

## Here's the drill for using social media to get hired

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Companies are finally hiring again — and there's a swarm of job seekers beating down their virtual doors. Not only has the unemployment rate topped 9 percent, but many who are bringing home paychecks are getting restless: In a survey by Right Management, a whopping 84 percent of workers said they want to change jobs in 2011.

So saying that the job market's crowded is an understatement. Consider that Facebook received 250,000 resumes last year. Or that last January Google received 75,000 in a single day.

Given the flood, a great number of resumes are never seen by human eyes, leaving their owners with scant chance of ever landing an interview.



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**HIRE PLANE:** Smart use of social media can help you stand out in a crowded field.

“There’s no way I can look at all the CVs coming at me,” says a staffing specialist at a Wall Street firm, who recently received 1,700 resumes for a single opening (and asked that her name be withheld). “I can’t even get through the ones my computer says are high-probability matches.”

Dismal as this seems, there is hope. Where there are roadblocks, there are also alternate routes.

“You need to go around the established application process,” says Abby Kohut, a staffing consultant who doles out job-seeking advice at AbsolutelyAbby.com.

In 2011, that means leveraging social media, which gives job seekers an unprecedented ability to connect with potential employers, and stand out from the crowd.

“With LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook at your fingertips there has never been a more opportune time to do this,” says Geoff Peterson, a consultant who provides employment-related strategies and services to companies.

So, say goodbye to yesterday’s job boards and plastering your resume all over the Web. It’s time to get social.

To show you the way, we’ve tapped the minds of today’s leading recruiters, staffing experts, networking coaches and others and created a step-by-step guide — call it a job seeker’s boot camp.

### **Station One:**

#### **Establish Your Core**

1) To build connections and make it easy for employers to find you, start with your LinkedIn profile. “It’s your living, breathing resume,” says Mark Hogan, VP of digital and social strategy solutions at Bernard Hodes Group, a recruiting consultancy. Fill it out completely.

“Go for 100 percent — just do everything LinkedIn tells you to do,” says social marketing expert Nichole Santoro.

2) Define, describe and quantify your skills — and be highly specific. “It’s not enough for a job seeker to be skilled,” says career coach Ellen O’Brien of Azureleaf Communications. “You need to differentiate your skills from other like-skilled job seekers through your value contributions.” She has a point — after all, there’s a difference between being a pitcher and pitching a no-hitter.

3) Use keywords. Consider the terms an employer seeking someone like you would type into Google — and use them in your profiles and resume.

“Be both broad and specific when you pick them,” says sales and marketing specialist Chris Westfall, the elevator-pitch national champion of 2011. By being broad (e.g., “sales”) you’ll get found, and by being specific (e.g., “medical equipment”), you’ll get the interview.

4) Create a Twitter account for your professional life. Use the exact name you use for LinkedIn. Use a photo of yourself — “no kids, spouse, dog, sports team, etc.,” advises Santoro. Your bio should mirror your LinkedIn summary with a touch of personality.

5) Create an e-mail address specifically for your job search. “It’s one of the first things people see,” says recruiter Rena Davis of Roper St. Francis Healthcare. An address like RenaDavis@gmail.com suggests a serious job seeker — YankeesFan@hotmail.com, not so much.

6) Overhaul your Facebook profile to make it work for you. “Showcase your strengths and highlight your experience as it pertains to the job you’re seeking.

It's a great way to market yourself and show off your creative side," says Robert Morgan, of SHLPreVisor, a talent management firm.

While you're at it, make sure there's nothing there or in any of your online profiles that might give an employer pause. And Google yourself to make sure no negative content comes up — employers will.

### **Station Two:**

#### **Make Connections**

- 1) Sync your e-mail contacts with LinkedIn and invite those you know and trust to your network. Aim to make at least 50 connections; that's the number you need to increase your chances of getting in touch with the people and companies that will help you get ahead, says LinkedIn spokeswoman Krista Canfield.
- 2) Find, follow and be followed on Twitter. Locate the movers and shakers in your profession by entering keywords in Twitter's search feature. When you click the "follow" button to indicate that you're following their tweets, they'll get a notifying e-mail that includes your name, a link to your Twitter page and your photo. This could be how your next boss first takes notice of you.
- 3) Use hoosaid.com to find people who are employed at companies you'd like to work for. This may be your first step toward getting the attention of a company insider.
- 4) Use Google to find the Facebook career pages of the companies you'd like to work for, then "like" them. That will give you access to their recruitment walls, where notices about Q&As with managers are posted.
- 5) Join branchout.com, which searches the Web for jobs and then uses your Facebook information to identify who you know at your target companies.
- 6) Go offline. Make a list of people you've worked with in the past, as well as friends who are good networkers and/or well-connected in your industry. Set up dates to meet for lunch or coffee. "There's something magical about getting together with people and breaking bread," says Keith Ferrazzi, founder of the Relationship Masters Academy.

