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Expert: Being warm, friendly helps professionals online

Originally published: October 14, 2010 6:12 PM
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By PATRICIA KITCHEN patricia.kitchen@newsday.com

QUICK SUMMARY It's like "a big online cocktail party or networking event. You can pretty much approach anyone," one consultant says.



Photo credit: Newsday / Alejandra Villa | Alexandra Stebelsk, of Great Neck, attends a computer literacy workshop at the Hicksville Career Center. (Aug. 19, 2010)

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If you're a professional wanting to make online connections that lead to business and career opportunities, you'll have to do more on sites such as Twitter and Facebook than blast out requests and sales pitches.

The key, said Steve Haweeli: Be warm and friendly. "We call them social networks because we're being social," said Haweeli, founder and president of WordHampton Public Relations in East Hampton. With authenticity as a foundation, the commerce happens organically, he said.

Haweeli shared his advice with about 25 communications professionals at Wednesday night's program at the Melville Marriott on "Transforming Online Connections into Offline Relationships," sponsored by the Public Relations

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Louise DiCarlo of [Stony Brook](#), an online community producer, social media manager and social media columnist with [ThreeVillagePatch](#), pointed out there is an "initial investment" of time and focus in learning the ins and outs of the sites. She said she doesn't market her services; clients come to her after getting a sense of her personality and work ethic on Twitter, a microblogging site where users post comments of 140 characters or less.

And she has some fun with the site - during baseball playoff season, her profile photo shows her in a pink [Yankees](#) cap.

Twitter users don't have to ask to connect with someone they want to follow - as they would have to on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) - they just do. It's like "a big online cocktail party or networking event. You can pretty much approach anyone," said [Robin Bernstein](#), a writing and public relations consultant in [Melville](#) who attended the session.

James D'Ambrosio, a communications professional in [East Northport](#) who's looking for a job with a nonprofit, said he's been learning the Twitter ropes at MeetUp sessions in Manhattan. He's just found and started following the tweets of recruiters and hiring managers, some of whom have followed him back.

Those looking to combine socializing, talking tweets and giving to charity can check into the second-annual LITweetup Helps initiative on Oct. 23 at four [Panera Bread](#) locations on [Long Island](#). It's part food drive and part tweetup, where Twitter users meet face-to-face, said DiCarlo. Newbies, bearing nonperishable food, are welcome. "We talk to everybody," she said. Learn more at [facebook.com/LITweetupHelps](#) or

on Twitter look for

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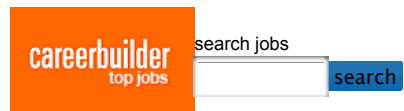
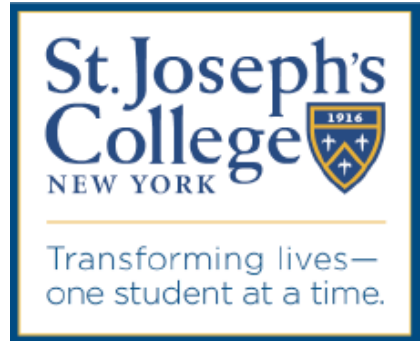
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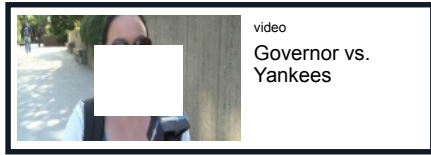
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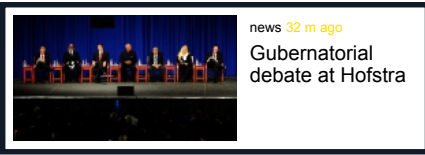
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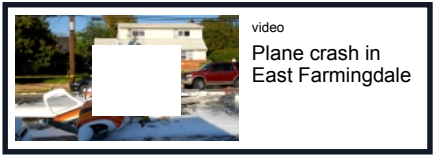
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