Should You Use Social Media to Support Your Military Transition?

Everywhere you look you see people connecting on Linkedin, Twitter and Facebook but are these connections useful to you during your military transition? The answer is Yes!

While there is much hesitancy about using social media, it is helpful to remember that these networks can be leveraged to support useful connections in your career search, used as a way of keeping up with colleagues and to do research on companies that you may be interested in working for. It is very common for companies to have a company profile on LinkedIn, a Fan page on Facebook and a Twitter account for job postings. Social media has moved way beyond watching Super Bowl ads on YouTube or connecting with family and friends for the next get together.

There will be some things that you will want to remember which are just extensions of your offline common sense:

* Don’t connect or accept invitations from people you don’t know.
* Don’t share information that you would not want a future employer to see unless it is in a Private News feed.
* Don’t share any private information such as home address, phone numbers or other information
* You always have the option of notifying the social network that someone is spamming you, is someone you don’t know or is acting inappropriately
* Clean up digital dirt before you begin your job search. Remove any photos, content and links that can work against you in an employer’s eyes.
* Consider creating your own professional group on social networking sites.
* Keep gripes offline. Keep the content you posted focused on positive things, whether it’s related to professional or personal information.
* Be selective about whom you accept as friends.
* If you’re still employed, don’t mention your job search.

The below provides job seekers with pros and cons of utilizing social networking sites:

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| **PRO** | **CON** |
| **One email or update can contact hundreds** | **Process has to continually be updated** |
| **Name/resume recognition** | **Must ensure there isn’t any unsavory information out there** |
| **Widely recognized as a way to connect** | **Time consuming**  |
| **Ability to network within one’s own career field** | **Need to ensure that your credentials/certifications are current and one is using the language of the career field** |
| **Your opinion within a field may receive review and/or recognition** | **Blogging or whining within these areas isn’t appropriate**  |

The collaborative nature of social media tools is used well beyond supporting a career search and is now employed in many defense contractor firms and federal agencies to connect employees in disparate locations or facilities in order to work more efficiently and effectively.

At Booz Allen Hamilton, for example, they utilize wikis to collaborate on proposals and client management as well as use a Facebook-like application to connect all their employees, share information, identify key competencies for proposal development and to identify internal candidates for new positions.

While social media may have started as a way of being more “social” the tools are part of every day life and are a vital part of any career search and development plan.

For more information, check out this presentation: <http://www.slideshare.net/ClearedJobsNet/fort-meade-tap-class>

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