



Executive Outlook Series

# THE JOB SEEKER'S SOCIAL MEDIA SURVIVAL KIT

At Ivy Exec, what we see time after time is that when it comes to a job search, the details make the difference between landing a job, and winding up in the 'pass pile'. It may seem unfair to the candidate, but a meticulously-crafted resume, a robust network, and an air-tight interview strategy are all necessary to make it through successive stages in the job search process.

However, one area that many job seekers neglect is their social media presence and strategy. You might say: "I have already submitted a resume and cover letter, employers have all they need." But in a recent Ivy Exec survey, 91% of HR professionals indicated they use social media before making hiring decisions.

We surveyed HR professionals across multiple industries to find out what they look for on social media, and what matters most to them when screening candidates.

Below are our findings from the survey, along with actionable tips you can use to bolster your presence on the networks that are most important from an employer's perspective.

**91% of HR Professionals**

**Use Social Media Before Making Hiring Decisions**

# How Employers Use Social Media in the Hiring Process

It may come as no surprise to you, but the moment you nominate yourself for a job opportunity by sending in your resume, your social media presence can come under scrutiny. In our survey, 29% of respondents indicated that they will start observing your social media profiles as they review your application. A further 47% of employers will review you before conducting a preliminary interview. 23% will continue to or start reviewing your social media presence afterwards.

That being said, you should **perform a social media audit before sending out your resume, or reaching out to a recruiter or network connection.** (We'll show you how to improve your social media profiles soon)

It goes without saying that if you are about to embark on a job search, you want to make sure your social media accounts are in tip-top shape. But if you are even partially open to making a move, it behooves you to take action immediately, as recruiters search social media networks to find candidates like you for very attractive positions.



## What Employers are Looking For

There are plenty of clues that employers can get from your social media presence. Frequently, employers are looking for reasons to disqualify you - but social media can also work in your favor. In fact, nearly 1/3rd of HR Professionals said social media profiles have led them to hire one candidate over another. 74% of those surveyed also indicated that social media will play an increasingly important role during the hiring process in the future.

So if you really want to have everything working in your favor, you better believe that checking the right boxes on social media is part of your job search. Below are the top 3 things employers are looking for on social media.

## What Employers are Looking For

# #1 - Completing a Cross Check

The #1 reason employers are looking at your social media accounts is to cross check them with the story on your resume. In particular, companies are using LinkedIn (and just to eliminate any uncertainty, 98% of those surveyed use LinkedIn to review candidates) to complete a career story that a resume can't always provide - or to find points of disparity, an indicator that you may be trying to hide parts of your career to a certain employer.

While we do not advocate lying on your resume or social media accounts, we do want you to remember that if the two do not tell the same story, it creates a red flag. Be sure that your job titles and dates of employment match your resume and LinkedIn profile. If you are a seasoned executive who chooses to hide their graduation date on their resume, do the same elsewhere. The last thing you want to do is have the employer wondering: "why did they choose to misrepresent this information on their resume?"

The good news is that since almost everyone is checking your LinkedIn profile - you have a great opportunity to deliver more information and personality than your resume and cover letter alone can convey. How do we do that? You'll find out in the section on LinkedIn.

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### Should Your Resume Match Your LinkedIn Profile?

We are often asked: "should my resume and LinkedIn profile be the same?" The answer is yes and no. Use your LinkedIn profile to create a narrative, rather than a list of bullet points stating that you "Achieved targets on time and under budget." When you send out your resume, employers already have access to this information. Instead, use a professional yet conversational tone that builds on your story. You can talk about what you enjoy doing most at work, what makes you unique, and even talk about other experiences that might not make it on to your resume, such as volunteer work that is important to you. Your resume has limited real estate, so use your LinkedIn profile to complete the narrative.



## What Employers are Looking For #2 - Identifying Your Online Brand: Professional VS. Relaxed

Social media is a great way to express who you are as a person, and you can be sure that employers will be comparing the 'you' who shows up to the interview with the 'you' they found online. That being said, many respondents in our survey said they realize social media (in particular Facebook, or Twitter), can be part of one's personal life. "People are entitled to a business profile and personal (profile)" said one respondent. Another respondent added "LinkedIn is a professional site and there should be no perception of privacy," whereas "Facebook is a social site..."

So can social media users rest assured that whatever they post on 'personal' networks bares no impact on hiring decisions? Of course not. When asked if an inappropriate post or photo on social media would be considered a deal breaker, 23% of respondents said they would stop considering the candidate, and 62% said it would be a concern they would address in the interview.

Given this information, feel comfortable knowing that Facebook, Twitter, and other more personal networks are a fine place to loosen up and be social (without going overboard). But for LinkedIn, accept the fact that you will need to keep it professional.

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### What Doesn't Fly on Social?

