

**I**n business school, students learn the value of developing and maintaining a good professional network.

More than 70 percent of jobs are obtained through existing relationships and networking. But as people move across the country or around the globe, staying in touch with former classmates or connections from the Baylor Business Network meetings can be difficult.

Welcome to the digital age. With approximately 92 percent of recruiters using social media as part of their hiring process, it's hard to ignore the implications of online networking. People are using LinkedIn, apps, even Facebook and Twitter to initiate and sustain professional relationships.

It is growing significantly easier to stay in touch with former classmates and business acquaintances thanks to technology. A quick search on LinkedIn reveals more than 14,400 profiles of current and former Hankamer School of Business students. LinkedIn has reported more than 400 million users and conveniently suggests new connections based on your current network.

Imagine a face-to-face networking event. You approach another attendee, introduce yourself, chat and possibly exchange business cards. Now think about LinkedIn. You can do all of the same things: connect, introduce yourself and exchange a few messages. Online, though, the new connection has access to employment history, volunteer experience, education and skills. By maintaining online relationships, contacts know the pertinent information to make informed referrals.

From an employer perspective, candidates referred by current employees tend to be the highest quality hires. A referral candidate often has greater job satisfaction and stays longer with the company. Referral candidates are three to five times more likely to be hired for a position than a candidate with no connection within the company. With the growing popularity of employee referral programs, 69 percent of companies say they have a program in place, more and more members of professional networks are incentivized to refer highly qualified candidates for positions.

Nice to

*(digitally)* Meet You

### Digital Options Outside of LinkedIn

Most business conferences designate a hashtag for attendees to use on Twitter and other social media platforms. It's easy to find and connect with someone at a conference when you both use the same hashtags to discuss the event.

Facebook offers targeted groups, groups with the intent to unite people with common interests, which allows the opportunity to network with anyone online who identifies with the network. This is a great way to digitally meet and bounce ideas off of industry peers and experts. If the group is for practitioners in your area, it might lead to face-to-face interactions, too.

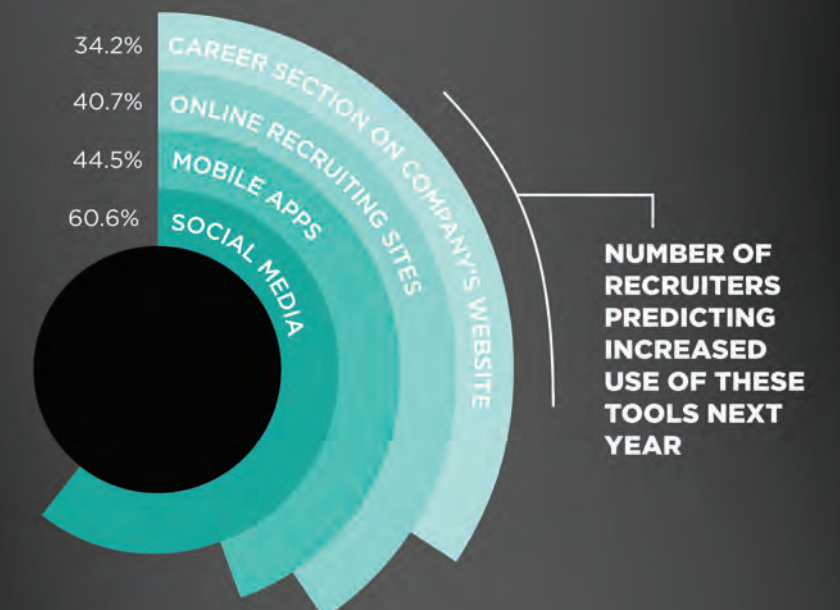
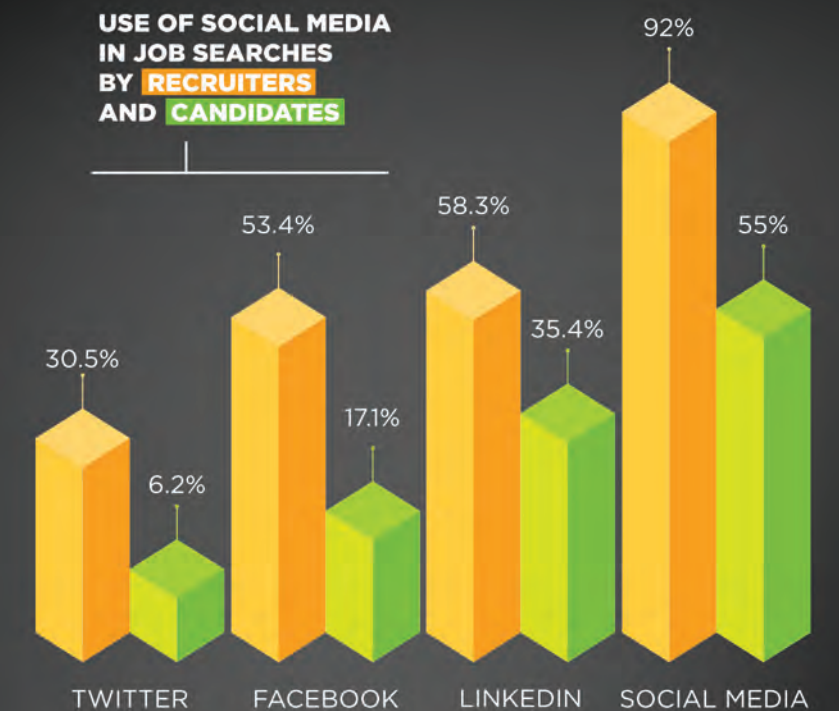
Additionally, networking smartphone applications (apps) are being introduced to the market daily. For example, the purpose of the app Weave is to introduce professionals. When two individuals both indicate they'd like to meet, the app puts them in contact with each other. Want to hire or be hired? Fundraise? Weave's algorithm suggests professionals based on stated goals.

It is important to find the digital networking style that works best for you, but with the expanding number of options, there's no excuse for avoiding what is taught in school: never stop networking. 📱

[bbr.baylor.edu/digital-networking](http://bbr.baylor.edu/digital-networking) <

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