ATTENTION JOB SEEKERS: Your Search is at Stake!

9 Steps to Becoming an Expert Marketer & Getting Hired in Today’s Digital World

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> Please feel free to post this on your blog or e-mail it to whomever you believe would benefit from reading it. Thank you.
**STEP 1: ANALYZE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE**

Let’s start off with some statistics. According to a study commissioned by Microsoft:

- 79% of employers now conduct an online search of applicants
- 70% say they have turned down applicants by what they found online
- Only 7% of job applicants were concerned about their online reputations

Clearly, there is a disconnect between job seekers (you) and employers. We’re going to fix that, **now**.

**Search for Yourself**

That’s right: Go to Google, Yahoo, and Bing, and type in your name. (If you have a common name, type in another detail about yourself, such as the university you attended, your most recent employer, or your field/industry.) What do you find?

Pay close attention to the results:

- What comes up in the first 2-3 pages?
- Is there anything unprofessional (YouTube videos, Facebook photos, etc.) that you can remove?
• Look at the results that come up for others with your same name. Are these things that could affect you in a negative way, even though you’re not that person?

Have a friend or family member take a second look at search results for your name. They may see something you don’t that could affect your chances of getting a job.

Now that you’ve taken the first step in discovering what’s out there about you, set up alerts (Google, Yahoo, Bing) for your name to be e-mailed to you whenever new content is added. This allows you to catch results as they come in and avoid any future problems.

**Recommended Resource:** Vizibility is like a “Google Me” button for career professionals.

Through a simple wizard, the Vizibility service enables people to quickly create the optimal Google search for themselves based on their name, employment history, and relevant keywords. It also allows for exclusion of irrelevant keywords and inaccurate search results. This PreSearch can be shared easily through a short, personalized SearchMe link or SearchMe button.
Comb Through Your Social Networking Profiles

We’re going to talk about networking sites in greater detail later, but for now, delete anything that may be considered inappropriate to an employer, such as college party pictures, offensive language or remarks, etc.

Note: Just because your profile is set to private, doesn’t mean they won’t see it (especially if a mutual friend works for their company)!

**Recommended Resource:** Almost everything you do on the Internet can be traced back to you and nearly everyone has left some online footprint(s). These online footprints can include references to you on corporate websites, blog posts, press releases, and social or business network profiles. Collectively, these footprints make up your online brand. Employers, colleagues, friends or just acquaintances are increasingly using ever more sophisticated Internet search engines to research your online brand to gain additional insight about you. Luckily, MyWebCareer created a service that enables you to uncover and evaluate your online footprint.
STEP 2: GET YOUR MARKETING DOCUMENTS IN SHAPE

Marketing documents? What marketing documents? you’re probably wondering. Remember, as a job seeker, you must become a marketer in order to succeed in today’s competitive market. So, everything you could potentially hand to an employer is now a marketing document.

Your Cover Letter

The cover letter is typically the first thing a hiring manager will read. If your cover letter doesn’t meet the manager’s expectations, s/he likely won’t move on to your résumé.

A cover letter is your chance to tell a little story about yourself. It’s more personable than your résumé. Use this opportunity to convey your passion and interest for the job and to concisely state why you are a good match.

Let’s start with some overall cover letter writing tips:

- **Font style:** Use Arial or another sans-serif font. Serif fonts (like Times New Roman) have extra hooks at the end of letters, making them harder to read. And you definitely want the hiring manager to be a captive audience!
• **Font size:** The size can be anything between 10pt and 12pt, depending on the font you choose. Make sure the letters aren’t super huge or extremely tiny. Again, you’re going for readability!

• **Letterhead:** Make sure your cover letter looks like a letter. What do I mean by this? You should develop a “letterhead” at the top that includes all of your contact information, followed by the current date and the organization’s name and address.

If possible, address your letter to an actual person. Search the organization’s website, do a Google search, sweet-talk the receptionist, etc. If the position ad says not to call, that simply means the *hiring manager* does not wish to receive calls. So, when you reach the receptionist, do not ask for the individual – just his or her name and title. If you absolutely cannot track down the hiring manager’s name, personalize it as best you can: Dear [insert department name] Department Hiring Manager.

One final general rule to remember: Your cover letter is about what *you* can do for the *company* and why you make a good fit for both the position and the organization. It is neither about your life story nor your needs, and it will change every time you apply – customized to the needs of that particular employer.

Let's walk through paragraph-by-paragraph. While each one will be short, your first paragraph will likely be the shortest. Whereas many cover letters begin by stating
the position for which the candidate is applying, we strongly recommend using the following outline as a guide:

- **Sentence one:** [Succinctly explain why you admire the organization and are choosing to apply. If someone within the organization referred you to the position, you can extend this into two sentences by mentioning it here.]
- **Sentence two:** As such, please consider me for the [position title] position at [company name] advertised on [where you saw the job ad].
- **Sentence three:** My [list characteristic/skill], [list characteristic/skill], [list characteristic/skill] and [B.A./B.S.] in [major] from [school] make me an ideal candidate.

Paragraphs two and three both will be accomplishment stories. In addition to describing the accomplishment in thorough but concise detail, be sure you connect its importance to the position for, or organization at, which you are applying.

**For example:** My community newspaper, The Star, awards $400 scholarships in several different categories to graduating seniors each year. Knowing this, and as a senior staff member of my high school paper, *The Knight Times*, I slaved over a feature article about a local basketball prodigy for several months – writing, editing, and re-writing until it was perfect. So, winning the Feature Article of the Year scholarship not only brought me personal satisfaction, but also confirmed my strong writing skills and desire to pursue a career in journalism. In this respect, I know the
Chicago Tribune’s feature desk would benefit greatly from adding an award-winning writer to its summer intern team.

