

Virtual Presence

8 Steps to Create and Manage a Strong Virtual Presence: A UNC Student Guide

Did you know that [95% of recruiters](#) [1] actively use LinkedIn? Your virtual presence matters! Here's a step-by-step guide, in which career coaches highlight curated resources to help you develop your online brand ? which is what people see when they find you on the internet. Think of it as a checklist! Extra tools from career departments and schools across UNC can be found at the end of this document.

FAQ:

STAGE 1: Create an Authentic Personal Brand

But first, what is a personal brand? Personalbrand.com defines it as follows: ?

A personal brand is a widely-recognized and largely-uniform perception or impression of an individual based on their experience, expertise, competencies, actions and/or achievements within a community, industry, or the marketplace at large.? You want it to be authentic, to sincerely highlight your greatest strengths.

1. Design your Personal Brand Strategy ? How Do You Want to Be Seen?

Demonstrate Career Readiness Competencies in your brand ? Based on a survey, hundreds of employers share what competencies they seek. Make sure your competencies shine. Read more about [Career Readiness Competencies](#) [2] under the extra resources section at the end of this guide.

2. Align your Social Media to Match your Brand

LinkedIn ? The number one tool, no matter what industry, is LinkedIn! Here is UCS Information on [How to Use Linked In](#) [3]. Also check out this [University Student LinkedIn Checklist](#) [4]. Don't forget to make an appointment with your career counselor to get your profile critiqued.

Other social media matters too? Depending on your industry and trends, consider using the following:

- *Twitter* ? Read Hubspot's guide on [How to Build a Memorable Personal Brand on Twitter](#) [5]
- *Facebook* ? If using Facebook, consider having a separate personal and professional account. Here are [13 Ways to Use Facebook for Personal Branding](#) [6] from Social Media Today
- *Instagram* ? The Muse shares [Your Ultimate Guide to Using Instagram for Personal Branding \(without being fake\)](#) [7]
- *Handshake* ? [Handshake](#) [8] says, "80% of students who share their interests receive a message from a recruiter on Handshake." Think about what you want them to see when arriving on your profile. Here are Handshake's Three things students must do.
- *More: Pinterest/Tiktok/Snapchat/YouTube* ? [How to Build Your Brand on Pinterest, Snapchat, TikTok, and YouTube Without Spending Any Money](#) [9]

3. Audit your Digital Footprint for Congruence with your Brand

Organize your social media audit ? Consider reading Hootsuite's Guide on [How to Do a Social Media Audit](#) [10], which includes a free template.

4. Amplify your Brand

Resume & cover letter branding ? One tip: Consider using your resume header as stationery for your cover letter! The website, StudentLife Network shares [Cover Letters, Resumes, and Personal Brands: What's the Difference?](#) [11]

Email signature branding ? Have you ever considered what should go in your default email signature? That's a part of your brand. Uloop UNC has an article on [How to Setup an Email Signature for College Students](#) [12].

Business cards ? If you have business cards made, consider matching them to your brand too. Your department at UNC may be able to work with you to get a [UNC Business Card](#)

[13] made. If you have questions, check out UNC's business card website.

STAGE 2: Make your Personal Brand Work for You

Once you've laid the foundations of your personal brand, it is time to maintain and grow your professional reputation.

5. Networking & Career Fair prep: Learn Techniques to Network Online

Build relationships ? The word "networking" can be intimidating. Try to replace that word with "relationship building." You want to form professional relationships in which you can share and exchange resources over time. Think about people you've worked with on projects or jobs, and professionals you know. Add them on LinkedIn. See about maintaining those relationship in Step 8.

Virtual career fair prep ? Prepare yourself to shine at virtual career fairs. Use the UCS Virtual Prepare for the Fair Checklist to make sure you are ready! Get to know the software used for virtual career fairs before you arrive! You can learn about CareerEco, the system we use for the majority of our career fairs, using our [CareerEco Tip Sheet](#) [14], which includes a tutorial.

Save the dates for upcoming career events! Add all relevant fairs and information sessions to your calendar and RSVP to attend live [online](#) [15]! You can find [UCS sponsored fairs on Handshake](#) [16]. All sessions will be recorded, and can be accessed on the [UCS YouTube channel](#) [17]. See top tips, and look for the UCS [Prepare for the Fairs](#) [18] series in the Extra Resources section below.

Career Fair Cram Sessions - offered prior to many UCS Virtual Fairs. Upcoming events can be found on [Handshake](#) [8] and on the [UNC Events](#) [19] pages. If none of the dates work for you, all sessions are recorded, and you can also make an appointment with a career counselor.

Research before the fairs - Before attending a fair, see which organizations will be present and what opportunities they are hiring for; prioritize who you want to speak with, prepare your questions in advance, and write your [elevator pitch](#) [20].

Prepare specifically for virtual job fairs ? Here's a UCS selected article: [Wear Pants ? and Other Advice on How to Prepare for a Virtual Job Fair](#) [21] from the Penny Hoarder

6. Build Expertise in Your Industry

Associations, conferences, and employer info sessions - Get familiar with associations in your profession to learn about your industry and consider joining. Attend industry conferences. Utilize [Handshake](#) [8] or check in with your department to identify employers who are offering information sessions, or that are participating in career panels. These can help you prepare for entry into your industry. Also check out the [career guides on Vault.com](#) [22]. UCS provides UNC students with access. Our [Personal Branding Guide](#) [23] also includes a checklist with opportunities for association and recognition.

7. Interview Prep: Prepare to Land Jobs and Internships During Virtual Interviews

Practice ? Do mock interviews with career services, or use [Big Interview](#) [24] ? which offers a bank of commonly asked interview questions, coaches you on best practices for answering, and lets you practice with the ability to record yourself in mock interviews at beginning, intermediate and advanced levels.

