How Your Online Presence Can Help (NOT Hinder) Your Job Search
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Managing your online presence is critical as you enter a profession where professional reputation and ethical behavior are paramount. 78% of recruiters check search engines and 45% of recruiters eliminate candidates based on what they find in search engines. Therefore, your online identity and your social networking activities, both personal and professional, should demonstrate you at your best. Here are some tips and strategies to ensure that your online presence aids your job search efforts:

**KNOW & CONTROL WHAT'S OUT THERE**
Google your name frequently and look for photos of you used without your permission, unflattering comments. Be careful of what you share and even more careful about with whom you share it.

Choose your photos wisely and never post a photo you wouldn’t want a prospective employer to see. Think before you post. Spelling counts. Set email alerts to notify you of new postings to your profile or feed so you can respond or remove quickly.

**CREATE A PERSONAL BRAND WITH LINKEDIN**
Join LinkedIn, the social networking tool of choice for professionals and lawyers, if you haven’t yet or revamp your profile as a future attorney. Having a strong, professional LinkedIn profile is a good way to positively influence what people find when they do an online search on you. It’s also an effective way to maintain relationships with classmates and colleagues, and to create new connections with people in areas of law you’re interested in. LinkedIn should be thought of as your professional persona, while Facebook and other similar sites, can be kept more personal.

**KEY LINKEDIN TIP FOR LAW STUDENTS**

1) **Make a strong first impression:**
   a. Present a specific title. “Student” is not as effective as “First-Year Student at Loyola University Chicago School of Law.” Update your title as appropriate, including roles like Law Review Editor, Law Clerk, or Research Assistant.
   b. Be sure your photo is professional - throw on a suit jacket and have a friend take a nice crisp shot.
   c. Create a professional URL. By default, your LinkedIn URL is a long string of letters and numbers. Change it to linkedin.com/in/FirstnameLastname by editing your Public Profile.
   d. Make your profile public with your contact information. Hiding your profile from people you’re not connected to just defeats the purpose of being on LinkedIn.

2) **Be sure your profile is complete:**
   a. Consider presenting a short introductory summary. Two or three well-written sentences describing your course focus, desired area of practice and legal experience can provide good context.
   b. Include your complete legal resume. Focus on previous legal employment or work experience with transferable skills. Your LinkedIn resume should contain all details on your hard-copy resume, but the LinkedIn format allows you to expand beyond the traditional resume. Considering including relevant coursework you’ve taken, pertinent papers you’ve written, awards you’ve won, etc. Highlight relevant legal activities like clerkships and other professional affiliations you’ve participated in by listing them as separate employment entries. Fine tune and update your profile frequently to make sure all information is current and correct.
3) Connect with people you know:
   a. Connecting with people can be an advantage. But the quality not necessarily the quantity of your connections is important. Protect your professional reputation by connecting with people you know and respect, and ignoring invitations to connect with those you don’t.
   b. There are many ways to find new contacts. Use the “People You May Know” feature on the top right of your LinkedIn homepage. Find new people to add by reviewing members lists of organizations you’re involved in. Once you’ve connected to others, you can see their lists of contacts and those friends-of-friends that you also may know.
   c. **Be sure to send personalized invitations to link rather than the default/generic invitation to your contacts.** Generic connection requests are cold and impersonal, particularly when the invitee may not be sure of or recall their connection to you.

4) Intelligently network:
   a. Reach out to lawyers for informational interviews in areas you’d like to work. A great way to find Loyola alums is to do an “Advanced People Search” with Loyola University Chicago School of Law in the “school” field. Enter a title, firm or company, or location to narrow the search and find relevant alums.
   b. Most LinkedIn users can see who has viewed their profile recently. So, if you’d like to review people’s profiles without risk or looking like a stalker, make yourself anonymous. Under “Settings” click on “Select what others see when you’ve viewed their profile.” The tradeoff of being anonymous is that you won’t be able to see who has viewed your profile, either.
   c. Join groups like the Loyola University Chicago School of Law group, your undergrad alumni group and/or groups focused on niche areas of law you may be interested in.
   d. Post regular updates, but don’t overdo it. Share interesting ideas, news, links or information that is practical, helpful, interesting or informative.

USE OTHER PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS
Consider creating a twitter account or blog dedicated to convey the appropriate message about your professional interests and aspirations. Take this opportunity to showcase your academic and professional interests. Demonstrate to potential employers that you have a valuable contribution to make in your desired field.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE
At all times, be professional, online, in print or in person. LinkedIn and professional social media might help you find a job and it will also be a useful professional marketing tool when you become a lawyer.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES/REFERENCES
2. LinkedIn Learning Center http://learn.linkedin.com