
WIN INTERVIEWS!

The New Must-Have Game Plan



Louise Garver & Christine Edick



WIN Interviews

The New Must-Have Game Plan

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and Christine Edick**



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Companies are sharpening their interviewing and hiring processes; identify how that might affect you.

Louise Garver

Companies Are Changing Their Hiring Process

There has been a slight improvement in the interview and hiring processes of companies over the last decade. There are still the “old believers” who ask a question like “Tell me about yourself” and think the answer can extract pertinent and useful information for the interviewer. Then along come the “new age” interviewers who want to primarily ask behavioral questions. These examples are at opposite ends of the spectrum, and businesses are realizing that they need to rethink their hiring process to get the right candidates.

Here are four ways companies are changing their hiring processes:

- 1. Quit asking irrelevant “curveball” questions.** It has become clear that these types of interview questions do not generate the information necessary to classify the candidate as the right fit for the job. NOTE to job seeker: What this means to you is that companies will be focusing more on interview questions that relate to the position and the skills needed to accomplish the job. Of course, it doesn’t hurt to keep your response to a curveball question in your back pocket just in case.
- 2. Be clear about what you want.** Companies are encouraged to start the process by identifying the key skills and behaviors that a candidate must have to succeed in this position and fit with the company. By knowing these up front, it helps the interviewer to compare apples to apples. NOTE to job seeker: Read the job description that is

provided for the job opportunity carefully as it will contain clues to key skills and behaviors. If this is a position that you found out about through other channels such as networking or an internal employee, ask questions about the company's expectations of the person they are looking for to fill the position.

3. **Proof.** The companies need proof that you are who and what you say you are. There cannot be an ounce of doubt for the interviewer. They are looking for the closest fit, and anything that can be disputed could get you disqualified. NOTE to job seeker: You will be tested during the interview to prove that you can do what you represent. They may give you a specific problem to solve. Can you make quick decisions? A sample situation may be thrown your way (and timed) to simulate a situation under pressure.
4. **Panel/multiple interviews.** More companies believe "two heads are better than one." By involving more people in the interview and hiring process, they get several perspectives that bring multiple levels of information and details that would not have been possible if the entire process was handled by one person. NOTE to job seeker: You may be seeing more panel interviews that include many levels from several departments that would be affected by the hire. There also may be more interviews in the entire process. Some companies have a policy of a minimum of eight interviews with everyone from the top executives down to the assistant for the new job candidate. They come together after all interviews are conducted to compare notes.

So be alerted that companies are sharpening their interviewing and hiring processes, and identify how that might affect you.

New Job Market: Are You Prepared?

As a job seeker, you may have experienced many changes in the job market over the years. Predictions have been formulating for some time now about big changes in careers and the traditional workforce. The experts forecast an exponential growth in the number of self-employed, independent service firms, “solopreneurs,” and temporary workers by 2020 with 40 percent or sixty-five million people who will not work in traditional jobs as we know them today.

What does this mean for you? You could be affected in two ways: (1) from the employee view of managing this new workforce, and (2) for yourself personally, your flexibility/ability to market yourself as a one-person company if necessary.

Let’s look at three key points:

Be sure that you know your brand and your unique value. Your brand should be transparent across all career collateral, both on- and offline.

Jill Grindle

- 1. Create your personal brand.** This concept is sometimes the hardest for job seekers to grasp. They typically don’t think of themselves as a “brand.” It has been proven that people who land the best opportunities are those who understand the value of marketing themselves.

The most important marketing message that you can relay to a prospective employer is who you are (your unique value proposition) and what you can do for them (focusing on their issues and needs).

- 2. Create your niche.** It is easier to separate yourself from the masses by clarifying your expertise and showcasing it in your job search documents and interview materials. What we know is that every company has problems. Recruiters and hiring managers are looking for people who are able to solve those problems. Make it easy for the recruiter or hiring manager to see you as the go-to person for X.

Are you prepared to answer this question that almost always comes up in an interview?

“How are you more qualified to do this job than the other applicants?”

- 3. Follow industry trends.** Up to now, you may have been sustaining an insular approach to your job and focusing only on your company. It’s time to evaluate what’s going on industry-wide, whether you intend to stay in your current industry or move on. Incorporate industry research into your job search activities to find the trends. Joining online groups (LinkedIn is a great source for online forums and groups) and networking will also help you verify the information that is circulating about your industry and trends. This will help you circumvent concerns that may come up about key issues that are stumping your competitors.

