

“Today's job seekers face a tougher market than ever before.  
*The Online Job Search Survival Guide* is packed with  
strategies and tactics to land the ideal job in any market.”

- *Dr. Betsy Alden, President/CEO*

*Alden & Associates Executive Search & Consulting*

**FIND  
YOUR  
NEXT JOB  
TODAY!**

# THE ONLINE JOB SEARCH SURVIVAL GUIDE

**Everything You Need To Know To Use  
Social Networking to Land a Job Now**

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## Social Networks and the Successful Job/People Search

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### Fundamentals of Social Media and Social Networks

**F**OR STARTERS, let's briefly reflect on what we mean by **social media** and **social networks**. **Social networks** refer to online communities of people who share common interests. Members of a social network use these communication platforms to set up personal profiles, which include information about themselves. They then can search for, contact, communicate with, or otherwise share information with others in that community. Examples of popular social networks include Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace. Although social networks were created for personal relationships, job seekers should think of social networks as distribution platforms that enable them to broadcast their messages to others.

The term **social media** has been used interchangeably with social networks. However, social media is a bit more broad-based in that it includes channels of distribution (e.g., blogs or Web-pages)

beyond the social networks (communities). The most important element you must consider is that social networks and social media are all about *content*. And when it comes to your job search, the content you create for each channel must position you in a way that your target audience (e.g., the industry, company, human resources recruiter) will find most appealing. Social media enables you to distribute information to large numbers of people (for example, making your personal information available for viewing by the public). How you shape the content that you will post or upload as a blog post, an article, a video, or a podcast will have a major impact on the type of employers you will attract. Self-publishing their qualifications, skills, accomplishments, and personality gives job seekers more opportunity than ever before to promote themselves...*and more risk* unless they have a full understanding of all that the online job search entails.

### **The Best Approach: A Blend of Traditional and Social Media Elements**

The most successful job searches are neither dumb luck nor magic. They are developed from strong networks that the job seeker has already built, both online and off. Effective job seekers must integrate social media outreach with the more traditional approach in order to present a consistent, aligned, professional image. Recruiters are evaluated in part based on their abilities to screen qualified applicants, so they don't react well to surprises, such a candidate whose interview presents an entirely different person from what is stated or implied on the resume. Job seekers often forget that human resource professionals are looking for the candidate they saw on paper, online, and in a profile photo—so consistency counts!

The best recommendation is that job seekers include links to their blogs, LinkedIn profiles, YouTube video resumes—whatever online elements they have created—on their traditional resumes. Standardize profiles across all social media sites, and link them together.

Candidates must position themselves effectively where recruiters are searching as well as become content producers in order to attract recruiters directly to them. Again, bear in mind the current state of the job market:

- Fewer jobs are available.
- More competition exists for those jobs.
- More touch points exist for job seekers and recruiters to interact.
- Smart job seekers must optimize their personal brands and seek out those who are on the lookout for great candidates.

In addition to the standard-issue background and employer checks, hiring managers—and even college admissions officers—are turning to social networking sites to delve more deeply into the backgrounds of applicants. If you think this is unfair, think again. The Internet is not a private club for you and your friends. It's a public space. The rule used to be that anything on your resume was fair game for an interviewer to consider. Although this is still the case, the same is now true for anything on the Internet that has your name attached to it—including your Facebook wall. If you don't like the odds that a recruiter will check out your wall of potentially inappropriate updates, our best advice is to clean your wall.

Like anything else in the realm of social media, we do not advocate that any candidate forego traditional job-search fare in

favor of a strict social-media diet of job search. Candidates should continue to post their credentials to job banks, respond to corporate postings, attend career and job fairs, and so forth. That said, note that this type of activity would have been primary in the past, but today's candidate needs to have a 21st-century mentality about job search. Although some attention should be devoted to traditional job search methods, the majority should be geared toward social media strategies—regardless of industry or job type. Social media is simply a more efficient way to find yourself a job sooner rather than later.