We are all aware that sharing illegal, offensive, or embarrassing content on social media is not going to look good to prospective employers. But what else should you be aware of? Many survey respondents indicated that the way in which candidates speak about current or former employers on social media can impact hiring decisions.



If you think back to common interview questions you've received, there are likely a few that relate to your boss or employer: "Why do you want to leave your company? What is your relation with your boss? What would your boss say about you if I asked them?" These questions serve to gauge how you work with your team and if you are able to keep positive working relations. So if you end every day by heading on to social and blasting your boss' incompetence, lack of leadership skills, etc, you can bet that prospective employers will look at you with a raised eyebrow.

Simply put, bosses don't want to be lambasted on social media - so why hire someone likely to do just that?

Additionally, be careful about how you speak of the company you are interviewing with.

A recent case involved an engineer who posted on Quora that he couldn't make up his mind about which offer to accept: one from Uber or one from Zenefits. "My biggest problem with Zenefits is that it isn't a buzzword like Uber...I think that this isn't as exciting a brand name to have on your resume..." said the engineer. Well, Zenefits CEO Parker Conrad had no problem making the decision for the engineer; the offer was revoked. If you do have tough, or sensitive questions about your job search, interview process, or negotiating offers, consider a less-public sounding board than social media. Ivy Exec's members, for example, [confide in one of our 600+ Mentors](#) to help them evaluate career options.

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## What Employers are Looking For

### #3 - What Kind of Person Are You: Finding the Fit

When it comes to making hires, a candidate who has stellar achievements and checks all the boxes will usually be a poor hire if they don't fit the company culture. Social media allows companies to screen for cultural fit even before calling candidates for a phone or in-person interview. Recall from the previous section - a person who creates a negative attitude on social media is likely to bring that attitude into the workplace. But it's not just about attitude.

Social media can help show your personality, interests, affiliations - and ultimately - cultural fit. You can represent this in a few ways:

#### Twitter

- Topics You Tweet About
- Hashtags or Trending Topics You Engage With
- People or Companies You Retweet or Engage With

#### Facebook

- Topics You Post About
- Content You Share
- Pages You Like

#### LinkedIn

- Groups You Participate With
- Influencers You Follow
- Volunteering Experiences (on Your Profile)
- Causes or Organizations You Care About (on Your Profile)
- Projects You Have Participated In (on Your Profile)
- Interests (on Your Profile)



How you interact on social media dictates how you will fit into the culture. For example, if you are interested in working with an Athletics Wear company, you might: 1) Post pictures of a recent marathon you participated in on Facebook, 2) Retweet your favorite athlete's Tweet about a charity on Twitter, 3) Publish an article, or create a status update on LinkedIn describing your recent experience volunteering for Relay for Life.

These types of actions on social media show not only how much you care about a particular industry, but may also create common grounds regarding shared favorite athletes, or groups you participate in. And why do we keep bringing up volunteer experience? In addition to making a difference in the world - hiring managers love to see this.

You're not going to be able to match every interest with every person viewing your profiles. But you just might find common talking points that strike up a conversation.