In your fourth (and final) paragraph, indicate to the hiring manager that you’ve included all the information requested in the position advertisement – such as your résumé and writing samples – and your strong interest in and availability for further discussing your fit for this position in the near future.

If you’re applying to an organization not located near your “local” or “permanent” addresses, be sure to indicate that, while you reside in another area, you are extremely interested in relocating for the summer and will do so at your expense. Do you have a relative or friend that lives there already? Even better – mention local connections.

Conclude with a “call to action”: If I don’t hear from you beforehand, I will follow-up in one week.

Finally, thank the reader for his or her time and consideration in reviewing your application materials. Be certain you haven’t left out anything from the position listing, and don’t forget to sign the letter!
Your Résumé

The résumé is an important part of your job search strategy. Usually, it’s the driving force in landing you an interview with a hiring manager.

Too many people make the mistake of including anything and everything on their résumé – but that won’t work. You need to show the employer why you are a great fit for a certain type of job and what you have achieved with past companies that you could help their company achieve, as well.

First, use the same font, point size and “letterhead” as your cover letter. You want both documents to look uniform – as though they came from the same person. (Or better yet, the same set of marketing documents!)

Do not include an objective statement. At this point in your career, they are either too broad or too narrow. Plus, they are about you whereas your application materials should be about the company.

Instead, use a “Professional Profile.” Either bullets or paragraph-style are acceptable. Don’t restate word-for-word anything that can be found elsewhere on your résumé or in your cover letter, and instead, use this opportunity to showcase the value you’ll bring to the position and organization.
If you are still in school or graduated within the last year, immediately following your Professional Profile should be your “Education” section. (If you graduated more than a year ago, it should be the last section on your résumé.) List your college or university’s name, location, anticipated graduation date, degree (i.e., B.A., B.S., etc.), major, minor (if applicable to the position for which you are applying) and GPA (if 3.0 or above).

Do *not* include information about your high school, period. Additionally, except for when you’re applying for your very first internship, you should leave coursework off altogether. Coursework is theory-based, and experience weighs more with hiring managers once you have it. However, please note that if you are in a highly technical field/industry, listing some coursework might put you at an advantage.

“Experience” should follow your Education section. Why “Experience” and not “Work Experience”? Many positions can be included on your résumé that would not be considered “work experience” but still count as “experience.” For example:

- Volunteer work, such as helping out at a local nonprofit
- Completing a class project
- Taking a leadership role in a campus organization
- Assisting a professor with research
- Starting your own business
In this section, do not include any experience not directly related to the position for which you are applying. (There will be a place for those extra positions you’ve held later.) List your position title first (bolded) and then the organization name (italicized). The actual position is more important than where you held it. Also, don’t forget to include the dates you held each position and where the organization was located. This section should be organized in reverse chronological order (most recent position first by the date you began the position, not when it ended).

Under each position, include up to three bullets. Begin each bullet with an action verb, such as “increased” or “enhanced.” If you still hold the position, your verbs should be in the present tense. If this is a past position, your verbs should be in past tense. As always, try to focus on accomplishments and not job duties.

Remember when I said there would be a section for all the other work experience you have? It should follow the Experience section and be called “Additional Experience.” Only list position titles, organization names, locations and dates you held these positions (following the same formatting rules as in the Experience section). No bullets are necessary for this section.

The final section found on your résumé will be “Skills & Accomplishments.” Here you can include any related awards you received, computer programs you know, language fluencies, etc.
Contrary to popular belief, just like the objective statement, do not include a list of your references or a "References available upon request" statement at the end. This is implied and therefore not necessary.

**Your Business Cards**

Business cards not only make you look like a professional, but also come in handy while networking.

Since you will be using your business card in your job search, yours will be different than a business card you would have at a company or organization. Your business card should contain the following elements:

- **Name.** Use your full name (no nicknames) and make sure the font looks professional.

- **Title or area of expertise.** This is especially important when the person wants to contact you for your expertise. They need to know what you do – for example, "Software Engineer." If you're searching for an internship, you may write something along the lines of "Natural Resources Student."

- **E-mail address.** As you've read before, this should be professional—some variation of your first name and last name. This is often the best way for a hiring manager to contact a candidate, so don't leave it off.
**Phone number(s).** Make sure to include a phone number you can always be reached at. If you're constantly switching apartments or live at home only part of the year, don't include that number. Also, make sure your voicemail or answering machine is professional!

**Website/blog.** Make sure to include your professional online portfolio and/or blog. (Details about creating these will come later!) If you want it to really stand out, you could put it on the back of the card by itself.

There are many resources online to order great business cards. VistaPrint offers 500 business cards for around $10 with tons of designs to choose from.

Here are some others to consider:

- [http://www.zazzle.com/businesscards](http://www.zazzle.com/businesscards)
- [http://www.iprint.com/](http://www.iprint.com/)
STEP 3: JOIN & ENGAGE IN PROFESSIONAL & SOCIAL NETWORKING COMMUNITIES

Networking has always been a key part of the job search process. It’s often not what you know but who you know (and who knows you) that lands you a job. Your network can be a valuable source in hearing about jobs that aren’t yet posted, making connections to hiring managers or employers of interest, or finding great people to contact for references.

Today, networking becomes even more instant with the Internet and the various resources available at your fingertips. You've probably engaged in one or more social networking sites already – Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter, just to name a few.