## Social Networks and the Successful Job/People Search

Social networking gives job seekers the distinct advantage of having one more type of weapon in their arsenals of tactics. When confronted with an unexpected layoff or a corporate downsizing, job seekers usually react in one of two ways:

- They take immediate action, sending a barrage of resumes through the digital space without even mulling whether to update that resume.
- They slip into sweatpants, fall into a funk for a while, and consider writing that novel they've started on and off for the past 11 years.

We'd like to encourage a different reaction altogether: a strategic and reasoned approach to not only securing a job but securing *the* job that best suits your skills and your passions. In the mix of all this, however, is our innate tendency to be slow to act when it comes to networking. Quite frankly, most people would sooner not go out

and network face to face if they could. They would much rather network from the comfort of a La-Z-Boy™ recliner with laptop in hand.

Yet what this book will show is that job seekers must be willing to get out of their comfort zones to test many different ways of connecting with people during their job searches. While it is never easy to be out of a job, today's applicants have an unprecedented advantage by having primed social networks available and at their fingertips in ways that simply weren't available to job seekers even a handful of years ago.

### **No One Is Exempt from Job Seeking**

Okay, if you're one of the few who are independently wealthy, then perhaps you needn't worry about a job. But the vast majority of us are not exempt. You may be highly educated, highly skilled, highly motivated, or all the above. You might be just starting out fresh from high school, trade school, or college. Regardless, job-seeking savvy will give you a critical advantage.

Perhaps you have changed jobs frequently. Have you ever been called a job hopper? Maybe you've been downsized or flat-out fired from a job or two. Some of you have gone through the humbling experience of having to trudge to the unemployment office for a canned orientation and an interview with an employment counselor. Regardless of the reasons behind your job search, the experience always comes with an ample dose of pain, frustration, and anxiety.

Let's face it. Being out of work, feeling unsure about your future, and having to look for a job is likely one of the more memorable times in your adult life. And we don't mean the good kind of "memorable"!

But the forecast for your job search is only partly cloudy. This book offers practical and tactical ways to help you get the jobs you want as quickly and as painlessly as possible. Obtaining a great job may not happen easily or immediately, but the goal is to move in a positive direction as opposed to being like a gerbil on a wheel—moving frantically but getting nowhere fast.

Remember that being out of a job is not the end of the world. For some, it may represent a crisis, but it's also an opportunity. A job search offers individuals time to reflect and to consider new directions. Our advice is to view unemployment as an opportunity to reposition, to reestablish, and to rethink an important part of your life. After all, it's never “just a job”—it's 80 percent of your waking life—so you might as well make it count! What type of work would be most meaningful and rewarding to you? With patience, persistence, and a tactical approach, you will give yourself every opportunity to land your dream job.

#### JOB SEEKER SUCCESS STORY:

##### The Architect of Job-Seeking Success

Brian Ward, a resident of Cleveland, Ohio, knew he had to act fast to find work after losing his job in 2008. Ward beat the normal 12-week job-searching grind by capitalizing on shrewd use of the Internet. Remarkably, he landed a job in just 11 days.

Ward is a married architect with three children. He is the sole breadwinner for his family. Like so many Americans, though, he found himself unemployed when the economy turned sour.

While he had “passively” been updating profiles on Facebook as well as on the Twitter and LinkedIn social-networking sites, Ward started making phone calls within the first three hours of joining the ranks of the unemployed.

One of those calls was to a college friend in North Carolina who used Twitter extensively. The friend sent out messages to all his contacts,

giving Ward the idea to use the medium as a way to enhance his search.

Ward spent his first jobless weekend updating his existing profiles and uploading a new resume to the professional networking site LinkedIn, and he sent messages to his 200 Facebook contacts about his job search.

Within a few hours of starting his search, Ward was able to line up a phone interview with a Louisiana company that employed one of his friends. Although that interview did not result in a position, the quick turnaround did strike Ward as “impressive.”

In addition to posting on the sites and joining groups to get his name and qualifications out into cyberspace, Ward also attended a webinar presented by a former arena football player to get tips on looking for work.

