

TQ & SQ OF A CA

Ameet Patel Pune Branch of ICAI 13th May 2017



"It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change."

- Charles Darwin

TQ & SQ – Elephants in the room?

- Is Technology and/or Social Media an elephant in the room?
- Do you avoid talking about it?
- Is it "an obvious problem or risk no one wants to discuss, or a condition of groupthink no one wants to challenge"?

Why technology & SM are important for CAs?

- There is a massive risk of most of our present functions being taken over by robots, machines, websites, software, mobile apps etc.
- Here are a few survey results that are a harbinger of times to come

Top 10 jobs most at risk from robots

Job	Likelihood of becoming automated
Insurance underwriters	98.90%
Loan Officers	98.36%
Credit Analysts	97.85%
Real Estate Brokers	97.29%
Compensation and Benefits Managers	95.57%
Postal Service Clerks	95.41%
Nuclear Power Reactor Operators	94.68%
Budget Analysts	93.78%
Accountants and Auditors	93.51%
Geological and Petroleum Technicians	91.28%

Will your job be replaced by a robot in next 20 years? - Oxford study

Probability	Job
99.00%	Data Entry Keyers
99.00%	Library Technicians
99.00%	New Accounts Clerks
99.00%	Photographic Process Workers and Processing Machine Operators
99.00%	Tax Preparers
99.00%	Insurance Underwriters
99.00%	Mathematical Technicians
99.00%	Title Examiners, Abstractors, and Searchers
98.00%	Models
98.00%	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks
98.00%	Legal Secretaries

Thus, the writing on the wall is quite clear

- Most of the traditional work that we have been doing for past few decades will be taken over by technology companies
- Most surveys predict that accountants are likely to be one of the worst affected by technology
- And the worrying part is that this day is <u>NOT</u> far off!

So lets talk a bit about Technology

TQ & SQ – a very hazy dividing line

- Today, when one talks about Technology, invariably, Social Media comes into the discussion. Both are inseparable for the young generation.
- So, today, in our discussion, we will use both terms interchangeably

Therefore, lets first talk about



SQ – Social Media Quotient

- Are you a Social Animal or are you anti social?
- Do you have a Face Book presence?
- Do you avoid checking your FB presence on a regular basis?
- You don't even know what Twitter is?
- What is LinkedIn?

Why Do You Need Social Media?

- Marketing techniques change as rapidly as tax laws and accounting standards. To remain competitive in the marketplace, grow your practice and manage your firm's online reputation, you have to keep up with the demands of your client base and reach new prospects.
- Prospects are more tech-savvy today than they were 10 years ago. Many of them grew up with technology, or have adapted to it, so they expect to be served differently. They don't wait for brochures or prospect meetings to learn about your firm. They do their homework online before you even have the chance to shake their hand. What do prospects see when they Google your firm? What's their first impression of your firm when they research you? Are you satisfied with the quality and quantity of information that will guide them to the decision to engage your services?

What do clients want?

Social media isn't just about business development. It's also about client retention and recruitment. Clients look to you to provide real-time answers to an array of questions. They expect you to be accessible and to communicate with them regularly through channels they already utilize, including email, social media and mobile. They want more advisory interaction with you without having to pick up the phone or come into the office.

Why Social Media?

So, why do you need social media marketing? Your social presence, or lack thereof, can be critical to your firm's continuity. If executed properly, social media is a measurable solution that will:

- Raise awareness of your brand and services
- Allow you to tune in to what's being said about your brand
- Enhance word-of-mouth marketing
- Provide a real-time mechanism for client and prospect communication
- Increase client loyalty and provide richer client experiences
- Build consumer trust
- Offer more opportunities to convert
- Increase inbound traffic and conversion rates
- Improve search engine rankings for your firm's website

So, do answer these questions in your mind:

- Do you communicate with your clients regularly?
- For communication, do you use channels that your clients want or prefer?
- Are you easily accessible to your clients?
- Are you proactive with your clients or reactive?
- How much time do you take to respond to a client's query?
- Do you regularly update your website?
- Do you engage with your clients / prospects on a regular basis?

- Amy Jo Martin Social media is the ultimate equalizer. It gives a voice and a platform to anyone willing to engage.
- Amy Jo Martin Social media is changing the way we communicate and the way we are perceived, both positively and negatively. Every time you post a photo, or update your status, you are contributing to your own digital footprint and personal brand.

- Timothy Ferriss Online I see people committing 'social media suicide' all the time by one of two ways. Firstly by responding to all criticism, meaning you're never going to find time to complete important milestones of your own, and by responding to things that don't warrant a response. This lends more credibility by driving traffic.
- Raymond Arroyo Whether via social media or in person, building your relationships is a long-term process, and the ultimate goal is to strengthen your network one person at a time.

- Amy Jo Martin We all have personal brands and most of us have already left a digital footprint, whether we like it or not. Proper social media use highlights your strengths that may not shine through in an interview or application and gives the world a broader view of who you are. Use it wisely.
- Padmasree Warrior I think social media, it in a way forces companies to be more authentic or more transparent because it gives a voice to the consumer and a reach to the consumer that they didn't have before.

- Aaron Lee (@askaaronlee) "These days, social media waits for no one. If you're LATE for the party, you'll probably be covered by all the noise and you might not be able to get your voice across. It could only mean that if you want to be heard by the crowd, you have to be fast; and on social media, that means you have to be REALLY fast."
- Bonnie Sainsbury (@bsainsbury) "Social media will help you build up loyalty of your current customers to the point that they will willingly, and for free, tell others about you."

Message from the PM of India – Narendra Modi

My dear fellow Indians and citizens of the world,

Namaste!

A very warm welcome to the official website of the Prime Minister of India.

