



CONTRACTING
SCOUT

Scouting the best contract for you

How to make the most of social media: guide

As a contractor, investing time in developing a social media strategy can provide you with a valuable and cost effective marketing tool. Used properly, social media platforms are a cost effective way of connecting with industry professionals in order to grow your contacts and promote yourself. They're also essential for staying ahead of the curve with emerging trends, news and industry events. In this guide, [Contracting Scout](#) take a look at the different platforms and how they can help your contracting career.

LINKEDIN

[LinkedIn](#) recently overhauled its desktop site to offer a streamlined experience complete with better search functions, more relevant results and new features. With approximately 3 billion users, LinkedIn is the world's number one business networking site, that's why creating a LinkedIn profile should be at the top of any contractor's 'to do' list.

Your Profile:

Think of your [LinkedIn profile](#) as your interactive online resume. Using the information from [your CV](#) as the basis for your

profile, you can also upload your digital portfolio, allowing potential clients to view samples of your work. Pay particular attention to your headline, which should clearly and concisely communicate your value to the employer with relevant information, such as your job title, industry, and years of experience, for example:

Linux contractor with extensive experience of IBM Unix/AIX based servers + T-SQL, PHP, JavaScript,

Search Bar:

According to data published by LinkedIn, recruiters use the platform's powerful search feature to find contractors for specific rolls. By clicking 'Advanced' beside the search bar, contractors can find specific professionals, companies and jobs related to their field of interest. This should give you a good indication of the key words and phrases to incorporate into your profile to ensure the content is optimised for recruitment searches.

Connect & Follow:

By increasing your connections, you increase the likelihood of appearing higher up in

LinkedIn

recruitment searches. Just enter your email to sync your contacts with LinkedIn and use the 'My Network' section to get back in touch with old colleagues etc. You can also follow relevant companies on LinkedIn so that their [news](#) and [jobs](#) will come up in your news feed.

Groups and Interests:

A great way to meet new professionals to connect with is to join groups based on your interests or current profession. You can participate in discussions, often gaining valuable insights into your field of work. LinkedIn also has a publishing platform where you can share your own articles with thousands of readers, [SlideShare](#) for sharing presentations and info-graphics, and [Lynda](#), [LinkedIn's educational platform](#), for developing your skills. Joining groups can also be a great way of learning about industry events where you can take the opportunity to network in person.

New 'Open Candidates' Feature:

More than 10 million members are currently using LinkedIn's Open Candidates feature. The feature allows members to privately notify recruiters that they are interested in being

contacted about new roles, without announcing this publically on their profile. Recruiters now have access to a new contract filter via [LinkedIn's Recruiter platform](#), allowing them to narrow their searches to target candidates based on their preferences.

Summary & Specialties:

Use this area to neatly summarise your professional story, including your background, expertise, successes and business goals. LinkedIn's search engine scans this content for key skills and attributes, and so might a potential recruiter. Use keywords that relate to both your industry and general contracting, such as: 'contractor', 'contract', 'independent consultant', along with job types and skills.

Visual Appeal:

It's easy to create a professional looking headshot with your phone camera, while many people don't realise you can change LinkedIn's custom blue background to reflect your services and the contracting sector you work within.

Twitter

Over 80% of Twitter users access the platform on their mobile

Twitter is a microblog site for posting real time status updates and breaking news. The updates or 'Tweets' can be a maximum of 280 characters, making twitter a good tool for concise bulletins that link to articles or general content on other sites. When you follow other people on Twitter, you see their Tweets, and when they follow you, they see yours. Twitter is good for opening up a dialogue with your followers. It's also a great way to see what people are saying about your contacting sector or to interact with a company you might be interested in working for. Here are some top tips to make the most out of your contractor Twitter account:

- Hashtags: Use the hashtags (#) to follow conversations and topics that interest you, or add them to keywords in your own tweets so that these become searchable by other users.
- URL link: As part of your bio, Twitter allows you to add a URL. Unlike some other social media platforms, you can

regularly switch it to wherever you want it to go, such as a blog on your website or your other social media profiles.

- A custom background: The cover photo carries real importance in the world of Twitter, so make the most of it with an eye-catching graphic.
- A pinned tweet: If there's something important you want to share, such as a retweet from someone talking about your services, you can pin it to the top of your profile.

Facebook

- Facebook has over 2.27 billion monthly active users
- Facebook is still the world's most popular search term
- 24.2% of Facebook Pages are using paid media

There's growing evidence to suggest that when it comes to getting contracts, word-of-mouth referrals can give you a powerful advantage. Companies and agencies are frequently adding 'refer a friend' to their recruitment campaigns, realising that their employees are a good resource for finding new talent. Facebook is a great platform for staying in contact with friends who might also be old colleagues.

You can also create a business page for yourself that's a good alternative to a fully-fledged website. Business pages also help to keep your personal and professional content separate, which you should always keep in mind when posting your personal opinions and photographs.

Facebook has moved to a 'pay-to-play' model

in order to promote your posts to a specific audience. However, Facebook advertising offers good value for money if you're a contractor who wants to **directly source new clients**. Here are some top tips on using Facebook advertising:

- 🚩 Create offers such as discounts or free appraisals
- 🚩 Use the regional settings to target specific clients
- 🚩 Create banner ads, carousel ads, lead ads, and video/slideshow ads
- 🚩 Implement a **retargeting strategy** to recapture lost traffic

Instagram

Instagram now has over 1 billion monthly users, making it the fastest growing social media platform by a considerable margin. Although well-crafted words remain a powerful marketing tool, pictures can be a more direct and self-explanatory form of communication, with research showing that user engagement is 58% higher on Instagram than any other social media.

In 2018 the amount of UK Contractors on Instagram rose to 48%, compared to just 18% back in 2015.

Tell your story:

It's often said that contractors are hired on the basis of their skills alone, but as the contracting market grows, the need for contractors to distinguish themselves on more personal terms is inevitable. While it's not necessary for contractors to post their life story, photographs that feature their latest work, their clients, industry events and things that inspire them offer the client an instant insight into the contractor's world. Projects work particularly well as visual stories on Instagram, with the ability to capture something as it unfolds, such as a building under construction, or a design in its various

stages of completion.

Grow your connections:

Research concluded that user interactions with brands are higher on Instagram than any other social network. This spells major opportunities for contractors. Whether its recruitment agency scouts or organisations looking to hire you directly, your profile can optimise your chances of getting noticed with the following tips.

- ♥ Choose the business profile option when you set up your account
- ♥ Set your account to public so that anyone can see your photos
- ♥ Use a professional looking headshot as your profile picture
- ♥ Give a clear call-to-action, including your contact information
- ♥ Link to your website in your profile
- ♥ Renew your content regularly
- ♥ Use Instagram's photo editing facilities

Instagram

📍 Build a reciprocal connection with other users and businesses

📍 Link trending news to your profile with hashtags

Video is about to account for more than 80% of all internet traffic in the coming years; a 30 second video can put you ahead of the curve and bring your Instagram to life

Using a minimum of one hashtag per post can boost user engagement by up to 12.6%

For impartial information on all your contracting needs you can talk to a member of our team on: 0203 603 1878