Many job seekers think the holiday season is a time to ‘refrigerate’ their job search campaign. They are mistaken. In fact, the holiday season is the perfect time for you to thaw your job search tools, prep, dial up the heat, and get cooking!

While most job seekers will join you in relaunching their job search around January. With our holiday job search recipe, you will stay ahead of your competition.

Two cups of branding: Define your brand by uncovering what is unique about you. What do you offer employers over other job seekers who are highly qualified? Extract your uniqueness, aligning with what employers need. Caramelize your candidacy until your (UVP) unique value proposition shows a rich color, and your efforts will create an irresistible job search entrée!

A branded resume leaf: Write or rewrite your resume, ensuring your personal brand is sprinkled across the entire document. Avoid job descriptions; instead, focus on what challenges you faced at each corporation and how you solved those challenges. If you recently started a new job, contemplate what you are positioning yourself to accomplish for this corporation. Note: Important to clarify and blend your triumphs with your personal brand.

One LinkedIn profile: LinkedIn has become the most important social networking site to generate job leads. Don’t discard this tool because you are too afraid to try something new or because you just don’t have time to network. Now, during the holidays, as you have downtime—learn how to leverage this dynamic tool. Carve out select accomplishments from your resume and transfer that information onto your online profile. Do not copy and paste your entire resume on LinkedIn (deep frying your LI profile in your resume’s fat is not going to yield the best results).

One stick of job search planning: So, where do you go after you’ve defined your brand, prepared your resume, and created your online profile? Start planning. Luck favors the prepared. Explore online job boards and make a list of corporations in your area you’d like to work for. What do they need? Whom can you contact at that company? What is the HR e-mail?

A tablespoon of moxie: Having the confidence to sell your brand is crucial. Without the right attitude or ‘I-deserve-it’ mentality, your efforts will be futile—no matter the ingredients. But don’t overdo it. Too much confidence can come across as arrogance. Serve your confidence al dente. Present your job search ‘dish’ with confidence, professional garnishing, distinction, and tantalize employers’ taste buds! Your guest (employer) will be delighted they ‘ate’ what you had to dish out!

-Rosa Elizabeth Vargas

Read more at http://www.careerealism.com/holiday-job-search-recipe/#lg91o3jwbUWLx72i.99
Self-Study Guide to Social Media in Your Job Search

PRE-READING
Social media is now playing a critical role in the job search process. Make sure you understand and can fully use various platforms such as Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook to build a professional online presence, research employers, locate jobs, and connect with professionals in your field. These tips will help you get noticed, get connected, and stay connected!

1. Which forms of social media do you use and which do you need to know more about?
2. How can social media enhance your professional online presence?
3. How do employers use social media to identify strong candidates?
4. What is the downside of using social media for your job search?

POST-READING

Reflect
What are the most important things about you and your career plans that you want employers to know?

a. Create a professional, consistent “portrait” that captures the key words, skills, abilities and titles that you want potential employers to know about you.

b. Check your current profiles in your social media applications and make changes to reflect this information.

“Portrait” Example:
Curious, connected, high achieving and well-traveled political science major with keen interest in African politics. History of volunteer work and compassion for people who are challenged by mental illness and poverty. Recognized for successful recruitment efforts in several organizations. Familiar with Microsoft Office and statistical software. Would ideally like to work in an NGO that assists third world countries.

Activity
“Google” yourself to see what information comes up.

Extend and Build
One of the easiest ways to establish a consistent online presence and make sure that professional information will appear when your name is "Googled" is to set up a Google Profile.

- NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers)

For an extended version of this information, please go to: www.naceweb.org

10 Tips for Effectively Using Your LinkedIn Status Update

Updating your LinkedIn status is a great way to communicate to your network on a frequent and ongoing basis.

Insert the title and a “shortened” URL link to one of your recent blog articles. Bit.ly is a great resource for shortening URL’s.

Insert the title and a “shortened” URL to a blog article you read and really liked. Particularly one that is timely, informative and relates to your “brand” or area of specialty in some way.

A link to a newsworthy web posting or news item. Include the title and a shortened URL. Alignment with your brand “voice” or area of specialty makes it more powerful. I like to focus on POSITIVE news as opposed to negative news.

A great “quote of the day.” A great source of quotes of to search the #quote “hashtag” on Twitter. Since Twitter updates are limited to 140 characters, you’ll find quotes that fit the LinkedIn status update window.

A brief piece of advice relevant to your brand or area of specialty.

A link to a great YouTube video. I recommend linking only to videos that are less than about three to five minutes in length. The video content should be consistent with your “brand” or area of specialty.

A request to connect with you on Twitter. Be sure to include your Twitter URL. I’ve created a “custom” domain for my Twitter URL: www.AndyOnTwitter.com.

An important announcement about you or your company. Try a brief “press release” type of communication.

A link to an article in which YOU were quoted. I give the title of the article and a shortened URL link to the article. This is a powerful PR and branding activity.

Recent results and key activities at work. Something like, “Just landed three new Executive Career Coaching clients this week; excited about launching those engagements!” Give it a try, make it a habit.

- Andy Robinson

Read more at http://www.careerealism.com/linkedin-10-tips-effectively-status-update/
How to Create a Persuasive Online Profile to Get a Better Job

Crafting the perfect resume has always been one of the most vital and frustrating steps in the job search. From font and format to using “active” verbs, there’s a lot that goes into that single sheet. So much rides on the brief descriptions of education and work history, and often you are left wondering if you really provided a full picture of yourself. After all, a good hire needs more than just experience; personality, outside pursuits, and social influence can be valuable to know before offering employment.