Ward proceeded to spend 12 to 15 hours each day in his quest for employment. He updated his Facebook and Twitter accounts, and he sent frequent emails to provide his contacts with information about his search and to thank those who had been assisting him.

Finally, a former co-worker set up Ward with a contact at her firm. He got the job. The co-worker sent him a half-joking message, asking why Ward did not appeal to her about openings at the company. It had never occurred to Ward that a former subordinate may have been in a position to help him in his search.

“It’s still all about connections,” Ward said. “What’s changed is how you do it.”

SOURCE: Kiviat, Barbara. “Using Twitter and Facebook to Find a Job.” *Time*, 8 June 2009 <<http://www.time.com/time/business/article/0,8599,1903083,00.html>>.

## Have a Roadmap

How will you get where you want to go without a roadmap? If you're like most people, you might be inclined to job search on instinct or to let the marketplace of available jobs dictate how your search will go. Today's job seeker cannot afford to take this loose approach.

Frankly, the majority of job seekers don't have time to wander aimlessly through the process. They have mortgages to pay, families to feed, and expenses that won't wait. So rather than find yourself hopelessly stranded on a dead-end path, we arm you with directions—and a few shortcuts—on the road to your next job. Of course, you'll also need a steady dose of motivation to keep going when the job seeking gets tough.

Your job search may be urgent, or you may have the luxury of more time to plan. You might be just starting your career, or you might be in the midst of a career change after many years or decades. Regardless, our strategies and tactics are equally applicable. All successful projects start with the end result in mind, and your job search is no exception. Making your goal as clear and specific as possible is critical.

## Think Temporary

Over a lifetime of employment, always remember to maintain this mentality:

***Every job is temporary.***

By no means are we suggesting that you should be disloyal to your employer or that you should work as if you have one foot out the door. However, you should always approach any job with an eye toward what's next. This philosophy will keep you in a professional

development mindset and thus allow you to take advantage of every opportunity to advance your skills from any position.

You must be willing to acknowledge and to accept the reality that it is highly unlikely that you will stay in one job for the duration of your professional career. Those days are largely gone.

Of course, you need to commit yourself to doing the best job possible. Great performance always opens doors eventually. But by accepting and realizing that all jobs are temporary, you will position yourself to remain alert and to optimize your efforts toward obtaining a recommendation or referral when you need one. In essence, you want to find yourself in a constant state of readiness to look for another job at a moment's notice.

Taking this stance can help you avoid being caught off guard with no safety net or Plan B should your employment situation change unexpectedly. It also will make you less likely to knee-jerk and to immediately write off opportunities that may arise over the years. As the saying goes, "The best time to look for a new job is when you already have one." Just because you're relatively happy in your present job doesn't mean that there might not be something better out there. From a practical standpoint, it's wise never to become too trusting or overly comfortable in what may become your "temporary" position. Always have a Plan B that you can activate quickly.

Be sure you have two items in top shape and ready to go at all times—your attitude and your resume.

## **Develop Your Strategy and Tactics**

When you are first launching your job-search campaign, we suggest that you take a page out of the military playbook by thinking

through your strategy and related tactics. We cannot overstate that almost all successful projects are well planned. Sure, there are stories about how someone's best friend got a job by slow dancing with an HR recruiter at a wedding, but these are flukes and not sustainable strategies in the long term.

Most people will spend more hours of their lives in their places of employment than at home with their loved ones, so you really want to think through your job and career.

Don't wing it. Make sure you have a strategy BEFORE you start sending out resumes.

## Your Strategy

In the field of marketing, strategy consists of two components: targeting and positioning. When it comes to marketing yourself, **targeting** is the process of deciding which fields you want to consider and which organizations you want to approach for a job. **Positioning** refers to how you want to present yourself in order to maximize the opportunities of being hired by your target organizations.

