



Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.
The original outplacement company

CONTACTS

James K. Pedderson, Director of Public Relations
Office: 312-422-5078
Mobile: 847-567-1463
jamespedderson@challengergray.com

Colleen Madden, Media Relations Manager
Office: 312-422-5074
colleenmadden@challengergray.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Social Networking Explodes As Job-Search Tool **SITES OFFER MANY BENEFITS, BUT PITFALLS** **ABOUND AS JOB SEEKERS LEARN THE ROPES**

CHICAGO, November 17, 2009 – As the nation’s job seekers attempt to find any advantage in a tight job market, more and more are turning to social networking to stand out from the crowd. However, while these sites have the potential to revolutionize the job search, they could also prove harmful for those who rely too heavily on them or misuse them, warns one employment authority.

“The job search has changed radically over the last two decades with the advent of electronic mail, the Internet, social networking, smart phones, etc. However, it is important to remember that all of these technologies simply enhance the job search; they will never replace the face-to-face connections that are critical to a successful search,” said John A. Challenger, chief executive officer of global outplacement consultancy Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc., which provides job-search training and counseling to individuals who have lost their job.

“That being said, we feel that these new networking tools are essential and now advise all of the job seekers going through our program to open LinkedIn accounts and to consider other services such as Facebook and Twitter,” said Challenger.

“Of course, many of the job seekers going through our program do not need the advice as they are already among the millions who have signed up on social networking sites in recent years,” he added.

The number of Americans belonging to social networking sites has grown exponentially in the last five years. It is now estimated that 51 percent of online U.S. adults utilize social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn, according to a recent survey by Forrester Research. That is up from the 25 percent of users who reported using social networking sites in 2007.

One reason the number of social networkers is on the rise is due to increased use among business professionals. In fact, the most rapidly growing age group represented on Facebook is the 35-and-older population.

Meanwhile, a study from the Pew Internet & American Life Project reveals that 19 percent of Internet users are sharing personal and business updates on Twitter or other status-update services, up from 11 percent earlier this year.

“Social networking is an easy way for job seekers to build their network by reaching out to former colleagues and classmates, as well as fellow alumni and industry professionals. Job seekers can then use their networks to uncover available positions and to establish relationships with hiring managers or contacts who can give them a recommendation,” said Challenger.

“Just a few years ago, job seekers’ only search tools were newspapers and cold calls. Now, technology serves to instantly connect seekers with employers, recruiters and job leads.”

Job seekers are not the only ones taking advantage of these new tools. Employers are also jumping on the social networking bandwagon. A recent survey by Jobvite found that 80 percent of companies use or are planning to use social networking sites to fill vacant positions. While LinkedIn is still the most popular site used by employers, with 95 percent of companies using it, Facebook and Twitter are gaining ground. The use of Facebook has grown from 36 percent of recruiters in 2008 to 59 percent in 2009, while Twitter is currently being used by 42 percent of recruiters.

“Social networking should be used cautiously, however,” warns Challenger. “As these sites become increasingly intertwined, it will become easier and easier for potential employers to access the more personal aspects of job seekers’ lives.”

Status updates on Facebook can now be sent automatically to Twitter followers. A similar cross-service status updates was recently initiated between Twitter and LinkedIn. The problem, said Challenger, is that people tend to use these services in different ways, and these ways are not always compatible with the job search.

In fact, a job seeker is twice as likely to be eliminated from consideration than be hired based on his or her social networking site content, according to a survey of human resources professionals by Careerbuilder.com. In the survey, 35 percent of respondents said they ceased consideration of an applicant due to a social networking gaffe, with reasons ranging from provocative/inappropriate photographs and information to candidates having poor communication skills. Only 18 percent said they offered a position to a prospective employee due to social networking research, attributing that decision to seeing the candidate as a good fit for the company or the candidate’s site conveying a professional image.

“Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the Internet is the permanency and pervasiveness of any and all information that finds its way there. Comments on a friend’s blog, reviews on consumer sites and inside jokes made for a private audience on a social networking site’s public group page are all available at the click of a mouse to potential employers.”