With the increasing ubiquity of the Internet, paper resumes are falling to the wayside. They are being replaced by professional profiles. This online format isn’t restrained by the physical parameters of a page and allows for more information to be shared with a potential employer. Now you can present a well-rounded snapshot of who you are, what you can do, and why you fit a given position.

There are a number of sites on the Internet that provide the framework and marketplace for professional profiles. LinkedIn is a reliable tool for the white collar community, allowing a clean and simple way to display credentials and job background. Their connection feature allows job seekers to reach out to companies that may have been difficult to reach otherwise, giving them a wider span of opportunities.

Shiftgig provides this kind of easy connection and outreach for the service community, with profiles that reflect the values of personality and social influence that play big roles for bartenders, servers and other industry professionals. Facebook, while still seen as primarily a casual social network, has also become a tool for employers to find staff, allowing them a deeper view into the character of a potential hire.

This shift towards the dynamic professional profile underlines the changing values of employers. While experience is still paramount, personal details can be a huge help in deciding which applicant is right for a company’s culture. So, how do you make the most of the online profile? It is a balancing act; you need to provide the right kind of insights without completely compromising your privacy.

Focus on elements that will display skills or characteristics that could be valuable in the workplace. Volunteer activities, travel, and participation in a club or on a team show off not only your personal interests, but attributes that could translate into an asset on the job.

Don’t shy away from pictures, as being able to “put a face to a name” can make employers more likely to feel comfortable reaching out to you. While casual photos can work, stay away from party shots or selfies; they do not suggest professionalism.

Social media is becoming a widely-used and powerful tool for business, so inclusion of your social networks will provide value. However, once you make them a part of your professional profile, they become an extension of the image you are presenting to an employer.

You don’t have to turn your Twitter into a marketing machine overnight, but make sure the tone of your posts on any forum is something you feel comfortable sharing with a potential boss. Evidence of social influence can be big point in your favor, but only add it if you’re ready to put those networks to work. A paragraph or two describing yourself, your strengths, and what you hope to accomplish adds personality and a sense that you are, in fact, a person, not just a piece of paper. Just a few sentences might provide a connection with an employer that makes you stick in their mind.

This “About Me” will be a more general introduction, so cover letters tailored for each employer are still a wise idea. However, that little human touch can really make you stand out from a pile of black-and-white resumes.

Online professional profiles offer a lot of opportunity to wow an employer right from the start. With a little thought and effort, your dynamic and personalized profile can present a more complete picture of what kind of employee you will be and increase an employer’s confidence in handing you an offer of employment.

- Eddie Lou

Read more at http://www.careerealism.com/create-persuasive-online-profile/#vOkY93SB6Lw5mYBI.99
Matt Youngquist, the president of Career Horizons, tells job seekers that finding a new position presents the same challenges as taking a product to market. But the product they are selling is themselves.

Most Jobs Are Not Published: But just sending out resumes, even hundreds of them, in response to ads probably won’t help that much. The reason, Youngquist says: Most jobs aren’t posted or advertised publicly. "At least 70 percent, if not 80 percent, of jobs are not published," he says. "And yet most people — they are spending 70 or 80 percent of their time surfing the net versus getting out there, talking to employers, taking some chances [and] realizing that the vast majority of hiring is friends and acquaintances hiring other trusted friends and acquaintances."

Los Angeles-area resident Terri Garfinkel, for example, e-mailed past employers after she was laid off from her job at a high-end retail bakery, telling them she was looking for a new position. It took a while, but she landed a job with someone she had worked for just briefly a decade ago. That personal connection is especially important now. With so many people applying for jobs, it’s hard to get noticed.

An Overwhelming Number Of Applications: Ashley Stirrup, the vice president of product marketing at Taleo, which creates software to help companies sift through job applications, says major companies typically receive about six times as many applications as there are employees in the company. "So, for a 30,000-employee company, that would be 180,000 applications a year," he says. Youngquist, the career coach, suggests job seekers network aggressively, looking for connections in companies or with people they want to work with. He often directs job seekers to the people search function on the networking site LinkedIn. Get to the hiring manager, he advises, or at least get to someone who can put in a good word for you.

Make 100 New Contacts Each Month: Another tip from Youngquist: Individuals looking for work should make at least 100 new contacts a month by making phone calls, sending e-mails or even showing up at a company’s door. It’s the same type of work a sales representative often has to do — making cold calls and hustling to find new business.

"It takes X number of contacts to get this many appointments, to get this many chances of actually getting a sales opportunity or a job," Youngquist says. "I do think volume is a big part of it." He says many people’s efforts are "really anemic."

A Full-Time Job: Former pharmaceutical sales representative Camilo Ruan says the smartest thing he did in his job search was treating the hunt for work as a job. He says he would get up early every day and get to work. Among other things, Ruan used his knowledge of firms he was interested in to create customized cover letters that focused not on his past performance, but on what he could do for a company if he were hired.

His well-informed and aggressive efforts paid off. He landed what he calls a great position at the package delivery company TNT Express, and he’s making more money than in his previous position. Experts say that even though the job market is undeniably tough, there are more positions available than many people think. But job seekers will have to be smart and disciplined to find them.

For more information go to http://www.npr.org/2011/02/08/133474431/a-successful-job-search-its-all-about-networking