

# Women, Get Recognized: Social Media and Professional Visibility

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ESSEC's Viviane de Beaufort – co-head of the Public & Private Policy department and head of the Executive Education program [Women be European Board Ready](#) – gives women in the workplace her advice on how to increase their professional visibility.

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Today, laws in France, Europe and abroad require businesses to “feminize” upper management, in other words, increase gender equality on Boards of Directors, on Supervisory Boards and beyond. However, while businesses stand to benefit from this push – improving not only their internal social equality and diversity, but also their economic efficiency by creating value and adding performance – challenges lay ahead for both businesses and the female candidates to their upper-management positions.

Leveraging feminization must be a change enabler, bringing more diversity and professionalism to boards and decision making structures. It is thus a question of promoting the right tools which allow women to bring their added value in terms of skills and “feminine” values.

How do we change the actual power mix and move beyond just quotas and numbers to create real gender equality on boards? How do we break the glass ceiling that still effectively exists in so many companies? “Women need to increase their professional visibility, and the visibility of their particular talents and expertise, to stand out in a pool of candidates,” explains ESSEC's [Viviane de Beaufort](#), co-head of the Public & Private Policy department and head of the Executive Education program [Women be European Board Ready](#). “Social media is an important tool for creating this kind of visibility, and one that women should use to their best advantage.”

Indeed, a big cultural difference between men and women is online presence on professional networks. Unfortunately, men are still more likely to use this kind of tool. Needless to say those networks are a great tool for women as well. However, using them to their maximum capacity requires a focused reflection and adapted strategy to promote their successes and gain visibility.

Indeed, one of the first reflexes today before meeting a new person is “googling” his or her name:

- **60%** of Internet users search online to find information about a person they are going to meet in a professional context
- **90%** do so if that person is a business leader
- **100%** of recruiters research on Google and on several social networks before meeting a candidate

Unlike an employee, the majority of information regarding business leaders is published by

others, therefore, the risk of finding negative information increases with the level of responsibility. Online reputation is influenced by quotations, references, photos, interviews, online profiles and more. But the lack of online information can also be a negative.

Women, here are just a few tips and best practices to help manage and increase your online presence:

## 1. Monitor your online Presence

Making a map of your digital identity requires both knowledge of self and knowledge of available monitoring tools. The main tools for measuring and mapping your network and influence includes:

- **E-mail alerts** – There are several tools of this type to help you measure and monitor your e-reputation. They are easy to set up and give you instant update when something appears online. These tools include: [Google Alerts](#), [Google News](#), [Google Trends](#), [Google Blog Search](#) and [Hyperalets](#) (for facebook specifically).
- **E-reputation dashboards** and online platforms can also help you monitor one or several social media platforms at once. Once set up, they can give you a quick overview of what the web is saying. These tools include: [Netvibes](#), [BuzzWatcher](#), [Sindup](#), [Klout](#), [Tweetdeck](#), [Tweetlevel](#) and [Bloglevel](#).

## 2. Choose your tools

A multitude of social media tools exist. Build your presence on the platform(s) that best suit your needs.

- **[LinkedIn](#)** - With 120 million users, this is arguably the largest professional network. It can help you build a professional profile and connect with potential employers as well as employees on an international level. Best of all, it gives users the option joining or creating [thematic groups](#) based on their professional profile.
- **[Facebook](#)** – With 760 million users, many of whom dedicate as much as 16% of their internet usage to this network, creating a page can be very effective in certain sectors, particularly those sectors with more popular appeal.
- **[Viadéo](#)** – A France-centric network with more than 35 million members, it can be a practical tool for French and European businesses.
- **[Xing](#)** - Formerly OpenBC, is the German network that boasts more than 10 million members. Its reach of influence however is both European and international.
- **[+ Google](#)** – This relatively new network allows user to create specific profiles for professional and personal connections. [Google + hangouts](#) also give you the options of create online video meetings with individuals in your network.
- **[Neovillage](#)** - By invitation only, this network is reserved for executives and economic decision makers. This is a targeted tool and is therefore very useful for the economic sector.

- **Asmallworld** – This is a very elitist, VIP network that brings together international celebrities and decision-makers. You access this network via **sponsorship**.
- **Youtube** - The second most used search engine after Google, this platform gives you the option of creating a channel and playlist of videos where you can post interviews and presentations to build your reputation as an expert.
- **Twitter** – With more than 200 million subscribers worldwide, including 50 million active daily messages every week, this microblogging social network lets you communicate with your audience in real-time while connecting with key influencers including journalists, bloggers, experts and politicians.
- **Slideshare** – This platform lets you share documents and presentations and build your reputation as an expert.
- **Del.icio.us** – This is one of the best ways to share your favorite sites and therefore share your sphere of influence.
- **Amazon** – The best way to use this online store to build your reputation is to comment and recommend books based on your expertise.
- **Ebook** – This is the fastest way to build credibility and take advantage of the viral nature of social networks.
- **Wordpress** – Create a blog and make yourself known among your peers and target audience.

### 3. Set objectives for yourself

Set goals for your online presence: The objective may be to build an online reputation, launch a strategic reorientation, communicate on the reorientation of your career or counter rumors.

- Target an audience be it potential investors, partners, influencers, media, government, NGOs, future employees and future employers, and make sure your online presence speaks to them.
- Choose the social media tools that will best help you meet these objective.
- Set goals for your network size in terms of followers, friends and professional connections. Connect with new online audiences whenever possible.

### 4. Have a strategy

When creating a strategy to increase your social media presence, ensure coherence between your digital identity, your personality, your public and private life. What you communicate should always be consistent in message. At the end of the day, you are creating a brand identity for

yourself. Make this a strong brand based on a clear and consistent message that highlights your expertise and talents.

## 5. Stay active

In order to stay relevant and visible, your social media presence should be a living and breathing creation. Therefore, you must stay regularly active: Update your profile regularly; add new recommendations for publications, news stories and pages; add quality photos of events and activities; contribute and participate in online discussions with hubs and groups; use the real-time nature of twitter to comment directly on news and events; if you have a blog, update it regularly and keep content relevant. Create solid connections by using good “netiquette” – sending personalized notes and responding punctually to inquiries.

New online tools can help you stay regularly active. These include:

- [\*\*Hootsuite\*\*](#) – this online tool lets you organize a tweeting schedule in advance and tweet automatically.
- [\*\*Seesmic\*\*](#) – this tool lets you post automatically on multiple platforms including facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Many women have not yet understood the professional importance of maintaining visibility on social networks. That said, an evolution has already begun, illustrated by the rapid development of networks specifically geared for women - [\*\*The Professional Women's Network\*\*](#), EPOkelle and [\*\*Vox Femina\*\*](#). Social networks, by offering a way around the constraints of time and geographical location, are an excellent tool for creating visibility and fostering virtual connections that can ultimately become real professional relationships.