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Social Networking

By Marc Phillips | December 7th, 2011 | 20-Somethings, Ministry of Cool

How Twitter is the new cover letter and résumé

You can't spell *Internet* without *intern*.

While many see it as a way to embarrass friends or stalk an ex's digital life, some see it as an opportunity to network and get hired as interns.

Not surprisingly, I'm talking about the potential of using social media to boost your résumé. What better way to interact with potential employers than to communicate directly in an open forum?

A clean, online persona can help students excel in the digital arena. According to *Mashable*, more than 90 percent of job recruiters search applicants' profiles as part of the hiring process. Recruiters get a cross-section of their ideal applicant — such as his or her thoughts, interests or personality — more so on an entertainment platform than in a job application. In short, if you're drunk-tweeting or professing your love of vodka on Facebook, make sure you delete the offensive content.

Baking for Good, a non-profit organization, tweeted about needing a new marketing director, but Ithaca College junior Colleen

Wormsley offered herself as an intern. The avid tweeter, who claims to use Twitter more than Facebook, sent out a lighthearted response to Baking for Good's tweet. Much to her surprise, the company responded favorably, asked for Wormsley's resume, and hired her shortly thereafter.

Wormsley's tasks align perfectly with her Integrated Marketing Communications major: seeking partnerships to strengthen brand recognition, designing promotional materials and creating social media strategies. Since the internship is remote work, Wormsley enjoys the flexible hours.

"There are many nights when I'm working on Baking for Good projects at 11 p.m. or later and I couldn't do that if it wasn't an online internship," said Wormsley.

Since commercial Internet access became available in the early 1990s, nearly all 20-somethings grew up with a connection to the World Wide Web. It is fitting for the first generation who grew up with rapid access to information, to take advantage of the Internet's many resources. While technology-based fields such as social media and web design puzzle older generations, young adults are selling their knowledge by offering digital services.

Similar to Wormsley, I found my freelance job with The BoatYard Grill in Ithaca by chance. I noticed the Facebook and Twitter accounts for the restaurant had been overrun with spam, duplicate posts, pixelated images and grammatical mistakes. I sent a Facebook message to restaurant's manager (who is now my boss) and asked to assist in social media obligations. I am always learning how to create more effective strategies and marketing and The BoatYard Grill is giving me the opportunity. My responsibilities include responding to customers' wall posts and tweets, creating promotions and buying ads on Facebook.



Image by Georgie Morley

My friends joke I should major in Facebook and minor in Twitter, but those sentiments led me to build my online, social media portfolio — and expanded it to include a number of other companies.

Harnessing the power of social media might seem daunting, especially if you only use your accounts for following celebrity gossip or creeping on cute classmates. It *is* possible to find the happy medium *and* further your career. In a rough economy, jobs are scarce and young adults often need guidance if they are not sure of career options. With so many students graduating with nearly the same credentials, it is important to stand out among competition.

Elizabeth Venturini, president of Scholasticus, is a for-hire college admissions counselor. She said she has two types of clients: those who are focused and those who are in panic mode.

“There’s been a definite shift in the mindset of students as recent as 2009. Students and parents I’m working with today are more career-oriented as the price of higher education continues to rise,” Venturini said.

Venturini is based out of Orange County, Calif. and mentioned a standout client who has sights set on working in Silicon Valley.

“I coached [the client] to follow his interests, have a resume for visiting tradeshows, and to have a clean online presence,” Venturini said.

Junior Silvia Magana became an Intern Queen campus ambassador by tweeting at the Queen herself, Lauren Berger.

“I first heard of [Berger] at a Public Relations Student Society of America meeting and started following her on Twitter immediately. Berger tweeted about campus ambassadors, so I asked to be one for Ithaca,” Magana said.

Berger, whose career is based on helping students get internships and careers, is the poster child (or poster young adult) for 20-somethings seeking employment. Magana’s responsibilities include assisting promotions, creating blogs and spreading knowledge of the Intern Queen’s website.

“I blog for her monthly or bi-monthly depending on her schedule,” Magana said. “I’m also working on projects to promote her new book. It’s hard since we can’t solicit, but we have to be creative in how we get it out there.”

Magana estimated that Berger has more than 120 interns — all of whom applied online, many of whom opened the line of communication with a simple tweet. Magana will blog from Rome next semester — again appreciative of remote work opportunities.

One question remains and it’s up to young adults on how they will answer it: How will 20-somethings learn to work in a physical “workspace” after working remotely during college?

Marc Phillips is a junior IMC major who only thinks in 140 characters at a time. Email him at [mphilli1\[at\]ithaca\[dot\]edu](mailto:mphilli1[at]ithaca[dot]edu).



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