

## Using Your Social Network

Lida Citroën

Q: I've heard it said that social media is powerful in helping build visibility (especially in a job search). Do you agree?

A: Absolutely! For most of us, our online profiles are the first place a potential employer, interviewer or recruiter will go to try to find us. For this reason, I have several tips for building a powerful online personal brand. If you'd like to learn more, I'm also doing a webinar on this topic (free) on August 23rd. You can register online.

Here are some best practices for using the power of social networking to attract the attention of a future employer:

1. **Nothing is private.** Anything you post online (regardless of privacy settings) is public information. Since LinkedIn is a business tool, keep specific client information, project details and confidential information off your posts and comments. While Facebook is more social, it is still considered "public" regardless of the privacy settings you might believe are tight. Most posts online are searchable and indexed by Google.
2. **Project a good image.** Pay attention to your headshot and the tone of your profile. Are you projecting an image of someone who is welcoming, approachable and professional? Or, does the absence of a headshot and the tone of your profile send the message that you are standoffish and aloof? Are you engaging and welcoming or confrontational and angry?
3. **Use all the features.** For instance, LinkedIn gives you the opportunity to fill out a robust and informative profile. Take advantage of as many of the apps and plug-ins as make sense for you. For instance:
  - a. Include a Summary of your experience in your Profile. Be sure this isn't just resume-content. Use the Summary to describe who you are and what you do (what are you passionate about?).
  - b. Add the Amazon app plug-in to share your favorite books with your connections. Be sure to include a review of the book and whether you would recommend it to others. This gives your connections more insight into your interests.
  - c. Include your past career experience – not as a resume. What were your successes at that job? What contribution did you make? What did you learn? What did you enjoy the most?
4. **Talk about your military experience** in ways that a recruiter or hiring manager will understand. If you use overly technical jargon and terminology, you might turn off the civilian recruiter. Instead, relate your experiences and skills to understandable values, such as: "Able to make effective decisions quickly.... Understanding of complex engineering systems... Team leader with proven track record for collaboration and effectiveness...." Use civilian language if you are looking for a civilian opportunity.
5. **Use keywords.** LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube are highly searchable. Consider key words in your summary, title, and experience descriptions that make your profiles more findable to prospects, colleagues and partners.

I used several key "tags" or words to make my profile more findable to someone seeking "personal branding" "personal branding for executives" or "reputation management." Under a search (people) for "reputation management" there are almost 150,000 results returned. I enjoy my positioning!!

6. **Groups.** LinkedIn offers you hundreds of groups to choose from, where you can become engaged and involved in conversations around areas of interest, alumni groups, causes and business initiatives. Choose the groups wisely – you build your own reputation in part through the groups with whom you associate. Once you join a group, post and comment where appropriate and comfortable. Ask questions, offer insight and share information around the topic of the group. And, be aware that recruiters and employers watch group conversations, so keep it all relevant and professional.
7. **Research.** If your job is landing another opportunity, then you should spend much of your day researching companies, hiring manager, thought leaders and content in your desired industry and company. There is so much rich information online! Take advantage of the power of Google to learn as much as you can about the industry, company and people you want to meet.
8. **Update regularly.** Sending an update to either your LinkedIn or Facebook status or profile, groups or apps ensures you stay top of mind with your network. Posting something relevant every 7-10 days increases your odds of being top of mind with most of your contacts. Some ideas of things to post: updates on your career, professional interests or business, links to articles, blogs, news, comments or ideas or celebrations about trends, happenings and topics of interest that relate to your business, industry

and professional circle of influence.

9. **Work it.** If social networking and social media are part of your transition strategy, then treat it as work. Research, share, collaborate and post insights to ensure you stay relevant. Keep the rants about politics off social networking if you are using this tool for business and career transitioning.
10. **Be authentic.** While social networking might feel anonymous and abstract (as opposed to face to face meetings), the need is still very strong to connect with people who are genuine and approachable. Showing your authentic enthusiasm, passion, talent and interests creates a well-rounded profile of yourself and what others can expect to experience if they work with you. In the online world of social networking, strive to be authentic in the content you post and comment on.

Social networking is a vibrant resource for busy people. It affords many tools to build your visibility, share your interests, promote your talents and connect with like-minded individuals around the globe.

*Lida Citroën, a branding expert based in Denver, has made a career of helping people and companies create new or enhanced identities. She is donating her time, expertise and effort to help returning war veterans learn how to compete in a civilian, particularly corporate, career. Lida works closely with Philadelphia-based, Wall Street Warfighters Foundation, and has produced numerous programs and materials to help military veterans with reputation management after service. If you have a transition question Lida can help answer, email her at [lida@lida360.com](mailto:lida@lida360.com).*

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