



## 5 STEPS TO BUILD A POSITIVE PERSONAL BRAND ON FACEBOOK

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Unless you've been living under a rock, it's no mystery that social media is on the rise. Social media has become more than just a pastime for teenagers and college students, and it's now more important than ever to get in the mix of viewing and sharing user-generated content. In 2011, major social networking platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, and Google+) saw a growth of 86% new users. 2012 won't be seeing the same growth rate, but instead there will be an increase in user engagement. With increased engagement, you can bet employers will be focusing more on social media to hire future employees. So with that being said, how does one go about finding a job using Facebook?

For those who are new to Facebook, one thing you should decide early on is whether to use it primarily for professional networking or social networking. It is said that Facebook and business don't mix well. Many younger job-seekers change their online names or deactivate their profiles to hide inappropriate personal content. Still, Facebook is notorious for having confusing privacy controls, so in order to maintain a professional profile, it's best to always be conscientious of posting only content that you would want a future employer to see. Here, we will show you the first steps of creating a Facebook profile for professional networking.

### 1. Show your best face.

When you first sign up on Facebook, one thing that will be stressed is to upload a photo of yourself. This is the most basic part, as the name "Facebook" originates from what is literally a book of headshots that is traditionally handed out at universities to identify new students. Find a good quality, semi-professional photo of yourself and use it as your main profile picture. This photo is the gateway to your profile and is the first thing a user will see when you add them to your network.

### 2. Fill out your personal info.

This is all the information that is displayed on the About tab of your profile. **Many people now find out more about someone by looking at their Facebook profile than actually talking to them in person, and you can use this to your advantage.** Filling out sections like Work and Education, Living, and Contact Info are the most important because they give a person a quick and easy overview of your background and history.

There are other sections like Family and Interests that are not crucial for professional networking purposes, but are okay to fill out (again, use discretion in what type of activities and interests you select). Be wary of Relationship Status; it's probably best just to leave this blank if you are not using your profile for social purposes.



### **3. Add a cover photo.**

The cover photo is a new feature and is the large banner-style photo behind your profile picture. While this cover photo is not mandatory, it is a visually appealing way to display your professional interests or hobbies. Interested in Biotech? Find a beautiful graphic of a DNA helix or protein structure as your cover photo. Do you do freelance photography? Use the cover photo area to display one of your best shots.

### **4. Choose your friends wisely.**

The people you are adding to your Facebook network can see who your other added friends are. By mixing personal and professional contacts, you run the risk of a college buddy posting a comment or tagging an old photo that you don't want your industry colleagues to see. Facebook has the capability of creating and managing lists of friends with different privacy levels, but that gets too complicated to maintain. The best way to keep control of a professional profile is just to not add any "friend" who may jeopardize your chances of employment.

### **5. Engage!**

Once you have the first 3 steps down and get the hang of how Facebook functions, it's time to make your profile come alive. Post daily updates of content relevant to your job search. Find the latest industry breakthroughs from blogs, news sites and forums, and "Like" or post those links on Facebook. Write succinct and informed opinions along with your links. Subscribe to Facebook updates of industry leaders and other relevant figures ([facebook.com/subscriptions/suggestions](https://www.facebook.com/subscriptions/suggestions)) and comment on their updates when you have something insightful to say.

While you want to drive awareness of your knowledge and passion for the subject, you also don't want to overwhelm and annoy your Facebook friends with too much activity. Post diverse content that will provide value to your audience more than self-advertisement. Once you effectively achieve this balance, people will start branding you as a subject matter expert of your field.

Being able to brand yourself using social media is an extra edge, but the most basic part of using Facebook to find a job is just keeping your profile clean and consistently updated. On the Internet, you never know just who is looking at your online activity, but if your activity is relevant to your professional goals, getting noticed will pay off. Being well-connected in this economy is the extra boost that many people need to get hired, and there is no better and easier tool than Facebook for doing that.