Alumni Job Search Intensive – Social Media Networking

Transcript

Slide 1: Welcome. This webinar talks about networking using social media. Since social media is so prevalent today, and there are many options available, it’s become an essential element of a successful networking strategy.

Slide 2: Here are some of the social media resources we’ll go through.

Slide 3: First of course, is the powerful LinkedIn. We’ve previously discussed how to create a powerful LinkedIn profile, and how to use LinkedIn in your job search. One of the primary functions of LinkedIn is to network. You should connect and network with three main groups of contacts. First, do use your social contacts – all your friends, family, co-workers (or former co-workers), former faculty, and people from any other social groups of which you’re a part. Do an advanced search in the People section, and when you find them, ask to be connected. This group may be helpful in linking you with people they know who can help in your job search, and can send referrals your way. Don’t forget RIT alumni - we’ll talk more about finding them later. The second group of contacts are recruiters or headhunters, who use LinkedIn extensively to find candidates for the positions for which they’re recruiting. You’ll want to find and connect with a reputable recruiter for your industry. We’ll discuss this process in a bit. The third group of contacts are the hiring managers for the companies in which you’re interested. This can be an involved process, and will take effort on your part, but can be key to a successful job search.

Slide 4: The point here is to make strategic connections, those that are relevant for your field, the companies you’re targeting, and your career and job search goals. Once you’ve got your targeted list of contacts, you can then approach them with a request to connect – these should all be customized, and focused on the mutual benefits of your connection. It should not be just about what they can do for you, take the time to determine how connecting with you can benefit them, and let them know. Or share something that you have in common, as a basis for the connection.

Slide 5: Here’s an example of a customized connection request. This makes the contact feel like they’re not just one more in a large number of blanket requests that you’re making – that you really do care about establishing a real connection with them.

Slide 6: Once you have connections, don’t just let them sit there—actively manage and utilize them. I think sometimes people think all they have to do is acquire connections and sit back and wait for people to come to them with job offers. Here are some ways to really utilize the contacts you’ve made.

First, gather information. Check profiles to see if you can add keywords to your own profile, see what groups people are joining, and even what companies they’ve worked for in the past – you might be able to add to your targeted company list. See what contacts they have, for suggestions on who you might want to reach out to in the future. As you find these, you can request that your connections make introductions on your behalf.

Also, look for opportunities to request targeted endorsements and recommendations.
Slide 7: In the spirit of reciprocal networking, stay in contact through LinkedIn messaging, and be sure to offer your support and expertise to them. Also try to make some contacts more than just LinkedIn connections; try to arrange in person meetings to take your relationship to the next level.

Slide 8: RIT alumni are a good source of connections on LinkedIn; most alumni are very willing to provide assistance to other alumni – as you should be as well. There are several ways to find RIT alumni. The first is the university feature, which shows you in depth where RIT alumni are, by location, field, company, etc. You can also do an advanced people search by targeted company, by inserting the company name, and Rochester Institute of Technology into the school box. You can do a similar search for your major or field by inserting key words. You can also insert a specific geographic location, and connect with alumni in a targeted location, for tips on relocation.

Slide 9: Here’s the LinkedIn alumni tool; if you go to this website and put in Rochester Institute of Technology, you’ll get a good summary breakdown of where RIT alumni are. Again, you can use this information to connect with alumni in your field, location, and targeted companies. You might also get ideas for additional companies to target, positions in your field you may not have thought of, and other areas to research further.

Slide 10: When you’re making connections, find a recruiter – third party recruiter, headhunter – for your field and geographic location and connect with them. Many companies use recruiting agencies to source their jobs, so connecting with them will help you gain access to these jobs.

Slide 11: To find a recruiter, go to the advanced people search section, and put your field and the word recruiter in the search box, adding location if you’d like. In this case we’ve done a search for IT recruiters. Once you have your list, you can research them and their agencies, and find ones you feel are reputable and work with companies you’re interested in. You can then reach out to make a connection.

Slide 12: Groups are an important part of LinkedIn. Take advantage of the 50 groups that you can join, and find groups that are relevant to your industry, field, and specific areas of interest. You should also join the RIT alumni groups – the general one and specific college ones, and of course our office group – RIT Career Services. There are general groups that may be of interest as well, such as women’s groups.

Slide 13: You can do an advanced search in groups to get an idea of what’s available for your industry, field, or niche area.

Slide 14: Once you’re part of groups, again be active, don’t just be a lurker. By being part of a group you have access to all group members, so demonstrate your skills by sharing your expertise. You can start discussions, contribute to ongoing discussions, and connect with group members for additional networking. Again, you can use groups for research; check out members’ profiles, companies, and other group suggestions. Companies sometimes have their own groups; if you’re targeting specific companies check to see if they have a group you can join.