According to Willy Franzen, founder of One Day, One Job, and One Day, One Internship, using a social networking site is a six-step process:

1. Joining
2. Seeking out interesting people
3. Listening
4. Talking about yourself
5. Interacting
6. Taking relationships offline
First, in order to professionally network online, you need to decide which sites you want to engage in. If you mainly use Facebook for social purposes, you may not want to include it in your strategy. You may also want to check out smaller, niche networking sites that pertain more to your major/field/industry. Try to focus your efforts only on the few you have time to update and engage in. Others will notice if you’re a part of every different site but don’t spend any time actually using them.

For each different site, you need to make sure you are easily found and have filled out your information completely. This includes your biography, experience, website, contact information, and profile picture. If all of these parts of your profile are not filled out, it makes professional networking more difficult. For example, if you don’t include a profile picture on Twitter, many other users view your tweets as possible spam.

Once you’ve started adding the people you know in person – such as co-workers, friends, family and acquaintances – you can start expanding your network. Maybe one of your friends has someone in their network who works at a company you admire. Ask your friend to introduce you to this person. Or, connect with them yourself—follow them on Twitter and @reply them, send them a quick e-mail or LinkedIn invitation, etc. Just make sure that every outreach is personal—let them know your friend in common or why you are reaching out to them, specifically.

What you don’t want to do is “friend” or “follow” every single person you can. Networking is not about numbers – the key to networking is creating mutually
beneficial relationships with other people. By just adding lots of people, you are not creating a relationship.

An important part of networking sites is listening. If you aren’t quite comfortable with the site yet—just watch. It’s easiest to start using a site once you see how others use it. Sit back and see what others are talking about.

A great way to put yourself out there is to engage in conversations and forums. On Twitter, participate in chats (with #hashtags) or make a point to talk to new people each day. On LinkedIn, reply to questions on group forums or comment on your connections updates.

Even though you are networking online, the rules of networking face-to-face still apply. Don’t do anything you wouldn’t do in person. This includes approaching someone with the mentality of “help me find a job.” It’s unprofessional—instead let your network know what you’re looking for and what type of company you want to work for. It’s possible somebody has a connection that could be useful to you.

Be aware that companies are using these sites, too. This can be a great opportunity to connect directly with a company and stay updated on what they’re doing. But that also means that they can follow updates you post. Stay on-brand with all of the professional networking sites you use.
Twitter

Twitter has become a priceless tool for networking and aiding in your job search. Unlike other social networking sites, you can follow people you may not have a connection to in real life. It’s also great for connecting with people across the world and keeping up on news and practices.

Get started. Go to the Twitter homepage and click “Sign Up.” You’ll want to use your real name in order to be found by your contacts. You also want to use your real name so when you connect with others for professional purposes, they’ll know who you are.

Choose a username. In order to keep your personal brand consistent, you want your username to be the same (or very similar) to other sites you have. Most people use their first and last name. If this is not available, use a variation of your names or include your profession somewhere in your username (i.e., JaneDoePR).

Upload a picture. Many people don't trust accounts with no picture because they could be bots or spammers. Make sure you choose something professional, like a headshot or a logo for your company.

Find people to follow. Connect with those people in your network who are already on Twitter. But, also connect with those you don’t know in real life. There are many
experts and interesting folks you can follow. Try to connect with others in your field and those you wish to get to know.

There are many ways you can find new people to follow. Search for specific names through the “find people” bar who are experts or interesting thought leaders. Search for your industry keywords in the Twitter search bar. See who your followers or the people you follow are also following. Look at people’s “lists” (lists of users they have grouped together) for lists of people in your industry.

**Start tweeting.** You may want to observe the Twitter-sphere before you just jump in if you’re not sure what #hashtags are or how to @reply someone. It’s ok to just watch other’s tweets for a little while. Once you’re comfortable, start tweeting.

**Understand the lingo.** Once again, this becomes easier to understand once you’re engaged in Twitter – but here are the basics.

- **#topic** – Any word with the pound (#) sign before it becomes a hashtag. Hashtags are used similar to the way a chat room works. When you follow a specific hashtag, you can see what every user has said about this subject if they put the hashtag in their message. For example, some hashtags have specific times where experts answer questions, such as #internchat. It is also a great way to follow events and conferences.
• @username – When you type @ before someone’s username, you are replying to them. The message is still public, but the person will be able to see that you sent them a public tweet in their “mentions.”
• Direct Message (DM) – These are not public. This is sending a message privately to the other user. You can DM someone by writing D username [message] in the tweet bar.

For more about the lingo, check out this post.

**Develop a strategy.** Decide on what types of tweets you want to send out to your followers and how often you want to tweet. Do you want to spend 15 minutes a day tweeting? More than that? Decide on what types of tweets you want to send out daily. Here are some examples:

• Blog post you’ve written
• Inspiring quote
• News article
• Other blog posts related to your field
• Image or picture
• Comment or advice

You can also retweet other’s updates (known as RT) and send those to your followers if you find them interesting or have something to add to them.
Once you’ve become comfortable with using Twitter and its features, you may want to download a free Twitter app to organize your lists, hashtags, mentions, direct messages, and so on. This becomes especially valuable when you follow a lot of people. Although there are many available, here are a few:

- Tweetdeck
- Hootsuite
- Twhirl

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a great way to keep in contact with people in your network in a professional, simple social networking site. It is also an important resource for job seekers to connect with companies, recruiters and HR professionals.

