



## **Using Social Networking Tools to Brand Your Company**

**By Marc Belaiche, CA**

With significant growth the last few years in the social networking arena, now is a great time to use these tools to brand your company, particularly when trying to attract job seekers to apply to your open positions.

Regardless of whether your organization currently has significant brand recognition or you're just beginning to build your brand, using social networking tools lets job seekers know about your company which in turn should help attract the best candidates.

There are many social media avenues available that have become more prominent in everyone's daily lives. The major ones are Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, although others such as YouTube, blogging, and podcasting all represent possible ways to reach out to potential candidates.

Here are some tips and information on using these tools to brand your company.

### **Post open positions**

Advertising open positions through these many possible channels can greatly enhance your company's visibility in the marketplace as well as cast a net to possible job seekers who otherwise might not know about you.

Examples of possible ways to advertise positions through social media include:

- Create a company group in Facebook and/or LinkedIn where people can become fans or members of your company. Once you have started to build up a group, you can send announcements to them about current job postings, open houses, and events.
- Place a link to the positions in your "Status update" section in LinkedIn or Facebook.
- Post positions on a job board within a LinkedIn group specifically targeting the types of candidates you are looking for.
- Include a link to the postings as a "tweet" from your Twitter account.
- Add a status update in your personal Facebook and/or LinkedIn profiles so your friends will be able to see the postings.
- Check out Facebook's "Marketplace" section where open jobs can be posted.

## **Set goals**

You need to decide at the outset whether it's your goal to attract more applicants to specific open positions or to simply let people know about your organization as a possible place to work.

If it's the former, track how many respond to open positions posted through your various social media channels. Determine which social media avenues garner you the most responses so that you can tailor your postings specifically to that medium in the future. For example, posting positions on your Facebook company page may result in more junior applicants, while LinkedIn will likely provide more experienced candidates.

If you want to create more awareness about your organization, consider ways in which you can put forth a positive image about your company. For example, in your company group in LinkedIn, encourage existing employees to write testimonials about the benefits of working at the organization.

## **Balance your time**

The reality is that you can spend a tremendous amount of time branding your organization through social networking avenues, and there are an infinite number of social media possibilities.

If you are looking to fill very few positions on a yearly basis, learning all the various tools available may not be worth the effort. However, if you have a multitude of open positions throughout the year, spending time branding your company by using social networking tools and posting your positions online can have a good payoff over time.

If you are not computer savvy, you may want to get temporary help from someone who is comfortable navigating websites to set up your presence. Ensure the person uses a company email when the accounts are set up so that if he or she leaves, passwords can be readily retrieved.

## **Don't oversell**

Job seekers in today's market are very intuitive and can see through "fluff". Have a strong visible presence online but don't oversell your organization. Make your visibility honest and realistic. Indicate any awards that your company has won, such as being a top employer in a region. Adding photos to your online presence will help personalize your organization.

## **YouTube videos**

YouTube is a useful and fun way of creating the company brand. You can make a short video with a description of your company and/or open position(s) with only a webcam and a computer. You can then include a link to the video in your company newsletters, in your Facebook or LinkedIn groups or even within your email signatures. This method allows potential job seekers to see you/the environment and get a vibe about the organization before applying.

## **Twitter**

Businesses are increasingly using Twitter as a means of promoting their organizations, advertising open positions and providing a snapshot of what is happening at their companies. Used effectively, Twitter can be a great tool for companies to get word out quickly and professionally about their organization.

## **Blogging**

Blogging is an easy and no-cost way to promote your organization. A drawback, however, is that it takes time, effort, and discipline to blog regularly. Visit [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com) to set up a free blog.

## **Podcasting**

A podcast is an audio recording that is made available via iTunes, usually at no cost. You can create a podcast using your computer quite easily without a large investment of time.

## **Use tools regularly**

The concept with social networking is that you want to be visible on an on-going basis, regardless of whether you have open positions or not. To maintain this presence, your company will want to make use of social networking tools on a regular basis, not just when you're looking to fill a position.

## **Creative ideas**

Other ideas to increase your online brand and/or to attract job seekers to your company include:

- Offer a cash incentive through your social media channels to anyone outside the organization who refers an employee who stays beyond their probationary period.
- Keep your social media exposure current with regular job postings. Set up reminders for yourself to post photos, make announcements or post discussions regularly so your sites don't get stale.
- Encourage your employees to share ideas of what they think should be done through social media regarding your organization. Also, allow them to post to your groups or tweet about your organization.
- Ensure interactivity by allowing external people to write comments in your social media. Take the time to read the postings regularly to gauge the feedback about your company.
- Post links on your existing website encouraging visitors to sign up to your Facebook, LinkedIn and/or Twitter profiles.
- Post a link to your website on all your social media.
- Sign up to daily Google Alerts so that you get notified whenever your company name is mentioned online.
- Make it easy for people to contact you. Include a phone number, email address and/or website on all your social media.
- Purchase a banner ad of your company with a link to your postings depending on your budget and the types of jobs you are looking to fill.

## Conclusion

Social networking is an increasingly important method for companies to use to brand their organization and encourage would-be job seekers to apply.

It takes time and consistent adding and updating of information to gain momentum. However, once the ball gets rolling, it takes a life of its own.

Be creative and think outside the box to gain maximum visibility through social media channels.

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