

# How to Use Social Media to Find a Job

<http://www.shrm.org/hrdisciplines/technology/Articles/Pages/SocialMediaJobs.aspx>

January 31, 2012

1/31/2012

By Aliah D. Wright

A 67-year-old man was worried that his age would hurt his job search. So, says [Jessica Miller-Merrell](#), SPHR, “he sent out a simple e-mail to five people and attached his resume. [The e-mail] read, ‘Hey, I’m looking for a job and here are four companies I’m interested in. If you have a relationship or connection there that could help me in my search, I’d really appreciate it.’ That one e-mail sent to five people led to an interview and a job,” she recalls.

HR consultant Joey Price, PHR, likes to tell the story of a friend who went to a Red Lobster at happy hour to mingle with employees of the company where he wanted to work.

He, too, got a job.

Today’s job search may involve e-mailing corporations your resume, complete with links to your social media presence; uploading your curriculum vitae (CV) to job boards like [jobs.jobs](#) and [indeed.com](#); or polishing your social networking profiles on [LinkedIn](#), [BeKnown](#) or elsewhere. Regardless of the specific actions taken, HR professionals and recruiters say the best and fastest way to find a job is to use an old-fashioned approach: network.

What’s more, those same experts say, using social media channels to engage people who are in a position to help you find work is one of the most effective ways to find a job.

Why? Because experts say they are more likely to notice relevant skills and competencies by sifting through a candidate’s publicly available social media presence—their blogs, comments on blogs, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, [Quora](#) and other sites—than they are by only considering a resume that’s been filtered through an applicant tracking system (ATS).

“We look at the summary of your LinkedIn profile and look for a summary of career history, connections and recommendations,” says Matthew Ogston, founder and CEO of the U.K.-based [jobpage.com](#), a social recruiting software firm. “We try to bring the best of a user’s profile into the jobpage ATS. And if we manage to identify their Twitter account, we bring in a summary of the last handful of tweets [to] see if that demonstrates stuff related to their work,” Ogston told *SHRM Online* via Skype from London. “The CV is not an afterthought, but it becomes secondary to all of that information.”

“The resume is going to be dead,” predicts career expert and best-selling author [Nicole Williams](#), who wrote *Girl on Top* (Hachette Book Group, 2009). She is founder of the careers website WORKS.

Williams, also LinkedIn’s connection director and a frequent contributor to “The Today Show,” told *SHRM Online* that social media can help individuals “have a voice.” She and other experts suggest that job seekers regularly blog and tweet, and participate in LinkedIn’s [groups](#) or use the [answer](#) boards.

“Become recognized in your area of expertise, and you will be found,” she says.

## Ask: You Shall Receive

Experts agree that there's still a stigma to being unemployed. So, "if you're really worried about how your resume is going to be perceived, stop relying on your resume to get you a [job](#)," says marketing coach and career strategist [Tim Tyrell-Smith](#).

Over at jobs.jobs, co-founded by Monster.com creator Bill Warren, job seekers will eventually be able to use the site to create a profile that includes their social media presence. They'll be able to add their Twitter and LinkedIn information, as well as blogs, to create a "[Klout](#)-like" persona. There, employers sifting through resumes can see a candidate's virtual footprint from across the web, says Nancy Holland, vice president of marketing for the [Direct Employers Association](#), which operates the jobs.jobs domain.

Networking online and self-promotion through social media channels are slowly becoming two critical components to landing a job.

## Go Where Recruiters Go

When it comes to marketing yourself, "the No. 1 tool you should use is LinkedIn," says Tyrell-Smith. "It's the place where you can most effectively use your time."

According to [Jobvite](#), 89 percent of U.S. companies are now using social networking to recruit. And LinkedIn, with 135 million members worldwide, accounts for 73 percent of hires through social media. LinkedIn's Communications Manager Richard George says more than 7,400 companies use [LinkedIn Recruiter](#) to find "passive candidates."

But experts say you shouldn't just build a profile, hoping recruiters will find you. Engage them in the neighborhoods where they live by:

Participating in relevant discussions on LinkedIn and [tweet chats](#).

Reading and responding to the blogs of those companies you're interested in.

"Liking" and posting comments on their Facebook pages.

Tweeting and tagging companies that are relevant to the type of position or experience you have.

Retweeting relevant items of the conversations people are having on Twitter.

"You cannot just go out on social media and follow people," Tyrell-Smith says. "You actually have to talk to people—especially on Twitter."

He suggests that job seekers pick 10 target companies, follow them, retweet their "stuff, add them to lists, and send followers direct messages and notes of encouragement. Become a part of their lives by communicating with the company. Even if all you're doing is talking to the social media manager, you're becoming someone that they're aware of. You're not just another number floating on the desk. That kind of stuff matters."

## What Can You Contribute?

“It’s not what you know, and it’s not who you know; it’s who knows what you can do,” says Price, CEO of [Jumpstart: HR](#) and author of *Never Miss the Mark: Career Search Strategies Provided by HR Pros* (Bookbaby, 2011).

“The tools have changed, but it’s an old-fashioned” concept, Tyrell-Smith adds.

“We have a lot of networks that we don’t take advantage of—people we know at the gym, at church,” Price says. “They know you, but they may not know the ways in which you can add value” to a job.

Having a clearly defined “value proposition”—which job seekers can put on the back of a business card, on their websites or in their LinkedIn profiles—is important, says Nadia Nassif, principal at [Springboards](#).

“If you’re an HR leader in the nonprofit world, you want to articulate the value you bring” in that role within the industry you’re in, she says. “Be able to explain how to solve people’s pain and problems, and try to be specific.

“There [are] a lot of people—particularly in HR—who are in transition and ... there isn’t a clear value proposition” in their resumes or on their LinkedIn profiles, Nassif adds. “They need a clear description about what they offer, who they offer it to and what tangible benefits they can bring” to their next role.

Williams adds that “The more active skills you have, the better. Describe, as much as possible, what you’ve done and what you’ve produced. Volunteer activities are helping people find work, too. I have heard so many people say their passion helped them get a job in a different area.”

But “there’s still a stigma for people out of work,” Tyrell-Smith says. Remember, “whether you’re working or not, you are still a qualified professional. You’re just out of work.”

*Aliah D. Wright is an online editor/manager for SHRM. Follow her @1SHRMScribe for employment news and links to social media insights.*