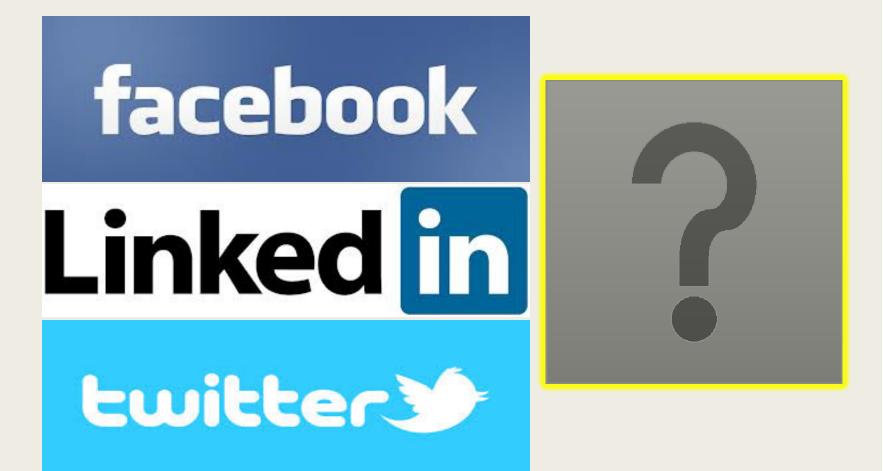
On 16th May 2014 the people of India gave their verdict. They delivered a mandate for development, good governance and stability. As we devote ourselves to take India's development journey to newer heights, we seek your support, blessings and active participation. Together we will script a glorious future for India. Let us together dream of a strong, developed and inclusive India that actively engages with the global community to strengthen the cause of world peace and development.

I envision this website as a very important medium of direct communication between us. I am a firm believer in the power of technology and social media to communicate with people across the world. I hope this platform creates opportunities to listen, learn and share one's views.

Through this website you will also get all the latest information about my speeches, schedules, foreign visits and lot more. I will also keep informing you about innovative initiatives undertaken by the Government of India.

Yours, Narendra Modi

Social Media – what do you know about it?





Time to reach 50 million users



38 years



13 years



4 years





4 Elements for using Social Media Effectively

Listening

SOCIAL MEDIA

KNOW CUSTOMERS BETTER

A CRM app tracks both existing and potential customers' social media presence in a variety of ways:

- FOLLOWING UP ON QUESTIONS posed via social media
- Using social media to gather more INFORMATION – ABOUT CUSTOMERS –



 TRACKING CUSTOMERS' SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS to gain invaluable insight

 TRACKING LEADS gained through social media automatically



BUSINESSES CAN ALSO ACCESS THESE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS whether in the office or on the go with mobile compatibility.



Communicate Effectively

SAKER TILLY

Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP is a full-service accounting and advisory firm whose professionals connect with clients through refreshing candor and clear industry insights. Founded in 1931, we have grown steadily over the years, broadening our service offerings and expanding our geographic ... more

Recent Updates

Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP Baker Tilly is proud to again be named to the Vault Accounting 50

Baker Tilly Named to Vault Accounting 50 for Fifth Straight Year

prweb.com • "We are honored to again be named to the Vault Accounting 50 list, and to be recognized by our employees and peers as both an innovative service provider and employer of choice." CHICAGO (PRWEB) April 15, 2014 Accounting and advisory firm Baker...

14 hours ago

крмд

KPMG is a global network of professional firms providing Audit, Tax and Advisory services. We operate in 156 countries and have 150,000 people working in member firms around the world. With a worldwide presence, KPMG continues to build on our successes thanks to clear vision, defined values and, more

Recent Updates

KPMG "Following the financial crisis, there was huge volatility and a much greater awareness of possible risks. The expectation now is that audit could play a bigger role in helping to understand the possible impacts of those risks." Jeremy Anderson, ... more



What misperception would of audit would you bring clarity to?

youtube.com · Four KPMG audit leaders from across the globe clear up some misperceptions around the audit.



PwC helps organisations and individuals create the value they're looking for. We're a network of firms in 158 countries with more than 180,000 people who are committed to delivering quality in assurance, tax and advisory services. Tell us what matters to you and find out more by visiting us at www.

Recent Updates

PwC is hiring: Solutions Architect - Billing systems

Careers at PwC + See more jobs + 10 hours ago

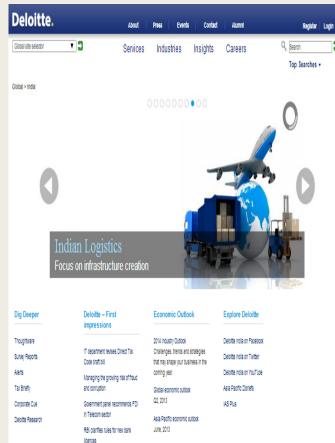
PwC is hiring: Experienced Associate, Financial Services San Francisco

Careers at PwC + See more jobs + 11 hours ago

PwC is hiring: Valuation Senior Associate Chicago

Careers at PwC + See more jobs + 12 hours ago

Link the Website



India Economic Outlook May, 2013 Guide to Fiscal Information on key economies in Africa 2012/13

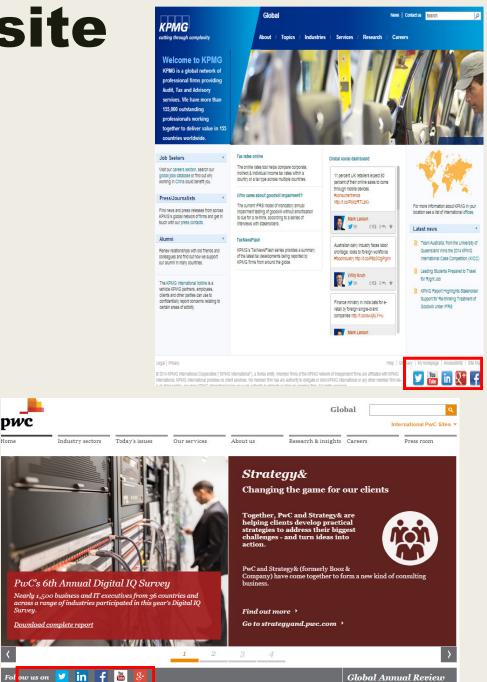
Legal Privacy Site map



pwc

Survey.

Home



Interact Face to Face

- The most important thing for an accountant is to engage with his/her audience and then move the conversation offline to a face-to-face meeting.
- The best way to convert leads is to meet the prospect in person.

