

# PERSONNEL PLUS! CONSULTING SERVICES

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210 E Lyndale Ave Helena MT 59601

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## RECRUITING TRENDS THROUGH SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES September 2009

Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services and the Career Services office at MSU Billings surveyed Montana human resource professionals regarding their company's use of Social Networking Sites to reach prospective candidates. The hypothesis was that SNS use among employers in this state would be markedly different from employers' SNS use nationally.

### GENERAL USAGE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Career Services surveyed members of the MSU Billings Career Services Advisory Board and members of Yellowstone Valley Chapter/Society for Human Resource Management. Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services also sent the survey to 250 of its constituents. Responses from 87 (35%) of respondents represented a variety of industries and company sizes across Montana.

Of the respondents, 36.7% of Montana employers indicated they currently use one or more SNS. These data are consistent with national employers' use of SNS as identified in a recent survey conducted by National Association for Colleges & Employers. In 2009, 36% of NACE employer respondents used SNS in their college recruiting programs, compared with 29% in 2008; see NACE "Spotlight Online," July 22, 2009.

Popularity of SNS among Montana users ranked in the following order:

- Facebook: 50% of those using SNS
- LinkedIn: 47% of those using SNS
- Twitter: 31.25% of those using SNS
- myspace: 22% of those using SNS
- Skype/OoVoo: 18.75% of those using SNS
- A few respondents indicated use of either an industry-specific online recruiting site or their own company website as electronic public outreach.

Popularity of Montana purposes ranked in the following order:

- Establishing a Company Presence: 75% of those using SNS
- Posting Vacancies: 40% of those using SNS
- Conducting Video Conference: 18.75% of those using SNS
- Checking Candidate Profiles: 6% of those using SNS
- Several other responses indicated use of SNS for active Client/Customer/or other Public outreach.

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## INDUSTRY INDICATORS

Responses from these Montana industries indicated highest SNS use among hospitality and non-profit businesses:

Industry	% of Industry Using SNS	Most Popular SNS	Most Popular Reason to use SNS
Finance, Banking, Accounting	33%	Facebook LinkedIn	Establish company presence Outreach to customers
Government	33%	Twitter	Establish company presence Post vacancies
Healthcare, Personal Care	18.75%	Facebook LinkedIn	Establish company presence
Hospitality	66%	Facebook myspace	Establish company presence Outreach to customers
Manufacturing, Mining, Construction, Automotive	0%	N/A	N/A
Non-Profit	60%	Facebook LinkedIn	Establish company presence Post vacancies
Retail	42%	N/A	Establish company presence
Utilities/ Services	37.5%	Facebook LinkedIn	Establish company presence Post vacancies

Other industries responding included: IT, Employment, Education, Business Consulting, Architecture and Engineering.

## OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS

Because the first portion of this survey was conducted without data regarding the size of the company, Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services does not have a data set of Full-Time Employees large enough to identify whether or not company size is a factor in determining SNS usage.

Data available suggest that companies with fewer than 100 employees are more likely to use SNS than are companies with over 100 employees; further analysis shows respondents' SNS use by FTE data:

- <10 Employees: 80% use SNS
- 10-20 Employees: 33% use SNS
- 20-50 Employees: 40% use SNS
- 50-100 Employees: 57% use SNS
- 100+ Employees: 25% use SNS

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The first administration of this survey was conducted solely in the Billings area by Career Services at MSU Billings, while later respondents were from other areas across Montana. Therefore, the data are skewed to show a greater response from the Billings area (54%), and extant statistics do not indicate whether geographical area is a determinant in the likelihood to use SNS.

Data include the following percentages of SNS users in these Montana zip code areas:

- 590XX: 0% (Carbon, Park, Stillwater Co)
- 591XX: 35% (**Yellowstone Co**)
- 592XX: NA- No respondents (Daniels, Sheridan, Valley Co)
- 593XX: NA- No respondents (Custer, Rosebud, Ekalaka Co)
- 594XX: 75% (Judith Basin, Cascade, Fergus Co)
- 595XX: NA- 1 response (Hill, Blaine, Phillips Co)
- 596XX: 33% (Helena, Lewis & Clark Co)
- 597XX: 71% (Madison, Silverbow, Gallatin Co)
- 598XX: 33% (Missoula, Ravalli Co)
- 599XX: 14% (Flathead, Lincoln Co)

## EFFECTIVENESS

Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services asked respondents who currently use SNS to rate the effectiveness of their use on a scale of 1-5, where: <3= below average, 3= average, and >3=above average:

- 22 % rated their experience below average (<3)
- 55 % rated their experience as average (3)
- 22% percent rated their experience as above average (>3).

The 2009 NACE survey also indicated that few respondents have found SNS to be effective recruiting tools. On a 5-point scale (1 = not at all effective; 5 = extremely effective), employers ranked SNS at 2.9 in effectiveness. Moreover, not a single NACE respondent rated SNS as "extremely effective" while two Montana respondents (hospitality and public government) identified SNS as "excellent" in effectiveness.

Montana respondents who reported the most effectiveness from SNS indicated they use Facebook and Twitter as their primary SNS choices, effective in Establishing a Company Presence. Those using LinkedIn, myspace and Skype/ooVoo identified effectiveness in: Posting Vacancies, Checking Profiles, Video Conferencing and "Other" (such as customer, client and public outreach). These users were more likely to rate effectiveness as average or below average.

Those who rated SNS effectiveness as above average were also more likely to use more than one SNS and/or to use SNS for more than one purpose.

## DATA ON COMPANIES NOT USING SNS

Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services asked respondents who were not currently using SNS whether they ever planned to use SNS. There were also asked why they were not using SNS at this time.

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## Does Not Use SNS and Does Not Plan to in Future due to:

- Legal concerns regarding privacy:
  - 1) Company Privacy, and
  - 2) Applicant Privacy/Discrimination concerns
- Lack of professionalism associated with use of SNS.
- Company recruits electronically through company website.
- Security concerns and IT policies prevent doing so.
- Receive enough applicants without going to extra effort.
- Otherwise see no value in it.

## Does Not Currently Use SNS But Plans to in Future due to:

- Concerns about legalities
- Lack of knowledge about SNS
- Company policy currently prohibits access to SNS

## **ADVICE FOR JOB-SEEKERS**

Last, Personnel PLUS! Consulting Services asked respondents to provide advice to job seekers in regard to SNS practices. Although only two respondents use SNS to check applicant profiles if available, the overwhelming advice is that applicants must:

- Be careful of the content, spelling and grammar they post;
- Treat their SNS as they would their job application documents and interview;
- Not post any unprofessional material that might negatively affect an individual's job search

These responses suggest either that more companies are checking SNS profiles of applicants than have confirmed doing so in this survey, or that respondents believe this may be a common practice among other companies. Other helpful advice included understanding that company information on SNS may not be updated or current and that companies may not have time to look at their own or others' SNS.

## **SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS**

The hypothesis that disparity exists in SNS use when comparing Montana employers with those in the rest of the country was false. Approximately 36% of human resource professionals in Montana are using SNS which is equivalent to use by employers across the country. Similarly, both user groups rate effectiveness of SNS as "average" in regard to reaching prospective candidates.

Results clearly indicate that all employers, whether their companies are using SNS or not, advise candidates to use SNS professionally and to remember that electronic identities impact employers' perceptions.

*Survey & report compiled in conjunction with Career Services, MSU Billings, 406-657-2168*