

# HOW THE FRIENDSHIPS YOU MAKE TODAY CAN HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL TOMORROW



*By Patricia Polischuk Diver*

TODAY, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LIKE YOU STAY CONNECTED WITH FRIENDS THROUGH DAILY TEXTING AND INSTANT MESSAGING AS WELL AS THROUGH ONE OR MORE OF MANY SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES, SUCH AS FACEBOOK, MYSPACE AND TWITTER. STATUS UPDATES, PHOTO SHARING AND PERSONAL YOUTUBE V-LOGS MAY WELL BE SOME OF YOUR DAILY RITUALS. THIS IS THE NEW NORM. BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT THE FRIENDSHIPS YOU MAINTAIN, BOTH ONLINE AND OFF, CAN ALSO HELP YOU GET A JOB? ↘

## CONNECT YOURSELF TO THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

As you think about your future and what happens after high school, remember that any career counsellor will tell you that up to 85% of jobs are found through the hidden job market. What is the hidden job market? It consists of jobs that are not advertised, the kind you can only find out about through other people. For example, if a friend of your parents asks, "Would you be interested in a summer job at our company? We always hire a summer student." — that's the hidden job market in action! And your relationships can get your foot in the door.

## EXPOSING THE TRUTH ABOUT ONLINE JOB BOARDS

Given the popularity of the Internet, many people assume that web-based job boards are the best place to find employment. But the reality is not so simple. If you visit a site such as Monster.com, there may be thousands of jobs available to you. Fantastic, right? But think for a minute: how do you make yourself stand out from all the hundreds of people applying for the same job? How does your résumé not get lost in the pile?

## "85% OF JOBS ARE FOUND THROUGH THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET."

To make hiring easier, many organizations have developed Employee Referral Programs. These programs allow employees to recommend people they know for jobs and even pay them if the person is hired.

## USING YOUR CONTACTS CAN HELP YOU STAND APART FROM THE CROWD

So why is all of the above important to you now? Whether you are going back to school, starting an apprenticeship program, or graduating and looking for a job, your friends, family, teachers, part-time employers and co-workers can be a source of job leads for you in the future. You're already an expert at keeping in constant contact with your friends. Make sure you maintain these connections as you head off to post-secondary school, graduate, relocate or change jobs.

It's also really important to continually build new relationships so that your network of contacts directly increases the number of employment opportunities that may come your way in the future. It's good to communicate regularly with your network, and sending out a Happy New Year message or responding to birthday reminders is easy with today's technology.



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### Tip

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**Today's technology** makes it easier than ever for you to communicate regularly with your network of contacts. Sure, they're fun, but Facebook, MySpace and Twitter might just help you get the job you want!

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I'm not suggesting that you collect random names; I am recommending that you keep in touch with your friends and acquaintances. Keep your e-profiles updated. Let people know what you're doing with your life, and what your career goals are. This way, when opportunities arise in the future, you and your friends can help each other.

## THE POWER OF PERSONAL REFERRALS

Through social networking sites, I have reconnected with old friends from high school and university—some of whom are now my real estate agent, mechanic, financial advisor, etc. If given the choice of working with someone they know and trust, versus someone they found through an online job posting, most people will go with the person they know. This doesn't mean you are going to get hired because you know someone, but it does mean if the competition for a job comes down to you and someone else with the exact same skills and experience, your previous connection can help—a lot!

## DON'T LET YOUR E-NETWORK GET STALE

Waiting until you need to find a job to reconnect with people is not a good idea, as you may feel embarrassed to contact someone that you haven't spoken to in many years. Instead, keep in touch with people as often as you can. Better yet, look for ways that you can help them. You'll be amazed at the benefits that come back to you: opportunities, information and a reputation for being helpful and good with people—both positive traits for a new employee to possess.

## "REMEMBER, WHEN USING THE INTERNET, NOTHING IS PRIVATE. EMPLOYERS REGULARLY LOOK AT FACEBOOK AND MYSPACE WHEN RECRUITING, HIRING AND SCREENING APPLICANTS."

## IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO SEE IT ONLINE, DON'T POST IT!

Remember, when using the Internet, nothing is private. Employers regularly look at Facebook and MySpace when recruiting, hiring and screening applicants. Google yourself. What content is out there that you have posted, and what have others posted? This may include photos, personal blogs and content. If you would be embarrassed to talk about it in an interview, you may not want to display it online.

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