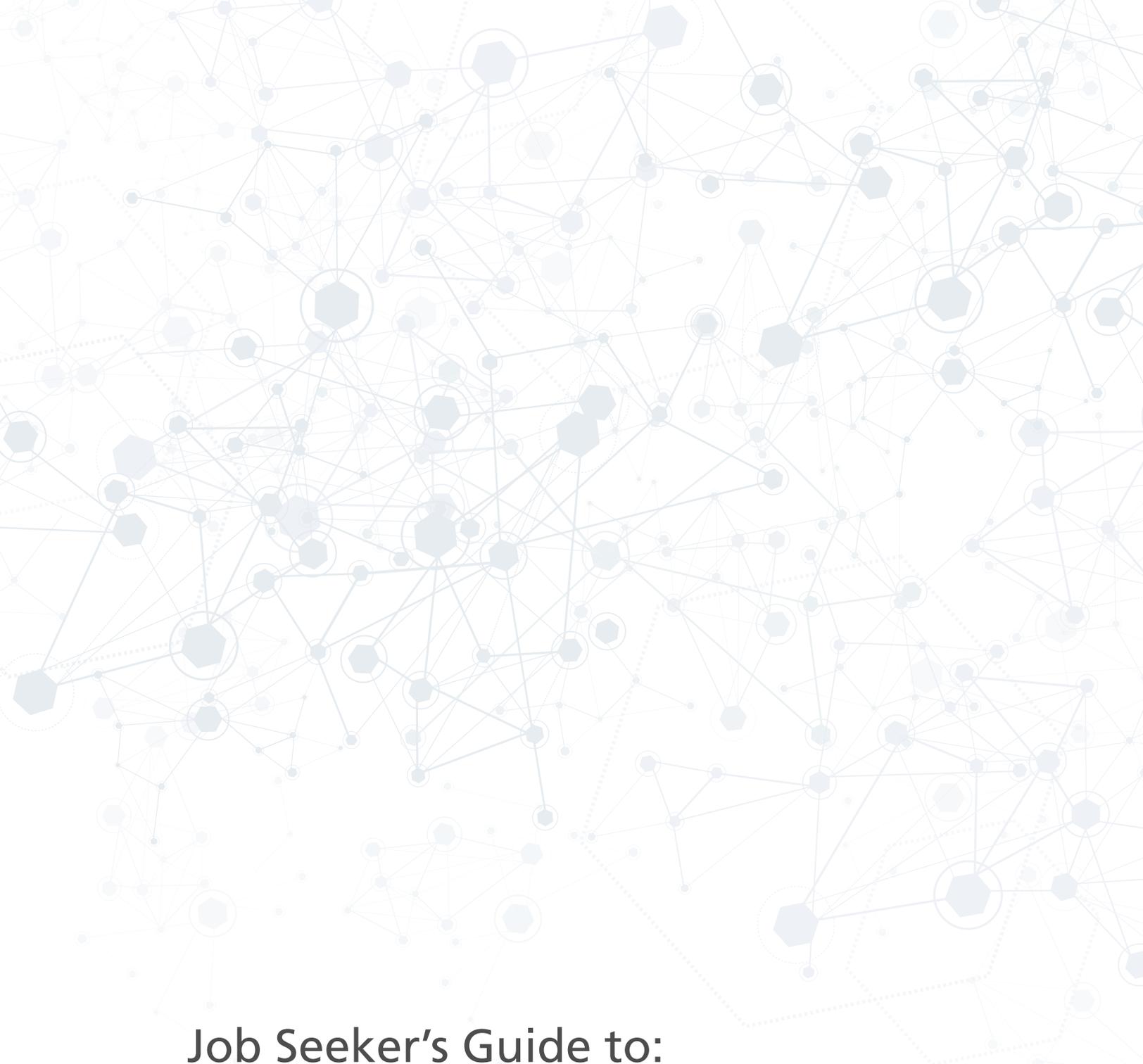
## What Employers are Looking For #4 - Honorable Mentions

After the top 3 most valuable applications for social media in the hiring process, overall influence on social media (followers, connections, authority) edged out publications on social media in importance.

Employers always want to hire thought leaders with large followings - people who can spread the message and voice of the company. But ultimately, the amount of connections you have won't exactly harm your chances of being considered or landing a job.

Some respondents also indicated that some level of activity is nice to see - as opposed to completely dormant social media profiles.





# Job Seeker's Guide to: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

Here, we will give you network-by-network guides to the 3 most-used social media sites for making hiring decisions.

# Your Twitter Profile

**Ivy Exec**  
@IvyExec

Ivy Exec is the premier source for career information and job opportunities for high caliber professionals.

New York, NY  
[ivyexec.com](http://ivyexec.com)  
Joined April 2009

2,958 Photos and videos

**Tweets**   Tweets & replies   Media

**Ivy Exec** When employers view your Twitter account, they really just want to see how professional you are (or aren't), and what topics you tweet about - be they professional or personal interests.

They're looking for personality, and are not judging you by the amount of followers you have. That being said, if you do have quite a large following, it's a good indicator that you might be a thought leader within your industry.

If you are particularly proud of your social media account or following, you might want to include links to the accounts on your resume.

Having trouble getting started on Twitter?  
Take these simple actions each day:

- 2 - Retweet 2 people
- 2 - Tweet a link to 2 articles. Provide your own take on it if you want!
- 1 - Reply to someone else's Tweet

Keep the Tweets in line with your brand / industry / interests etc.  
The point of this exercise is to grow your social media presence, not just tweet cat pictures.

# Your Facebook Profile

**Intro**

Lives in New York, New York

Married to

From

Followed by 55 people

**Photos**

When it comes to photos, take caution.

Don't post anything embarrassing, inappropriate, or illegal.

If your photos are used by employers for anything else, it's to cue them in on what it's like being around you on a day-to-day basis.

**The Skinny on Facebook**  
Posted on May 4th, 2016

The good news about Facebook, is that employers are basically just checking to make sure you are a somewhat sane person.

According to our survey, the primary reasons for viewing a Facebook profile are to examine your level of professionalism, learn about the topics you discuss, and also learn about your personality.

