

Be the (wo)man: marketing you with web 2.0

Some tips we've gathered in RDC's Alumni Relations to help you put your best foot forward online.

There's a children's commercial on TV – nobody's good at everything, but everyone's good at something. Although this is a message for kids, it's true for us grown-ups too.

But what if you're *really* good at something? What should you do after you've discovered, studied and honed your gift?

Market it.

On the other hand, what if you *don't* think you do anything that's all that special? You could be 'just' an all-around good employee?

Market yourself.

Even if you don't have a business, even if you're only looking for a job, you need to market yourself. Why? Because people need to be able to find you. No one will know that you are 'the best' unless you make yourself available. Employment and guidance counsellors have been saying this for years, but with the emergence of web 2.0, it's never been easier.

Where to start? Think about how people use the internet. Whether they are looking for people, a consultant or a new pair of shoes, most people start by using a search engine (such as Google, Yahoo! Search or other).

1 – Put yourself in the searcher's shoes

- While not all employers use Google to research employees, you can bet that some do. What do your search results say about you?

- If you have a special skill or business that you are marketing, what keywords will your customers use to find you? What results will they find if they search now?

2 – Get started

- As an individual, if any of your search results are embarrassing or out of date, you might need to contact a few website owners to see if they can help you to get a clean(er) slate.
- As a business, now that you know which keywords are important, be sure that your business is named and/or tagged accordingly. While a ‘cool’ sounding name, might sound, uh... cool, remember that it might be hard for customers to find you this way. For example, *Red Deer Bookkeeping Service* would probably be easier to find than *Books Pro* – consider names that contain the service you provide along with the location if possible. Things that a searcher would likely type first.

3 - Market. Market. Market.

- There are a lot of opportunities to market your skill-set online:
 - o Set up an account with LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com). You can post your skills and experience to your profile. This will usually appear quite high in Google’s search results – a good thing if you’ve got anything embarrassing you’d rather bury further down the list. Also good if someone is looking to hire an individual who does what you do within your neighbourhood. While you’re there, join our RDC Alumni group to start building your professional network.

- Do you have unique expertise? Set up a blog describing the work that you do, or the problems that you have solved. There are many ways that you can set up your own blog – one easy (and free) way is through our alumni network <http://rdcalumni.ning.com>. Set up your own page, and start blogging.
- Write an article. Yes, really! Once you've created your article, you can submit it to a service such as Articlebase www.articlebase.com – a collection of free articles. If you're nervous about your writing skills, why not start with WikiHow www.wikihow.com – a site similar to Wikipedia, only with 'how-to' information. What better way to prove that you are an expert in your field? Another way to improve your search results too!
- Comment. Often and nicely. When you see message boards, postings, or questions from users, offer your advice! When someone is looking to hire, it will be obvious that you not only know your stuff, but that you're a team player too. And yes, these too will usually appear in search results... see a trend?

The bottom line? Most people use search engines to navigate the internet. By working with these tools, you can maximize your professional and business profile.