

Building a memorable online presence for career searching

BY LAUREN CELANO, CEO PROPEL CAREERS

In today's job market, there are estimates that more than 30% of jobs are currently filled by finding candidates through online job boards and sites like LinkedIn. This estimate is astonishing and very important to keep in mind if you are a job seeker. Times are changing. Never before have job seekers been able to so clearly highlight and promote their knowledge, their experiences, and their interests. I have often wondered though, why, so few people seem to realize the full potential to utilize their online presence to drive awareness and focus in their career search.

Building a detailed and clear online presence can be a key differentiator in your ability to be recognized by external recruiters and internal human resources professionals as they search for candidates that are relevant for jobs that they are working to fill. A number of people tell me that they have been looking for a job for a while, but they are not having luck. Surprisingly, when I ask them if they have spent time on their online profile, they say, *"Why? People should be able to tell that if I am a molecular biology postdoc, I know all of the necessary skills/assays to excel in molecular biology. My PI is well known, so that should speak for itself."*

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Unfortunately, this thought process is not the way to approach your search. Assuming that a potential hiring manager can infer what you know from your title or position can lead you to miss exciting job opportunities. If you have no details listed in your online profile, the likelihood of coming up as a match when someone searches for skill sets, assay experience, or other terms, is almost zero. If you are serious about your career, you will have a profile on LinkedIn as well as other targeted sites such as BioCareers. These sources are tremendous resources for both job seekers and individuals looking to fill positions. These sites allow job seekers to add detail to compliment their resume and allow them to extensively build out their profile to increase the chances of being "found".



[Joining online discussion groups] is your chance to start to get tied into the industry and learn about people who share similar paths and experiences [...] and relevant news related to the areas of interest

Many HR professionals, when looking to identify candidates, will perform searches on these sites to identify individuals with the experiences they are looking for such as a molecular biologist with specific assay experience or a neurobiologist with a particular therapeutic experience. Key word searches could be as simple as "ELISA" or as detailed as TDP-43 animal models. Hiring managers or other interviewers will also look on LinkedIn and other sites to see your background before they interview you. If they cannot find you, it raises some suspicion.

As you think about your online profile on LinkedIn specifically, there are important areas where you can list information about yourself. These include the Summary, Experience, and Groups.

In the **SUMMARY**, this is your chance to list a few bullet points about yourself. For example:

Postdoctoral Fellow with >5 years of experience in oncology research studying the mechanism of ovarian cancer development. Research highlights include >20 publications, including three first author publications, and numerous presentations at international conferences. Upon completion of my postdoctoral work in 2012, I aim to enter industry to focus on translational research.

What does the above show about you? Well, you are translational/commercially focused, which is important to industry. You also have a strong scientific foundation, and you have highlighted your therapeutic relevance (oncology). This would appeal to the oncology focused companies.

In your **EXPERIENCE** section, much like how you build an industry focused resume, you can list your research focus, assays/techniques that you have used, presentations and publications, and anything else which you feel can highlight your skills. This is your chance to show the depth of knowledge that you have so that the person reading your profile can see what you have done and why you could be relevant to them.

As you search **GROUPS**, you may be surprised to encounter so many various ones which meet your specific interests. This is your chance to start to get tied into the industry and learn



about people who share similar paths and experiences. Join groups so that you can be up to speed on what they are talking about and relevant news related to the areas of interest.

In addition to highlighting what to do, I also want to highlight a few things to be careful to avoid. Keep in mind that your online avatar meets the hiring manager before you do and online material lives forever. Have you ever typed your name into Google to see what pops up? This could be a good way to see what others view when they search for you. You may be surprised by what you find.

Most people don't pay enough attention to their profile photo. However, this is extremely important. For both LinkedIn and Facebook, do not have a silly or unprofessional profile photo, since this may hurt you more than you realize. When using Facebook, be careful about being tagged in pictures. These can be searchable and, if inappropriate, can lead to you not getting an interview or a job. Pay attention to your activities and interests and make sure that these are "professional." Do not list things that could be taken as negative like "enjoys wasting time or too many cocktails." Last, but not least, you should not synchronize LinkedIn with Facebook or Twitter. Status updates for LinkedIn should be professional, not about what you ate at lunch.

BLOGS can be a tremendous way to show your thought leadership in specific areas. When done right, Blogs can provide you with a proactive way to develop and enhance your online presence, giving you the ability to channel your energy and focus. The key is to find the Gap in information and be responsible to fill the space.

