

Social media: a useful tool for job hunting

Most young people are regular users of social media. Whether they prefer Instagram, YouTube or Facebook, they use a range of digital platforms to stay connected with friends and peers and to share the things that interest them. But how many consider the role of social media when it comes to looking for a job, apprenticeship or university place?

Once a young person starts preparing themselves for the world of work, it's not just their friends and family they might be interacting with online but potential recruiters, future employers or colleagues. In other words, people they need to give a good impression to.

A growing recruitment tool

So when it's time to start thinking about moving into the world of work, whether into an apprenticeship or first job, social media can play a part in extending the opportunities.

Businesses and other organisations are engaging with social media more and more and several platforms are becoming increasingly popular for recruitment. Why? Because they're free, they can reach a wide audience but they can also provide a two-way channel with people who have the skills and qualities they're looking for.

There are three main reasons for using social media when job hunting:

1) **You can learn a lot about a company from its social media accounts**

Whether it's to sell a product or service, to give advice or information, or to promote their brand and culture, the output from companies on social media is not only a brilliant tool for research but can also provide rich fodder when applying for jobs - particularly at interview – showing you've done your research.

2) **More employers are using social media as a recruitment tool**

Some organisations have specific recruitment or careers accounts where they advertise their latest vacancies (see the bottom of this article for examples) and give advice; others may use social media to hunt for people who would fit right in. Yes, these may be potential candidates who have the specific skills and experience to fill a position but there will also be employers – particularly small to medium enterprises (SMEs) - who are very keen to find raw, young talent. A young person may not have developed job-specific skills yet but if they look as if they have something to offer, plenty of employers will jump at the chance to help them develop and grow within their organisation.

Encourage a young person to follow the organisations they're interested in. For some employers, social media may be the **only** channel, other than word of mouth, that they use to recruit.

3) **You can 'sell yourself' to employers via social media**

If you know someone who is keen to work for a specific organisation or in a specific field then getting noticed on social media can really help promote what they have to offer. It can be particularly effective for those wanting to work in the creative industries: platforms such as Instagram or YouTube can provide a real opportunity for people to shine. Just 10 years ago bloggers and vloggers were virtually unheard of but now people can make a career of this as well as using it to promote their skills and ideas.

It goes the other way too though – employers frequently check out prospective

employees' social media footprint, so maintaining an 'uncontroversial' social media presence is a must when job hunting.

Where to focus the attention?

Out of the three main social media platforms that recruiters use - Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook - LinkedIn, with around 21 million UK users is the biggest and most popular. But it's not the place to be for all jobs – it's largely used by professionals who have work experience and developed skills that they can demonstrate. You can join LinkedIn at 13 though and it can be particularly good for someone who's setting up their own business or for those wanting to connect with specific employers or interest groups. It's not the best place for every career but it can be useful for research.

For young people, Twitter or Facebook may be better places to discover vacancies. Large retail companies are particularly good at advertising vacancies on these platforms and there are also local job hunting accounts which will signpost to opportunities in a local area. Facebook is good for discovering vacancies with small businesses and for getting a feel for a company and what they do – find local vacancies on its jobs pages (www.facebook.com/jobs) or change the filter to browse further afield.

There's another type of social media platform that can also be useful when researching and searching for vacancies if used with caution. Sites like [Glassdoor](#), [TheJobCrowd](#) for graduate roles and [RateMyPlacement](#) use online communities to build up a picture of a company through reviews from those who have had experience of them. This can include typical salaries, progression opportunities and company culture. They're good for gaining an insight into an organisation but bear in mind that an individual and subjective review may not be representative of the whole.

Remember though that not all organisations are on social media, especially small to medium companies, so aim to use a variety of sources when job hunting.

Using social media for job hunting can be extremely useful when researching and preparing for job applications and interviews but if someone is using it to get noticed by a potential employer, they shouldn't expect instant results. Creating the right image and demonstrating skills or knowledge can take time but could also get you noticed.

Some organisations who have jobs and careers accounts on social media:

Boots www.twitter.com/boots_talent
BBC www.twitter.com/BBCCareers
NHS www.twitter.com/HealthCareersUK
Whitbread www.facebook.com/Whitbread.Careers
Next www.facebook.com/nextcareers
BT Early Careers www.facebook.com/BTEarlyCareers
EY www.instagram.com/eyukcareers

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