## Your Tactics

**Tactics** are the actions, activities, and tasks that you must perform in order to achieve your strategic objectives. In this case, that means finding the job that you want. Here are some examples of tactics you may employ:

- Writing articles about your areas of expertise
- Posting blog entries
- Creating personal profiles on social networks
- Researching job boards to help you position yourself correctly

Likewise, here are some strategic questions you must consider before beginning your job search:

**Targeting:**

- What job types, companies, or industries are you planning to target?
- What sources will you use to research other target organizations that might meet your job-hunting criteria?
- Which social networks will help you connect to people who can then help you contact key people in your target set of employers?

**Positioning:**

- What are the most effective ways of presenting yourself to your target organizations? What is your marketing message or, as it is sometimes known, your 30-second commercial or 60-second elevator pitch?
- How does your message to individuals in your social networks differ from the message that you present to prospective employers? That is, how do you present yourself to those who may recommend you to others who could ultimately give you a job?
- What information will you include in your profile pages when you post them on social networks?

- Is your message targeted enough? Will you create different versions of your pitch to meet the needs of different companies that you target?
- How will you go about actually connecting to people on social networks?
- How will you use blogging to help you market yourself? Will you become a blogger yourself or maybe comment on other peoples' blogs?
- Will you create a video of your 30-second commercial or 60-second elevator pitch?
- What will you do to monitor and to manage your online reputation?

Knowing the answers to questions like these before you start looking for a position will help save you time, money, and energy during your job search.

Take the time to think through your strategies and tactics at the start of your job search, and you'll save yourself a great deal of frustration along the way.

Although it's a trite expression, remember that clichés often stick around because of their simple truth: Remember that those who fail don't actually plan to fail—they simply fail to plan.

## **Getting Fired, Downsized, or Whatever You'd Like to Call It**

When you're out of work, you are very much focused on yourself. This is only natural.

As such, you may find little consolation in knowing that there are many others who are in the same situation as you. There are also most likely some who are even worse off than you are. Unfortunately,

in the last several years, several million hard-working folks have lost their jobs.

The recent job-loss hit parade has been particularly horrendous, hitting every industry sector and negatively affecting the lives of millions of individuals and families.

In light of the catastrophic economic collapses we've seen during the nation's worst recession since the Great Depression, candidates must be smarter than ever in the face of fewer jobs and sky-high unemployment.

Regardless of the causes, we are all in a new world in which job seekers must be brave and ready to approach job seeking in a truly unique way. Social media can provide you with the tools you will need to showcase yourself—or to reinvent yourself—so that you may thrive amid any market conditions.

### **Why the New Hypercompetitive Job Market?**

We don't need to tell you how competitive today's job market is. You know that companies around the world are competing against one another to offer quality products and services at the lowest possible costs. Companies are sending jobs overseas if they can cut costs by doing so. Alternatively, they are simply shedding jobs by the thousands in order to stay profitable.

In many places, there are far fewer locally based businesses that are thriving or even surviving. Many have either been acquired by out-of-town owners or have been put out of business by large multinational corporations with daunting economies of scale, such as Walmart.

Unfortunately, many of these larger corporations don't share the same sense of responsibility, loyalty, and commitment to their

employees and the local communities in which they do business—unlike their former owners. Regardless of what the corporate mission statements say, many employers don't value their employees as individuals as they once did.

In the past, company CEOs and presidents may have known all their employees—and even their employees' family members—on a personal basis. Now it's every employee for him- or herself. Often, the pace of business is too fast—and job turnover is too high—for anyone to really get to know anyone else. This is the reality that you must face as a job seeker.

Generations ago, you were considered a job hopper if you didn't stay at a company for at least 10 years. In today's workforce, getting a new job every two to three years is more of the rule than the exception.

As sad as it may seem, all employees are replaceable, and, eventually, most employees will find themselves replaced in one way or another—if not by technology, then by a younger, faster, more tech-savvy generation with skill sets that have naturally evolved to fit current job markets.

The days when companies valued and rewarded employee loyalty above all else are largely gone. Many employers have gravitated to an extreme fixation on bottom-line results. If you don't produce, you're gone. If you are uncertain as to where a company places its values, it's best to operate under this assumption.