Social networks are perfect forums to engage with people you might not have otherwise met. Establish connections, learn about the needs of others, and share your expertise as well. Building relationships is still essential in job search.

The writing is on the wall: *The job market and career opportunities are changing!*

The facts are clear. Over the last decade, job seekers want a career change because they are dissatisfied with their job/industry, unhappy with their salary, insecure about longevity of job, work in an obsolete industry, or a victim of corporate downsizing. Maybe you are among nearly 50 percent of job seekers rethinking their career path. Recognize that jobs typically last for only two to four years, not a lifetime. Develop an outstanding plan, including strategy and tactics.

If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.

—Yogi Berra

Focus and Set Goals

Many people think that if they keep their job-search options “open,” they will land a job sooner. Quite the opposite is true: With a target job in mind, you are far more likely to prepare properly - from resume to company research - and land the job of your dreams.

Debra O'Reilly

Career Audit

Are you ready for change? When was the last time you took a serious look at your career direction? Where are you now? Where do you want to be? Not sure?

As a job seeker, you know that being proactive is a must in this fast-moving world. And many job seekers are just too wrapped up in the day-to-day job activities to take a pulse reading of where they are in their own career.

If you answer yes to these statements, you may need a career direction evaluation:

1. Your job lacks challenge and excitement for you.
2. You are feeling unappreciated.
3. Your promotional and/or development opportunities are limited.
4. You are no longer having fun.
5. Learning is replaced with routine.
6. You sense that your skills and talents are being wasted.
7. You are suffering from stress or depression.

Individuals often take on the burden of having to know all and be all and lose themselves in that thinking. However, today, senior management is stretched beyond their capabilities at times,

causing one or more of the statements above to be true.

How do you get back on track?

1. Start with a career action plan. Yes, you may already have one, but if it is dated or not working for you, it may need some revisions or a fresh approach in a new direction.
2. Assessments or personality inventory may be helpful as tools to help you discover your strengths, preferred way of working, people relations and commonalities, etc.
3. Resume, cover letter, professional bio, LinkedIn profile, references, and other career documents may need to be updated.
4. Work with a career coach who can be extremely helpful in supporting you through this process. Coaches are perfect sounding boards for brainstorming ideas, formulating a strategy, and creating steps to help you implement it.

Don't wait. Get started now!

3

Define Professional Brand and Value to Employers

So what is your brand? At its core, your brand is your unique promise of value that you give to everyone you meet, work for, and with whom you have any sort of relationship.

Kim Schneiderman

Because stories are much more memorable than isolated facts, use an overarching storyline to explain your career, and individual stories to communicate your accomplishments. Being memorable is good!

Jean Cummings

Deliver your “elevator speech” in a few minutes. The listener—whether a recruiter, hiring manager, or interviewer—will appreciate that you know yourself well enough to articulate it succinctly. Prepare several short branding statements that relay critical information, such as your key skills and a quick rundown of your most recent employment successes.

Create Your Professional Brand

By Telling Your Story

Think of Coca-Cola. Do you have a picture of a can of Coca-Cola clearly in your mind? What do you see? Red and white/silver aluminum can with distinctive lettering. Now picture a glass of Coke, just an ordinary glass with a dark-colored beverage inside. It could be Coke, but it could also be Pepsi; it could even be root beer. If the resume of Coca-Cola just talked about a carbonated soft drink in general terms and didn't relay the unique taste, the secret formula that creates the taste, the color of the can, and distinctive script that identifies the Coca-Cola brand, the general public would murmur a collective sigh of “ho-hum.” There are many carbonated soft drinks on the market today. Why should they try Coca-Cola?

Hiring managers might feel the same way about candidates if they are not strategically showcasing their unique talents and skills in the resume. Job

seekers need to clearly communicate their professional brand—the impressive things they have done and the unique person they are. A successful resume has everything to do with branding. Understanding a candidate's personal brand is key to helping one get the job he or she wants because it distinguishes him or her from others. A good branding statement in a resume should include exclusive value, attributes, and competitive advantage blended with a successful work history.

Define and communicate personal brand around the unique value you offer your target employers – driving strengths, personal attributes, passions, and other good-fit qualities.

Meg Guiseppi

How do you create a branding statement? By telling your story in a succinct way that captures your value. Let's go back to Coca-Cola. Their brand has developed from marketing a single product to multiple products and, as important, the ethics and standards that the business represents. With your brand, companies and hiring managers are buying the standards you have set and consistently delivered. Paint a picture in the mind of the reader with your success stories.