Slide 15: For example, Paychex here in Rochester not only has a company LinkedIn page, but a group page, where they frequently post positions.

Slide 16: So again, to maximize the potential of your groups, make sure to join groups that are relevant for your field, be a contributor, not just a lurker, and be sure all your posts are relevant to the group’s
purpose and interests (you don’t want to waste anyone’s time, but demonstrate your expertise), and be professional at all times. Whether you’re posting or commenting on other posts, there is bound to be different viewpoints; be sure to respect everyone’s perspective. You also want to adhere to the group’s rules; different groups may have different rules for submitting posts by subject, etc.

Slide 17: Follow your targeted companies. You’ll get information on events and other happenings at the company, they may post jobs, and you may find out news about new hires (that you may know) and promotions, which may leave a slot you can fill. The more you know about a company, the more you can determine how you can fit in and fill a need they have, which is essential when you approach key people in the company about potential opportunities. Based on the keywords and experiences in your profile, LinkedIn will suggest additional companies for you to follow, which may expand your targeted company list.

Slide 18: We’ve talked about reaching out to potential connections. When you’re searching for industry contacts, make sure you use the keywords that are industry specific and related to your niche. Again, use the advanced people search function to find people in your industry, as well as jobs within your industry or field.

Slide 19: Remember that people always opt for a known commodity, in the same way, hiring managers would rather hire people that come recommended. So when searching for the hiring manager in the department of the company you’re interested in, see which of your own connections can give you an introduction, referral or recommendation to that hiring manager. This is another good reason for strategically building your LinkedIn network.

Slide 20: We’ve previously talked about your Facebook profile and using Facebook in your job search. It can be a powerful networking tool as well. Remember that Facebook allows you to organize your connections by category. So you can make lists that are things like for family, friends, professional contacts, business. This lets you easily share relevant information and updates with the most appropriate contacts. In addition to making friend with individual contacts, Facebook lets you become a fan of pages -- of companies through their Facebook pages. This gives you information and updates on your targeted company, to see job postings, and even community events that are sponsored by the company that you may be able to attend. This is a good way to stay up to date on companies that interest you. You can also search for and join groups in your professional field of interest and become fans of the groups’ pages. Once you’re a member of the group, you can connect and network with other members, you can share industry information, job opportunities, referrals and tips for a job search. As with any other networking group, the more the members get to know you, the more willing they will be to send jobs your way when they hear about them and to make recommendations on your behalf to their own contacts. Use your personal contacts and friends, let them know that you’re looking for a job and you would appreciate any job contacts and referrals they can make with you. You can use the classmate and coworker searches to connect with former classmates and people with whom you used to work. So you can find somebody that you know who now works at a company that you’re interested in, and then they can help you get a foot in the door.

Slide 21: We’ve previously talked about using Twitter in your job search as well, and developing a strong Twitter profile. To build your online network, search for and begin to follow people, companies, professional associations, journals, etc in your industry. Once you start following other people and commenting on their tweets, you can begin to establish relationships, which can ultimately lead to
referrals, recommendations, tips and suggestions for your search (as with any other networking contact). Your ultimate goal is to follow many people to gain industry knowledge and potential contacts, but to really develop and nurture a few relationships that will turn into valuable assets for your job search and career.

Slide 22: RIT alumni are a great resource for growing your network. The RIT Online community is only available to RIT alumni, and provides you with access to our over 114,000 RIT alumni. Once you register in this system you can search the Tiger Locator directory by major, industry, job type, geographic location and other criteria. The system will give you a list of alumni who meet that criteria, and if they have agreed to share their information, you’ll have the ability to see their in depth job and education details. You’ll also be able to send them an email, in which you can introduce yourself and request advice, information, and contacts to help in your job search (don’t ask for a job directly) As with other networking contacts, your goal is to establish a mutually beneficial connection, which will hopefully lead you to other contacts and resources.

Slide 23: The RIT Professional Network is another opportunity to find alumni with whom to connect for networking and informational interviews. You can find alumni in a wide variety of industries and fields, who have volunteered to talk with other alumni to share their knowledge and expertise. This resource is found on our Job Zone system, under the Career Coaches tab. When you find someone with whom you’d like to connect, you can email them through the system and if they’re available, they’ll respond to begin your networking relationship.

Slide 24: Don’t forget to utilize the online resources for your professional associations as well. You can find other members to network with on the association’s website, and connect through online committees and networking events. Associations often have LinkedIn groups, where you can participate in discussions and get to know other members, with whom you can follow up for networking.