1. Register on LinkedIn with your professional e-mail.
2. Fill in your profile completely – a relevant headline (i.e., “Student at WMU” or “Public Relations Professional”), previous jobs and experience, a picture, keywords, your website, Twitter profile, etc. LinkedIn provides a “profile completeness” box on the side of the page to help you.
3. Add people in your network. You can do this by allowing LinkedIn to check your contact book in your e-mail for who’s already on the site. You can also look at the “People You May Know” window or search manually for names.
4. Choose a public URL. In “Settings,” go to “Public Profile” and you can choose a public URL for your profile. Try to make this the same or similar as usernames on other sites such as Twitter or your website. You want your profile to be public in order for recruiters or HR managers to find you.

You don’t just need to fill in most of the profile and then dismiss LinkedIn as a resource. You have to show others why you’re a great candidate from the experience you’ve had. To be sure you’ve filled in your profile thoroughly, double-check the following parts:

**Headline.** This will automatically be the title from your latest or current job, unless you change it. Position yourself for the job you want to have, not the one you already have. For example, instead of “Marketing coordinator for Housing, Inc.,” you could write “Innovative marketing coordinator for up-and-coming companies.”

**Summary.** Include previous experience that would make you great for the job you want. Highlight your unique abilities, skills and qualifications that employers or recruiters would be interested in. You should include any awards or honors you’ve received. Also, define your career aspirations.
Experience. Make sure you fill in all previous experience you’ve had. You can easily fill this in by using your résumé and what you’ve written there.

Keywords. This is how people searching for employees will find your profile – so don’t leave any out! You can pull keywords from your previous job titles and achievements.

Recommendations. Request recommendations from previous managers, co-workers, professors or colleagues. Having recommendations can set you apart from others on LinkedIn with similar experience – so request them from various sources. A good way to receive recommendations is to fill in some for others, so recommend those co-workers or acquaintances, too!

To get the most out of LinkedIn, join groups and follow company pages. Many groups pertain to certain industries and interests. Search for ones you’d be interested in learning more about and sign up for e-mail reminders to keep up with group activity. Add to the conversation or answer others’ questions if you are an expert on the subject. Search for companies you want to work at to read their updates and connect with employees from that company.

LinkedIn has a newsfeed similar to Facebook, so the more you update your network, the more you show up on their main page. If you’re job seeking, write updates telling your job prospects or ask if they know anyone at a company you’ve applied at. It’s a great way to receive help during your search.
STEP 4: CREATE AN ONLINE PORTFOLIO

In today’s online world of personal brands, you need to stand out by having your own website to showcase your work. No matter what your field, a portfolio can help you to land a job if it’s done correctly.

Online portfolios are great for a variety of reasons:

- Easy accessibility
- Inexpensive
- Easy to share
- Allows for more creativity than traditional job search documents
- Boost your online identity

First, find out if your personal domain name is for sale (firstname.lastname.com). If it is, purchase it! If this is not available, think about adding your profession on the end or creating a memorable related name as your site name (such as InternQueen or JaneSmithPR).

Next, you need to purchase hosting. You can build and design your online portfolio using a free content management system, such as WordPress. (Bluehost.com specializes in hosting WordPress websites.) If you would prefer something else, here are some others to consider:
• Weebly
• Wix
• DoYouBuzz
• ZooLoo
• Webs
• Carbonmade
• Chi.mp
• Flavors.me
• Tumblr
• Posterous
• SnapPages

Personally, I strongly recommend WordPress.

Also, depending on your industry, you may want to check out niche portfolio sites that are more focused and connected to others in the field. (Example: DeviantArt is a large community for artists to display their work.)

You want your portfolio to be clean, easy to navigate and eye-catching. Focus on your audience (employers) and what they would expect to see. You want to organize your content in a meaningful way that works with your industry, so take some time to think about what you want to include.
Parts of Your Online Portfolio

**Welcome page.** On the homepage, include a welcome message to visitors – this can be a similar, more generic version of your cover letter. ([Here’s a great example.](#))

**About page.** Describe who you are, what you’re looking for and a little about yourself.

**Résumé.** Put your previous experience, volunteer positions, leadership roles, education and skills here. This is a great way to link to your previous employers to make your résumé interactive. Be careful not to include too much personal information, however, such as your phone numbers or home address. You should also make it easy to download in PDF format ([iPaper](#)) for those who want to save it.

**Previous work.** Only include your best work. There’s no need to include everything you’ve done, and, frankly, no employer will look at it anyway. You only have a few seconds to impress someone who lands on your page. If you have multiple concentrations (such as design, web, and writing) make a separate page or section for each. *Make sure you have permission to share your work samples!*

Think about including explanations of your work: Tell the employer why you created the piece you chose to include. What problem did it solve? Who was the client? What resulted from it?
Contact information. Link to your blog, Twitter, LinkedIn, and/or other professional pages. Include a "contact me" box or your e-mail address so people can get in touch with you.

After you’ve created your portfolio, include it in your e-mail signature, cover letter, and résumé.
STEP 5: START A BLOG

Blogging is a great activity to boost your job search and create professional content to increase your visibility. Not only are most employers impressed when you have a blog, but you become easier to find online and build up your professional network in the process.

To Get Started...

Choose a blogging software. Look for one that appeals to your design tastes and is simple enough for you to use. Just a few you can choose from include WordPress, Blogger, and LiveJournal. You will be able to choose the layout and look of your blog once you’ve signed up. Some of the sites offer free themes. Once you’ve become comfortable with blogging, you can determine if you’d like to pay for more features or buy a domain name for your blog (highly recommended).