Three additional benefits to creating your brand by telling your story:

1. **Leverage the information in an interview.** These same stories can carry a candidate through some of the most challenging interview questions, because you already have the answers (or a portion thereof) in your back pocket. You have a story to tell that can help you present yourself as a solution to a company's problem.
2. **Social Media Profiles.** Candidates can use a professional branding statement as a basis for a social media profile. It should not be exactly the same as in the resume, however, it can be the starting point for the creation of a strong online profile.
3. **Professional Bio.** The foundation of a professional bio can be seeded from the professional branding statement.

In developing your brand, consider answering these questions to help you extrapolate additional key talents that bring value to a potential employer:

Management Style:

1. How do you handle coworker conflicts?
2. What goals have you put in place for your team in the past?
3. How do you delegate assignments?
4. How do you evaluate employees?
5. What do you look for in a cohesive team? Individual member value?

Leadership Style:

1. How do you motivate others?
2. How do you mentor and train others?

Marketing Style:

1. How do you determine marketing strategies?
2. What marketing tools have you developed or used?

A good stand-alone brand statement is quite versatile. Creating a professional brand will increase your market value.

Personal Brand YOU

Tom Peters is still right, after nearly two decades: Brand You rules. Know Thyself, and market your skills in the context of the current market. Be prepared to seek contract and/or part-time jobs, and alter your resume/CV to indicate your employment flexibility.

Debbi O'Reilly

Developing your brand will help you in all stages of your job search. Do you have a rock solid brand message that clearly and concisely is achieving the results you desire? Or have you just started your career transition and haven't created a "public face" yet? Either way, the best time to tighten up or create your personal brand is now.

1. What do you have to offer? If you don't know your strengths, skills, and talents and how to showcase them, how do you expect others to get to know these things about you? Sometimes we are too

close to see the whole picture. Career brand strategists can help you extract what you don't see and leverage your attributes in a compelling manner and get attention.

- 2. Be your authentic self.** Confidence comes from within as we all know. When you are honest with yourself and present yourself to others in an authentic way, you will be showing your courage and confidence about who you are and what you can accomplish. This can do more for you in an interview than you might think. People notice the confidence that shows in your face and body language, without you saying a word.
- 3. Unique value.** What's unique about you that sets you apart from your competition? The question many hiring managers ask at some point in the interview is, "All things being equal (education, years of experience, etc.), why should I hire you over the other top

candidates?” Consider the answer to that question as something that should be included in your personal brand statement.

- 4. Adopt the right mind-set.** Be aware of how people do business today and what’s most important for hiring managers to know about you. Even as few as five to ten years ago, personal branding was different from today. Social media has had a huge impact on how job seekers’ online presence affects their personal brand. Candidates are being Google-searched, so LinkedIn profile, Facebook page, and tweets are vital pieces of a personal brand. Watch out for the digital dirt that could exist and ruin your reputation/brand.
- 5. Focus.** With messages becoming shorter and shorter (like 140-character tweets), job seekers need to be able to laser in on their achievements, milestones, and skills in a sound bite. A recent study indicated that the first seventy-five to eighty characters are what people really read. Likewise, a strong brand would include the most significant part of the message up front.

These tips should help you create a clear brand message that you can express in verbal or written communications during your job search. Now that you are on your way to creating your brand, putting some of this information into an elevator pitch of thirty to sixty seconds is important.

Hiring managers look for three things: reasons to hire (personal brand, target skills, and achievement stories); a match to their open job requirements; and your employers, titles, and lengths of tenure, all in only a six-second read. So convey your brand, speak to the job requirements, and use visual elements to emphasize only the key information you want to communicate.

Jean Cummings

Ultimately, you want to be able to present a message that is clear, targeted, and easy for anyone to understand. There are five key components of an effective self-marketing profile or pitch. Create thirty- and sixty-second sound bites. You can tailor them depending on the situation—networking meeting, answer to the “tell me about yourself” question, etc.

1. Create a professional identity.

This point has been covered previously. Incorporate who you are into this brief message, a shortened version of your unique value to a company.

2. Showcase three areas of expertise.

Highlight three areas of competency that show your value and differentiate you from the competition. Choose strengths that can easily be coupled with proof of performance of how you have helped organizations make money, save money, save time, maintain the business, or grow the business.

3. Use accomplishment-focused, metrics-driven examples to support your strengths.

Just like the resume, the marketing profile must include proof of success. Pair a strength with a specific example to illustrate that you are accomplished at what you do. Quantify accomplishments using numbers, percentages, and dollars whenever possible.

