

## SELF-MARKETING 2.0: USING LINKEDIN IN THE MARKETING CLASSROOM

Denny E. McCorkle, Monfort College of Business, University of Northern Colorado,  
Greeley, CO 80634; denny.mccorkle@unco.edu

### ABSTRACT

Social media has grown tremendously in the past two years (Bernoff, 2009). Sites such as Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, Digg, StumbleUpon, YouTube, Delicious, Blogger, etc. are changing the way students learn, promote, and communicate with others. While most students are connecting and have experience using Facebook or MySpace (Hare, 2009), many seem unfamiliar with the processes and student use of social media for professional networking, personal branding, or job search/career development. While the marketing academic research has had some focus on developing student self-marketing skills (McCorkle et al., 2003; Smith, 2004; Taylor, 2003), the use of social media for student personal branding and job search is in its infancy and mostly found as anecdotal or in non-academic publications, blogs, and web sites.

The purpose of this article is to address the pedagogical importance, methods, issues, and recommendations of using LinkedIn in the marketing classroom. For students in the job search, LinkedIn provides a professional alternative to Facebook and with numerous career enhancing uses (Kawasaki, 2007). For instance, LinkedIn could be beneficial to students for: (1) self-promotion, (2) social networking, and (3) job search/career knowledge development.

A series of LinkedIn assignments are used by the author to introduce and encourage social networking to the marketing students' job search and career. The course is the capstone Marketing Management course composed of senior marketing majors, most with plans for graduation at the end of the semester. The LinkedIn assignments for this course were developed and improved over three semesters.

**Phase 1: Set-up Resume 2.0 and Personal Learning Network.** This involved setting up their resume on LinkedIn and connecting with other students, alumni, and professionals; and setting up Google Reader and subscribing to RSS feeds on their career interests.

**Phase 2: Personal Branding/SWOT.** This involved completing a SWOT Analysis on themselves and then creating a statement of their best qualifications or accomplishments and adding to the summary section of LinkedIn.

**Phase 3: Social Networking.** With this phase students are required to join LinkedIn groups on the topic of their professional/career interests. After joining, they are required to participate in the groups by asking questions and sharing appropriate readings/articles found in their Google Reader. Additionally, students are asked to visit the Answers section of LinkedIn and ask or answer questions.

For phases one and two, the feedback was generally positive with all students recommending the continued use of LinkedIn assignments and many wanted even more assignments using LinkedIn. Overall, the students generally liked the phase 3 assignment for it taught them more about social networking in a professional setting. But, there were some problems or difficulties requiring improvement of the phase 3 assignment for use in future semesters.

Further recommendations for future use of LinkedIn in the marketing classroom are made in the article.

**References Available on Request**