Decide what you’re going to blog about. You should blog about your field or a specific area of expertise you have. The subject matter will determine how your blog is laid out and what the theme looks like. The more specific your topic, the more likely you are to have many readers. Choose wisely!
Test out your features. You may want to test out your blog to see if you like how the posts work, how it's laid out, etc. Do a few test posts before starting to write – you may want to choose a different provider if you don’t like the way it looks.

Create Your Blogging Plan

Set realistic goals. If you don’t have time to create new and interesting content every day, don’t aim for doing so. Create a plan that you can follow and stick to it.

Decide how often to create content. You might have a few different audiences, so you choose to write one post per week for each audience. Or maybe you can only write on the weekends. Either way, decide on what works best for you – after all, blogs are flexible.

Create a calendar to keep yourself organized. If you want to focus on one audience Mondays, and one Fridays, write that down. Then, come up with ideas of what you think you’ll write about for those days. You may end up getting new ideas along the way, but at least you have an idea of what you’re going to write from the get-go.

Think about how you’re going to publicize your blog. Are you going to tweet it out to your followers when you’ve written a new post? Create a Facebook fan page for it?
Enlist others. Start following other professional blogs in the same subject area as yours. When you’ve built relationships with other bloggers, offer to guest post on their blog or ask them to write up a guest post for yours. You can also enlist other professionals you know (such as friends or family) to write up content to get their name out there.

Once You’ve Done That...

Start writing. You need to provide useful and unique content for your readers. This means combining your expertise, opinions, intellect, and research skills to provide something different from others online.

Check out other people’s blogs to get ideas. Looking at others’ content and layout can provide you with ideas and insight into your own blog. It’s also a good idea to comment on other blog posts to introduce that person to your blog. This helps to build a community and gain readers for your content.
STEP 6: GET FOUND ON GOOGLE

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the practice of developing the visibility of a website in search engines.

When someone types a term into Google (or any search engine), the search term pulls up an index and finds the best matches in a matter of milliseconds. The Google index is comprised of over a trillion web pages found by Googlebots, “spiders” that crawl through cyberspace. As it crawls, a Googlebot learns about the specific page and brings information back to the Google index for ranking. Using SEO allows the Googlebot to bring the best information to the Google index, thus bringing your pages to the top of search results.

In other words, SEO can help you land the top spots when individuals (or potential employers) search for your name or specialty. Now that you have social networking profiles, a website, and a blog, you can use SEO to stand out when someone clicks “search.”

How to Start Using SEO

Get linked. A web page that has links on other web pages is far more attractive than one that has no links. To start, add links between your profiles, website, and blog. Then, ask friends and colleagues to link to your pages (sweeten the deal by offering
to link to their pages). You can also get linked by tagging your content on websites like Technorati or Blog Marks.

**Increase traffic.** It sounds like a Catch-22, but having a high traffic count tells Google that your profile/website/blog is important and top-result material. Google Analytics is a free tool that allows you to track number of visits, absolute unique visitors, average time spent on a page, and other statistics.

**Use keywords.** Keywords are miniature labels you can apply to your web page and one the first things a Googlebot takes in as it crawls through. Most blogging software helps you do this when publishing posts. Also, you can use keywords in your page’s title, throughout your page, and within a post’s URL. Word Stream, Word Tracker, and Keyword Discovery are keyword tools that allow you to search for the keywords that are the most effective.

**Tag yourself.** For the more tech-savvy, meta tags can allow for even more control over what search engines pull from a web page. Meta tags, for the most part, aren’t visible by the everyday visitor and can be found in the HTML of a web page. The most important meta tags to know are title tags, description tags, image tags, and keyword tags.

- **Title tags** are the words that appear along the top bar of an Internet browser.
- A **description tag** is the paragraph found underneath the title of each search result pulled by Google.
• An **image tag** allows Google to understand what your pictures look like through a description or caption you provide.
• **Keyword tags**, just like the keywords described earlier, are labels you can add to your web page. Keywords are most effective when they are relevant to the page and selected with your audience in mind.

For more information about using meta tags, check out [this article](https://www.searchenginewatch.com) from *Search Engine Watch*.

**Keep content relevant.** Google tries to give its users results that consist of relevant content throughout. When adding to your blog or Twitter page, ask yourself, “Does this align with my original goal?” If not, then that adorable picture of a skydiving turtle may not be appropriate for your blog about international finance.

**Be active.** Google wants to provide its users with pages that are updated and see a lot of activity. Be consistent on your profiles, website, and blog by adding new content and participating in the community on a regular basis.
An expert is defined as a person who has special skill or knowledge in some particular field. What better way to stand out during the job search than by standing out as an expert, especially online?

Nowadays, an online presence is just not enough. You must stand out professionally by showing some expertise in your field/industry. Managing Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and your personal blog are all great ways to be present in the online world and to be found. But you also have to be present in a positive and useful manner.

As Seth Godin has advised us, long gone are the days of thinking “if you build it, they will come.” So you have to go the extra mile to stand out and to gain credibility. A hiring manager needs to look at all of your online tools and gain a sense of who you are, what you are interested in, and most importantly, what you are capable of.

By becoming an expert online and showcasing this expertise through your social media platforms, you will gain the best exposure. But before you go edit anything, what’s your niche? You need consistency in your message—and to figure out what resonates with the companies and people you follow.
Now Google yourself, and analyze the data. How is your online presence looking? Don’t stress, we can not only make you look like an expert, but also actually become one.