4. Discuss your background as it relates to the target function or industry.

Draw on your past experiences from several positions to solidify the scope of your skill set, show career progression, and build the business case for your candidacy. Also include relevant education, if applicable, such as a job-related or advanced academic degree, industry certifications, advanced technological skills, or leadership roles within a professional organization to showcase the diversity of your experiences and to position yourself as a unique contributor.

Make the match between your experience and the skills needed for a particular job function or industry.

Bring the conversation full circle by relating your qualifications back to the needs of the employer or the needs of a particular industry. By doing so, you prove relevancy and demonstrate why your skills are a good fit for a certain type of position.

Online Reputation Management

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of continually building your brand's online footprint.

Tomorrow's hires may well depend on how much high-value, on-brand, relevant material they find about you online. If you don't have a solid presence on three-plus social media sites, like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, you may be dropped from consideration for the job.

Jean Cummings

When searching for a job, it's very common for employers nowadays to look at your online profile. This information isn't just used to rule out candidates—finding a broad online presence can also improve your chances of getting the job by increasing your “know, like, and trust” factor. What a company finds about you online should reassure them about your qualifications and suitability as a prospective employee, not raise red flags.

But it's the negative information that can hurt your chances of getting the job. A recent survey found that 79 percent of hiring managers in the United States researched candidates online before making a hiring decision. Another survey found that 70 percent of recruiters and hiring managers

eliminated candidates after they found negative information about them from online sites like Facebook. More and more companies are reviewing the Facebook profiles of job applicants, either as a first step in the screening process (to narrow down the pool of applicants) or before inviting a candidate to an interview.

Prospective employers will make judgments about you based on what they find out about you online. You want to come across as committed, competent, skilled, and of strong character and integrity. You can manage the impression others have about you through your online presence. However, it is essential that your online professional image is also authentic and credible.

It is also important to note that if you aren't managing your personal brand online, it's still being formed (but without your input). Your online identity is determined not only by what you post, but also by what others post about you—whether a mention in a blog post, a photo tag, or a reply to a public status update. When someone searches for your name on a search engine like Google, the results that appear are a combination of information you've posted and information published by others. You can have more control of your online identity by taking a strategic, proactive approach to managing your online presence.

What is online about you is more important than ever, and you must be proactive in managing your online presence as it relates to the job search.

Assess Your Presence

The first step is to see what's out there already. Monitoring your online presence is easy if you know which tools to use. Many of these are free.

Start by Googling yourself. On the Google homepage (<http://www.google.com>), type in your name.

Note: If you have a Google account (i.e., Gmail or YouTube), you will find that you get different results if you are logged in to your Google account when you conduct your search. Log out of Google before conducting your search so you can see what others see when they Google your name.

If you have a common name, you will want to see what information is broadly available through a simple name search, but then also narrow it by your profession or geographic location. (For example: "Jane Jobseeker Public Relations" or "Jane Jobseeker Omaha.")

You will want to note how many search results are returned, but you will primarily be looking at the first two to three pages of search results.

jane jobseeker

About 301,000 results (0.19 seconds)

[\[PDF\] Jane Jobseeker - Illinois workNet](#)

www.illinoisworknet.com/.../SummerinternshipCombination.pdf

File Format: PDF/Adobe Acrobat - [Quick View](#)

Kim Tran. Current Address: Permanent Address: 234 E. University Ave. 111 Oak Street. Minneapolis, MN 55424. Des Moines, IA 50310. 612-444-4444 ...

[Jane Jobseeker | LinkedIn](#)

www.linkedin.com/in/janejobseeker

Greater Omaha Area - Nationally Recognized Public Relations Specialist and Social Media Consultant to the Cycling Industry

View **Jane Jobseeker's** professional profile on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is the world's largest business network, helping professionals like **Jane Jobseeker** discover ...

[The 7 Elements of a Highly Effective Cover Letter](#)

www.quintcareers.com/effective_cover-letter.html

Sincerely, **Jane Jobseeker.**" (Notice how Jane assumes she'll land the interview? This approach is clever, smart, and it works like a charm). Think of your cover ...

[How to Beat the Competition to Unlisted Jobs](#)

www.theladders.com > [Career Advice Home](#) > [Job Search](#)

Apr 14, 2009 – But, as Joe or **Jane Jobseeker** walking up to the company today, you'll get routed to HR — the first stop for unknowns — and will be told that the ...

Google Alerts

You should also set up Google Alerts for your name so that you can be alerted when new information is posted online about you.

