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Social Media



## Social Media

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### OVERVIEW

Nearly 70% of households in the US have a broadband internet connection, allowing people to use the Internet in increasingly more engaging and richer ways. This ever-evolving use of the web has been labeled as Web 2.0. It is characterized largely by its reliance on user-generated content. During the last few years, the Internet has become increasingly driven by such content and the sites that provide an avenue for its dissemination. Most of these sites have gained worldwide audience through the broad appeal of interacting with the web in a way that allows the user to determine what they want to view.

### DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

More than ever, people are engaging with the Internet for entertainment, and to stay in touch with family and friends in an *interactive* and *social* way. Far from being a niche restricted to teenagers and young adults, nearly every segment of the population has embraced social networking and social media. As of March 2009, the fastest growing age group on Facebook is women aged 55-65.

### ONE TOOL AMONG MANY

After one separates the hype from the facts about all that social applications can do, there are true opportunities in this space for recruiters if used effectively. *However, it is important to temper this hype with a realistic expectation of what role social networking plays in an overall mix of properly targeted advertising techniques.* By engaging these available social applications and creating a presence through them and on them, recruiters can capitalize on their popularity.

### IMPROVED SEARCH RESULTS

Aside from using social marketing tools for creating a direct connection to potential candidates, an investment in this arena can also benefit search engine results for an organization's web presence. Search engines like Google and Yahoo include entries from some of these sites as search results. For instance, if a user searches for nurse careers in a particular area, a YouTube video about that topic might be included in the results the search engine returns. This is referred to as 'universal search.' Integrating all of these elements will bolster a site's rankings and therefore its visibility on the web. This is part of search engine optimization.



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There are a number of technologies and portals that provide a social media interaction, perhaps chief among them Facebook and YouTube, which provide a more interactive web experience. But there are many additional sites and ways for users to enjoy the web, some of which support vast networks of registered users. (Facebook currently boasts more than 175 million members.)

Most social media can be categorized into the following areas. Each provides a recruiter with a unique way to reach their audience, and has pros and cons.

### **SOCIAL NETWORKS - FACEBOOK, MYSPACE, LINKEDIN, TWITTER**

Social media can be divided into two categories: professional and personal.

LinkedIn caters to a professional audience, providing users a place for networking and would be a good place for an organization to have a presence.

Facebook is more casual, and provides a place for people to interact with friends and groups of people by sharing what they are doing, photos and videos and any other information they care to post online. The benefits of a Facebook page as a recruitment tool for an organization are negligible. The true value of Facebook may lie with targeted advertising techniques that display on individual Facebook pages, and point to a website with more information on available positions.

Twitter is a form of social network that allows people to 'follow' a friend, relative, celebrity or politician with regular updates on a computer or cell phone. The person who is being 'followed' sends out 'tweets' to broadcast their thoughts or activities. Twitter is primarily used on mobile phones, and is limited to 140 characters.

**Pros:** Ability to reach a large audience of people in your field. Targeted advertising.

**Cons:** Requires a significant amount of time to maintain and nurture connections.

**Recommendations:** A presence can be suited to individuals looking to engage people in a casual environment.

### **BLOGGING**

A blog, or web log, is similar to an online diary. It must be regularly updated with fresh and interesting content provided by authors well versed in the subject matter to keep it relevant and the reader engaged.

**Pros:** Can generate excellent search engine results.

**Cons:** Extremely time consuming to do well and properly.

**Recommendations:** Only organizations willing to devote a great deal of time and effort should attempt to enter this realm.



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### PODCASTING

A podcast is an online audio or video presentation that users can subscribe to. iTunes software is used to organize, download and play podcasts on an iPod, hence the name. Most podcasts are part of regular series, and users subscribe to them and automatically get the latest updates downloaded.

**Pros:** Can deliver a refined, polished message on pertinent topics in an audio or visual manner. No distribution costs.

**Cons:** Take time to produce, need to be serialized for maximum effectiveness.

**Recommendations:** A powerful way to connect with an audience

### VIDEO ON DEMAND - YOUTUBE

Sites like YouTube and Vimeo provide a place for people to post videos of interest to broad or narrow audiences. A 'channel' on YouTube can be private, allowing a limited number of users to access the content. However, most are offered for public consumption and can be searched according to titles and keywords that have been assigned to them by the person or organization who posts them. These can also be embedded into other websites.

**Pros:** Engaging messages can reach a wide audience. No distribution costs.

**Cons:** Take time to produce, need for many.

**Recommendations:** An active presence on these types of sites can be a great way to boost search engine results.

### SOCIAL BOOKMARKING AND NEWS

Internet users can use social bookmarking sites such as Delicious, Digg, StumbleUpon, and Reddit to organize, share, search and tag bookmarks. Tags associated with bookmarks allow for easy organization into topics that others can view and search. Bookmarks for sites or specific pages can spread virally, or receive high rankings with increased use, increasing the likelihood that others will follow links, leading to more site traffic.

**Pros:** Makes it easy for users to share sites within networks.

**Cons:** None

**Recommendations:** Add to websites.



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All of these new technologies have varying degrees of utility. They play a supporting role in the efforts to recruit talent to an organization and certainly are a *small part* of an effective strategy. While these terms are buzzwords of the moment, they are not, in and of themselves, the answer to the marketing problems you may face. *There is value in using Web 2.0 applications for targeted advertising, but these campaigns must be properly coordinated with more traditional methods to achieve maximum effectiveness.*

### **MSI SERVICES**

MSI will provide consultative services tailored to an individual organization as part of any retainer agreement, working to determine which of these approaches will be an effective part of your strategy.

In addition, MSI can provide creative services and produce or implement any of these social media resources on a project basis for those clients wanting to add this to their communications strategy.