## BOOKS

## Tweet and lowdown: Microblogging your way to a better job

## BY MATTHEW CROWLEY

OK, job hunters, here's the short of it: First came the elevator pitch, the project idea or résumé brief enough to recite while riding from the lobby to a higher floor. Now authors Susan Britton Whitcomb, Chandlee Bryan and Deb Dib bring you the short, tweet Twitterized job search, in which people relay their experience and potential value 140 characters at a time.

Some skeptics view Twitter as just another flavor of time-killing social media. Best-selling business-book author Seth Godin, for example, has likened the constant posting of items and checking of feeds from "followers" on the microblogging site to a digital tic that distracts people from producing at jobs and pursuing their passions. But in "The Twitter Job Search Guide: Find a Job and Advance Your Career In Just 15 Minutes A Day," Whitcomb, Bryan and Dib suggest a little tweet time can connect job seekers to job recruiters, industry leaders, job-specific blogs, and a support circle of like-minded friends.

The authors know that mindnumbingly mundane posts have fed Twitter's aura of inanity. Nearly no one, they acknowledge, needs to know, or cares, that someone else has guzzled his eighth Diet Coke of the afternoon or has eaten steel-cut oats for breakfast. But the authors, echoing New York Times technology columnist David Pogue, argue that Twitter is a great channel for sharing news, asking questions and connecting.

The authors argue that Twitter is business-oriented in ways rival networks aren't. Facebook has games like Farmville and Scrabble and advertising to further splinter attention; Twitter has none. Facebook and LinkedIn require friends to accept others into their circles; Twitter doesn't. To follow someone, click "follow."

This openness, the authors argue, gives Twitter greater reach. Unless people deliberately protect their tweets, those tweets enter a public feed for any of 73 million users worldwide to see.

Bryan, Dib and Whitcomb show users how to use Twitter for personal brand building, advising them to pick profession-appropriate screen names and write bold, fun 160-character Twitter bios (dubbed 160mes). In his profile, fictional tweeter HappyPizzaGuy proves he's ready for rhyme time: "I'm a happy pizza guy. Happy customers buy more pies ... the devotion in every slice helps to lift the Nasdaq price."

The authors offer tips for smarter connecting: Devote three-fourths of tweets to business; join lists; link to industry-specific blogs and articles, using bit.ly or tinyurl to abbreviate URLs; use and search indexing hashtags (#) to find topic discussions; use Twitter's search tools to find follow people and companies in your industry.

The authors remind users to be patient, building relationships before asking for jobs; be honest; and remember decorum. Tweets are public and can (and will) be used against you, they say, describing people whose overly spicy posts cost them jobs or job offers.

The authors advise against overtweeting; 15 a week should suffice. They offer a glossary of text-message-style abbreviations (IMHO = in my humble opinion; TIA = thanks in advance) but advise users to write mostly in complete words, and sentences.

Legions of ancillary programs have grown up around Twitter, and the authors explain how to use them. Twellow and Tweepsearch, for example, can point you to companies and job postings; Trendistic lets you see trending topics; TwitteRel helps you find other people with similar career interests. As they dispense advice, the authors offer themselves, and job-search gurus and headhunters who have contributed to the book, as connections, listing their Twitter handles for readers to use.

For all of this book's tips and tricks, it's still easy to wonder whether job hunters can succeed with Twitter. With the economy struggling and people hunting madly for work, many Tweeple are talking, and competing for attention, at once.

Nevertheless, chances for connection give Twitter soul, the authors suggest. Looking for work, or trying to get promoted, is emotionally trying, Whitcomb, Bryan and Dib acknowledge. But if you join the networks and share with others, they say, you'll find you won't

hunt alone.

"Our heartfelt hope for each of you is that you'll tap into the best part of you —your ideal 'future' self — and step out with courage, confidence and conviction."

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## **Well Read**

"The Twitter Job Search Guide: Find a Job and Advance Your Career in Just 15 Minutes a Day" by Susan Britton Whitcomb, Chandlee Bryan and Deb Dib, 192 pages, Jist Works, \$14.95.