<http://www.google.com/alerts>

Use your name as the search query and determine what information you want searched (Everything, News, Blogs, Video, Discussions, Book), how often you want to receive e-mail alerts, how broad you want the results to be (Everything, Only the best results), and where you want the alerts sent.



Search query:

Result type:

How often:

How many:

Your email:

[CREATE ALERT](#)

[Manage your alerts](#)

Monitor the Web for interesting new content

Google Alerts are email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your queries.

Enter a search query you wish to monitor. You will see a preview of the type of results you'll receive. Some handy uses of Google Alerts include:

- monitoring a developing news story
- keeping current on a competitor or industry
- getting the latest on a celebrity or event
- keeping tabs on your favorite sports teams

Use quotation marks to make your search more specific. You will get a preview of the search results in a box on the right-hand side of the page, which will help you further refine your search query.

For example, using quotation marks results in these sample search results:

The screenshot shows the Google Alerts interface. On the left, the search query is "Jane Jobseeker" (with quotation marks). The result type is set to "Everything", and the frequency is "As-it-happens". Below the search options are "CREATE ALERT" and "Manage your alerts" buttons. On the right, a preview box shows that there are no recent results for the search query. Below this, a sample result is shown under the "Web" category, titled "3 new results for 'Jane Jobseeker'". The results include a LinkedIn profile for Jane Jobseeker and an article titled "The 7 Elements of a Highly Effective Cover Letter".

Removing the quotation marks makes it more likely that you will receive results that are irrelevant.

The screenshot shows the Google Alerts interface with the search query "Jane Jobseeker" (without quotation marks). The result type is "Everything" and the frequency is "As-it-happens". On the right, a preview box shows a "Google Alert for today" from Google Alerts. It indicates there are 2 new results for "Jane Jobseeker" under the "News" category. The results include an article titled "Welfare carrots and sticks" and another titled "Work experience schemes under fire as Tesco makes U-turn".

You can modify these alerts at any time, so start with broad results and you can refine them over time.

Me on the Web

Me on the Web is Google's way of helping people manage their online brands. Using Me on the Web, you can create a profile to put your best foot forward, set up alerts to help you figure out when people are talking about you, and attempt to remove negative items related to your online presence.

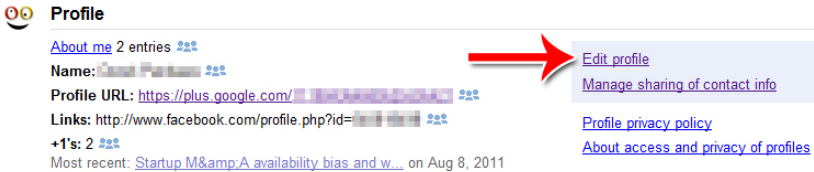
Access Google's Me on the Web here:

<https://www.google.com/dashboard/b/0/>

You will need to sign in to your Google account (or create one) to access the tools.

Google recommends keeping your profile updated so people who are searching for you will be able to find precisely the information you want them to find.

To change your profile, click "Edit profile" in your dashboard.



Profile

[About me](#) 2 entries

Name: [David Parkes](#)

Profile URL: <https://plus.google.com/>

Links: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=>

+1's: 2

Most recent: [Startup M&A availability bias and w...](#) on Aug 8, 2011

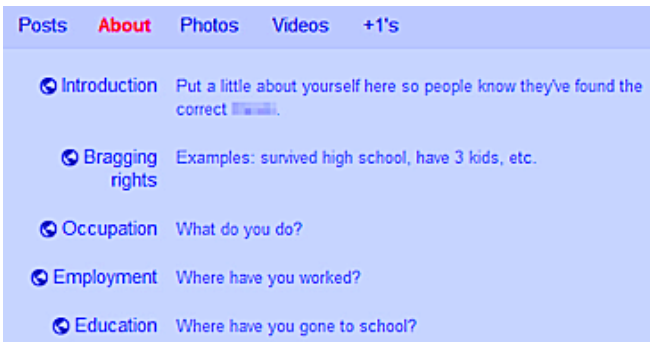
[Edit profile](#)

[Manage sharing of contact info](#)

[Profile privacy policy](#)

[About access and privacy of profiles](#)

Then just click an area to edit your profile.



Posts **About** Photos Videos +1's

[Introduction](#) Put a little about yourself here so people know they've found the correct [profile](#).

[Bragging rights](#) Examples: survived high school, have 3 kids, etc.

[Occupation](#) What do you do?

