or could be considered inappropriate by your current employer – it could be used against you during a disciplinary process.
- Forget that your own friends and family can often be your best source of information when it comes to job opportunities. Be discreet if you approach them about your job search on Facebook (use the private mailbox option!).

Whatever method of social media you try – remember to treat other users with respect and courtesy as you would in 'real' life and don't abandon more traditional forms of job seeking such as using jobs boards and recruitment agencies.