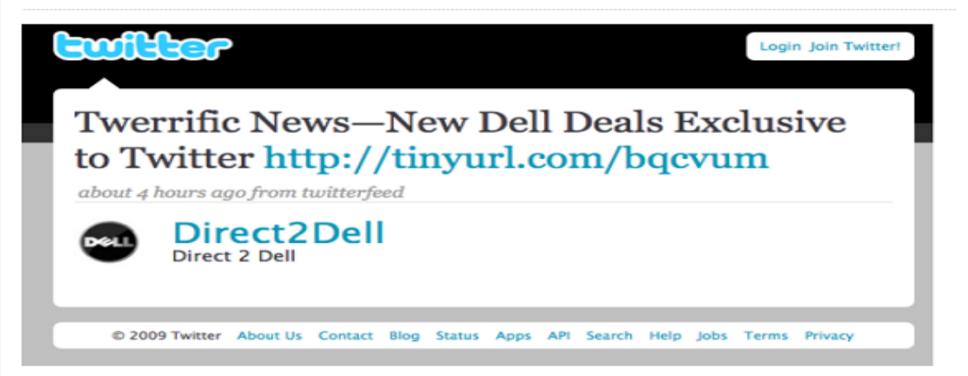
CAN SOCIAL MEDIA HELP IN SELLING ????

It helped....

Dell Starts Offering Exclusive Discounts Through Twitter

by Erick Schonfeld on February 3, 2009

79 Comments 🔍



Dell's Twitter experiment seems to be working. After making **\$1 million during the holidays** ⁽⁷⁾ by alerting Twitter followers to sale items, Dell is now offering discounts *exclusively* to the **11**,844 people who follow **@DellOutlet** ⁽⁷⁾. For instance, here is a Tweet with a link to a **30-percent-off**



It helped one of these car companies

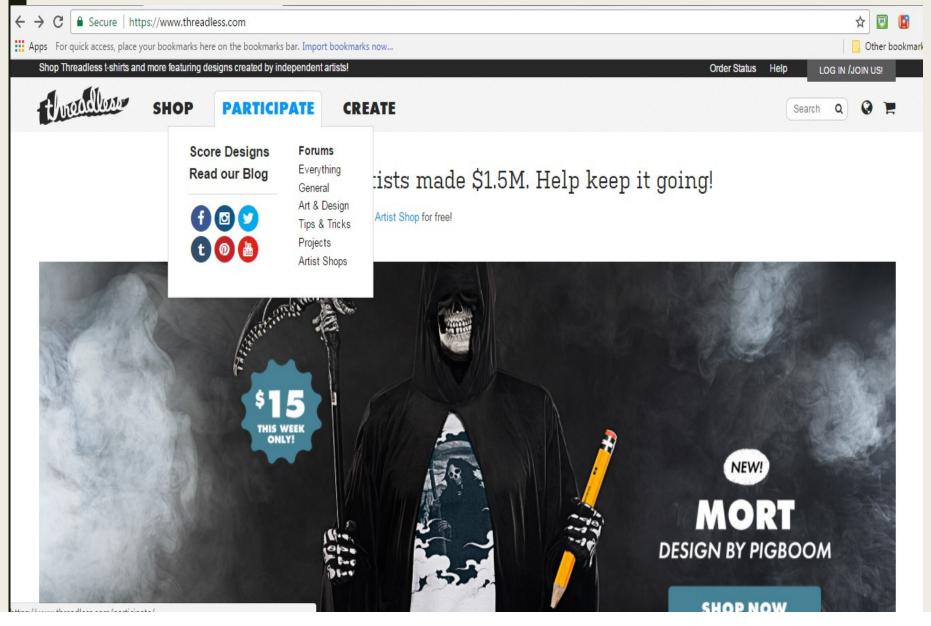


Buy the New Car between Tata Safari, Mahindra Scorpio or Xylo, any suggestions? May 7 at 10:21pm · Comment · Like

	Between the three I'd pick the Safari any day.
	My vote definitely goes 2 Tata Safari! :0)
	Hummer v2
والمشاره	Safari any day
	Fiat linea nice.
	Safari! No second thought!
	Harmeet go for Safari.
	obviously safari :-)
	Safari, any time. But be aware that it will become pain in the *** after 1.5-2 years. Go for CRV, but then it's a guzzler:)
-	Scorpio any time
	Scorpio is a good choice , has less virbations as compared to xylo , In safari you might feel your car pretty unstable while taking U turns
1	try the new pickup Tata Xenon

Car purchase decided, not by the size of Xylo ads, but by the 22 recommendations here!!

It helps sell T-shirts...rather, it RUNS a large T-shirt business!



And it helped this plumber



Filters needs to find a plumber...asap!!! Anyone know a plumber I could contact? 11:19pm · Comment · Like





Can this happen to a CA too?

Same could happen with a doctor, a lawyer, a CA There will be positive recommendations, as also negative.... "Don't go to that guy.. He's a cheat.." etc.

"I will tell my Facebook friends about your brand. <u>Not</u> <u>because I like your brand, but</u> <u>because I like my friends</u>!"

Social Media For Professionals

Social Media is all about building "Relationships"

Network with existing relationships
Leverage existing... to build new ones
Find new relationship opportunities
Convert "contacts" into "contracts"

For professionals like CAs, Social Media can be very useful

Create Thought Leadership

- A tool for creating a brand (without advertising)
- Platforms
 - Blogs
 - You Tube
- Content
 - Talk about issues and your opinion on those issues
 - Similar to writing articles in the Institute's or BCAS journals
 - Except now you are trying to address your potential customers and not just fellow CAs

Generate Leads

- Build relationships
- Platforms
 - LinkedIn
 - Yahoo Answers
 - Google Groups
- Build your network...bigger the better
- Participate in conversations
 - Groups
 - Q and A



Reputation Monitoring

- For large firms
- For "well known" individuals
- ORM
 - Online reputation management
 - What are people talking about
 - Responding to issues right away

Example of Reputation Monitoring

y	Tweet				۹ (2	÷	
a @tat	Ameet Patel @patelameet adocomo Absolutely disgusted wi	th my experience of ordering a	n wifi dongle online. Will neve	er buy your product again.				
4:05 PN	I · 03 Jun 14							
	*	17	*	<				
	Tata Docomo @tatadocomo @patelameet We apologize for the inconv	enience caused to you, kindly DM us you	r contact details so that we can get in tou	ch with you.			4d	
. 5 9	Tata Docomo @tatadocomo @patelameet We have forwarded your co	mplaint to concerned department and wi	ll revert to you shortly.				4d	
A	Ameet Patel @patelameet @tatadocomo Just how short is your "shor	tly"? I have paid for my dongle in advance	e. I regret it now.				4d	
	Tata Docomo @tatadocomo @patelameet Please be patient. We will address your concern asap. Kindly bear with us during the interim.							
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Rep	ly to Ameet Patel					140	Tweet	
\leftarrow			^		10:32	AM∦	₹, 🗎	
Se	See How quickly Tata Docomo responded to my tweet							

Example of Reputation Monitoring

47



Ameet Patel @patelameet · Jul 29 @musafirdotcom Terrible experience with your site. Booked a flight. Cr card debited. Your system failed. & I m told refund will take 15 days

ill.

