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Application process – how to boost online appearance

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Digitization has been a long-discussed topic all over the world and especially now looking at the latest Covid-19 situation, it proves to have been a good choice for companies already involved in the prospective transformation. Having a look at the Human Resource sector and application processes, online profiles on well-known business and employment-oriented service platforms like Linked-In (international userbase) or Xing (rather seen as regional example for Germany) gain relevance and networking is nowadays happening not only on a personal, but also on a digital level. European NEETS (young people neither in education, employment or training) need to be aware of this fact and raise their chances for better working perspectives through activating and thereafter boosting their online profiles.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok are examples of internationally well-known social media platforms with 2.95 billion users in 2019 and a projected 3.43 billion in 2023¹. Worldwide, internet users tend to spend 144 minutes per day² interacting with others while using all kinds of devices like cell-phones, tablets and laptops. Online presence, regardless of location, is not new and part of the digitalization process throughout society. Even in the offline world, usage of social media has an influence on lives as there is an “increased access to information, ease of communication, and freedom of expression”³. On the other hand, it can be very time-consuming and polarizing when e.g. looking at advertisement and politics.

When it comes to work life, finding a job or looking for suiting personnel as a company, the attention on online appearance becomes increasingly relevant. Potential applicants can easily be looked for on search engines like google and the findings can either hinder or support the recruitment process. It is therefore important to have a concrete look at one self’s online presence while taking the perspective of the potential employer. What does the applicant want to show his future employer and what should be kept on a private level? Here, the right use of privacy settings on all utilized social media channels is advisable.

Having checked the already existing platform settings, the next step would be to look into the available business and employment-oriented service platforms. Examples are the following:

¹ © Statista 2020, Number of global social network users 2010-2023, Published by J. Clement, updated 01.04.2020, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>, accessed 07.05.2020

² © Statista 2020, Daily time spent on social networking by internet users worldwide from 2012 to 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>, Published by J. Clement, updated 26.02.2020, accessed 07.05.2020

³ © Statista 2020, Daily time spent on social networking by internet users worldwide from 2012 to 2019, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/>, Published by J. Clement, updated 26.02.2020, accessed 07.05.2020



LinkedIn (2003, USA) – funding \$184.9M⁴



Xing (2003, Germany) - funding €5.7 million



Viadeo (2004, France) - funding €56 million⁵



Wizbii (2010, France) - funding €17.1 million⁶

The international platform LinkedIn, which was founded in 2003, currently has 645+ million members and is represented in more than 200 countries and regions⁷. LinkedIn, as well as Viadeo with 7.5 million members in France and Xing with 17 million members mainly in Germany, Switzerland and Austria, are three options to be activating a profile. Another option is Wizbii (founded in 2010), that connects more than 3 million young people from all over the world⁸ fostering employment and entrepreneurship while offering free services, events and therethrough helping to enter the job market⁹.

Depending on personal career objectives, one can decide to create an international profile on LinkedIn and/or specify on the local level through regional business platforms. Language modification when looking at profiles is available e.g. on LinkedIn.

A professional Facebook profile in addition to a potentially already existing one is another considerable option; in this case, personal photos and information are left out and the focus is laid on proficient information, joining professional groups, sharing events etc.

Notwithstanding the amount of profiles – most important is a uniform appearance that leads to a personal branding which shall represent the candidate's professional disposition. This appearance can be supported by using the same photo, posting interesting articles and updating information consistently throughout all of the candidate's professional social media accounts.

The professional online profile can be seen as an online Curriculum Vitae that consists of an updated proficient photo, experiences, educational path and skills. A good start for NEETs would be to create

⁴ AngelList, Funding Viadeo, <https://angel.co/company/linkedin/funding>, updated 01.01.2020, accessed 07.05.2020

⁵ AngelList, Funding Viadeo, <https://angel.co/company/viadeo/funding>, updated 01.01.2020, accessed 07.05.2020

⁶ Silicon Canals, 7 European tech startups disrupting social media in 2019, <https://siliconcanals.com/news/european-tech-startups-disrupting-social-media/>, updated 18.11.2019, accessed 07.05.2020

⁷ LinkedIn logo © LinkedIn Corporation 2020, About LinkedIn, <https://about.linkedin.com/de-de>, accessed 05.05.2020

⁸ la société Wizbii, Vous êtes recruteurs ?, <https://en.wizbii.com/>, updated 15.04.2020, accessed 07.05.2020

⁹ Silicon Canals, 7 European tech startups disrupting social media in 2019, <https://siliconcanals.com/news/european-tech-startups-disrupting-social-media/>, Silicon Canals' editorial team, updated 18.11.2019, accessed 07.05.2020

a profile, upload a suitable picture and find out, what the personal interests are and where they would like to see themselves at some point in their lives. Formulating and drawing a picture of the wished-for future will help substantiate interests and identify potential paths, useful contacts or firms that can be reached out to later on in the process.

Even if the educational and career paths have not been stable and the interactions with people surrounding them, seemed to not have helped to make advancements, creating a profile and giving interests a wording through placing them into an online CV, can be the first step into clarifying the direction.

When having created a profile with all required information, the next step is to connect with contacts who can confirm certain skills they might have added into their profile like social competencies, social media knowledge or language skills. Also, these contacts possibly have another contact, that can help him/her find a career or a mentor that accompanies them on various levels. Expanding the network will expand the chances for reaching out to the one person that will help to find the right path. The profile pushes visibility and shows willingness and availability in finding new opportunities to the existing connections as well as expanding the outreach. In case of no available contacts that could support the NEET, there is the opportunity to look for and thereafter follow persons of interest, have a look at their professional career and copy facts to the own profile that might be similar and fitting.

With an updated, professional online appearance (professional photo, no spelling mistakes etc.), one can take a little time and click through the proposed contacts nearby as well as the companies that might offer a job appealing to the candidate. Each person deserves a chance and if already having gone as far as having completed the online CV and having looked for opportunities – all this shows self-awareness that has been started to evolve and trust in oneself is building up. Being confident and positive are useful traits which can e.g. be used when directly writing a personal message to the head of a chosen company, explaining the own background situation while directly asking for advice, an internship or a useful contact. All these are thinkable chances that can be taken when having set up an appealing online profile. Being respectful, friendly and resilient when writing, also accepting and learning from negative feedback and keeping on trying will at some point pay off.