“The other danger is that many job seekers tend to let the Internet become their primary, if not sole, job-search tool. It is too easy to simply sit in front of one’s computer all day, scanning job boards and expanding one’s virtual network through LinkedIn. However, these online connections are superficial at best. It takes a lot more work to turn them into meaningful relationships that can advance your job search. In the end, face-to-face meetings are still the most effective relationship-building tool available,” said Challenger.

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Challenger offered some of the guidelines provided to job seekers going through its job-search training program.



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USING SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES TO FIND A JOB

Build your network. Utilize every person in your personal and professional networks. With Twitter, you can grow this network to include hundreds of people.

Build your brand. Your Twitter page can show a little something about yourself with the pictures and colors you choose to use. The interface allows you to post links to websites or blogs, so when building your Twitter page, make sure to include links to these. Start a blog discussing industry trends as you see them. Include discussions about your work. Basically, talk yourself up. You are a product employers must have.

Advertise your job loss. Although a job loss can be a trying time for families and loved ones, telling your "followers" that you are looking for a job can be not only therapeutic, but also incredibly useful to finding a new position. Hundreds of recruiters are on Twitter and have no problem following your tweets. You can cast a very wide net on Twitter with potential to net incredible results.

Get Recommended. LinkedIn allows users the ability to recommend each other's work. As professional networking sites become the new resume, ask colleagues to advocate on your behalf on your LinkedIn profile. Recruiters trolling these sites are much more likely to be impressed if past colleagues rave about your performance.

Join Groups. LinkedIn also allows users to create and join professional groups, allowing you to instantly communicate with others in your field. Join and/or start building those relationships.

Think before you tweet. Twitter can be as anonymous as you want it to be. However, if you want to find a new position, you might want to spend some time on each tweet. Remember that you're marketing yourself, you're a product. As with blogs, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc., you don't want to post anything that might cause pause (i.e., racy photos, questionable content, etc.). Moreover, having only 140 characters to express yourself limits your literary ability. What you read as witty, another might read as acerbic. What you think is funny, someone else might find offensive. Obviously, you want to show the world your best face, so keep this in mind when fashioning those 140 characters.

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.



FIVE BEST WAYS TO USE TWITTER FOR YOUR JOB SEARCH

1. Follow and read job search experts. The amount of excellent ideas, tips, leads, news, informative articles, and best practices going by all day long is amazing. Use [Twellow](#)'s directory for [Employment](#) > [Career](#) > Job Search to find excellent people to follow. You'll find outstanding advice that applies to your situation... guaranteed.

2. Search for posted positions. Use Twitter's search function to look for #jobs, or [TwitterJobSearch](#) to find a wealth of open positions that aren't necessarily posted on job boards or company sites. Also search #splits for positions that recruiters use to split open searches with other recruiters. New positions are posted with excellent companies, large and small, every minute of every day. Get them in real time, early, and often.

3. Follow and read people in your field or industry. Industry chatter is incredible. News items, rumors, and trends get discussed daily. You can become much better versed in your field by 'listening'. It can provide you with new and valuable information that can make you a better candidate in the interview process. Use Twellow to find appropriate people to follow.

4. Engage! Get in conversations with people. Ask questions, offer help, ReTweet (re-post) good information you see. Make sure to proofread everything you Tweet, and keep everything professional. Offering opinions about politics (unless you're looking for a job in politics), or talking about your weekend at the bar will alienate half the people you want to connect to. Don't sound discouraged or be a spreader of bad news. Keep your conversations focused on your area of expertise, or job search topics, and keep them positive.

5. Connect with people at your target companies. Many companies have an official presence on Twitter and post positions. There are also obviously many people on Twitter on their own that work at companies you may have an interest in. *Professionally*, ask questions, ask for referrals, offer information, and seek advice.

Source: Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.



10 LINKEDIN GROUPS JOB SEEKERS SHOULD JOIN

- The Talent Buzz
- Executive Suite
- Linked:HR
- JobsDirectUS
- Star:Candidate For Hire
- Indeed
- Career Rocketeer
- Project:Get Hired
- MyCredentials: Career Presentation
- Job Search Help

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