....





0

Dear @patelameet. Can you please share your contact details so that we can understand the issue?

11:33 AM - 29 Jul 2016

4]

•

See How quickly Musafir.com responded to my tweet

...

General Tips

- Social Media is not about shouting out loud.
 It is about quiet conversations
- You have to learn to listen, before you start talking
- It is about creating "shareable" content. Your users (consumers) are also your content distributors
- It is about lighting up a forest with a match stick

A few important professional networking sites

AngelList – Where the world meets Start ups

Beyond - Beyond helps millions of professionals network with each other and find jobs to advance their careers.

Data.com Connect - An online community to share ideas, get feedback, and discuss industry best practices.

E.Factor - An online community paired with a virtual marketplace designed for entrepreneurs by other entrepreneurs.

Gadball - A LinkedIn alternative that features profile and resume creation and job searching.

A few important professional networking sites

Gust - Connects startups with a large pool of investors across the world to help raise early-stage funding.

Meetup - A networking website for finding like-minded groups and meetup opportunities locally.

Networkingforprofessionals - Is a business network that combines online business networking and real-life events.

Myopportunity - Opportunity is a business network built around a lead generation tool that connects you to other professionals who could bring you leads, sales, and clients.

PartnerUp - Is a Google+ community connecting small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Plaxo - Is an enhanced address book tool for networking and staying in contact.

Kinds of campaigns that CAs can run on Social Media

Linked in

Power of LinkedIn..at a click

🕹 Network Statistics LinkedIn - Mozilla Firefox		
<u>File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools H</u> elp <u>R</u> elated Links		
C X 🏠 🛅 http://www.linkedin.com/network?trk=tab_net	☆ ᢏ → 💁 OneRiot	Social Web Search 🔎
🔊 Most Visited p Getting Started 🔜 Latest Headlines 🔜 bigb.bigadda.com 🗋 http://indigoairline.bl		Share on LinkedIn Linked 🔃
📅 Profiles - LinkedIn Learning Center 🛛 🗙 📊 Network Statistics LinkedIn 🛛 🗙 🔯 How can i export party ledger to exc 🗙	Facebook Search 🛛 🛛 👔 Problem loading page	× +
Basic Account: Upgrade	Welcome, Hareesh Tibrewala \cdot \textbf{Add} $\textbf{Connections}$ \cdot Settings \cdot Help \cdot Sign Out	
Linked in . Home Profile Contacts Groups Jobs Inbox More	People • Q Advanced	
My Connections Imported Contacts Profile Organizer Network Statistics	Add Connections Remove Connections	
		=
Your Network of Trusted Professionals		
You are at the center of your network. Your connections can introduce you to 21,156,900+ professionals — here's how your network breaks down:		
Your Connections	10.011	

LinkedIn Network Statistics Lives!

(3

0

C

Your trusted friends and colleagues

Total users you can contact through an Introduction

 \rightarrow

25,592 new people in your network since January 3

Friends of friends; each connected to one of your connections

Reach these users through a friend and one of their friends

Two degrees away

Three degrees away

I know I can't be the only one missing the ability to see LinkedIn network statistics broken down by first, second, and third degree.

19.041

4.076.800+

17,061,000+

21,156,900+

P 🗳

Join LinkedIn Groups

- Groups are a great way for professionals to network.
- A lot of these groups, like ICAI, post new jobs on their page.
- It is a great place for chartered accountants to keep themselves up to day about the happenings in their field.

in		\$
My Groups Discover		¢
Chartered Acco Accountant gro 54,751 members	ountants India - ICAI - Large oup	st Chartered 🗸 Ask to join
ADMINS Vivek J · Group Owner Audit	Neha (ACA,MBA) • Manager Advisor	ABOUT THIS GROUP Members of ICAI, India, Students, aspirants are invited to join this group for healthy discussion. Indian Chartered Accountat CA across the world are invited to join.
YOUR CONNECTIONS CA. Kamlesh Vikamsey Senior Partner Khimji Kunverji & Co.	Nilesh Vikamsey President - The Institute of Chartered	Chartered Accountant Chartered Accountants ICAI Institute of Chartered Accoutants of In Show more

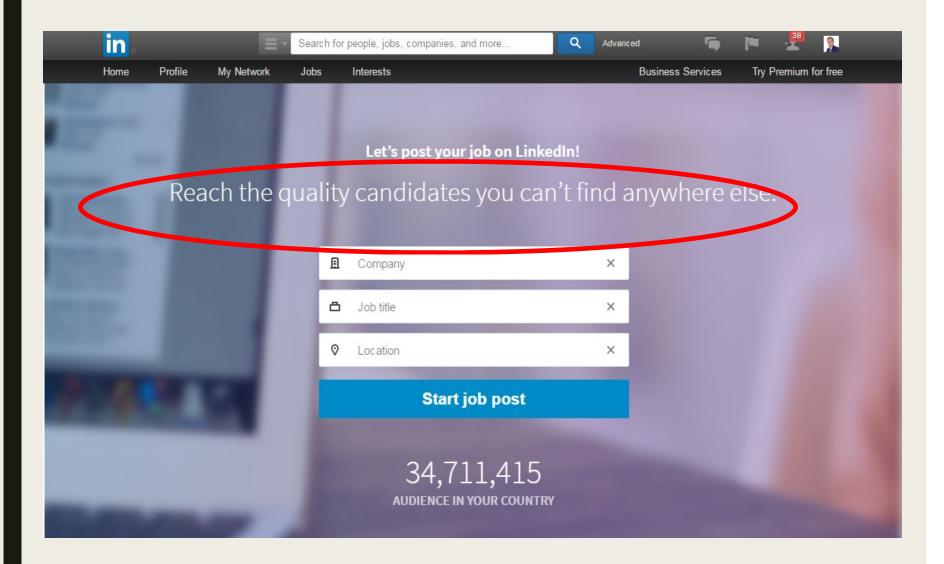
Join LinkedIn Groups

in		ŝ
My Groups Discover		្
My groups My pending groups	Filter my groups	
Create group	GROUPS THAT I MANAGE BCAS - Domestic Taxation	
	(7) pending members	ŝ
	BCAS - XBRL	¢
	BCAS - Practice Management (1) pending member	¢
	BCAS - Service Tax (4) pending members	୍ଷ

It's a great place for searching for a job too!

