



# DEVELOPING YOUR BRAND

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Your personal brand begins when an employer receives your resume and continues when they Google you, inquire about you to their network, and call your references. It is solidified when they meet you in person. Does the employer “meet” the same person at every place? There are other tip sheets to help you with building a strong resume and interview skills. This resource focuses mainly on your online brand.

- **Define your brand:** What do you want to be known for? What do you stand for?
- **Define your audience:** Who do want to see your content?
- **Create content:** What skills, experiences and knowledge can you share to connect with your audience?
- **Be authentic:** Are you using both professional language and words that are real to who you are?
- **Engage with your audience:** Are you sharing content and commenting on posts and articles?
- **Be consistent:** Does an employer find the same version of you on all sites?

## YOUR ONLINE BRAND

This is your presence on social media and networking websites. It communicates your professional (or lack thereof) potential and fit to prospective employers. The information employers find when they Google you can make or break their decision to hire you. You are better served to put forth an effort to proactively and carefully develop your online presence and brand.

### Social Media

Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Pinterest, Snapchat, blogs, etc. may become your unintentional virtual resume. Pay attention to privacy settings and control strangers’ ability to view information. Use correct grammar and spelling to convey a level of professionalism and maturity even on social sites. Always interact with your career in mind - what you post in college, may cause trouble in the future. You never know when a follower has the ability to open or close your access to a networking or job opportunity.

**LinkedIn** is a professional networking site that allows you to share your virtual resume and demonstrate your expertise as you follow companies, join groups and communicate with professionals. Please see LinkedIn Tip Sheet for additional help building your profile. *Maintain a professional presence and ask for introductions.*

## DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGY

Assess your current presence online by Googling yourself and consider setting-up a personal Google Alert.

Decide what message you want your profiles and posts to communicate to employers and your network. Strive to strengthen and bring consistency to your profiles. Read and comment on career related blogs and articles and join professional groups.

## EMAIL

While a student, using your ut.utm.edu email is fine. However, it is only available for six months after you graduate. When applying for internships, full-time jobs and graduate programs, use a professional email that contains your name: `firstname.lastname@gmail.com`. Don’t use an email that includes nicknames, hobbies, etc. Also, don’t include birthday dates for security purposes.

Communicating professionally through email is extremely important when building your network and job searching. Develop good habits so you don’t accidentally use “text talk” in your emails, resume and cover letters.

Be cautious of word choices as email is void of body language, and a “tone” can be misunderstood. Don’t compensate attempts at sarcasm or humor with emoticons, emojis or exclamation points.

### Content

Always include a subject line, salutation and closing. Remember, emails can be quickly and easily forwarded to others. Make sure the topic is not of a private nature. Adhere to spelling and grammatical rules. Proofread before you hit send.

### Attachments

Check with the recipient to ensure that it is permissible for them to receive attachments. Ensure that the type of file you are sending can be opened by the recipient to maintain software compatibility. Keep file size as small as possible to avoid jamming the recipient’s mailbox.

## YOUR RIGHTS

Employers should not ask for your passwords (social media, email, etc.) during an interview, but if the position includes you using the organization’s social media sites, they may ask that you log into your account to demonstrate knowledge of navigating the various social media platforms. In this case, keep in mind that your social media presence is even more relevant to your job search.



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