

ASK THE COACH


**Executive Career Coach
Provides Insights on Mentoring**
**A Quarterly Column
By Robin Fogel,
Executive and Career Coach**

Q *I have been reading about the new social media, such as LinkedIn and Twitter but I'm not sure if I should use them and if so what the "rules" are?*

A The use of these forms of communication has taken off over the past year in ways that I think some of us never anticipated. While I am not sure that there are any hard and fast rules, here are a couple of thoughts.

Let's start with Facebook. While I have a number of clients who use Facebook in a business setting, especially realtors, I personally believe that it is better to use Facebook as a way to keep in touch with friends and family, not business acquaintances. There is too high a likelihood that you could end up being connected, even inadvertently, to something unflattering, perhaps a picture that someone else posted.

LinkedIn on the other hand is great resource, a way to connect and network with business associates. I have clients who are looking for their next career move and regularly use LinkedIn. Some are finding out about job opportunities because recruiters are now posting positions, some because contacts forward information

about opportunities at their companies, or even those they find them themselves. Others, knowing that a company had an opportunity, have used LinkedIn to connect with someone at that company, perhaps a former coworker. They have asked if they would be willing to give their resumes to hiring managers. At the same time that more individuals are using these tools, recruiters tell me they too look at social media like LinkedIn and Facebook to informally check out candidates, so be mindful of what you post. When you sign up for LinkedIn, be sure to join some of the groups – alumni of your college, former employees of companies, interest groups. It's one other way of expanding your network. Apart from the job search function, a colleague recently told me her company works with corporate executives to set up them up on LinkedIn and Twitter to assure that their profiles are consistent with the company's brand and message.

It is important to think of these types of social media not only as another way to keep in contact but as a great resource. For example, when you need information for a project you are working on, or perhaps you are researching to get new business; you have another tool to use. At the same time it is critical that you remember that the communication should be two way. If someone is looking for information or hoping to make a contact, they are more likely to help you if you are open to helping them. As with most forms of communication, don't write or put anything into a pro-

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file that you wouldn't want distributed. One final thought, remember to "Google" yourself every once in awhile. It's important that you be aware of what is out there in cyberspace with your name attached. **■**

Robin is an executive and career coach who helps insurance women advance their careers, and make career changes and transitions. As an executive coach she provides advice on staffing issues, helps managers develop emerging talent and sharpen manager's individual communication and management skills. To learn more, visit www.coachrobinfogel.com or email her at robin@coachrobinfogel.com

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