

Words on Work

Podcast Interview with Michele Martin

Learning and Workforce Development Consultant

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[**Jeff Stoller**] Welcome to *Words on Work*, a feature podcast of the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University. I'm your host, Jeff Stoller. In today's competitive labor market, job seekers and employers have embraced social media tools as a way to match qualified candidates to job openings. In order for the staff and managers of government One-Stop Career Centers to help these two groups connect, they need to understand and utilize social media as well. Today, we'll be discussing how social media tools can support effective job searches and improve customer service. Returning as our guest is Michele Martin, a learning and workforce development consultant for more than 15 years who has been exploring the uses of social media since 1999. She is a former co-host of the Internet radio show *Career Talk*, currently blogs at the Bamboo Project. She is also a co-author of a new Heldrich Center research brief entitled, *Social Media for One-Stop Career Frontline Staff* with Savannah Barnett and Rob Sewell. Glad to have you back to our podcast, Michele.

[**Michele Martin**] Yes, thanks Jeff. Glad to be back.

[**Jeff Stoller**] Great. Well, again, you've had a very successful series of these now on social media with these different briefs, this one is looking at a whole new group to target. I was wondering before we go and start looking specifically at the particular uses by One-Stop Career Center staff, how important have social media tools become to employers that are looking for qualified job candidates?

[**Michele Martin**] Well, this is a developing situation but we find that social media tools with employers have become incredibly important. In the last couple of years, when we site these reports in our brief, we've seen tremendous growth on the part of employers, up to 80% of employers report that they are using social media for recruitment and it's particularly important for people who are in white collar, what we would call white collar kinds of jobs. Employers are going directly to resources, particularly LinkedIn, to source potential employees so they will go onto LinkedIn, do searches for people who have the skill sets that they are interested in, and do direct outreach. So we're finding that more and more social media is playing a major role for employers in terms of finding the most qualified applicants.

[Jeff Stoller] Great. So if the interest of the career centers is to be where the action is, they really have to understand that this is really the direction employers have been going in terms of their recruitment. And on that point of you know what the career centers can do to facilitate this kind of a connection between the job seekers and the employers, what is it exactly that One-Stop Career Centers can do to assist job seekers, particularly those who may not be familiar with social media tools?

[Michele Martin] Well, I think that the first thing that One-Stops need to do is let people know what a source or a resource social media has become for employers. I'm not sure that job seekers are aware of the extent to which employers are using social media to support recruitment and so One-Stop really need to let job seekers know this is the place to be. It used to be you know you would look for jobs in the newspaper. That is not working anymore and you need to be online and active in social networks. Obviously once you know they've sort of emphasized that point, the next piece of it is that they need to show people how to actually use the tools, particularly LinkedIn, that is probably the premier social network for job seekers and so they really need to show people how to optimize their profiles, make sure those are complete, how to use the different features on LinkedIn, the different ways that they can use it for a job search. I would also say that they need to ensure that their One-Stop Career Center is actually providing access to these sites. I know that you know there are some places where that may be blocked and that can be an issue if job seekers are using a One-Stop as their primary way to get online, then they need to be able to get into those networks where the action is going on. And then the last thing I think is really important is that staff need to actually model the behaviors they're looking for so they need to be on LinkedIn, they need to be understanding how employers are using LinkedIn so that they can you know they're in a better position to be able to talk with job seekers about the different features and how they work and everything else.

[Jeff Stoller] Can you give a few examples of how these tools might relate to specific steps you would take to say learn about that employer and what they might be offering?

[Michele Martin] Yeah. So if you're starting with you know that there's a particular employer that you want to target, the first thing that you want to do is see where they are active in social media. So you want to go on LinkedIn and see if they have a company page. You want to go on Twitter and see do they have a Twitter account. You want to go on Facebook and see do they have a Facebook fan page. Some companies are specifically using Facebook, for example. They have set up fan pages that are specifically for recruitment and so you're able to find out what the job openings are and be able to connect with staff in the company. So your first thing is to find out where the company may be active in social media. Once you know, identify those different places where they're active. Then you want to dig in more deeply and you want to take a look at their fan page and see you know what are their products and services. What seem to be the things that are important to them as a company? If you go on LinkedIn, that obviously a particularly rich resource for learning about companies in part because that's part of the

purpose of it so you're able to go on company pages and find out you know who's working in that company, what kinds of jobs are available there. You can see where people who worked at that company were before they came to that company, and you can also see where they go after they leave that company, which can give you additional ideas on places that you can apply.

[Jeff Stoller] Well, thank you again for speaking with us today, Michele. I've been talking with consultant Michele Martin, co-author of the new Heldrich Center brief, *Social Media for One-Stop Career Center Frontline Staff*. The complete brief can be accessed at the Heldrich Center Web site. That's www.heldrich.rutgers.edu and Heldrich is spelled h-e-l-d-r-i-c-h.

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[Jeff Stoller] This is Jeff Stoller for *Words on Work*. Thank you.

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