### **Station Three:**

#### **Build Your Network**

- 1) Strut your stuff on LinkedIn, which gives you ample opportunity to put your best foot forward. You can establish yourself as an expert by engaging in a Q&A, for example, or add video and SlideShare presentations to your profile using widgets.
- 2) Send five unsolicited recommendations to your best colleagues on LinkedIn. Why? "Because LinkedIn auto-suggests reciprocation after receiving a recommendation," says Santoro. Result? Up to five new recommendations on your profile page.
- 3) Tweet about things happening in your profession. Retweet what people you respect say — it's seen as a compliment, and flattery can win friends. Comment on tweets using @, which will make you visible to other people's followers.

- 4) Go to industry events and introduce yourself to the speakers. Show up early and offer to do something for them that will demonstrate your generosity or expertise, says Ferrazzi.
- 5) Attend Meetups, engage with your peers and offer your expertise where appropriate. Talk about everything except yourself, says David Perry, co-author of "Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters."
- 6) Invite everyone with whom you have engaged in meaningful dialogue to connect with you on your social networks. Keep abreast of whom they're connected to. Ask for introductions whenever it's appropriate.
- 7) Offer to do something for free for those who might be your future bosses, such as writing a white paper or doing some market research. It builds your professional currency.  
"The best people start to work for their new bosses even before the interview," says Ferrazzi.

#### **Station Four: Go for It**

- 1) Once you've cultivated connections at a company where you want to work, leverage them to get your resume in front of a hiring manager. An endorsement from someone on the inside is a huge advantage.
- 2) If you don't have strong connections at a targeted company, search its Web site for job openings you're qualified for. **DO NOT APPLY.** Instead, use LinkedIn to figure out who the job reports to and ask anyone who works at that company to pass your resume to the hiring manager. "In 99 percent of cases, the hiring manager will at least look at your resume, given the internal source," says Michael Froehls, author of "The Gift of Job Loss."
- 3) If you can't drum up any connection whatsoever, the best way to reach an employer is by old-fashioned US mail, says recruiter Carolyn Thompson, author of "Ten Steps To Finding the Perfect Job."  
"Send a well-written cover letter via a USPS Priority Mail cardboard envelope," she says. Instead of getting lost to a resume screener, "your correspondence will get right to its intended target."
- 4) Finally, try fax. Yes, fax. Get the desired number from the company switchboard, address a cover letter to your boss-to-be and send it along with your resume. People get so few faxes these days that yours will stand out. No new job yet? Start the circuit again. It takes less time and gets easier as you go.

#### **Some alternate routes**

IN a tight job market, sometimes going the extra mile to get attention can pay off. If you're not scoring any interviews using your current approach, here are a few things you might try.

\* Abby Kohut, author of "101 Job Search Secrets," suggests taking an egg timer and putting it in a FedEx box with a note that says, "If you give me this much time, I'll prove to you that I'll be the best [insert your profession] that you will ever hire." She reports that it worked for a job seeker who wanted work as a financial

analyst — even though financial analysis had been only his hobby until that point, not his livelihood.

\* Carolyn Thompson, author of “Ten Steps To Finding the Perfect Job” offers a tip to use at a job fair: “Take a few \$3 Starbucks cards with you so that if you meet someone you really want to reconnect with, you can invite them to meet you for coffee. A note inside the envelope with your contact info will go a long way in making a great first impression.”

\* “Lumpy mail” is the way to go, says David Perry, author of “Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters 3.0.” This means putting a one-page resume and a cover letter in a Starbucks coffee cup and sending it to your boss-to-be via FedEx, with a note requesting you meet for coffee. “You get an electronic notification by e-mail when your package arrives,” says Perry. “Wait 45 minutes and then call and say, ‘I see you received my package.’ ”

\* Attend one of Brazen Careerist’s Network Roulette events (see [brazencareerist.com](http://brazencareerist.com)). It’s like speed-dating via the Web, except that participants talk about their careers and job searches rather than hooking up. It can be a great way to make connections for your social networks and to get the skinny on whom to send your resume to at various companies.