

Transcript: Building Your Professional Brand with LinkedIn, Twitter, and More

[00:00:00:00] Building Your Professional Brand with LinkedIn, Twitter, and More. A tutorial from Bedford/St. Martin's.

[00:00:07:09] Hey. My name's Maggie Lipsky. I just graduated with a degree in statistics, and I'm on the search for my first job. The career advisor at my school told me that the key to landing a great job is creating a strong professional brand. But what does this mean? And how do I do this?

[00:00:23:10] Your professional brand is the identity you create for yourself online. It should clearly communicate to potential employers who you are and what you have to offer professionally. In this tutorial, I'll show you how I built my professional brand using tools like LinkedIn and Twitter – and how you can, too.

[00:00:40:07] Before you BUILD or DO anything online, set aside time to research how others in the industry – those with your dream job – crafted their brands. Careful research will help you align your brand with your industry's, showing that you've done your homework and that you see yourself easily melding with their values and culture. Also, research will help you uncover important information about industry trends and developments, key organizations and people, essential skills to obtain, and helpful tips on the job search.

[00:01:06:02] Here's some strategies to guide your research: Determine where people in your industry are building their brands and what they're doing to further them. Which social networks are they using? Do they maintain blogs? Participate in discussion forums? I'm hoping to find a job as a data analyst. A classmate of mine who graduated last year is a data analyst, so I start by seeing what he's done. I see that he has a LinkedIn profile and a website where he blogs about projects and posts helpful learning resources for others in the industry. He also belongs to Github, a social coding site. As I do my research, I'll also take note of tone. Is it casual or formal? Quirky or straightforward? Do people mention interests they have outside of work, or are they all business?

[00:01:48:24] Once you've thoroughly researched your industry, you can begin building your own brand. The best place to start is LinkedIn, a professional social network -- sort of like Facebook for work. Like on Facebook, you'll have your own profile as well as a news feed showing activity among your connections. Go to www.linkedin.com and set up an account.

[00:02:10:09] What to do first? Pull up your resume – this content will make up the bulk of your profile. Fill in the "Experience" section by transferring your work and education from your resume. Even though you may have proofread your resume a million times, proofread everything again.

[00:02:26:11] Next, write a brief summary of your goals and accomplishments. Take your time with this. It will be the first thing people read on your profile. Your summary should articulate your immediate career goal, what makes you qualified to reach that goal (that is, your experience), your strengths and skills – presented using searchable keywords.

[00:02:46:06] Here's mine: Aspiring data analyst with a strong statistics background and experience with segmentation and response modeling. Quick learner proficient in SAS and Python. Proven aptitude for understanding markets and customers. This summary gives a thorough but quick overview of who I am and where I want to go, and it also contains specific skills and program proficiencies employers may search for, like response modeling and SAS.

[00:03:11:08] Searchable keywords are essential to a successful profile. You'll see that LinkedIn has a Skills & Endorsements section. You should add as many specific skills as possible before you connect with others. Then, your connections will have the ability to endorse you for specific skills and to add, with your permission, other skills. You can also add test scores, certifications, volunteer experience, and more.

[00:03:34:14] What else should I set up before I begin looking for connections? A photo! Choosing your LinkedIn photo is no small matter. You don't need a professional photographer, but your photo should be a high-resolution headshot. You used to make your first impression at your interview. Now, you'll often make it here.

[00:03:50:26] Now that you've built your profile, it's time to connect. LinkedIn will allow you to connect your account to your e-mail and to other social media accounts so that you can find people you already know. You should also think about following your university and joining groups and professional organizations that interest you.

[00:04:08:24] My LinkedIn profile's up and running, but I'd like to do more to distinguish myself. I minored in writing, and I often find myself reading industry news, eager to contribute my own thoughts. I'd like to start a blog so I can join the conversation. But I need my posts to reach people, so I think a Twitter account would be useful for me. In addition to tweeting my blog posts, I can follow all of my favorite industry news outlets in one place and find even more of them.

[00:04:33:09] To set up a Twitter account, go to www.twitter.com. Choose a handle that is simple, straightforward, and professional. Then, set up your profile. By creating your LinkedIn profile, you've already done some legwork. Why? Because one of the keys to a successful brand is consistency. Use the same photo, the same name (that is, don't be inconsistent about nicknames, middle initials, etc.) and, with modifications, the same summary across all of your accounts. I'll need to shorten my tagline so it meets the 160 character requirement. My tagline should give potential followers an idea of what I DO on Twitter. On Twitter, people are often fun and creative with their bios while still maintaining professionalism.

[00:05:19:27] You should also add hashtags to your bio where relevant. Hashtags group each and every piece of content marked with that hashtag together, so that, for example, I can easily find every Twitter post about #bigdata. Including hashtags in your Twitter bio will help potential followers find you.

[00:05:38:27] Now that I've put my profile together, I'll find accounts to follow. I start by searching for people, organizations, and publications that I read already. It's a good idea to follow the individual editors of publications too, to get more diversity and personalized takes on issues. Then, I'll look at the followers of my followers. Before I start adding too many followers, I should post some content. If I appear to be an active Twitter user, people will be more likely to follow me back.

[00:06:09:05] Don't underestimate the power of Twitter to help you land a job. Follow companies at which you're interested in working. Consider using Twitter's Direct Message feature to ask specific individuals if they'd be willing to do an informational interview with you. Same goes for LinkedIn. Hence its name, social media adds a conversational dimension to the job search. Take advantage of it.

[00:06:28:26] I know my professional brand will grow and change, but I'm feeling pretty good about the one I've crafted for myself right now. It communicates my strengths and abilities in a clear, professional manner and demonstrates my dedication and initiative. Now, it's time to start searching for that job – staying active on my LinkedIn and Twitter accounts and using them to land an awesome one. Now you can go ahead and create your own job-grabbing professional brand, too.