Let’s tackle each social media outlet separately to learn how to best present you:

**Facebook**

You likely already have a Facebook account for personal use. Although there are people who use their personal account for networking and sharing expertise in their field, I highly recommend creating a Facebook page or group instead. (Personal accounts are limited in terms of “friends” you can attain, anyhow—you’re only allowed to connect with 5,000 people. A Facebook page can have millions of “fans” or people who have “liked” it.)

Whether you choose to create a page or group is up to you. Some professionals choose to create a page for themselves in order to connect with fans and post interesting and relevant links, photos, and videos. (A great example of this is Mari Smith, a Facebook marketing expert and author.) Others create a group based around their company, expertise, or blog.

Either way, creating a group or page makes you a leader in your field. You can drive conversation, facilitate discussions, and help create relationships—which sets you apart from the many others in your field or industry.
If you’re not quite comfortable starting a page or a group just yet, at least “like” pages and join groups you’re interested in. Merely participating in these communities increases your visibility online and aids you in building your professional network.

**Twitter**

Twitter is a powerful tool you can use to set yourself apart as an expert and create mutually beneficial relationships with thought leaders and professionals alike. Assuming you already have an account and have filled out your profile completely, it’s time to start looking like a leader in your field.

To brand yourself as an expert on Twitter, it’s important to do the following:

**Share relevant information.** All of your tweets should be on-brand—period. Although, this is not to say you cannot tweet about *anything* personal. However, if you’re constantly sharing information about things unrelated to your field, people will have a difficult time seeing the benefit of following you. What types of things should you tweet?

- Current events/news related to your field
- Recent blog posts by industry thought leaders
Photos or videos of interest to your followers
Retweeting interesting information from people you follow
Websites and resources of value

Get involved in Twitter chats. With more than 268 Twitter chats registered on the Twitter chat schedule, there’s bound to be at least one—if not several—that can help you grow your network and build your brand. Twitter chats allow you to develop deeper connections with industry thought leaders and potential employers by facilitating discussions among users.

Reach out to thought leaders you follow. Twitter’s platform is unique—it allows its users to follow whomever they wish (as long as the account is public) and build relationships with people who they may otherwise never get to meet. In order to create mutually beneficial relationships with industry thought leaders, be genuine and giving. Retweet their content, talk with them, and share your expertise whenever possible. Once you’ve built a relationship, reach out to them for advice, guidance, and opportunities to grow as an expert in your field.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a prime opportunity to showcase your expertise because its focus is professional networking. Of course, it’s important to keep your account up-to-date
and update your status regularly, but you should also focus on the opportunities LinkedIn Groups and LinkedIn Answers provide.

Joining groups on LinkedIn gives you additional chances to network with other professionals, thought leaders, and peers in your field. You can start, participate in, and follow discussions, making you visible to other members in the group. These groups also display on your profile, helping you look like an active and well-rounded individual.

LinkedIn Answers is a great way to ask questions and receive answers from industry leaders. Ask questions to create discussions—or answer questions to share your expertise.

Commenting on Blogs

Following industry and niche blogs is a great way to keep up with recent news and trends. You might already share with your network blog posts that interest you, but do you regularly comment on them, too?

Whether you agree or disagree with the blogger’s point of view, you can share your expertise by adding to the conversation in the comments section of a blog post. This also increases your visibility across the web—and also to the blogger and their audience.
Guest Blogging

With so many great industry blogs available online today, the opportunity to write a guest post is an amazing way to brand yourself as an expert. Although it might be nerve wracking to write something for an industry leader’s blog, many of these people are often looking for new, relevant content to share with their readers.

You know how you’ve been creating relationships through Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook already? Take those relationships a step further by offering your expertise in a blog post. Before you do so, however, follow the tips below:

- Create a relationship with the blogger (follow them on Twitter, comment on their blog posts, share content with them, join their Facebook group or page, etc.)
- Read their guest posting guidelines (if applicable) and carefully analyze what their niche is
- Spend time reading their posts, paying attention to their style of writing, length of posts, and successful topics

Once you’ve done your research, reach out to the blogger and ask if you could write a post for their blog. While not every blogger is open to guest posts (especially if there is not a strong relationship built beforehand), it’s always worth offering your
expertise—not only to share it with their audience, but also to boost your own brand online.
STEP 8: CONVERT “PROSPECTS” INTO “LEADS”

In addition to the tactics already discussed in this e-book, providing a “call to action” is essential in order to turn prospects (potential employers with whom you’ve had no direct contact) into leads (scheduled interviews).

Traditionally, calls to action include some sort of offer and verbiage that entices you to inquire about the offer.

**Notepod**

**Notepod 3-pack**

*App idea? There’s a page for that.*

**BUY NOW for $17.95 USD**

*Same price, shipped anywhere in the world.*

**What’s a Notepod 3-Pack?**
Three 60 x 110mm, 100pp Notepods printed on both sides. 80gsm laser

**Payment and shipping**
Payment is via Paypal. Your 3-pack costs $17.95 USD, shipped wherever
With so many people seeking jobs, it's important that you catch your future employer's eye—fast! Include a call to action at the end of every blog post. Develop an e-newsletter just for potential employers, and embed a subscription form on your website. Create a free e-book—like this one—and make it freely available on sites like SlideShare (be sure to include your contact information). The possibilities are endless!

Often times, you’ll read job ads that seek a creative or an out-of-the-box thinker. What better way to catch the hiring manager’s eye than by using a creative or an out-of-the-box idea?

During the summer of 2010, a newly unemployed paralegal in Atlanta, GA gained local attention by renting a digital billboard and telling potential employers why they should hire her. With her billboards visible in Atlanta’s busiest streets and highways, the stunt had an estimated cost of over $8,000. Was it creative? Absolutely! The stunt received media attention from Metro Atlanta’s top newspapers and news channels.

