

## How to Use Social Networking, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter in Your Job Search

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

In Los Angeles—like most major cities—if you go to a major auto dealer you will notice a group of ten or more salespeople, usually men, who are standing together (smoking, drinking coffee, gossiping, and so forth) waiting for you. In some dealerships it is actually quite intimidating. Less than three minutes after your getting out of the car, a salesman will put his cigarette out and start to approach you. The salespeople stand there all day and wait. They also joke among themselves:

- “That one’s hot; why do you always get the hot ones?”
- “That guy’s got a printout and knows our costs. You’re screwed.”

The banter among these guys goes back and forth all day long. I’ve actually listened in on them before because it’s amusing and instructive. The salespeople go to sales meetings, are hired and fired quickly, and are trained to close deals. They take people into their little cubicles and offices and attempt to get them to pay as much money as possible for the cars. They have all sorts of games to sell cars that they like to play among themselves. In short, the salespeople are extremely focused on the customers who show up and are right in front of them.

I used to look at cars a lot. I’ve given my card to salespeople before. Only once or twice has the man ever followed up with me after meeting me. The salesmen who did follow up simply left me a message and nothing more. No second phone calls. No follow-up letters. Nothing.

I get a new car every few years. A few years ago, I had a luxury car. Then I got a sports car. Then I got a pickup truck. I love cars and always have. However, in all my years of buying cars, I have never heard from the salesperson after I purchased the car. Instead, I can only assume they feel like it is more productive to stand under the awning of the dealership waiting for the next stranger to drive up.

- A few years ago, I purchased a Ford truck. I like Fords. If the salesperson who sold me the truck had called me and asked me if I was interested in purchasing a Lincoln Continental a few years later, I probably would have bought one. When I go to New York (or any other major city) I always get picked up in those Lincolns. I like them. I’ve checked them out online several times and would like to own one. Yet a salesperson has never contacted me about that.
- A few cars ago, I had a Mercedes. I gave it to my wife and she drove it until it had 100,000-plus miles on it. Eventually it started to have all sorts of maintenance problems. We went and bought another one at a dealership not too far from our house. In the years that I had that original Mercedes, I never heard from the salesman who sold it to me. Had he stayed in touch with me I would have bought the second car from him instead of the other salesman from whom we purchased the car.

I could list numerous examples like this with just cars. However, this idea applies to everything. Whether it is clothes, electronics, real estate, or otherwise—most businesses (and salespeople) I have done business with in the past simply have forgotten about me after selling me something. More than just this, the businesses have forgotten about me after *not* even selling me something and my expressing interest in them. In the case of the auto salesmen, it is as if they have the idea that standing on the side of the road is a more productive exercise than contacting past prospects, past customers, and others eager to buy.

In your [job search](#) and career, the desires and circumstances of the employers you may be interested in working for are constantly changing. By merely showing regular interest and continually communicating with an employer you would like to work for, you dramatically increase your chances of getting employed and improving your circumstances (no matter what they are) if and when the employer is ready to “pull the trigger” and hire someone like you.

Good businesses know how to stay in touch with and constantly communicate with their potential clients and past customers. In fact, the best businesses are generally masters at this. Check your e-mail from today and the past few days. How many successful businesses that you have frequented in the past are e-mailing you information? I bet it is a lot.

Here is a list of some of the companies that I have purchased from in the past that send me at least a few e-mails each week trying to sell me something:

- Amazon
- eBay
- MSN
- Apple
- Orbitz
- Adobe
- Restoration Hardware
- Dell
- Neiman Marcus

In fact, some of these companies are sending me e-mails on almost a daily basis. What do all these companies have in common? They are all respected companies. I DO NOT get spammed on a weekly basis by unrespected companies—just the respected ones. I want to make sure I highlight this again:

*I do not get SPAMMED by unsuccessful companies, just successful ones.*

Yes, I do get e-mails about stuff like Viagra and so forth from who knows who—but when it comes to getting spam e-mail, I generally am only getting it from successful companies I have done business with in the past and/or signed up on one of their mailing lists.

Why do you think this is? I would venture to say that successful companies have it together enough to know that spamming me is a good use of their time. They are much more likely to make a sale by spamming me than they are by chasing new business. People who are already familiar with them are much better prospects than people who are not. This is something that smart businesses and the people who run them understand.

In contrast, when I frequent a small, lesser-known brand, the brand typically forgets about me completely. I rarely hear from them again after making the purchase. They just do not have their act together enough to stay in touch with me. This is a reflection (in my opinion) that the company is not large enough and successful enough to have its act together in such a way that it is able to consistently develop a relationship with me by e-mailing me. E-mails from lesser-known brands are infrequent and sporadic at best.

Prior to e-mail, there was direct mail. Direct mail eventually became so sophisticated that companies like Victoria's Secret started sending people a new catalogue DAILY if they thought the cost-benefit analysis of designing, printing, and mailing you a catalogue made sense. They would “run the numbers” and send you as many catalogues as they could if they predicted they would come out ahead based on your previous spending patterns. Make no mistake about it—junk mail makes sense for big companies, and that is why they send so much of it.

If I am getting spammed by respected companies like Yahoo! and Apple, do you think there is anything wrong with your staying in touch with:

- Companies you have interviewed with in the past and who know you
- People you have worked with in the past and are now at other companies
- Companies and people you meet in the course of doing business

I had to get off LinkedIn because I was receiving so many requests from people **looking for jobs**—it became too much to handle, and most of the people I did not know. But LinkedIn is an amazing tool. You should be using services like LinkedIn, Facebook, and so forth to stay connected to people. This keeps you in the forefront of their minds. *Out of sight means out of mind.*

A few years ago I received a request to connect on LinkedIn from someone I had not heard from in years. I thought to myself: “*Why is this guy contacting me? We dislike each other anyway ...*” But then I thought about him and realized I knew someone who would be interested in meeting and talking to him about a project. As a consequence of this, something productive happened in both of their careers.

Every employer you have ever interviewed with (successfully or unsuccessfully) and everyone you know should be contacted on a regular basis. Follow the lessons of what the most successful companies do and stay in touch with people. This is the lesson of the largest companies out there. They do not let people forget about them, and they want to be there when you decide to purchase something.

Employers are no different from a consumer. They are periodically in the market to purchase something (you). It is important that you are there when the employer is ready to make a purchase. Like people, employers are most comfortable purchasing “known quantities” and brands they are most familiar with. Here, by continually staying in touch with people you are interested in working for, you are much more likely to be hired when the time comes.

## THE LESSON

You greatly increase your chances of being hired by maintaining constant contact with employers for whom you would like to work. Services like LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media are invaluable tools to connect with potential employers. Use these tools to stay in contact with every employer with whom you have interviewed (successfully or unsuccessfully), and everyone you know; maintaining such a high level of contact will make you much more likely to be hired when the time comes.