[Employment](#) Where have you worked?

[Education](#) Where have you gone to school?

One of the main features of Me on the Web is the ability to alert you when something changes with the results that come up when you search your name. Click "Set up search alerts for your data" under Me on the Web in your Google Dashboard to create your alerts.



Me on the Web

Links from your profile: 1

<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=>

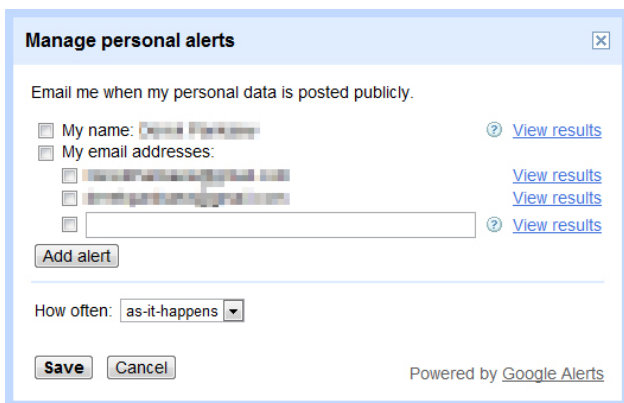
[Set up search alerts for your data](#)

[How to manage your online identity](#)

[How to remove unwanted content](#)

[About Me on the Web](#)

A new screen will pop up where you can choose what you want to be alerted for. Typically, Google will alert you whenever the results for your name or e-mail address change.



You can also set up custom alerts. For your job search, you can set up alerts whenever a company you want to work for is mentioned. Just click “Add alert” and add in as many custom alerts as you want.



Me on the Web helps inform you when you’re mentioned online with Google Alerts and helps you choose what information is displayed to the public with Google Profile.

Twitter Monitoring

You can also set up an application called IFTTT (If This Then That) to send you an e-mail whenever you are mentioned on Twitter.

Sign up for a free account at <http://ifttt.com/> and use recipe number 19739 (<http://ifttt.com/recipes/19739>). Replace “MyCompany” with your name, and you will receive instant e-mail notifications every time someone mentions your name on Twitter.

You can also use a free service like TOPSY to create alerts and monitor your online presence.

TOPSY

Real-time search for the social web

Advanced Search

Search


You can also subscribe to online services to monitor and manage your online reputation.

Reputation.com

You can sign up for a free reputation snapshot. You will likely see some of the same results as you've found through your earlier search efforts.

Take your free reputation snapshot

See how you look online.
Get instant results and find out what your reputation on the Internet looks like now — let's get started!
[Skeptical? Click here for the \(not so\) fine print.](#)

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="FREE SCAN"/>

Reputation.com also offers additional (paid) services to help you monitor and manage your online presence. For as little as \$9.95/month, the company's MyReputation Discovery will search the "Deep Web" for information about you:

<http://www.reputation.com/myreputationdiscovery>

You can also measure your social influence using a site like Klout.com (<http://klout.com/home>). KLOUT creates a Klout Score that measures your online influence (on a scale of 1 to 100).

Scrubbing Your Digital Dirt

Negative information about you online is referred to as "digital dirt." Like its physical counterpart, it can be messy and difficult to get rid of. However, one effective strategy for managing your online reputation is to "bury" your digital dirt.

Although your Google search results may have returned thousands (or hundreds of thousands) of results, it's what is in the first three to five pages of results that is most important.

There are two steps to managing your online presence: (1) removal and/or correction of incorrect or inappropriate information, and (2) posting new content that will move the unfavorable information lower in your search results.

One of the strongest ways to create positive online content is through social media. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn often appear prominently in Google search results.

Your Facebook Profile

Facebook is increasingly being used by job seekers—and employers—in the job search. More than eighteen million Americans credit Facebook as the source of how they found their current job. A 2011 Jobvite study found that 84 percent of job seekers had profiles on Facebook.

Having a Facebook account will also give you access to Facebook-related applications (apps), such as BeKnown, Glassdoor, and BranchOut, which use your Facebook network to help you connect to job opportunities. These tools allow you to leverage your network for you to find job openings and insider connections into the companies you want to work for.

It is very important to check out your privacy settings on Facebook. Restricting the information you show to the public is important—but don't just set it and forget it. Facebook occasionally updates its privacy settings, so you should review your settings regularly.

