

Media Coverage

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CAN TWITTER GET YOU A JOB?

Ditch your dead-end post and land yourself a brand-new career – in just 140 characters. By Candice Chung

While many of us may rely on Twitter to get the latest goss from Perez's

tweets or to stay abreast of our friends' breakfast choices, 23-year-old Brett Morris signed up for a different reason.

As a motion graphics designer, Brett follows a number of high-profile designers through Twitter. At first, he thought it was a great way of getting the most recent news and trends from the industry, but later realised it would soon play an important role in his career.

"One of the designers I follow is John Dickinson, and, through his Twitter, he posted a vacancy for a full-time motion graphics designer," Brett recalls. "I sent him a message saying I was interested, he wrote back with the details, and I immediately sent through my portfolio." Within the space of a few quick tweets, Brett was on his way to a great new job.

ARE YOU "VISIBLE"?

The concept of networking has evolved vastly through the years. From liquid lunches with clients in the past (cue *Mad Men*), to rubbing shoulders with managers after work, we're now seeing

the emergence of a new pattern, where more and more business contacts are being made via our virtual networks.

Iggy Pintado, social networking guru and author of *Connection: Generation* (BookSurge Publishing, \$32.95), says it's important to keep an online presence, no matter what stage you're at career-wise.

"The most important part of virtual networking these days is that it gives you visibility. Recruiters will often go and Google you," Pintado says. "If you don't come up, you're actually invisible."

IT'S WHO YOU WANT TO KNOW

If you're a serious job seeker looking to bolster your career, Pintado suggests using professional networking sites such as LinkedIn.com. This one in particular allows you to upload an online CV, search for jobs in your industry, and receive recommendations from past employers or those in your existing network.

There are currently 40 million LinkedIn members around the world. In Australia, it's estimated that about 900,000 senior professionals are members of the virtual professional hub.

"At least 15 per cent of all the people who are in LinkedIn are recruiters. It's a

very easy way for them to validate who you are and see whether you've got the right skills for a job," Pintado says.

"[With sites like LinkedIn], it may not necessarily be the first degree of connection that gets you the job – it might be the second or third one that gives you the opportunity you're after."

Put simply, successful virtual networking is not just about who you know, but who you want to know.

WHERE ALL THE EMPLOYERS ARE

According to Pintado, it's estimated that 70 per cent of all jobs are unadvertised. When faced with shrinking budgets and a growing pool of job seekers, recruiters are beginning to use social networking sites to find the right candidates.

Research from the recruitment industry's peak body, RSCA, found that about 53 per cent of recruiters use LinkedIn and 20 per cent utilise Twitter to seek out potential candidates.

"While the job market has definitely become more competitive since the GFC, these days, companies are always on the hunt for talented people, and technology provides employers with more channels to make contact with candidates," says Susan Howse of international recruitment agency Manpower.

"Social networking sites allow recruiters to reach out to both active job seekers and also passive candidates – people who aren't currently seeking a change in employment, but who may consider a new role if they receive the right offer," explains Howse.

"It's important to keep an online presence, no matter what stage you're at career-wise."



YOUR NEXT 140 CHARACTERS

A new survey by US job search engine CareerBuilder found that 45 per cent of employers use social networking sites to screen potential candidates. Of those surveyed, approximately one-third said they found things that stopped them from hiring someone. The most common reason was the posting of inappropriate photos, followed by content about the candidate drinking or using drugs.

On the flip side, a clever tweet could also win you a dream job. Freelance writer Emily Madden was approached by a magazine editor one day after having tweeted with her a few times.

"I never thought random tweeting could lead to a writing gig," says Emily. "It really goes to show the internet is a level playing field – anyone could be reading and engaging with your tweets."

The four "Ps" of social networking by Iggy Pintado:

- **PURPOSE:** Understand what you want to use it for. For example, if it's for socialising, go to Facebook; if it's business you're after, use LinkedIn.
- **PROFILE:** Present yourself the way you want to be seen, and the way you want people to see you behave. Be honest and express yourself exactly the way you would in real life.
- **PARTICIPATION:** Join a group and be part of a virtual community. When employers see that you're active, they'll get a better idea of your personality.
- **PERSISTENCE:** Try to have a management system where, like checking your emails, you make an effort to look at and update your social networking accounts on a regular basis. □