

The Value of LinkedIn for All Students

Written by William D. Jackson
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Competition for employment, internships, scholarships, grants and other forms of financial

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assistance and entrance into higher education has grown tremendously in the past years. Students should understand that digital tools and resources that aid in obtaining/starting a professional career should be welcomed and are an investment in time. Social Media platforms are not valuable if they do not promote a student's SWAG and Brand that holds the key to their talents, skills, abilities and leadership qualities. As an instructor at Edward Waters College teaching Educational Technology and Social Media I attempt to empower my students with the knowledge of using Social Media in a positive way.

One of the challenges for students is making a positive Brand and marketing it with SWAG, highlighting skills, talents, educational achievements, and leadership skills. A college/university undergraduate must sell themselves to the world they want to enter. Technology allows to transcend the physical networking and provides a digital platform by using professional services like LinkedIn to make connections that may have not otherwise occur.

LinkedIn.com is arguably the largest online professional network not to be confused with Facebook which is a social network. The versatility of LinkedIn can be seen with its presence in over 200 countries and over 2 million companies have LinkedIn pages.

A student's LinkedIn is to set up for "connections" and "linking" within the network. The combination of free and paid accounts can assist with connectivity and increase link-ability with others. This is important to understand when searching for entry level, professional and executive level positions; opportunities to Internships, volunteering and mentoring.

LinkedIn allows information that represents or defines the person and his/her qualifications to be shared with those of similar interests. Companies can use keyword searches to find prospective candidates.

A LinkedIn page houses various information that can define who a student is which aligns with their Brand and just as importantly their linkedin-2015SWAG. I define SWAG as "Students Working towards Academic Greatness," allowing potential employers to search by skills, talents, hobbies, volunteer/community engagement, education, previous employment experiences and associations. The advantages of LinkedIn can be seen with photos, social media feeds (Twitter, Blogging, About.me), having a personal URL (uniform resources locator) or web address.

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This creates a foundation to build a network, just as a house needs a solid grounding. LinkedIn allows a person to create a networking foundation based on their skills/abilities/talents. It creates the ability to LINK to build or construct your network of businesses collaborations and entrepreneurs. This is a dynamic relationship on technical modification that enhances the user not like a static traditional résumé.

Teaching Educational Technology at an HBCU Historically Black College and University gives the opportunity to educate on the benefits of Social Media where typically it is not included in the instructional curriculum. Overlooking virtual networking that social media provides can put students at a disadvantage when they are required to network and collaborate. Competing on a global or national scale depends on those with whom you are connected to, that is why the game of golf is held with such high esteem. It is not just hit the ball into the little hole, it is connecting, networking and collaborating with peers or crossing generational exchanges of information.

Integrating LinkedIn into my course, empowers my college students to bring their abilities to the educational, business, corporate, scientific, musical, and other professional worlds. HBCU students cannot pass up opportunities to what provides skills that leads to academic growth and career enhancement. LinkedIn will yield High School students before graduation visibility and a competitive edge when seeking employment and career building. This is more productive than Facebook or other Social Media sites that only promote the social side.

Words of caution for students should be considered when joining any social media group, carefulness should be exercised when sharing personal information and the type of digital content (text and video posted). LinkedIn represents communities, not everyone who potentially connects with you has generous or professional motives. Just as in the “real world” be cautious and continue to learn.

When posting content potential employers will view profiles, checking spelling, grammar, and the ability to write and/or creating digital content. It cannot be stressed enough, be careful of what is posted online and who/whom you're associated with. Embellishing (enhancing) your qualifications and abilities can be embarrassing, be honest, be truthful. When discussing qualifications and abilities, the importance of internships, volunteering, mentoring contribute to leadership abilities that many careers look for. Do not pass up the opportunity to volunteer, manage, lead, coordinate and take charge of situations, this shows diversity in your competencies.

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Making connections by Twitter (microblogging), Blogging, Goggle +, and other SM sites has inherent challenges. Again, be careful with whom you're associated with. People will judge you by those you are seen with physically and digitally.

Resources:

"Recruiting professionals strongly recommend using business networking sites" (Stone, L. Are You LinkedIn?)

LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/wdjackson>

About.me/ – online free bio site <http://About.me/wmdjackson>

You can also read <http://thyblackman.com/2016/01/12/linkedin-for-hbcu-students/>

About the author of this article: William Jackson is a graduate of South Carolina State University where he earned a Bachelor of Education. He also graduated from Webster University and got a Master's degree in Educational Technology. His career in education spans over 20 years. He taught in elementary schools as a STEAM. In addition, he was a Physical Education teacher and at an HBCU-Edward Waters College in the Education Department he taught educational technology. William has been blogging over 10 years and made conferences in Philadelphia, (Pennsylvania), Miami (Florida), etc. The above article was originally published on www.thyblackman.com and the author wrote for years on this website. His blog is located at <http://MyQuestToTeach.Wordpress.com>. He tweets at @wmjackson and his Instagram account is <http://Instagram.com/WilliamDJackson>. He can be reached at jacksonw@duvalschools.org or

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www.blogtalkradio.com/blackhistory/2013/12/20/malcolm-xs-daughter-author-activist-ilyasah-s-habazz-little-malcolm

to listen to his great interview with

[Malcolm X](#)

's daughter.