Finally, think about who is reading this information, and keep in mind that a potential employer could make an impression about you before you even realize it. When used correctly, an online presence can differentiate you and make you stand out from the rest. This is what you want and the goal of spending time building out your profile. Also remember, that your online presence should be continually updated – as you publish new papers, talk at new conferences, and learn new skills, add these to your profile. Like a lot of things in life, it takes nurturing, but the effort will pay off in the end.

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Good luck on building up your online presence. I look forward to meet your online avatar.



The importance of your “online personal brand”

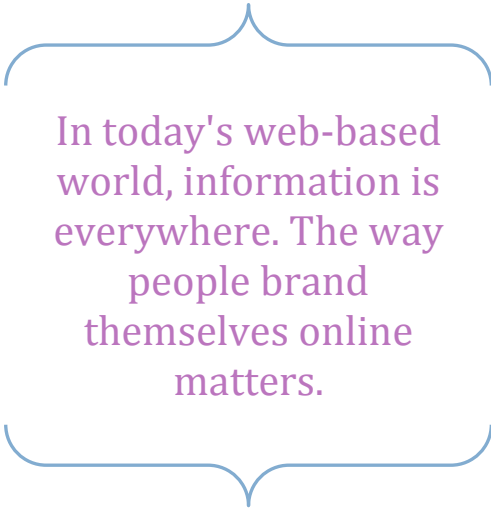
- BY LAUREN CELANO, CEO, PROPEL CAREERS

Your online personal brand, that is how you portray yourself and how others see you, is very important for your networking and job search process. Even if you are not looking for a job, how your brand yourself online matters. Below are a few examples.

NETWORKING SCENARIO:

If you follow up with someone at a networking event, you will probably send an email with a LinkedIn request. When someone clicks on this, what will they see? Will they only see your titles or something more descriptive like actual details about what you have done in each of your positions? Will they see a picture or a blank space where your profile picture should be? Will they see organizations that you belong to and publications that you have?

When people look at a profile, they prefer to see a professional profile picture (so that they can see if they remember you), along with details about background, experiences, and education. If you have a nicely built out profile, then it shows that you are serious about your professional persona and by default probably your career.

A quote box with a light blue, decorative border. The text inside is in a purple, serif font.

In today's web-based world, information is everywhere. The way people brand themselves online matters.

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW SCENARIO

If you ask for an informational interview, the person you ask will almost always look at your LinkedIn profile, even if you send them your resume. Why? Well, they want to see more about you and also if you happen to have any connections in common. If they look you up and if there is no information, it does not help them gather additional details about you to assist them with providing you useful information during an informational interview.

JOB INTERVIEW SCENARIO

If you are actively interviewing for jobs, more than likely, the people interviewing you will look you up on LinkedIn to see more about you. Similar to the previous example, if your



profile does not have much detail, then they cannot become more informed about you or see how you showcase yourself.

RECRUITER SEARCH SCENARIO

Recruiters, either internal to a company or external to a company (i.e. in a recruiting firm), routinely search LinkedIn to identify individuals who could be relevant for jobs they are working to fill. They search by using key word searches and also search on title, company, education, etc. If you don't have any details in your profile, then you probably won't be picked up by their searches, lessening the probability that they will contact you. Also, even if they find you, without details in your profile, they may not contact you since they won't be sure if you are relevant.

In today's web-based world, information is everywhere. The way people brand themselves online matters, more than you may initially think. Good luck building out your profile – the effort will go a long way!

More about Lauren Celano

Lauren Celano is the co-founder and CEO of Propel Careers. Lauren has more than 10 years of experience in the life sciences sector prior to starting Propel Careers. She has a B.S. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Gettysburg College and an MBA with a focus in the health sector and entrepreneurship from Boston University.



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More about Propel Careers

Propel Careers is a Boston-based life science search and career development firm focused on connecting innovative, entrepreneurial companies with like-minded professionals. While our primary service offering is job placement, the networking events, career guidance, and mentorship programs we offer ensure continuous growth and relationship development within our network. Our mission is to enable the critical human resource connections required to advance the life science industry as a whole as well as the growth and advancement of the companies and individuals we work with. Our expansive industry contacts, knowledge and experience working in the life science industry set us apart from other firms & offerings. Our team brings more than 40 years of collective experience working in a range of life sciences business, including start-ups, venture capital, and commercial organizations. As a result, we are able to act as a hub making critical connections between academic institutions, industry, investors, service providers and talent. To learn more, visit www.propelcareers.com.