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Ē	Tax Specialis Highpoints Tec		vt Ltd						Save this search to get notified as new jobs become available.				
Mumbai, IN Tax Residency Certificate (TRC) coordination, preparation & applicationPre-requisitesIndustry experience - 2 yearsIndia payroll experience - preferredWillingness to www.timesjobs.com				ence of minin	num 1		Creat	e search ale	ert				
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Using LinkedIn for sourcing staff



Using LinkedIn sensibly

Always Remember:

- LinkedIn is a PROFESSIONAL NETWORK and NOT a SOCIAL network
- Authenticity and integrity are key factors
- Make sure that your profile is regularly updated

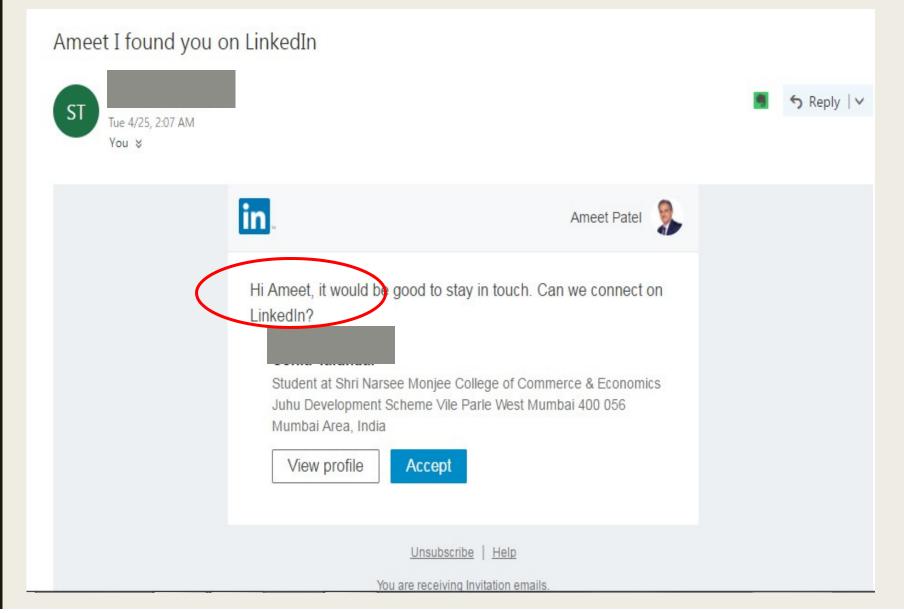
Some important aspects of your profile:

Photograph – Please put up an up-to-date profile picture. It should be a plain picture, suited and booted if you can, and on a plain, neutral background. The worst LinkedIn profile photo crime (made by those new to the networking world) is using a social picture (often with sunglasses or in a nightclub setting). No picture at all is better than one of those options. Also, please do not put your photo sideways. Remember to rotate it before uploading.

Qualifications & Experience – Please use the excellent templates that the site offers. Ensure that your profile on the site brings out the best in you.

Name – this very basic aspect is often neglected. Please do NOT register yourself as "MR. SATHE" or "CA So And So". Write your full name without any prefix. Write your qualification in the proper field and not as a prefix.

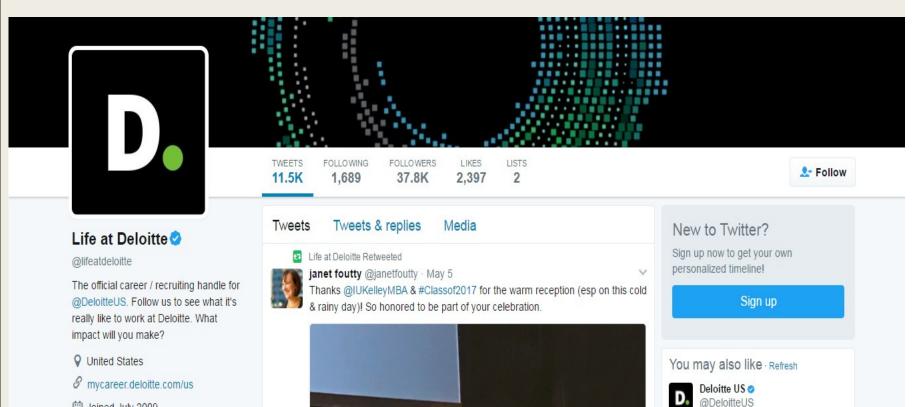
How not to use LinkedIn! Impersonal & rude invites



How to use social media – see how Big 4 do it



How to use social media – see how Big 4 do it



Deloitte 🥥 @Deloitte

Deloitte Talento @DeloitteTalent laitta Tachnalam

i Joined July 2009

2 590 Photos and videos



BLOGS

Some popular Blogs

- @AccountingOnion
- @BloombergLP
- @Reuters

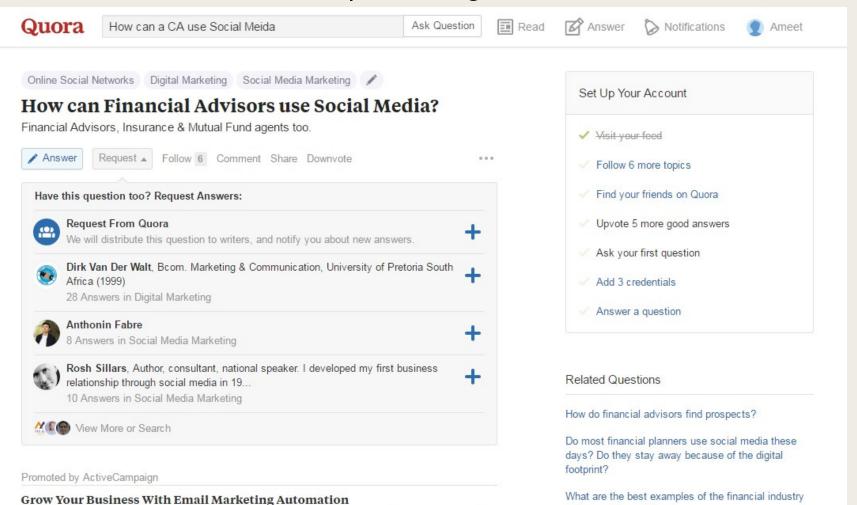
No. That's it!

