

Good connections

1 Warmer

Scan the article and answer the questions below.

1. How many social networks or internet platforms are mentioned in the article?
2. What are their names?
3. Do you have an account with any of them? If yes, do you use it for private or professional reasons?
4. How often do you update your profile?

2 Key words

a. Put the letters in the correct order to make key words from the article.

1. We had two major _____ (tprcuod sechluna) last year at which we introduced our new services to the public.
2. When something is _____ (dchenane), it is made better.
3. When something is _____ (rdadged), it is made worse.
4. _____ (cfkwrrooe) is a word used to describe the amount of people who work.
5. When you have been _____ (dial fof), your employment contract has ended – often because there's not enough work available.
6. If you _____ (edeux) a particular quality, people notice easily that you have a lot of it.
7. The word _____ (ciupbl) is used in the article to mean *open, not a secret, available for anyone to find out*.

b. Match the key words from the article with the definitions below.

apologize

charities

do-it-yourself (DIY)

employment service

favour

recommendations

shifter

1. suggestions and references that someone is especially suitable for a job and good at what they do _____
2. organizations to which you give money so that they can give money and help to people who are poor or ill, or who need advice and support _____
3. the activity of making or repairing things for your home instead of paying someone to do them for you _____
4. to say you are sorry _____
5. more dishonest _____
6. a business that helps people to find jobs or companies to find workers _____
7. something that you do for someone in order to help them _____

c. Find all 14 key words and expressions in the article to read them in context.

Good connections

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by Margaret Davis

Social media can help you to find a job or sell a business idea. But remember: inappropriate posts could also damage your reputation. MARGARET DAVIS reports.



Photo Disc / Getty Images

- 1 If used properly, social networks like Facebook and Twitter and professional networks such as LinkedIn and XING can help you find a job, build useful contacts and promote your business. In fact, some career experts say a social-media presence is essential in the modern workplace.
- 2 While Facebook is often seen as simply private entertainment, you should be aware that your comments may be seen by a wider audience (friends of friends and their friends, for example). And although Facebook may have played a role in the Arab Spring revolutions, it might be better to keep political comments to a minimum to avoid unwelcome attention.
- 3 Discussions of religion are also best avoided. As one of my colleagues likes to say: "Facebook is a cocktail party." Like real-time cocktail parties, Facebook can be used for the sort of networking that will help you in your career – and not just for finding your highschool girlfriend. This is especially true if you run your own business. You can link to your website and encourage others to become 'fans' and to 'like' your products. You can (and should) post regular updates on your business as well as invite your fans to attend events such as product launches. Some companies offer their fans the chance to take part in contests and quizzes. The range of possible networking activities is limited only by your imagination – and by the fact that you still have to produce the product, whether it's a hammer or a novel.
- 4 "We have to think about social media in a new strategic way," says Sree Sreenivasan, dean of student affairs at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. "It is no longer something that we can ignore. It is not a place to just wish your friends happy birthday. It is a place of business. It is a place where your career will be enhanced or degraded, depending on your use of these tools and services."
- 5 Probably the best-known of the professional networks is LinkedIn. Launched in 2003, it has more than 150

million registered users in 200 countries. About half of its members are in the US. Its German competitor, XING, has 12 million users. One reason for the popularity of LinkedIn is the mobile nature of the US workforce. With people frequently moving to new jobs in different regions, having a variety of connections is extremely important. The recession has also changed the way users present themselves, according to career experts. Don't be embarrassed to admit you have been laid off, for example.

"You exude confidence by not being ashamed to say that you're between jobs," executive coach Sandra A. VanGilder told *Forbes*. VanGilder says it is important to have a profile on LinkedIn because interviewers often check for them. "In creating a new profile or editing your current one, be very public about the fact that you're looking for new opportunities."

You can also use LinkedIn to search companies and find people you're connected to – you may be surprised who they are. For example, just for fun, I searched the BBC and discovered the profiles of three members of its staff. I don't know any of them, but one of my LinkedIn contacts does. This person could provide me with an introduction to the BBC employees or recommend that they add me to their professional network.

It is also useful to 'follow' a company; this means you can get email notifications that announce when someone is leaving a position. If this is a job that fits your qualifications and experience, you will find out

Good connections

about it early. American Molly Cain is a banker and CEO of the website GlassHeel.com, a careers and networking site for professional women. Cain says that it is important to have recommendations on your LinkedIn profile from former employers or people you have worked with successfully on business projects or charities. But don't suddenly go from having none to having 20, Cain warns. This will be a clear sign that you are looking for a new job – perhaps not the sort of information you want your current employer or colleagues to know. Instead, make sure that you regularly add recommendations to your LinkedIn profile, even if you are happy in your job. In general, make changes to your profile gradually, Cain advises.

9

If you run your own business, a new site called Pinterest might be useful. Launched in 2010, the 'online pinboard' has about 12 million users, the majority of them women. Users post photos and videos, with links to their favourite websites. The most popular Pinterest categories are food and drink, do-it-yourself (DIY) projects and clothing, but perhaps 'politics' could soon be added to the list. Ann Romney and Michelle Obama are using Pinterest to support their husbands' campaigns for the US presidency. Both are aiming to attract women, with posts that are managed by their respective campaign staff. Romney joined in February, Obama in June. They also have Twitter accounts.

