

Six tips to optimise your social ranking for potential employers

 By [Suhaifa Naidoo](#)

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Social networks have made personal lives public. Choosing to be a part of a social network allows for you to be scrutinised, something once reserved for the famous. This, however, does not only stop with your friends and ex-partners: people are now being socially examined by potential employers as well.

But does this mean that people should refrain from social networking? There are always ways to optimise your social presence for potential employers:

- **Use LinkedIn**

[LinkedIn](#) is the world's largest professional network. Make sure you update your profile regularly by listing previous jobs, obtaining recommendations and choosing an appropriate profile picture.

Use LinkedIn to connect with companies and people within your industry, join groups and network with others. Make it easy for people to contact you by completing your online resume.

- **Check your Facebook security settings**

Potential employers are definitely viewing your Facebook profile. However, I strongly believe that Facebook is a personal social network with optimal security and you have the right to express yourself in ways you feel comfortable.

Therefore, never allow public viewing accessibility to your profile. Make sure only your friends have access to your profile. Although this is not always guaranteed, it is therefore best to remove your tag from inappropriate pictures. Remember, what happens in Vegas stays on Facebook!

In the meantime, Facebook this week has not only launched [improved friends lists](#), it will also be [implementing a "subscribe" button](#), allowing your [friends as well as non-friends](#) to subscribe to your Facebook activity. If you are posting statuses, for example, that you do not wish anyone other than your friends to see, make sure you tick the Friends option and not Public.

You also have the option to disable anyone from subscribing to your activity.

- **Be proactive on Twitter**

Being proactive on Twitter is key. You should use this opportunity to connect directly with potential employers and people within the organisation. It is also important to retweet industry-related tweets.

However, if you have a weird sense of humour, extremely passionate about politics or have strong opinions about sensitive subjects, don't create a separate twitter account to express that side of you. Culture is an important part of any organisation. No employer wants a stiff employee that only tweets about industry-related topics. Employers socially stalk you because they want to know about your personality. If it were only your skills they were interested in, your CV would be enough.

Nevertheless, you should always tweet responsibly; don't bash your ex employer on Twitter, for example. This will definitely dampen your chances of getting a good job.

- **Syndicate your video resume**

In today's highly competitive job market, your CV has to stand out. Although many companies may prefer traditional CVs, video resumes are definitely more capturing.

Creating the right video resume can sometimes be daunting but this has to be done professionally. Shooting a video resume using your iPhone in your bedroom is not going to work.

Mashable has some good tips for creating [video resumes](#). Make sure your resume is syndicated to all as many social sites as possible.

- **Google Alerts**

People are saying things about you all the time: your friends, ex-colleagues, ex-employers etc. Make sure you set up [Google Alerts](#) for your name; this is a perfect online reputation management (ORM) tool.

[Respond to negative comments immediately](#). Remember, you cannot always control your online presence but you can certainly try.

It may seem unfair that potential employers sometimes scrutinise your personality and social skills before employing you but, unfortunately, once pieces of information are online, it does become public property. Being cautious with your online activity can definitely help you look good to future employers.

- **Blogs and forums**

Blogs and forums have become inherent in social media. [MyBroadband](#) and Bizcommunity's [forums](#) and [comment facilities](#) are typical examples of how forums are becoming increasingly popular amongst South African online users.

Commenting in forums and on blog posts is a great way to express your opinion on topics you are passionate about. However, with freedom of speech, comes responsibility. All your online activity is being [cached by Google](#) and can be found by anyone.

It is therefore imperative for you to be cautious when commenting on blog posts and forums and refrain from personal attacks, slander, vulgar and racist statements.

But do keep in mind that expressing your opinion is very important; it shows you have passion for certain topics and are willing to engage with others about these topics. Passion for your profession is something every employer looks

for.

Social media is not a passing phase and will still be here five, 10 and even 15 years' time. It has become a very important facet of our lives, right down to securing that perfect job.

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