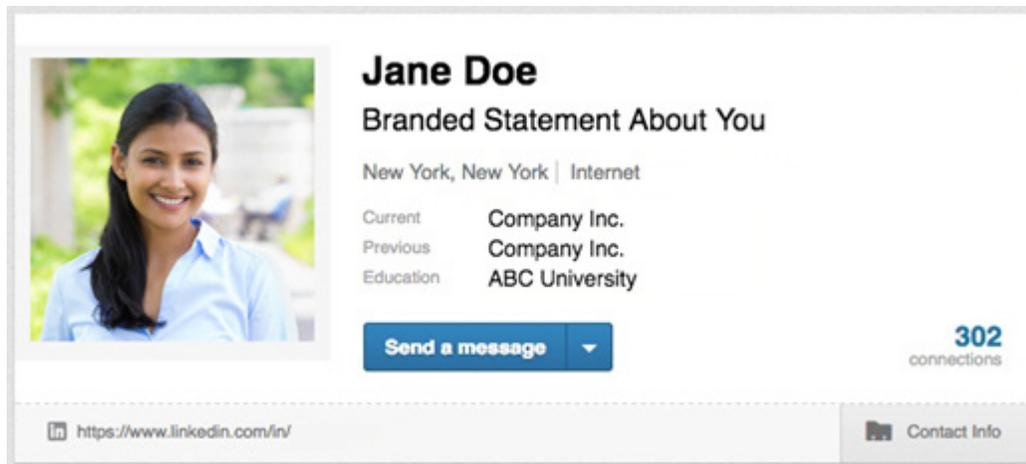
They want to see someone they can get along with, and maybe even have shared interests with.

They might not be making any judgements about your career, because generally speaking, people don't talk about their career on Facebook - unless they use it to speak ill of their company (not good to see - employers will be quick to call you out for doing that).

So just be yourself!

# Your LinkedIn Profile

More than any other social media account, employers are looking at your LinkedIn profile for obvious reasons. We've broken down some of the most important sections of your profile here.



The top of your profile is the first thing that readers will see - so pay special attention.

Your profile photo should be professional, and should frame your face and upper body.

Below your name, you have an opportunity to provide a branded statement about you. Instead of just stating your job title, use this space to give a catchy and unique descriptor of who you are - think super condensed elevator pitch. This section, in addition to your summary and experience section, is searchable on LinkedIn. This means people on LinkedIn will see this information when searching for professionals with particular skills or experiences.

Double check that your contact info (bottom right corner) is updated, and also create a public profile URL that includes your name if possible.

## Posts

Published by Jane

302  
followers



Your Article



Your Article

## Background



### Summary

Your LinkedIn Summary is your big opportunity to show some personality.

Make sure it is easy to read, so be liberal with your use of space, and start on fresh lines.

Remember, you have 2,000 characters to occupy this space with, so don't feel the need to leave off any important details or facts.

List some of your key accomplishments, talk about what makes you unique.

Keep in mind that recruiters use LinkedIn to search profiles for certain keywords, much like applicant tracking systems will screen for specific skills or proficiencies. Your summary is just one such place they might find them.

Additionally, you may consider including some of your contact information.

**98% of Surveyed  
HR Professionals**  
use LinkedIn to review candidates



## Experience

### Your Current Position

#### Current Employer or Company

Years at Position

The experience section is one of the places you can be sure that hiring managers and recruiters are going to look. Their goal is to check your resume against your listed experience.

Make sure that your list of experiences matches that which is listed on your resume including titles held, and the date ranges in those positions. Some people have stretched the years they held managerial roles on their resume to meet a job description's requirements - yet their LinkedIn profile said otherwise! We don't recommend this practice - but be sure that everything lines up.

Should this section be a copy / paste of your resume? Not exactly.

Add more color, and tell a story rather than a list of bullet points. This story can touch on some of the achievements and bullet points in your resume.

Consider adding a link to your online portfolio if you have one, or additional publications.



### Your Previous Company / Employer

#### Previous Employer or Company

Years at Position

Your resume might have condensed your earlier experiences.

Remember that on your resume, you want to highlight your accomplishments for the most recent 10 years. If you have more, you can fit in some of the relevant background information on your LinkedIn profile.

In addition to these main sections, employers are also looking at your **skills and endorsements**.

This isn't exactly a section you have control over - but consider politely asking your connections to provide them, and return the favor.

# Final Thoughts

Having a stellar social media presence has become a must for modern job seekers.

When a resume and cover letter are not enough, employers turn to social media to learn more.

Don't forget that 91% of employers are using social media to review candidates on some level.

So if you are planning a job search, update your profiles, show personality, link to your interests, portfolio, and provide any relevant information that will look good to employers. But above all else, **be authentic!**



## About Ivy Exec

IvyExec.com, an Inc 500 company, provides unparalleled career building and job seeking resources - from a 1-on-1 mentorship program with industry veterans and consultative advisory services, to a curated job board and thought provoking original content.

As a technology enabled recruitment firm, Ivy Exec offers companies flexible customized search solutions and helps companies tap top talent by mining its proprietary member database. Ivy Exec clients also have unique opportunities to publicize their employment brands to a highly engaged audience, solidifying their market reputations as premier employers.