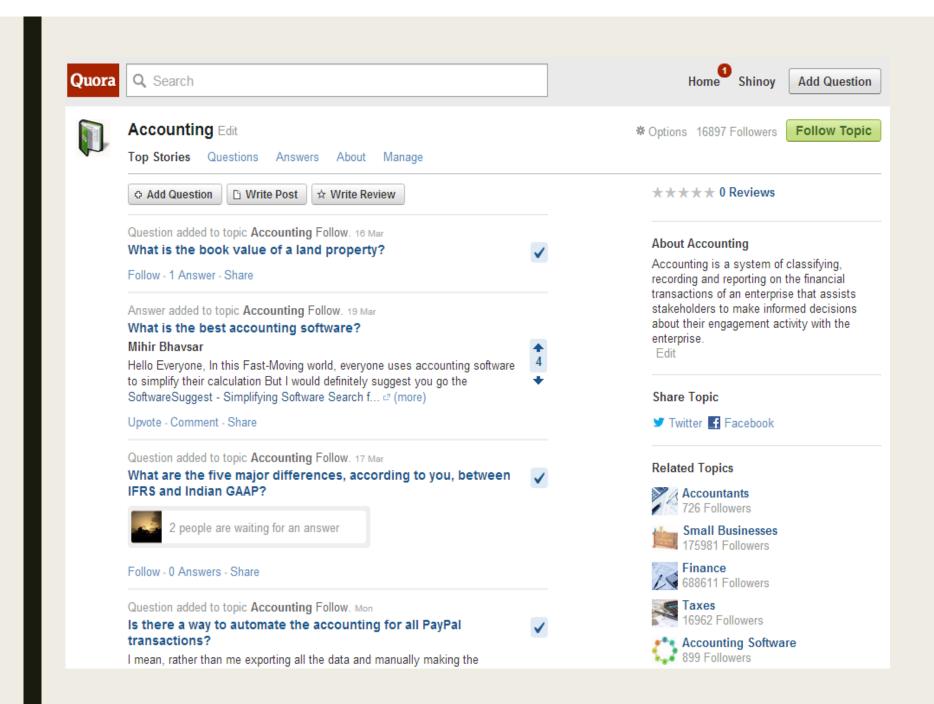
You can't expect to be spoon fed all the time.

Find your own blogs

Quora

Quora has a lot of different questions registered under topics like "Accountancy". CAs should go and engage in these places and increase their influence. Quora can also be used for following those topics which are of interest to you. One must learn how to mine for hot topics and get involved in those.





Power of Twitter – No. of followers (as on 8th May, 2017)

Barack Obama	8.77 crores
Amitabh Bachchan	2.66 crores
Narendra Modi	2.97 crores
PMO India	1.78 crores
Sachin Tendulkar	1.59 crores
Arvind Kejriwal	1.13 crores
Kiran Bedi	91.40 lakhs
Shashi Tharoor	52.70 lakhs
Barkha Dutt	60.40 lakhs

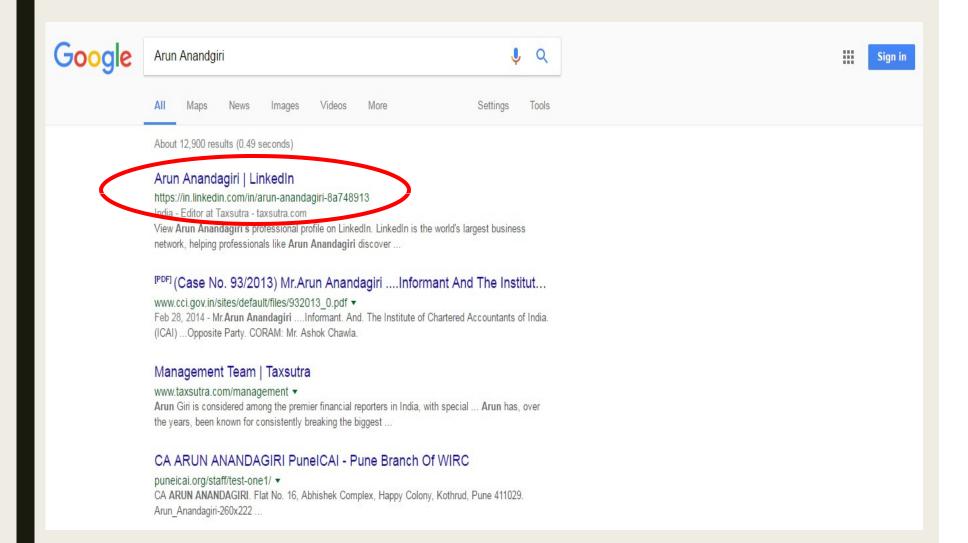
Power of Facebook Pages – No. of Likes (as on 8th May, 2017)

Name of Page	No. of Likes
Narendra Modi	4,16,72,433
Madhuri Dixit Nene	2,59,26,513
IPL Indian Premier League	1,98,25,386
Reliance Jio	20,28,978
Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd	6,98,914
ICAI	57,695
ICAEW	84,476
ICFAI University	66,769

Power of Twitter – And where are CAs?