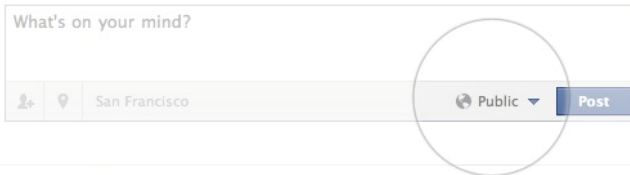
Learn more about Facebook privacy settings here:

<http://www.facebook.com/settings/?tab=privacy>

Privacy Settings

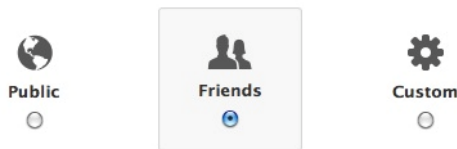
Control Privacy When You Post

You can manage the privacy of your status updates, photos and information using the inline audience selector — when you share or afterwards. Remember: the people you share with can always share your information with others, including apps. Try [editing your profile](#) to see how it works or [learn more](#).



Control Your Default Privacy

This setting will apply to status updates and photos you post to your profile from a Facebook app that doesn't have the inline audience selector, like Facebook for BlackBerry.



Another key setting is Past Post Visibility.



When you click on the “Manage Past Post Visibility” link, it will open a new box asking you to confirm that you want to change all of your past status updates to “Friends Only” visibility. If you click “Limit Old Posts,” it will automatically reset all your previous posts to a more private setting.



If you choose not to change the visibility of all your old posts, you can change the visibility of individual posts by clicking on each post. (This can be quite time-consuming if you have a lot of posts.)

Another important step is to see how the public views your profile. You can check this with Facebook’s “View As . . .” option under “Edit Profile.”

<http://www.facebook.com/editprofile.php>

Finally, be aware that when you comment on other people’s posts, the information may be more public than you were aware.

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO FACEBOOK PRIVACY











Before you comment on a post, look at its icon:	The post’s setting is ...	So your comments can be seen by ...
 Like · Comment · Share · about an hour ago · 	Public	Anyone
 Like · Comment · Share · about an hour ago ·  People in small box	Group members	Group members (duh)
 Like · Comment · Share · about an hour ago ·  People escaped from box	Friends only	The poster’s friends
 Like · Comment · Share · about an hour ago ·  Gear Shared with: Custom	Custom	Some subset of poster’s friends
 Like · Comment · Share · about an hour ago ·  Gear Shared with: 's friends of friends	Friends of friends	You have no flippin’ idea

chart by Jay Shepherd · jayshep.com · @jayshep

Be sure to post content related to your profession or career on your Facebook page—and make those posts public. Share content you find in industry publications, traditional media, and blogs. Comment thoughtfully on the content. Post inspirational quotes from business leaders and relevant facts, figures, and infographics.

Keep in mind, however, the “golden rule” in posting any information online: If you don’t want your mom (or grandmother or sister) to see it, don’t post it. Anyone who has access to your private profile can take a screenshot and post it publicly.

In addition, some employers are asking for access to Facebook accounts. They ask the job seeker to log in to his account and then peek over his shoulder as he scrolls through the account. In this instance, if you change post settings to “Only Me,” those will still be visible if you are logged in to your account, and the hiring manager will be able to see them on your page. You are better off deleting controversial content—or not posting it in the first place. As the old saying goes, “Sometimes the best offense is a best defense.”

Requesting Removal of Online Information

If you find information online that you don’t want to be public, first, determine who controls the content. For example, if the photo you want to hide is on your Facebook profile, you can change the visibility settings

of that photo. If, however, the unwanted content resides on a website or page you don't control, you can request that it be removed.

Note: Google won't remove the content for you. Google's company policy is that they will not change search results to cater to individual people. (If, however, the site in question is publishing your confidential personal information, Google will intervene. This includes your social security or government ID number, bank account or credit card number, an image of your handwritten signature, or your name if it is associated with a porn site.)

To get an item removed, you need to first contact the website's owner to get them to change it. You want the information removed at the source because if it isn't removed from the original website, people will still be able to see it, even if it doesn't appear in Google's search results. And remember, removing content from Google's search results doesn't remove it from other search engines (e.g., Bing, Yahoo).

After the webmaster has made the change, the negative result will still show up in Google for some time until Google updates their index. Note: If the content has not been removed from the website, the content will reappear in Google's search results when that site is indexed again in the future.

If you've removed a negative item and need Google's index to reflect that immediately, you can go through Google's removal procedures to have that item taken out of the index. Here's how.

Start by going to the removal request page:

<http://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/removals>

Click "New removal request."

My Removal Requests

Use this page to request removal of a page or site from Google's search results.

