

Using Social Media To Get Your Next Job

Salons of all shapes and sizes are embracing social media and many use it to scout for – and hire – new employees.

As many hairdressers find their jobs through word-of-mouth or talking to friends of friends, using social media in your quest to find a new role can simply be seen as an extension of this networking.

Facebook

Most salons today have a presence on Facebook and while it provides a perfect informal way to connect with peers and potential employees, it should be used with care.

Be picky about the companies you 'like'

Liking lots of companies may provide you with an influx of information but don't forget that you want to be perceived as passionate about the company you are applying for, not just a Facebook addict who follows any and every salon that might offer you a job.

Make sure there is an element of similarity in the companies that you 'like', otherwise it may appear as though you have a scattergun approach to finding a job – for instance if your niche is modern men's barbering, look out for similar salons and follow them.

Join groups that reflect your interests

Joining groups that reflect your interests will keep you up-to-date with what's going on in the industry and help you connect with other likeminded individuals.

For example, if you're interested in session styling, you could look out for glossy magazine networks, session stylists that you look up to and fashion week fan groups.

Say something sensible

The beauty of social media is that you can get involved in debates and discussions about things that matter to you and the industry you work in. Get involved, but make sure you have something relevant and reasoned to say. It's a good way to get noticed and develop strong contacts.

Use it to learn about potential companies

Looking up salons on Facebook can help with background research before an interview, especially as many companies offer more open and up-to-date content on their page than on an official website. You can look at their latest news and events, get a feel for which areas of the industry they are focusing on – and see what others are saying about them.

Keep your private life private

Adding industry contacts is important but bear in mind that many people see Facebook as a way to keep in contact with friends and family so only add an industry contact if their profile is work-focused.

If you consider Facebook to be there for documenting your social life not your career, check your security settings to make sure you know who can see what. It's easy to set different parts of your profile to different privacy levels – for example you can set your contact details and career information to be visible to all, but your photos only visible to friends.

Smile for the camera

It's almost inevitable that a potential employer will check your online profile. Employers aren't expecting to see you in a suit or a corporate pose, but it might be worth avoiding the 4am 'worse for wear' photo as your profile picture.

Twitter

Salons are increasingly involved in Twitter and having a profile will enable you to communicate with industry peers, celebrities, brands and high profile hairdressers that you admire.

Create different accounts for different voices

If you want to use Twitter to chat to friends and share stories about your social life, it can be worth having a separate Twitter account for your professional persona. The informal format of Twitter means it can be tempting to say anything, but don't forget that everything can be traced back to you. The golden rule? Don't tweet anything you wouldn't mind a current or future employer seeing.

Give yourself an identity

Your Twitter name can be anything you like, but it can be helpful to link yourself to your company or industry – for instance if your name isn't available don't just add random numbers, why not add something to do with hair? Similarly, it's important to add a sentence or two in the profile about who you are and where you work, and adding an up-to-date profile picture will also add personality to your account.

Find followers

One of the quickest and easiest ways of finding relevant followers is by looking at the profile of companies or people that you admire then seeing who they're following. Following interesting and relevant people will generally encourage them to follow you back.

It's all about the conversation

Twitter is all about having a conversation, which should consist of listening, contributing your own thoughts and responding to others. Make sure your tweeting reflects this etiquette with a mix of tweets, retweets and mentions.

Engage directly

The joy of Twitter is that it is so immediate and direct. There's no other social media tool where you can be speaking to the head of the company you admire without a formal introduction. Common courtesy and manners still apply, but make the most of being able to connect!

Use hashtags

Hashtags let you search for keywords and topics that may interest you, as well as letting you know what other people are talking about. Remember to use them when commenting on any hot debate that may catch a recruiter's eye, whether it's about The X Factor, a charity event or an awards' ceremony.

Tool up

If you're spending a lot of time in Twitter, it can be useful to download a free programme like TweetDeck which will help you manage your account and ensure you never miss a mention or message. You can also add a search column with any keywords – 'hairdressing jobs' for instance, so that any mention of those words is immediately visible to you.

Tumblr and Flickr

If you don't have the time or money to set up a website, a Tumblr or Flickr account can serve as a useful addition to your online presence. Operating primarily as somewhere to host pictures for free, both sites are perfect for creating a professional-looking portfolio.

Give it a name

Whichever site you sign up for, make sure it has a relevant name – the name of your salon or something to do with your name and hair. Don't forget to fill out a profile page to help your page be found in a Google search.

Keep it up-to-date

Flickr is usually used for showing off your own photographic work, while Tumblr allows you to share inspirational imagery as well as your own work.

If you opt for a Flickr account, keep it up to date with snaps of your work as well as more professional images. Shots from industry events can also be added or even interior images of your salon if it's something you're proud of.

Tumblr allows the opportunity to do all of the above, as well as post pictures that you find interesting or inspiring, which can be perfect for providing an idea of the sort of work you're interested in.

Get organised

Both Flickr and Tumblr allow you to tag your images, which will help keep them nice and organised as well as ensuring they're easily searchable.

On Flickr you can also put your work in albums, so you can categorise it by year, genre, or style for example

Share your work

Make sure you add the website address of your page on your Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as on your CV and covering letter.

Both of these sites are extremely professional and well-regarded, so make sure you show off your work to as many people as possible by sending them the link.

Industry groups

Sometimes these are used directly for recruitment or to ask for recommendations for job vacancies, but more often they put you in the right company and provide the opportunity to network.

Groups including the HJi forums and Salon Geek, as well as listings sites like Model Mayhem, Who's Testing and Exposure Box are all full of contact details and profiles for likeminded people in the industry.

Join the groups most relevant to your job search and behave as if you were at a fairly informal business meeting; show something of yourself, but not all and remember certain topics such as your social life and company politics should stay off limits.

Provide answers

If you have some experience, offering an answer to questions will show you in a good light and get you noticed. It's better to do this on an ongoing basis as part of your professional development, rather than around a burst around job seeking activity in order to appear genuine.

Make an approach, indirectly

If there's a company you wish to approach and you have a broad network, you probably already have a connection who works for the company – even if it's one or two degrees removed. A quick search can reveal any mutual contacts who you could politely ask for an introduction. Never ask anyone directly for a job, but instead seek their general advice on opportunities or the best person to approach.

Use it regularly

Use the site to source connections for future events and back it up by adding them on Facebook and Twitter – that way when you find yourself job searching, you're ready-to-go with a strong network of contacts that supports your efforts. If you neglect your profile until you have to find a job, you'll have the bigger task of building a profile from scratch.

Choose recommendations with care

Recommendations are powerful – but only if they are credible. If your profile is cluttered with too many, they become devalued. Similarly, too much 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours', where you endorse a colleague and they reciprocate will come across as weak. Ideally, a recommendation should be from someone for whom you have provided a service, so a boss, business partner or customer.