

Advantages and disadvantages of social networking



Social networking is the hottest online trend of the last few years. Not only do social media sites provide a way to keep in contact with friends, but they can also offer opportunities for professional online networking. Social networking could be advantageous for your career, but there are also disadvantages to consider. Could the time you spend interacting online be put to better use? Let's take a look at the advantages and disadvantages of social networking to work out whether you should be devoting more of your attention to this online activity.

Advantages of Social Networking Social networking offers many benefits. It is now easier than ever to keep in contact with old friends and colleagues. The professional networking site LinkedIn even allows users to request introductions to business people who are known to their contacts. The potential of this enhanced connectivity is huge; whereas once you would be left sifting through business cards after a networking event, trying to remember details about each person, you can now easily look up a connection's credentials and business interests on their social media profile.

LinkedIn is a particularly valuable business tool; over 200 million people are members, including hiring managers from many top companies. Your profile is designed to function as an online resume, detailing your education, career history (with recommendations from your colleagues), and creative portfolio. The platform encourages users to connect with people working in their organizations, and to endorse their colleagues for the skills they display in their daily work. You can learn how to take advantage of all that LinkedIn has to offer with this LinkedIn Training Course.

Social networking is particularly vital for entrepreneurs. Freelancers can find contacts via professional groups on LinkedIn and Twitter, while business owners can make use of the large user bases of Facebook and Twitter to market their products and services. Facebook has a range of services designed to help businesses market themselves more effectively, including the ability to target advertising at the precise demographic groups that are likely to respond favorably. Find out how to Create a Successful Facebook Advertising Campaign with this free online course.

What about Twitter? Business owners can also use this service for effective promotion, as explained in this Twitter for Business online course.

Disadvantages of Social Networking The primary disadvantage of social networking is that most people do not know how to network effectively. As a result, the few benefits they get from their networking activity are not worth the time invested. The best way to avoid being disappointed in this way is to decide on a strategy for using social sites, and stick to it. For example, if you are going to use Twitter to draw attention to exciting new content on your website, then resist the temptation to waste time tweeting about unrelated topics. Stay focused on what you want to achieve and don't let yourself get distracted.

The golden rule of social networking is to avoid putting anything online that could reflect badly on you or your business. Pictures of you acting unprofessionally could harm your chances of getting a job, or make a poor impression on a new client. If you want to use a social media site for personal as well as professional networking, consider creating a separate account under a nickname, so you can keep your professional account clean.

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