However, creativity doesn’t necessarily have to be that costly—nor that extreme. Here are a few ideas that will get you in the proper creative mindset to turn that “prospect” into a “lead”:
Ever notice the “#” at the end of a tweet on Twitter? (See the earlier section about hashtags.) Well, Julia Prior gave employers a reason to hire her by starting her very own Twitter campaign with a simple #hirejulia at the end of her tweets. The campaign took little effort, and is definitely one of the most creative ideas out there. Check out her story [here](#).

**Hello There** is a service that provides job seekers with an innovative way to present themselves to future employers. The site allows users to easily upload a video, work samples, links to social networks, and copies of their résumé and cover letter. Applying to five different jobs? Not a problem! Hello There users are able to tailor each page to target a specific company.

Who says you have to wait until a job opens up to show off your résumé? Certainly, **Blackbird Tees** did not. Blackbird Tees offers consumers a unique approach in making their résumés visible by making a résumé tee. It’s actually quite simple! Users upload their résumé online and go through the various options. The end result is a shirt with either, “My résumé is on the back of my shirt” or “I heart job offers” on the front and the résumé posted on the back.

Creativity and innovation grab the future employer’s attention. These examples are extremely creative, yet nearly effortless at the same time. Creativity will turn that “prospect” into a “lead” in no time.
STEP 9: CONVERT “LEADS” INTO “CUSTOMERS”

So you have made the connection. Both parties agree to meet, and an interview is scheduled. Now what?

Think back to your first few classes of marketing. (Didn’t have any marketing classes? Don’t worry! I’m going to tell you everything you need to know.) You were taught the Exchange Process. In the Exchange Process, both parties must have something to exchange. The company you are interviewing with has the upper hand in this. They have money and benefits to give you. What you are giving them in return? When you research the company and position, keep that question in mind.

Phone Interviews

Don’t feel pressured to interview at that very moment. Often times, hiring managers will call and ask if you have a few minutes to “chat” about your application. However, this is really your first interview with the organization – and first impressions matter. So, unless you are completely prepared to answer any question the individual might ask, politely say you are interested but would like to schedule the call for later that day or even the following day.

Do your homework. Don’t feel that just because you are not staring your interviewer in the eyes that you should be less prepared than for a formal, in-person
interview. Thoroughly research the organization, position and interviewer, if possible.

**Sound professional.** Because the interviewer’s only cue is audio, focus on sounding professional, and give your answers slowly and clearly. Don’t use any slang or anything that might be interpreted as slang. Also, be sure not to sound too young (i.e., don’t giggle).

**Be prepared for tough questions.** Phone interviews are the first method of screening (or weeding out) individuals for positions, unless you count the Google search of your name the organization has already conducted. Although you might be asked these same questions again later during the in-person interview, a few tough questions will likely pop up during this stage of the hiring process.

**Have water handy.** Before your interview, drink some tea or suck on a throat lozenge to make sure your voice isn’t scratchy or hoarse. Just to be sure, have a glass of water available during the interview in case your mouth goes dry.

**Have your résumé and portfolio in front of you.** You have them with you during in-person interviews, why wouldn’t you during a phone interview? Assume the hiring manager interviewing you has a copy of everything you sent with your job application, as well as any online samples to which you directed him or her. Be sure you have the same items in front of you for easy reference.
If possible, use a landline phone. I know I’m one to break this rule because I only have a cell phone, but if possible, find a landline on which to conduct the interview. This way, your call won’t be dropped, and both parties will be able to understand each other clearly.

Make sure you’re in a quiet environment. If possible, take the call in your room with the door closed to avoid any background noise. Again, you want to make sure the hiring manager hears you clearly and is not distracted by what is going on in the background. (You don’t want to be distracted either!)

Ask good questions. Just because this is a “phone screen” doesn’t mean you shouldn’t ask good questions. Make a list before the interview of what you intend to ask, again to keep you on track. Be sure the questions are appropriate to the individual with whom you’re speaking. (You would likely ask the director of human resources different questions than your potential supervisor.) Among your questions should be: What is the next step in the hiring process, and when and how should I follow-up?

Send a thank you note. Always—I repeat, always—send a thank you note at every stage of the hiring process, to every individual with whom you speak or meet. As usual, send an e-mail thank you within 24 hours and for that added touch, also send a shorter, handwritten thank you note via snail mail.
In-Person Interviews

While on the job (or internship) hunt, potential employers will throw you some real curve balls in the interview room—and your answers to these questions will determine whether or not you move to the next stage of the hiring process.

So, what are some of the toughest questions you might face, and what are the best answers?

**Why should we hire you?** Basically, what can you provide the organization that others can’t? You must go into the interview knowing how your skills, knowledge and personality relate to the position— and convey this to the potential employer.

**Tell me about yourself.** This is your *elevator pitch*! Don’t talk about your personal life unless directly asked.

**What is your biggest weakness?** Don’t provide strengths disguised as weaknesses. Be honest about areas in which you could improve, but be sure to identify qualities that would not eliminate you from consideration for the position.

**Why do you want to work for our organization?** For this question, you need to know yourself, the organization and the particular interviewer extremely well. The only real way to be successful here is to do your homework before walking into the interview.
Where do you see yourself in five years? While we understand five years is a long time for students and recent graduates, this is an important question that shouldn’t be nonchalantly answered. Because this question is frequently asked, think about it before your interview. Where do you see yourself in five years? Know the typical path someone in your field takes and provide an answer along similar lines.

