

6 Tips for Professional Social Networking

Social Networks were designed to facilitate communication; subsequently, it's in your best interest to keep your exchanges as professional as possible. A February 2009 *Associated Press* article entitled, "8 Technology Etiquette Tips for Job-seekers" suggests that you should, "Manage your digital footprint: be judicious about what you post on social networking sites and assume that anybody has access to anything." This should also be held true when helping your company engage in social networking. The online social experience can be exactly what you want to make of it. You can connect with friends, and market yourself professionally.

Here are 6 tips for being professional on social networks:

1. Divide and conquer

If you use Facebook for professional networking, set up two different accounts – one for your friends, and one for professional contacts/colleagues. Don't post anything to your profile that you wouldn't want your co-workers and clients to see. To avoid awkward situations, make sure your contacts on LinkedIn are only those you know professionally.

2. Be yourself

Don't lie about where you work, where you went to school, or what you're interested in. You'd be surprised at how much time people will spend reading your profile. Make a good first "online" impression; it may mean the difference between being contacted for an opportunity and being skipped over.

3. Add friends/apps/widgets carefully

Choose quality over quantity. The quality of your social networking experience will be based on the quality of the people in your network. Just because you can ask your Facebook friends which Disney character they are, doesn't mean that you should.

4. Use your privacy settings

Give careful consideration to exactly who sees your profile and when they are able to access it. Make sure to go through each item in the privacy section and make necessary adjustments.

5. Incorporate tools into your profile

If you blog or have a Twitter account, you can add these applications on social sites. If you have a WordPress blog, your posts will automatically be pushed to your Facebook profile, along with recent comments.

6. Join groups related to your business interests

There are quite a few groups that can provide useful information and professional connections. You can use social networks to virally address a business cause.