Use this tool to remove content from Google search results.

You have no pending removal requests.

New removal request

Enter the URL you want removed.

New removal request

Enter the URL that you'd like to remove (case-sensitive)

Continue

Finally, select the reason you want it removed and hit the “Request” button. Make sure you choose the right reason for your situation.

Remove a URL from Google's search results

URL:

Reason:

- Page has been removed or blocked from search engines
- The page has changed and Google's cached version is out of date
- The website owner won't remove personal content
- Inappropriate content appears in our SafeSearch filtered results

Populating Your Online Presence

You can distinguish yourself online by using your middle name or middle initial online (and then be sure to use the same name on your career marketing documents).

Own Your Name (Vanity URL)

One of the best things you can do is register your name as a domain name, also known as a vanity URL. You should also claim your name on social media accounts. Social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer vanity URLs, where your username is in the URL. You can then create a simple website or blog, which provides links to all of your online accounts—especially the ones you want to direct a prospective employer to review. If you use your real name as your handle on social network sites, you will rank higher in Google search results.

Claim Your Profile (Or Remove Your Profile)

There are numerous “people search” sites that take publicly available information and aggregate it online. You have two choices with these sites—beat ‘em or join ‘em. You can either ask to have your information removed from the site, or you can claim your profile and create an account (usually free) to ensure the information listed is accurate.

Here are some of the most popular free “people search” sites:

<http://www.spokeo.com/>

<http://www.peoplesmart.com/>

<http://www.whitepages.com/>

<http://www.addresses.com/>

<http://www.411.com/>

<http://www.emailfinder.com/>

<http://www.intelius.com/>

<http://www.freephonetracer.com/>

<http://www.mylife.com/>

<http://www.phonedetective.com/>

<http://www.phonebook.com/>

<http://www.archives.com/>

“People search” sites make money by selling your personal information online, which means they don’t like to remove that information. You can often find instructions for submitting your request for removal on the website (sometimes it’s hidden under “Privacy” or “Terms of Service” at the bottom of the website), but they may make you jump through hoops to do so, requiring you to fax a request or send a copy of your identification.

Requesting removal once also won’t guarantee that the information won’t reappear in the future. Because many of these companies acquire their data from a variety of public sources, it’s likely that your name will reappear when they re-index their database.

Other Ways to Create Content

Postings on blogs and news sites often appear in search results. Writing constructive comments can be a good way to create new content for Google to associate with your name.

An extremely powerful way to create new content for your Google search results is by blogging. A personal or business blog—if you are committed to it—can provide a solid online presence. If you don’t like to write, you can shoot videos and publish it on your blog.

Posting content on these sites will also show up prominently in search results:

- YouTube
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- Google+
- About.me
- bigsight

Reviews you post on Amazon.com will also show up in your Google search results.

Also, while we’re at it, ensure that your LinkedIn profile aligns with your resume. Many recruiting managers and hiring managers compare the two.

Reputation Management is Not a One-Time Thing

Social recruiting isn't going away. A 2011 Jobvite Social Recruiting Survey found that 89 percent of employers surveyed said they would recruit using social media in 2012, and nearly 55 percent of those surveyed said they are increasing their budgets for social recruiting. With the increasing emphasis on social recruiting, online reputation management is even more critical.

Some of the steps involved in online reputation management can be done quickly, but the Internet has a long memory, so be aware that it will take time for your new content to begin replacing old content, and even more time for your old information to disappear from your search results. Most important, the need for ongoing online reputation management is vital. Continue to monitor your online presence, even when you're not in active job search mode.

About the Authors



Louise Garver has career coaching, recruitment and corporate management experience, a successful 26-year history as an Executive Coach, Resume Writer, Personal Branding Strategist, Online Identity Management & Job Search Strategist, along with 13 career-related certifications, a master's degree and post-graduate certification in career counseling. Executives work with Louise to capture their brand message and clearly, consistently, and effectively communicate it in their career documents and communications. This laser focus expedites results. Louise is featured as a career and resume expert for over 1000 career and professional associations, as well as in over 30 career and resume publications by JIST, Career Press and other publishers.



Christine Edick is a coach and trainer, designing and delivering customized seminars and training programs in the areas of interpersonal communication, leadership development, team building, work process organization, and customer service. She works with entry-level to senior leaders in a variety of industries. She also consults and coaches executives seeking assistance with their career path to achieve higher levels of accomplishment and success within a corporate setting. Christine has 8 career-related certifications and is featured in a dozen career and resume publications.