



# Employment News Alert

*Summer Quarterly Edition*

*Reaching Clients and Subscribers Throughout New Jersey, Across The Nation and Around the World*

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August 2010

Volume 7; Issue 3

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## **‘NETWorkplace’ The Rise of Social Networking on the Job**

*Part Three of Our Four-Part Series This Year on Managing Social Networking Sites in the Workplace*

In this installment, we are going to explore and explain the *necessity* for business to adopt, and adapt to, social networking use in the workplace. As you may recall from ENA’s Winter and Spring Quarterly Editions that we published earlier in the year in this ongoing series, our first installment provided employers with a cost-benefit analysis of social networking at work and options to manage the use of these sites by workers. In the second installment, we explored the right of privacy ... one of the more daunting challenges for NJ employers looking to use online social networking platforms to their advantage, and further discussed how management might strike the right balance.

So, just why is it a necessity to integrate social networking into the workplace? The plain and simple fact is, social networking sites are reaching higher and higher percentages of people around the world every month and the growth is explosive. Worldwide, more than 75% of all women online and nearly 70% of all men online visited at least one such site in May 2010 according to a recent report from comScore, an Internet research and tracking firm.

Since there are an ever-expanding number of social networking sites proliferating across the Internet, we will focus our discussions here to a few at the top, among others, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Facebook has been quickly adopted by workers to connect with friends, family, and colleagues, but is considered by many to be of a more ‘personal nature’. LinkedIn, which has positioned itself as the network for young professionals, is widely used to build and maintain external professional networks. Twitter’s applications, and by the very limits of its operations - 140-character bits of information - have yet to achieve what may be its full potential in the workplace, i.e., a continuous feed of up-to-the-second information. With that potential comes the problem, of course -- the inability of the human brain to process and react to an immediate and constant flow of information. But that’s a topic for another day.



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## Explosive Growth!

Just a cursory review of ENA's own web presence and use of these sites, particularly the rapid growth of our own 'Friends', 'Friends of Friends', and 'Connections', reveals to us that social networking is becoming ever more widely accepted by businesses across virtually all industries and by executives and managers across nearly all age groups.

As the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project has found, 'Millennials' (aka Gen Y ... those born in 1980 and after) are not shy about personal disclosure and information sharing and are leading the way in blurring the lines of what the mainstream would consider as "private", but sites like Facebook and LinkedIn are reaching and reining in more and more Gen Xers and Boomers thereby greatly expanding this information sharing across multiple generations. Take note, the sixty-something-year-old CEO of an ENA corporate client recently informed us that he himself had experimented with LinkedIn and was thoroughly impressed - it helped him find an expertise resource he needed. Big deal, you might say, but let us tell you this from personal knowledge ... this CEO was, until very late last year, a self-admitted computer illiterate who did not even know how to use his Outlook email, or any email for that matter. Over the last 8 months or so, he has seized onto social networking with such gusto that he already has nearly a thousand followers on Twitter!

## Productivity Increases?

From the employer's perspective, the viability of social networking as a business 'tool' rests in large part on its productivity benefits. Early on, many managers viewed these sites as 'productivity killers' and, in fact, that was a major component of ENA's cost-benefit analysis in the Winter Quarterly we published in February 2010. As any business executive knows, any Company looking to integrate a social networking platform into its workplace needs to be able to move its vision from 'interesting potential' to 'key business strategy'.

More and more, it appears to ENA that many companies are moving, albeit cautiously, toward that strategy, recognizing that social networking's primary work-related benefit is the relative ease within which work colleagues can maintain and even strengthen ties. Open, team-oriented, *collaborative* work environments will clearly reap the many benefits of this new focus on social networking, however, ENA sees it more likely to be the disconnected project team with members who may be spread throughout your building, or across the country, or even around the globe, who will experience the greatest benefits of their organization's adoption and integration of social network software.

## Where Can It Be Most Effective in Your Company?

So where in your Company would social networking be most effective? Interest is obviously high, but management must set expectations for use and provide direction to workers when integrating social networking platforms in the workplace. ENA suggests that implementation should first begin with employees whose 'job descriptions' already require more informal networking channels, such as those in sales or recruiting. At the next step, the platform can be expanded into specific departments in your organization in order to provide more efficient interaction between employees.

It can be done and, in ENA's view, must be done if your Company is going to remain competitive and your employees productive. Remember when email was first introduced, or faxes for that matter? Both met with some initial resistance from management. Now, email use is widespread and the fax is practically dead. It is only a matter of time before social networking sites are fully integrated into the workplace ... don't be the last to know!

## Tell Us What You Think

Just as with the monthly *ENA NewsFlash* you received a few weeks ago, the *ENA Quarterly Edition* has been completely updated and redesigned ... giving it a simpler, cleaner, cutting-edge look reflective of its now global reach. Let us know what you think at [becurtis@strykertams.com](mailto:becurtis@strykertams.com).



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and you can instantly see our fresh and exciting new formats. To make  
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This year, both the *Quarterly* and the *NewsFlash* have experienced tremendous growth and success, with each now reaching thousands of clients and subscribers all across the U.S. and the world, including Europe, China, South America, and Australia. Many of our national and international subscribers obtain information and resources here in order to protect their business interests in New Jersey.

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