



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Why Keep up with Technology?

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Are you on Facebook? MySpace? LinkedIn?

Do you text to keep in touch with family and friends?

Like it or not, social interaction has been significantly altered by the electronic revolution.

You may not realize how much the new technology impacts many aspects of our jobs, regardless of your practice area. I urge you to keep informed of new developments in technology. Why? Here are just three reasons:

- 1) If you're hiring entry-level staff, you need to keep up with the basics of how the younger generation thinks, learns and works.
- 2) Technology can help you make better use of your time, and the time of those you work with.
- 3) Social networking through the Web has more to offer than you think.

THE NEW TALENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Our universities and colleges are producing new, young talent who live, breathe and eat in an electronic world. They will have a question and will send you an instant message, or a text message on your cell phone. Will you be able to respond? Even if you're in the middle of a meeting? They are energetic and want to get things done. If you are able to keep up with them and the way they communicate, they will have a higher level of respect for you.

PRODUCTIVITY

Do you know how to set up a Web conference? Are you effective in managing employees who are geographically dispersed? Being able to conduct a

meeting over a Web connection, rather than having 10 people travelling from around the country saves hundreds of hours of time. In addition, those people participating via Web will still be able to attend to personal matters at home that evening, instead of sitting on an airplane.

You don't work with people in different locations? Maybe that's because you've limited yourself to hiring talent in your own geographic location. However, with today's technology, telecommuting has enabled more companies to acquire top-level talent, regardless of where they choose to live.

SOCIAL NETWORKING

If you haven't signed up for a social network, it's time to give it a try. The three sites I listed at the top of this article are the three most significant social networking sites available at this time.* I'm still something of a novice in this area, but in my limited experience I've already witnessed:

- People I haven't seen or heard from in over 10 years, who are looking to make connections to help relocate back to their home town.
- References for subject matter experts have been made quickly when someone posts a question on a discussion forum.
- People in my network make a job change, post important news about their career, and I'm able to keep up with little effort.

Whether you're a techno-phobe or a techno-geek, it's incredibly time-consuming to keep up with everything that's new. Don't let that intimidate you. Discover the power in the tools that are being made available every day. Read to keep up with what's new. Use what makes sense for you. And don't be afraid to ask your college intern to teach you some new tricks! ●

*USA Today 12/31/2008 – “Bad News for Workers is Good News for LinkedIn”