

# Use Social Media to Get an IT Job

5 Actionable Steps for Every Stage of Your Technology Career

Finding a technology job that suits your skills, needs and wants is a lot easier than it used to be thanks to social media. First, social media helps you highlight who you know — a good first step to getting a foot in the door — with direct links to people who have offered you testimonials and endorsements, and visible connections to your allies in the industry.

Social media also works fast, and in real time. You can follow a link that's just been posted on Twitter and apply for a job on the spot rather than scrolling through pages of job postings that have been gathering dust. It's a live connection to people posting jobs and looking to hire, and lets you get in the same digital space to introduce yourself, rather than waiting for a networking event to come up.

Before you get started in your job hunt, make sure your LinkedIn profile has an engaging, keyword-friendly summary statement that speaks to why you're in the industry and what you can do for clients/employers. Use powerful verbs to begin every bullet point on your LinkedIn profile. Try words like organized, managed, oversaw, coordinated and executed — be bold with your language. You can also use tips from the Managing Your Reputation and Connections Online handout in the CompTIA AITP Professional Branding Chapter Activity Kit  to make sure your social media profiles are professional and fresh — then use this guide to take action.

#### **EARLY CAREER**

##### TARGET RECRUITERS DIRECTLY

Look on LinkedIn for people who indicate that they're tech recruiters, hit Connect and then customize the information. "Hi, Chad, my name's Aamil and I'm searching for a job in cybersecurity. If that's your specialty, let's connect." Once you've got a connection and have sent a resume, keep in touch and ask for feedback. When feedback comes, take it to heart rather than get defensive. If you hear from a recruiter that you need XY or Z to be successful, work on that before you keep going.

##### FIND JOBS IN REAL TIME

Follow tech recruiters on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. You'll start seeing posts like "Dovetail is looking for a senior software developer" with links to apply. Keeping an eye on those posts will give you a sense of the jobs available, and you can start building relationships with the people looking to hire.

##### BUILD YOUR BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

You know a lot more people than you think. Go on LinkedIn and start connecting with people you've worked with before, know from different projects or groups, or have met at different events. Link up with at least 75 people so you look like you've got a decent set of business connections.

### TAKE PART IN THE TECHNOLOGY CONVERSATION

Conversations about technology are happening in live webinars, Facebook Live streams, LinkedIn Groups, Twitter chats and subReddits. Get involved in these online conversations and you'll start seeing patterns: the same industry folks showing up, the same hot topics and the same common issues among tech people. Once you're comfortable with the language and tone happening among IT professionals, comment when it's relevant. Follow companies on LinkedIn and you can stay updated with what those companies care about.

### SHOW PERSISTENCE AND DRIVE

When you get traction from a job site or a recruiter, take the time to follow up, return emails and ask questions. Make sure you have a reason for making the call or sending the email, and keep that line of communication open.

## ■ MID-LEVEL CAREER

### SHARE YOUR STATS

Call out numbers that make you look great. Everyone is "experienced in social media" but a real star says "I grew my company's followers by 800 percent and created social campaigns that brought in \$485,000 last quarter." Use a program like PiktoChart or PowerPoint to make a persuasive infographic that shows how you add value, and share it on your social media pages. You can also add presentations, white papers, awards and other files to your profile. Highlighting a few big projects you worked on or accomplished helps round out your profile.

### SIGNAL THAT YOU'RE LOOKING

If you're keeping it low-key, set your LinkedIn profile to indicate you're an "open candidate," which lets recruiters know you're looking, but keeps it hidden from your contacts. It's a great way to passively look for a job without telling the world you're on the hunt. If you're open about looking, use social media posts and direct messages to let your friends and former co-workers know that you're looking for a job, with details on the kind of job you're looking for. Warm up before you start pitching to more distant connection by commenting on posts and offering your opinion on hot topics. Showing up in people's social media feeds will remind them that you're out there, and being direct about your job hunt expands your reach.

### INVESTIGATE COMPANY CULTURE

Lots of people out there have relevant skills, so the notion that you'll fit in with the people you'll work with plays a role in hiring decisions. To get a sense of a company's corporate culture, camp out on the social media sites and get a feel for their style — and maybe even their needs — and you'll have a better shot of fitting being what companies call "a good fit."

### JOIN PRIVATE FACEBOOK GROUPS

Facebook has a lot going on under the surface. Many people are communicating behind the scenes in private and invitation-only groups related to technology. Some can be found in a cold search engine query, so try specifics that match your needs like "Travel Surgical Tech Providers," or "Tech Jobs in San Francisco." You'll have to send a request to join, and once you're on the inside, wait and see how the group operates before you jump in.

#### POST OUTSIDE THE BIG PLAYERS

Employers and recruiters look outside of job sites to find candidates, so stay active on discussion boards and in subReddits related to your technology interests. If you're into writing code, make sure your profile sounds professional on GitHub. If you're obsessed with C++, see who's talking about it online. The point is to make yourself discoverable, no matter where people are looking.

### ADVANCED CAREER

#### SEARCH FOR WHAT YOU WANT

At this point in your career, you know the difference between what feels like easy money and a job that feels like work, and hopefully are in a position to be picky. Map out exactly the kind of job you want, and use social media search engines to be targeted in your job hunt.

#### SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

If you've been around the industry many years, it's time to stretch your legs as a thought leader. Write blog posts or hire a ghostwriter if you don't think you can write blogs yourself, and share articles related to your field with insightful comments in the posts. Posting updates directly to the LinkedIn newsfeed is a great way to get noticed and make a name for yourself in that space.

#### GO AHEAD AND NAME DROP

Connections are key, and if you've been lucky enough to work with smart, big players in the industry, share their work, comment on their posts and let the world know you have a history.

#### USE BACK DOOR CHANNELS

Use back-channels to find companies that are hiring. If you know someone working where you want to work, send a direct message and what's going on inside the company. Even if they don't work in the same department you're targeting, there's usually an overall knowing of hiring freezes, open positions or people who are about to leave.

#### MAKE NO BONES ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Words like "senior" and "manager" play well into the keywords of your introductory statement on all your social media platforms. Show that you're far along in your career by playing those up. It also makes it easier for job recruiters to find you if they're finding candidates using a search engine. You're as experienced as you'll ever be, so don't be afraid to talk about it.