In fact, many executives at today's largest companies view their employees as disposable commodities, regardless of the impact that has on employee morale. If you have not yet experienced such a climate within your professional career, don't assume that it doesn't exist: Assume you've just been lucky.

So maintain a realistic mindset about your relationship to your employer. They owe you pay and benefits, and you owe them a solid

day's work. There are no guarantees beyond that. Even though many would love to return to that golden era of secure employment, there is no turning back.

Accordingly, do yourself two big favors:

- Accept the realities of how these and other factors have negatively and irreversibly altered the global employment landscape.
- Always keep the positioning of you foremost in mind. Each job seeker must fend for him- or herself. However, through social networks, fending for yourself can occur within a community, thus lessening the feeling that you are going it alone.

### **Job Market “Ins” and “Outs”**

Just as global economics have had a profound effect on how companies deal with their employees, cultural changes and technology had a profound effect on how you should go about searching for a job. If you have been out of the job market for a while—or if you are just entering the ranks of the employed and reflecting on the way in which your older brother obtained his first job years ago—remember that the Internet has been driving dramatic change in recent years. Specifically:

- Paper resumes are out. Online resumes have been in for some time now. But most recently, those who employ social media tactics have had a significant advantage over those who aren't familiar with such online techniques.

- Classified ads in newspapers are out. Online job boards, such as Monster.com and HotJobs.com, are in. But even more cutting-edge are social-networking sites.
- Meeting face to face for first interviews is increasingly being replaced by initial telephone interviews. Most employers are unwilling to waste the time, money, and effort to organize and to meet face to face with job candidates before they have weeded out those who don't meet their criteria via phone calls, videoconferencing, and Web chats. So you need to get your message down. It has to make an impact quickly, or you're dead in the water.
- There is an increasing move away from centralized cube workplaces. Employers are finding that they can cut costs and achieve higher productivity if they have at least some of their employees working remotely from home.
- Having human resources executives shuffling through paper resumes is out. Automating the job candidate screening process by using job sites and scanning software to home in on qualified candidates by finding keywords in their digital resumes is in.

Unless you have been completely cut off from civilization, you are fully aware of the economic employment mess we face, not only from a U.S. perspective but from a global standpoint. Therefore, an effective and successful job search today requires flexibility in adapting to the changes that have occurred in the employment market.

Whether you are comfortable with the idea or not, you must acquire and use all the job search skills, knowledge, and marketing vehicles available.

The bottom line is that if you are not using all the tools available, especially social networking and social media, you're putting yourself at a major competitive disadvantage when job hunting.

## Reach Out and Touch Someone

Remember the phone company commercial from years ago that used the jingle of “reach out and touch someone”?

Well, that is precisely what you have to do in your job search—reach out and connect to people.

But now, with social networking, you can do that much more effectively online. Online social networking can save you the time and frustration of having to get dressed up and go out to random networking events where you may or may not meet people who can help you find a job.

As anyone who has tried that tactic knows, real-world networking events give you plenty of opportunity to meet people who are looking for a job—just like you. Unless your goal is to commiserate with peers, that doesn't help you much.

Before you get too comfortable in your sweatpants and slippers, you will still need to show up at face-to-face networking events. In addition to this, though, you must now spend part of your networking time online. This will not only help you meet people; it will help you meet the *right* people *faster*.

## The Internet: Both Good and Bad News for Job Hunters

The Internet has brought us true global connectivity.

It is a game-changing channel that has forever altered how you

and everyone you know—and don't yet know—relate and interrelate with one another.

From one perspective, this is great news when it comes to expanding the number and type of jobs that you might be able to find. Additionally, the Internet also can help you find that next job faster.

Over the past decade or so, such online job boards as Monster, Yahoo! HotJobs, Dice, CareerBuilder, Careers.com, and others have come into their own and made significant inroads in the traditional way of applying for jobs.

In part, that's been driven by ever-increasing numbers of job candidates online. Simultaneously, employers have increasingly shifted their talent acquisition efforts to the Web. By tapping into social networks, you'll greatly improve the odds of finding your next job more efficiently.