Name of Person	No. of followers
Chirag Chauhan	6,224
Arun Anandgiri	7,009
Richard Rekhy	5,491
Mukesh Butani	2,968
Ameet Patel	2,255
Lubna Kably	2,112
Ketan Dalal	1,273
Kamlesh Vikamsey	3,664
Shailesh Haribhakti	337

Importance of a SM presence – Sample Google Search – Page 1



Importance of a SM presence – Sample Google Search – Page 2

Arun Anandagiri: Latest News, Videos and Photos | Times of India

timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Arun-Anandagiri ▼ Latest Arun Anandagiri News, Photos, Blogposts, Videos and Wallpapers. Explore Arun Anandagiri profile at Times of India.

Punes ICAI condemns threat to member | Latest News & Updates at ...

www.dnaindia.com > India News > Mumbai News -

Dec 4, 2011 - Joshi was reacting to the threat of physical assault allegedly made against city-based chartered accountant Arun Anandagiri by a fellow ...

Arun Anandagiri elected ICAI Pune Branch Chairman | Sunshine Pune

punesunshine.blogspot.com/2017/03/arun-anandagiri-elected-icai-pune.html ▼ Mar 1, 2017 - Arun Anandagiri elected ICAI Pune Branch Chairman. The election to office bearers of Pune Branch of Institute of Chartered Accountants of ...

Delhi high court dismisses CCI's appeal against ICAI - Livemint

www.livemint.com > Politics > Policy ▼ Aug 12, 2014 - The case arose when an 'information' was filed with the CCI by chartered accountant Arun Anandagiri elleging that the 10Al hed abused its ...

Arun Anandagiri Profiles | Facebook

https://www.facebook.com/public/Arun-Anandagiri
View the profiles of people named Arun Anandagiri. Join Excebook to connect with Arun Anandagiri and others you may know. Facebook gives people the ...

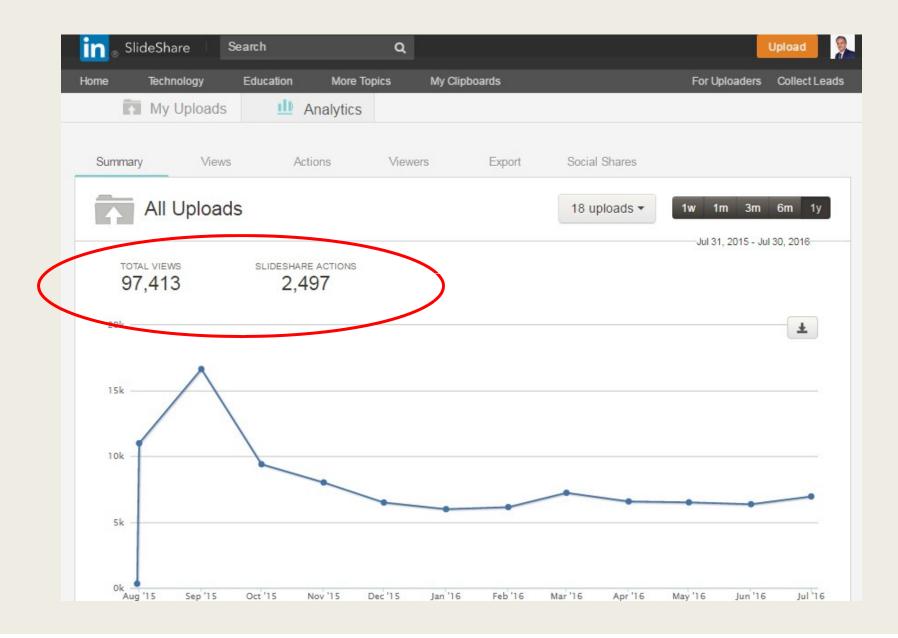
Images for Arun Anandgiri



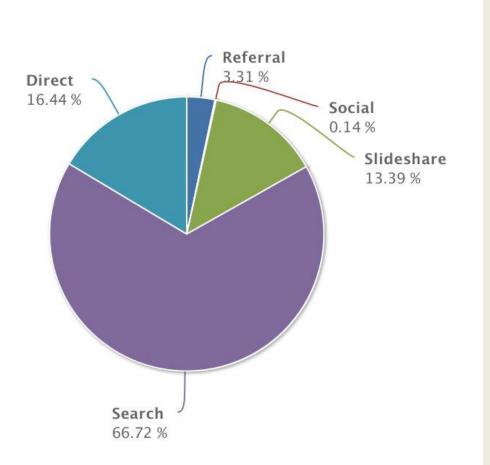
SLIDESHARE

- Fantastic power house for finding presentations on hundreds of subjects
- Increases visibility
- Encourages though leadership
- Connected to LinkedIn

Power of Slideshare



Power of Slideshare



This shows that millions of people are constantly searching on the internet for content & information

Cloud Computing

What is Cloud Computing?

To put it very simplistically, it is akin to having a server on the internet instead of in your office

Just think!

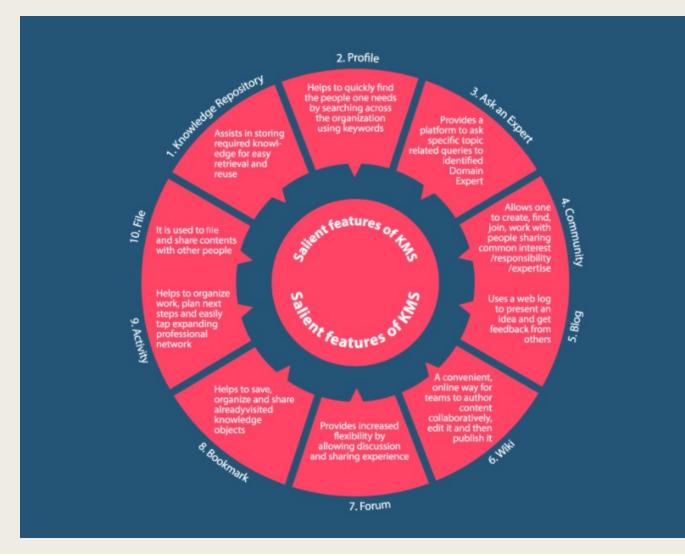
If your accounting package, Audit tools, tax computation software, e-TDS utilities, payroll processing software, attendance records, billing software, spreadsheets, documents, emails etc. were all stored or saved somewhere on the internet (cloud), would you need to go to your office every day from 9 to 9 ?