Read Best Practices on Virtual Interviews like [How to Ace Your Virtual Interview](#) [25] by the Vector Impact. See the UCS page on Virtual and Phone Interviews for in-depth information.

Attend UCS workshops and panels ? UCS and other departments host several workshops and panels every semester that can help you prepare. Stay tuned in with department's career services or keep an eye on the [UCS events](#) [19] pages.

Learn the BAR or STAR method ? Learn how to answer behavioral interview questions by using one of these methods. For example with [BAR](#) [26], you respond to questions by presenting the Background, sharing the Action taken, and concluding with the Result. For the [STAR](#) [27] method, you respond with the Situation you faced, the Task at hand, the Action you took, and the Result that you are proud of.

Utilize virtual backgrounds ? Avoid clutter and distraction in your background by using Virtual Backgrounds in Zoom. For example, [here is a UCS created virtual background](#) [28] and here are [instructions for using virtual backgrounds](#) [29].

Follow-up after interviews ? Within 24 hours, send a thank you note, ideally to everyone you've met with. If you haven't heard back within about a week, a check in may be appropriate. [No Response After an Interview? Here's How to Follow Up By Email?](#) [30] Career Sidekick shares tips on what to say.

8. Stay Engaged

Reinvest in your professional associations ? If you're not involved with professional associations, these can really help with a targeted job search, with networking, and with giving you a community to engage with professionally. To get started, check out this job-hunt.org article on [How to Find Jobs Using Associations and College / Corporate Alumni Networks](#) [31].

To explore how LinkedIn can help advance your brand with professional associations, read [The LinkedIn" Strategy to Networking Through Professional Associations](#) [32] on careerprofiles.info.

Post regularly and make sure your posts are seen. Use [hashtags](#) [33] to amplify your posts. See slide 30.

Maintain relationships - You've planted the seeds for professional relationships, now time to nurture them. After your first job this is especially important ? LinkedIn is one place you can do this. Check out these [Four Tips to Network on LinkedIn](#) [34], paying special attention to steps 3 and 4. Also write recommendations for deserving people you've worked with, and endorse others' skills. They just may reciprocate that favor!

Extra Resources

View [this document](#) [35] for more tools to help with your personal brand.

Events to Help With Your Personal Brand

[Click here](#) [36] to view Fall 2021 Virtual Workshops. These events provide opportunities for students to consider and refine their narrative.

Source URL: <https://careers.unc.edu/students/virtual-presence>

Links

[1] <https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/2017-05-05/how-headhunters-use-linkedin-to-find-talented-candidates>

[2] <https://www.nacweb.org/career-readiness/competencies/career-readiness-defined/>

[3] <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/recruiting-tips/2019/how-to-build-a-personal-brand-that-will-impress-even-oprah>

[4]

https://university.linkedin.com/content/dam/university/global/en_US/site/pdf/TipSheet_BuildingaGreatP

[5] <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/personal-brand-on-twitter>

- [6] <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/2015-04-08/13-ways-use-facebook-personal-branding>
- [7] <https://www.themuse.com/advice/guide-personal-brand-instagram>
- [8] <https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/handshake>
- [9] <https://browsermedia.agency/blog/how-to-build-your-brand-on-pinterest-snapchat-tiktok-youtube-free/>
- [10] <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-audit-template/>
- [11] <https://blog.studentlifefetwork.com/2019/04/08/cover-letters-resumes-personal-branding/>
- [12] <https://unc.uloop.com/news/view.php/192969/How-To-Set-Up-An-Email-Signature-For-College-Students>
- [13] <https://aux-services.unc.edu/printing/unc-business-cards/>
- [14] <https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Career%20Eco%20Tip%20Sheet%20for>
- [15] <https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/NEW%20Fall%202020%20Virtual%20E>
- [16] https://unc.joinhandshake.com/events?page=1&per_page=25&sort_direction=asc&sort_type-nav&type=CareerFair
- [17] <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC151hHtBYmWtssej0oUOTTg>
- [18] <https://careers.unc.edu/students/prepare-fairs-and-recruitment>
- [19] <https://careers.unc.edu/news-and-events>
- [20] <https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Elevator%20Pitch.pdf>
- [21] <https://www.thepennyhoarder.com/make-money/career/prepare-for-virtual-career-fair/>
- [22] <https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/vault>
- [23] <https://docs.google.com/document/d/14palxOt8OyaRASKfydwidPQIqIMGInnwhhz6gwNPD60/edit>
- [24] <https://careers.unc.edu/students/resources/big-interview>
- [25] <https://www.thevectorimpact.com/virtual-interviews/>
- [26] https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Interviewing_Raising%20the%20BAR.ppt
- [27] <https://www.themuse.com/advice/star-interview-method>
- [28] https://www.canva.com/design/DAD7gRb295s/rjeyMqUzjigPMD5ah3QISA/view?utm_content=DAD7gRb295s
- [29] https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Virtual_Background_Instructions.pdf
- [30] <https://careersidekick.com/follow-up-after-interview-no-response/>
- [31] https://www.job-hunt.org/findingjobs/findingjobs_associations.shtml
- [32] <https://www.careerprofiles.info/networking-through-professional-associations.html>
- [33] <https://docplayer.net/18306589-Building-your-personal-brand.html>
- [34] <https://blog.linkedin.com/2020/may/june/12/four-tips-to-network-on-linkedin>
- [35]

<https://careers.unc.edu/sites/careers.unc.edu/files/documents/Extra%20Resources.pdf>
[36] <https://careers.unc.edu/news-and-events/upcoming-events/workshops>