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## ASSISTANTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Today's career environment has evolved. What's different is that there are more ways to influence getting a job than in the past. We already know the saying is true, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." Well, the number of people you know has now expanded thanks to social networks. People are now able to learn more about you when you utilize and participate in the various social media tools.

LinkedIn has been around for a while as a professional online social network. It isn't an exciting network when you compare it with Facebook; however, it's useful to know that the LinkedIn profile pages are indexed in Google, allowing future employers to find your profile when they "Google" you.

LinkedIn can provide assistants with a new way to network with superintendents, fellow assistants and vendors in the industry and to find peers who share common interests. I have found many superintendents in my area who are on LinkedIn.

I have also found that another interesting aspect of networking exists with the members of golf courses who use LinkedIn. You just never know when your professional interaction with a member on LinkedIn might lead to an invitation for a job interview.

Blogging and sites such as Facebook can lead to hundreds of inquiries on who you are. Your blog is like a resume. The story of our work lives or the story of what we do after work expresses our passion and is now captured in ways we didn't have available before.

With free tools you can share your accomplishments with the world, and with Google's help your prospective employers can determine your Web presence and learn a lot about you before even meeting you.

Online social networks provide the opportunity to learn more about someone through repeated interactions. If you and I are friends on Twitter, I get to see what you consider

interesting enough to post into a box. If we're friends on Facebook, I might learn a lot about your interests and the like from what you put on your profile or some of the other groups you belong to.

However, social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter have the potential to be both a help and a hindrance. They are networking tools that allow you to get the word out to your network that you are looking for work, but they also allow companies to search social media sites and gather data that will help them make decisions about you with or without allowing you to present yourself formally.

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The use of provocative or inappropriate photos and poor communication skills will become a basis for judgment above all else.

With any new invention, nothing is guaranteed. What works for one assistant may not work for another, depending on the level of acceptance of social media today vs. the future.

Results will vary, but overall, an assistant is just as capable of finding and building networks as anyone else through various social media tools.

The point is you need to network to grow your career opportunities. Build and nurture your own network in a way that works for you. **GCI**