



Importance of Social Networking during Recession

The United States economy is in a mode of transition. Although the economy is not in a state of recession, recession looms like heavy dark storm clouds with the extended problems of the lending industry adding fuel to the fires of change that already were burning. Social networking during a recession can make a recession last for a shorter period of time and be used as a survival guide through the time of the raging, painful storm. When more people, given new powers by the near-miracle of the Internet, act in ways that benefit them during tough times, they make those tough times, well, less tough. They take away much of the storm's power.

What's the deal with understanding social networking during a recession, you ask? Well, the United States economy is in a mode of transition. Although the economy is not in a state of recession, recession looms like heavy dark storm clouds with the extended problems of the lending industry adding fuel to the fires of change that already were burning. The United States "regulators" decided a couple of decades ago that the normalcy of recession, which when left alone is over fast and paves the way for even greater booms, was just not desirable—the people "couldn't take it". The problem is when recession is staved off through artificial means, it just makes the recession much worse when it does inevitably hit. As a matter of fact, this is the very kind of thing that can turn a recession into a depression. For this reason alone, understanding social networking during a recession has become a very important tool to the job seeker.

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Especially if you are or are very soon to be a college graduate, with the increased competition for jobs out there, how do you differentiate yourself from the masses?

Start off by learning new skill sets—skill sets that you may not necessarily have any degree in, but which are amazingly valuable to nearly every employer today. The Internet and "Web 2.0" are making businesses more and more into globally linked-up virtual offices. [Designing websites](#), [integrating multimedia](#), and blogging at a high level of adeptness are now utterly potent abilities to have. Businesses need more and more competitive modes of these things in order for them to remain profitable in this global economy. If you can do one or more of these Web 2.0 things, you've got at least as much

market power as anyone with an MBA these days.

HAVE BIG DREAMS AND AMBITIONS; WALK TALL

The Internet also makes it easier to [find a job](#) than ever before. Through [online job boards](#), you have amazing outreach. You never again need to think that some choice employer is too far away or too big for you to impress. Just make sure you do your follow-up. You still need to know how to use that cell phone for more than texting; you need to make sure you send the follow-up email.

Another part of social networking during a recession is leveraging it to improve your image to potential employers. Your Wordpress blog, your MySpace and your Facebook profiles and pages will all be checked out these days by your target employer, if you have them. If you don't have these things, get them. If you do have them, clean them up if you need to. Do they make you seem intelligent and professional? Or do they currently make you look like a party animal, sailor-mouthed, hard rockin' sex fiend? If the latter is true, transform them pronto to make them more like the former.

There's another aspect to this, too: keep watch over your online image. You are probably on Google, somewhere. If you have ever made enemies who have figuratively drawn unflattering stuff on your picture, you need to find it and get rid of it or at least be prepared to counter it when you go for an interview. Be prepared to explain yourself if you've ever had a minor criminal offense, too. You can use automatic alerts so that potential employers know that you have been maligned—and they will be impressed that you also know it and are responsible enough to do something about it. Potential employers want to see evidence of personal responsibility probably more than ever before.

Keep it private. It's more difficult than ever now to be private, so it takes more vigilance than ever. You should be using social networking sites to give people more awareness of



Career Tips

yourself and to keep yourself relevant, but at the same time you should be highly selective in who is allowed to be your friend, post at your sites, not be banned from your sites, and so on. This is especially important for you to understand about social networking during a recession. Again, employers are going to be more selective during or if they suspect a recession. You have to shine like a star. Don't leave yourself open to your less-professional friends, your enemies, or complete strangers to throw dirt over you and diminish your light. It might seem unfair, but this is YOUR responsibility.

GET LINKED

One of the most used social networking sites among professionals is LinkedIn. LinkedIn boasts that over 25 million working people traffic there. This would include employers as

well as employees. Not only can you send or post messages to employers, you can talk to employees and let them help you get hired where they work or advise you on the ins and outs of a position in a given area—including companies to avoid. To use social networking during a recession, it's very important that you face the new reality of "it's not what you know, it's who you know". Employees usually really like helping newbies get hired—just don't abuse their time. They have a job to do.

CONCLUSION

Understanding social networking during a recession is even more important than understanding this important skill is at other times. Make yourself savvy.

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