

A digital strategy for 'Brand Me'

How to land a job using social networks



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Profile is the one thing that'll always open doors for you. Have they heard of you or your work? Do you stand out from the crowd, and precisely what makes you different? But not everyone has been around long enough to have created a reputation for themselves. And many have been too busy, shy or lazy to compensate by shmoozing at industry events. So most end up relying on a clean shave, their best smile and a nicely polished CV to create that good first impression at that first interview. Digital can give you back that edge. It won't suffice on its own, but it'll sure as hell give you that advantage you need. Put simply, you can use it to create that good impression before that first interview.

You need to treat your job search as a social media campaign in its own right. Each vehicle allows you to connect with people in different ways, thereby 'broadcasting' a different part of your identity. Find an overall angle. What's the one thing you know or do better than most? What's the best way to express it? Use this 'Brand Me' to differentiate yourself, and use it to gauge any communications you engage in. Somewhat paradoxically, this will allow you to be as spontaneous as certain digital vectors demand you to be. Here is one of the possible ways you could use the many digital tools and networks to raise your profile.

BLOGGING

You may think that blogging is old news. Ask yourself: how many people do I know in my field who are actually blogging and doing it right? You may think it's slow to build up or too taxing. Ask yourself: how the hell am I going to find the best possible job if I don't start giving this the same energy I would a normal brief?

In fact, blogging is the only way to get yourself published without already having a profile which would interest the trade magazines. Wordpress and similar free blogging platforms allow you to set up a blog very quickly and to customise it very easily. Plus you're likely enough to know bloggers or designers who can give you pointers.

People tend to underestimate their expertise. Identify what you know that others don't. What information do you tend to be privy to before others. What trade insights, technical know-how or opinions would your peers and potential employers find interesting.

Once you've found your voice, establish a



publication routine, install tracking and use traffic metrics to experiment with your content and plugins (editorial style, polls, twitter feed etc...)

Treat your site as a hub: have links to all your other online assets and accounts, and feed status updates into it.

PORTFOLIO AND CV

Use your blog to publish your portfolio or case studies. Place highly visible links within your homepage and blog posts to your portfolio section. Keep each piece short and relevant (brief, solution, results), and don't forget visuals. You may also have your CV on your site, and link the page it sits in to your LinkedIn profile.

Lastly, set visits from your blog to your portfolio and CV as the ultimate metric or conversion. Tell your friends in the industry about your blog. Put its address on your messenger status updates. If you publish relevant content regularly, it won't take long to take off.

LINKEDIN

Publish your CV on LinkedIn and connect with as many of the people you already know as possible. LinkedIn is pretty much the absolute proof of the theory of six degrees of separation. You'll be amazed to see that you're probably just a couple of

contacts away from the MD of your dream agency (in Dublin or Hong Kong).

Just don't let the cyberstalker in you do anything embarrassing. Rather, use common contacts for online or real world introductions. Also, use the status updates to broadcast relevant news, new blog posts and so on. You can also join industry groups and discussions, and come across events you may not have known about otherwise.

TWITTER

In spite of some misconceptions and the many, many freaks and tedious narcissists who use it, Twitter can be a very powerful tool to receive and share information. There are countless numbers of professionals and agencies who use it regularly and with whom you can network. Use Twitter to follow all the people and institutions you admire, and especially those who tend to share valuable insights.

Distinguish yourself by sharing valuable content that's relevant to the industry. Including links to your latest blog post, portfolio piece or campaign of course. Engage people who don't follow you by tweeting them – but once again, don't pester.

Before you know it, the quantity and quality of your followers will have increased dramatically. And many opportunities will come to you, whether networking events, publications, partnerships or job openings.

OUT OF THE COMFORT ZONE

There is no fool-proof, one-size-fits-all solution to using digital tools to raise your profile. It's really down to trial and error and dogged stubbornness.

Use digital to unearth real life opportunities like high-profile projects or public speaking. Then push yourself out of your comfort zone and give it your best.

If you don't get sought out for interviews after all that, then at the very least you'll have seriously increased your chances well before that first interview.

Alexis Bouckaert recently joined Rothco as digital creative director. He also blogs and speaks at the odd conference, though admittedly less of late.