Working in the cloud

Advantages

Once clear role matrix is in place, processes are in place, document creation is standardised and staff is trained, the supervisor can be more confident and can rely on the work output. This can enable a person to work from anywhere and anytime. Allows users to collaborate on same document – e.g. google docs or Dropbox

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM LAUNHCED BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



What the world is accustomed to today?

Today, everything is:

- Connected
- Intelligent
- Real-time
- Personalized
- Cross-platform

Do You

- Buy goods online?
- Use Net Banking?
- Book movie / flight / drama tickets online?
- Read news online?
- Use Mobile Banking apps?
- Check cricket scores online?
- Monitor your daily walks through apps?
- Consider Google as your one stop shop?

YES?

Well, you are not alone!

- Most of your clients also do the same!
- Most of your <u>future</u> clients definitely do the same!
- So, does your firm offer anything to any of your clients online?
- Will you attract any online person to your firm?

What you have seen is only the tip of the iceberg



A Few Stray Thoughts to take home

- Mobile app for clients & inhouse team
- Cloud based data server
- Payment gateway to allow clients to pay your fees online
- Automated responses to emails / queries from clients
- System driven reminders to clients for various due dates
- Updated website / blogs / SM posts that tell the world about your knowledge

Thank You

You can contact me on:





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Some Reference Material

Using LinkedIn sensibly

Certain basic etiquettes:

- Do not argue in professional forums
- Do not use capitals and language that is far from courteous
- Do not overpost, in case people think you've got nothing else to do. At best it looks as if you're desperately seeking praise and validation from your professional peers
- Remember to manage your privacy settings
- Do not accept random connection requests
- Unless you're in sales, blindly increasing your connections on LinkedIn may send the wrong message
- Did you know you can tailor your privacy settings so that your new connections don't show on your profile updates? This can be very important if you're employed and don't want others to see the tell-tale signs that you are job hunting. To change what others can see on your LinkedIn profile, sign in, then from the drop- down menu click on the settings option.

Using LinkedIn sensibly

How many of you send LinkedIn connection requests without personalising them? LinkedIn is the largest professional networking opportunity there is and sending a connection request is the first (and perhaps only) opportunity you get to make an impression. The standard LinkedIn connection request reads like this: "I'd like to add you to my professional network – Ameet Patel."

What many people don't realise is that it shouldn't just be used as is for a connection request. It is merely a templated starting point towards the request that you're going to make. Or putting it another way, sending the standard request without first personalising is the same as attending a real world networking event and:

- Approaching someone to network with and
- Forgetting to say hi and introduce yourself and
- Forgetting to find out their name or anything about them and
- Forgetting to give any reason for why you approached them and
- Expecting them to exchange business cards
 It would leave a pretty awful impression, don't you think? Most
 professionals would never dream of networking like this at an event,
 vet many do it every day on LinkedIn

Know Your Platforms

Social media is messy. Across Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social networks, we are connected to a mix of close friends, college buddies, high school classmates, co-workers, bosses, former bosses, I-met-you-at-a-party-once acquaintances, and people we've never even seen face-to-face. It's important to understand the particular platform that you're using, as well as the type of relationship you have with a person, before attempting to leverage that connection for professional gain.

Each social media platform has a certain reputation. For instance, LinkedIn is generally a business site, while Twitter is more "laid back" and often mixes professional and personal content. Respect the way that people use these sites. Adding a professional acquaintance as a friend on Facebook can be invasive, especially if that individual is a traditionalist who uses Facebook purely for personal contact with friends and family. Likewise, asking an old friend for a recommendation on LinkedIn might create awkwardness if the person has no experience with you in a professional capacity.

Customize Everything

From LinkedIn connection requests to advice-seeking Facebook messages to 140-character chatter on Twitter, you should customize every communication sent on social networks. It shows that you value your unique connection with the recipient. It's easy for people to feel used when you send them a generic request or a message that's clearly copy-and-pasted to dozens of others (especially if you forget to change the names!).

For existing connections, express an understanding and appreciation for the relationship. When you reach out for advice, give consideration to the other person. Ask pertinent questions about them, especially if you've been out of touch for a while. Be honest and open. When requesting a recommendation on LinkedIn, for example, always customize your request to reflect how you value the person's endorsement.

For new relationships, explain why you want to connect with this particular individual. What is it about her background that makes her an appealing person to talk to? Show that you've done your homework. Know about the person's work history and professional accomplishments, as well as anything career-related you two have in common. Never send an introductory message to a potential connection asking, "So, what exactly does your company do?"

Ask for Something Specific

When you approach someone for career help via social media, know what you want out of the interaction and ask specific questions that show you've done your research. Often, people send messages along the lines of "I'm looking to go into marketing. Any advice or leads would be greatly appreciated!" or "Can you tell me more about this job?" in a Twitter DM. These types of messages are so broad that it's difficult to provide a meaningful and relevant response.

Working professionals are strapped for time. Make it easy for them to help you — specify what you're looking for. Is it the person's time? Connections to certain individuals? Advice on a particular topic? Knowledge about a company? Do you want them to act as a reference? Introduce you to a recruiter at their organization? Provide a critique of your resume?

Be direct!

Take It Offline Whenever Possible

Nothing beats face-to-face interaction or voice-to-voice interaction, when geography prevents you from being in the same location. Social media platforms are great for making introductions and warming up relationships, but ultimately you should take your networking conversations beyond the confines of Twitter and LinkedIn.

In-person meetings allow you to build stronger relationships than backand-forth messaging online. Things like body language, eye contact, and tone of voice are all essential in helping to establish rapport and build a bond. When this isn't possible, one solution is to request a <u>Skype</u> call. Not only can you see the person, but you know that you're getting their full attention.

Along the same lines, when you meet someone through social media, ask for their preferred method of contact. Some people are big e-mailers, while others love talking on the phone or meeting for coffee. Respect their preferences.

Say "Thank You"

It's a simple step that many people miss. Show appreciation when someone does something nice for you online. Whether it's responding to a few questions, retweeting a link to your blog post, or even connecting you with one of their friends it's always appropriate to express your gratitude. It's especially important to follow-up after someone has provided advice. People like to feel helpful, so let them know if their advice was useful for you.

Continuously look for ways to give back to the people in your online networks. Don't approach them only when you need a favor. Reach out to say hello or to contribute something you think will be valuable to them. Networking is a two-way street. Plus, in the end, it's your reputation that counts.