10

Twitter is an online social-media and microblogging network. Members communicate via short messages limited to 140 characters. "On Twitter you can easily interact with people you wouldn't ordinarily meet," says personal branding coach Jennifer Holloway. "You might follow and start tweeting with the CEO of a company you're interested in working for. On LinkedIn, look at your contacts' contacts. Get them to put you in touch with people you wouldn't be able to get in touch with normally," Holloway told the *Financial Times*.

What do you do if people react badly to something you say on Twitter or another social network? Apologize, says author and blogger Julien Smith. "Full disclosure and absolute honesty is the only option," Smith told the *Financial Times*. "Nothing looks shiftier than taking down a tweet and pretending it never happened. It will always be archived somewhere."

11

The video-sharing website YouTube can also be used to promote products and services. Imaginative ways of using this medium include instructional videos showing your products in action, video blogging or interviews. You can also ask customers and potential customers to send in questions that you can answer online on your website or in a conventional blog.

12

And what if you want to set up your own social website? The Ning platform is useful for professional groups such as teachers who want to share information. The American Peace Corps Association has its own Ning group to encourage cooperation among volunteers worldwide and to provide them with news. Finally, remember that networking should not be one-sided. You can help yourself by helping others, according to Allan Hoffman, an expert on tech jobs at Monster.com, an international employment service. "If you're able to help people, they'll be more likely to remember you and return the favour," Hoffman says.

13



MARGARET DAVIS is a Canadian journalist and editor of the Careers and Global Business sections of *Business Spotlight International*.

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Good connections

3 Understanding the article

Use information from the article to answer these questions.

1. What are the professional / business benefits of using social media?
2. What are the benefits of becoming a 'fan' of a business on Facebook?
3. Why is LinkedIn so popular?
4. Why shouldn't you be worried about writing that you have lost your job?
5. How might being on a professional social network increase your chances of getting a new job?
6. Why is it better for you to update your LinkedIn profile regularly instead of putting up lots of new information in a very short time?
7. Why should you look at your contacts' contacts?
8. What should you do if you write and post something you regret on a social network?

4 Multi-word phrases

Put these words into the correct order to make multi-word phrases from the article, then put them into sentences which describe the article.

1. audience by seen a wider
2. attention unwelcome avoid
3. avoided are best
4. regular updates post
5. your imagination only limited by
6. touch get with in
7. honesty disclosure full absolute and
8. be should one-sided not
9. by help others helping yourself
10. the return favour

5 Discussion and web task

a. How might these kinds of businesses benefit from the use of social media?

- a restaurant
- an art gallery
- a painter and decorator
- a language school
- a landscape gardener
- an independent cinema

b. Find real examples of these kinds of businesses on the internet. Find out what social media they use and how they use it.

6 Planning and presenting a strategy

Your new CEO has made you responsible for improving your company's online presence.

Work in teams to come up with a plan of action which you should then present to the rest of the class. Think about costs, time (including working hours), launch dates, updates, continuity, your target audience and your competitors.

Good connections

7 Extra reading

Read the interview with a career expert to see what advice she gives about using social media for professional reasons.

“Your online presence is more and more the way people find out about you”

by Jennifer Holloway



JENNIFER HOLLOWAY

is an executive coach with her own company, Spark Personal Branding (www.sparkexec.co.uk) in Yorkshire, England. Before starting her business, Holloway spent 15 years working in PR and media relations. She is also in demand as a speaker and mentor.

How important is it to have a LinkedIn profile?

It's incredibly important. Your online presence is becoming more and more a factor in how people find out information about you and decide whether to buy into your brand – and LinkedIn is the number-one place for that in business circles. The great thing is that it ranks highly in Google searches, so if people search for you, it's likely to appear on the first page, where it matters. It's also an important opportunity to get your personal brand out there, so be sure to fill in as much as you can. In other words, make sure you have a profile photo (a professional one that looks as you would if I were to meet you for business) and be sure to fill in not just the experience but the summary too.

Should baby boomers put their age in their profiles?

I don't think it's a good idea to put your age anywhere. It's certainly not done on people's CVs these days, as it can create bias.

Is a Twitter account good for your career?

Using Twitter for your career is a good idea, but only if you spend the time and energy using it well. Just dipping in and out when it suits you and not taking part in the bigger community won't work. I know someone who uses Twitter a lot to connect with people she wouldn't normally get in front of. She followed the CEO of a company she wanted to work for and, over time, built up an online relationship with him, first retweeting some of his things and then adding comments, then a few direct messages. She then took the step of sending him a message to say she'd love to work for him and to ask if there were any opportunities. He put her onto his HR person, she met them for a chat and, within weeks, was working there.

Can social networks such as Facebook or Pinterest help your career?

Like Twitter, a lot depends on how you use the network: it's true that people buy people, so if the people you're forming a network with are relevant to your career, it's possible to use them as a source of information. For instance, by asking questions that you wouldn't get the answer to elsewhere, such as finding out some insider information on a company that you're going for an interview with.

Good connections

Vocabulary record: Good connections

verb	noun	adjective (+ opposite)	adverb (+ opposite)
produce			
	imagination		
		strategic	
			publicly

Vocabulary record