Click here to read other tough interview questions and how to tackle them!

So, your potential employer has just finished grilling you with tough questions and turns the conversation over to you. “Is there anything you would like to ask?” If your answer is anything but “yes,” you can kiss the offer call good-bye.

You can certainly add a question to your mental list if something particular comes to mind during the conversation, but always walk into an interview knowing what you will ask each individual with whom you meet. Here are some questions to get you started.

Who was formerly in this position, and why did he or she leave? It is essential you understand why the position is open. Was the previous person fired? Is the position a revolving door? Perhaps it’s a new position, and the organization does not have a precedent for what equates to success or failure. Depending on the answer, you might not want to work for them.
What brought you to [insert organization], and what keeps you here? This question is always revealing. It provides insight about the organization’s culture (and gives the interviewer a chance to talk about his or her personal experience with the organization). Culture is just as important, if not more so, than the actual job description.

What support systems are in place for entry-level professionals (or interns)? Again, a revealing question. You can always tell how much an organization values its junior staff members by the level of support it provides them. Do they offer a mentoring program? Are there regular professional development seminars?

What is your management style? If you are interviewing with someone who would be your direct supervisor, always ask this question. This is another make-or-break question in terms of your liking the organization as a potential place of employment. If you thrive by being hounded every five minutes about a task, then a micro-manager is best for you. However, if you would find this extremely annoying and stressful, as I do, then you know to walk away.

If I do an outstanding job for the next five years, where can I be in this organization? This question helps candidates understand the growth potential they have within the organization (and shows the organization they are thinking long-term). If there are little or no opportunities for growth, you will likely not be very satisfied in the position in the long-run.
Above all, leave salary and benefits questions for after an offer has been made. And, *don’t forget to ask when and how you should follow-up!* For more information, check out one of Come Recommended’s blogs that gives you great insight on **closing an interview successfully.**

**Thank You Notes**

If you aren’t following up *every* interview—and by that we mean each individual person with whom you meet or speak—with a thank you note, you are likely costing yourself the position.

But, the simple act of saying “thank you” is not enough. To really put yourself ahead of your competitors, consider the following elements.

**Send your note within 24 hours.** Send your thank you e-mail as soon as you arrive home from the interview (or within 24 hours) so you don’t forget what was said. Waiting longer than that tells the potential employer the position is not that important to you. You are also encouraged to send a personalized handwritten note via “snail mail” for that added touch.

**Reference your conversation.** Ask each individual you meet with for a business card at the end of your interview, and make notes on the back about what you discussed to help you remember later. Show them you were really paying attention.
Emphasize your strengths. Review the position description and your notes about the actual conversations you had, and express exactly why you are the best person for the opening.

Reaffirm your interest in the position. Remind each interviewer that you are truly interested in the position and why. Or, if you are no longer interested after having been through the interview process, tell them so. Send your thank you note regardless because you never know when the interviewer will cross your path in the future.

Keep it short. Two paragraphs are plenty. Quality over quantity.

More general follow-up tips:

- How to Follow Up After Applying for a Job
- Tips on Following Up After You Send a Résumé
- Why You Should Never Skip the Interview Thank You Note
- Should You Follow Up the Interview With a Phone Call?
- How to Keep Your Thank You Note Out of the Trash
- How Much Interview Follow-Up is Too Much?
- How to Follow Up After an Interview
Have you applied for countless entry-level jobs and received no responses? Or perhaps you are getting interviews but no job offers? We understand how frustrated you are.

What if you could give your job search a complete overhaul for a little as $2?

How iMarketYourCareer works:

Days are sold at +$2 per day. November 1, 2010, starts at $2, and the price increases $2 each day after. November 2 is $4, November 3 is $6, November 4 is $8, and the price continues to increase by $2 each day until December 31, 2010. The pricing resets to $2 on January 1, 2011, and again on July 1, 2011.

What you will get:

1. A job search plan
2. Specific direction for improving your cover letter and résumé
3. Tips and techniques for networking online and offline — and contact information for people with whom you should start connecting
4. Recognition on our social networking sites, and a blog post promoting you

BOOK YOUR DAY NOW
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Heather R. Huhman, founder & president of Come Recommended, is passionate about helping students and recent college graduates pursue their dream careers. As the oldest child in her family – even among her extended family – she did not have anyone to guide her through the trials and tribulations of developing her career. Now, as an experienced hiring manager and someone who has been in nearly every employment-related situation imaginable, she is serving as that much-needed guide for others.

Heather knows and understands the needs of today's employers and internship and entry-level job seekers. Her expertise in this area led to her selection as Examiner.com's entry-level careers columnist in mid-2008. The daily, national column educates high school students through recent college graduates about how to find, land, and succeed at internships and entry-level jobs.

Additionally, Heather blogs about career advice at HeatherHuhman.com, as well as a number of other publications. She is also the author of #ENTRYLEVELtweet: Taking Your Career from Classroom to Cubicle (2010) and the e-books 10 Years, 12 Jobs, 3 Careers: Lessons Learned from Taking My Career from Classroom to Cubicle to Penthouse (2010), Relocating for an Entry-Level Job: Why You Probably Have to & How to Do It (2010), Graduated, Unemployed & Un(der)insured: Why You Need to Stop What You're Doing Right Now to Purchase Health Insurance and How to Pick the Provider & Plan Best for You (2010), and Gen Y Meets the Workforce: Launching Your Career During Economic Uncertainty (2008).

Heather resides in the Washington, DC area with her husband, dog and two cats. She is available to answer your questions or speak at your next event.