IAL Excellence in Career Practice Webinar Series

Successful Use of ICT and Social Media in Career Advisory Services Q & A

Question

In the use of social media to facilitate career services delivery, or for that matter any university function, I have been forewarned by our corporate comms that if we don't offer Q & A feature (and man it), or ensure a designated practitioner responds to student questions as soon as it's posted, students' interest in career services postings on that social media platform would soon wane. What advice would you offer a university intending to gradually feature parts of career services on selected social media platforms?

Answer

Prof Sampson - A really important decision is how to balance your time with various elements of social media. One of the things that social media is particularly effective at is marketing by drawing people to your services with an understanding of what they might achieve if they came to receive help from your service. You can't spend all your time marketing and you can't spend all your time delivering services. There has to be an appropriate balance in terms of social media, between being proactive and reactive. The proactive part is how you manage your social media presence across tools to show that you are present and show how these interventions can be helpful in making a difference in your client's lives using testimonials and case descriptions (without violating any confidentiality). The reactive part is providing those services to individuals who request them. So it's a balancing act between time spent in creating new opportunities to use social media and serving the needs of the backlog of clients you have. I agree with you that consistently unanswered questions will result in decreasing student use of your social media site. Staff responses to postings will need careful monitoring and supervision.

Question

Do you use social media via group career counselling?

Answer

Yoges – With regards to group career counselling and what might be some of the key challenges for career practitioners in terms of our skills set and capabilities, traditionally we are used to having face-to-face, one-to-one interactions physically. With current disruptions that are happening, we have all moved to virtual coaching. Group coaching is more challenging and uses different skills set of coaches because it is necessary to be sensitive to individual agendas and group dynamics.

Prof Sampson – We have so many people needing services that trying to offer as much as we can via group interaction is really ideal for two reasons: one is that group interventions make best use of staff capabilities in terms of the number of people that can be served with the number of staff available. Second, there is a power of groups in shared experiences and common concerns. I think having as many services as

possible delivered on a group basis, while individual services are delivered to people with more unique needs, would be an optimal strategy.

Question

We are beginning to use video chats in our career services accelerated by Covid situation. As building rapport is critical in the work alliance with our clients, how do we achieve max effect in career guidance over ICT modes especially having limitations in administering some career tools online?

Answer

Prof Sampson – Part of it depends on whether you are in a synchronous or asynchronous communication mode. If you are using chat or email, there are unique counsellor skills in being able to communicate emotion in text when you don't have those visual cues, which is why training is so crucial in being able to communicate emotion through text. In terms of the therapeutic alliance in synchronous communication, there are some advantages to having video (vs email and chat) because it's easier to see the person and for some clients it's somewhat easier to establish a relationship. However, reluctant clients who are afraid of being exposed should be allowed to not share their face if it helps them engage in the service delivery process. They can start services where their identity may not be known. Once they develop a sense of trust and a therapeutic alliance is achieved, they can interact, show themselves, and be more open about who they are. I'm very excited about the potential of social media and ICT to serve people who really would have never ~~gotten served~~ received services before.

Kristin – From a university perspective, most youngsters are quite participative in Zoom and group sessions but we also have students that prefer to communicate with our career practitioners over email, preferring to be anonymous and have phone chat rather a half hour career consultation session with our practitioners. Some youngsters can be quite shy while some are more outgoing. We need to be able to cater to their different needs.

Yoges – Coaching has gone virtual. We now have video coaching besides phone coaching. When we give clients the option to decide between phone or video, we are giving them the option to decide the level of privacy they prefer. We have to find ways to bridge clients who are less familiar in using technology in interviews.

Jeremiah – As career practitioners, we pride ourselves on confidentiality and disclosure consent from our clients. It is a consideration whether we want our clients to come forward to show and identify themselves on the platform or even on social media. Service design is something we pay attention to given the continuous ambiguity and volatility in the ICT sector.

Most of our WSG clients are adults and most of them are not savvy in the use of ICT or social media. It is already a challenge to reflect feelings and contents during a session let alone doing so over text. Career practitioners need to not only look out for some form of instructional design but also be patient with clients and guide them in the use of social media, to share with them the limitations and cautionary stories in using

social media. For younger folks, the use of Internet is a natural extension of their lifestyles.

Question

Can Prof Sampson tell us more about Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) theory of career guidance?

Answer

Prof Sampson – CIP is a theory that examines how people's thoughts, emotions and behaviour interact to help them make career choices, and understanding this, how to design services that will help identify people that need more help than others. We have a differentiated services delivery model that allocates staff resources to people who need help the most. The three levels of service delivery in CIP theory are self-help, brief staff-assisted, and individual case-managed. The lower the level of career decision-making readiness, the more individualized are the services that are delivered. We are going to have a second webinar in this series devoted to CIP theory.

Question

With the growing popularity of leveraging upon social media for career development initiatives, what are your suggestions and advice relating to the etiquette and code of ethics by the individual relating to his/her career branding, and engagement with his/her career coaches or potential employers. Are there no-go areas?

Answer

Prof Sampson – In the United States, the major codes of ethics have been revised to keep up with changes in ICT. Revision has also occurred in the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance ethical standards. For career practitioners in Singapore, it would be very helpful to create a website that hosts all the different codes of ethics that may also be relevant in Singapore.

Yoges – I often remind my clients to keep within boundaries when using Facebook or social media because they are giving potential employers an opportunity to judge them. Whatever they say has to be in a positive manner, and they should not post messages after office hours. Some people would forget and become keyboard warriors when using these channels. I'm not sure how many of you have been getting calls after office hours since we've started going virtual. It is these kinds of things that we need to set boundaries with our clients from the start.

Kristin – Our university career office does QC on employers that participate in our virtual fairs or workshops to make sure that the employers are credible. Even with boundaries and terms and conditions, if the other party still causes discomfort to our clients, say women clients, these clients would need to come to us so that we can put a stop to it.

Prof Sampson – How active should you be on the Internet and social media, when you should be proactive, or when you should be reactive, is an important decision. The issue of boundaries and helping our clients establish realistic and appropriate

boundaries, to understand aspects of ICT that may be of value or less likely to be of value, are important questions. I would strongly suggest that people who are using ICT, and especially social media, to look at the use of ICT and social media by other career services, including the validity of assessment and information, and best practices. I believe that as career practitioners, we have a professional responsibility to our clients whether they are young or old, having their first job or last job, to teach them how to be good consumers of social media and ICT, and how to understand what is likely to be biased information.

Question

How do we ensure delivery of career services are of equal parity between face-to-face vs ICT? How do we measure the effectiveness of career intervention via face-to-face vs ICT?

Answer

Jeremiah – As mentioned by Prof Sampson earlier, I think it really depends on the service design and from a practitioner's point of view, what the clients that we serve are comfortable with. It could be just face-to-face or a multipronged approach. We have to cater our services and reach our clients.

Yoges – The client has to decide whether they want to use video or phone and the level of privacy they prefer. An effective coaching session can only occur when clients are comfortable during the session.

Kristin – We find that employers increasingly use ICT to engage our students, and the Career Office helps by preparing them for video interviews. Not everyone is comfortable with this mode of interface but it is something that I think will stay. Undergrads would need to be very comfortable in front of the screen and know how to answer questions confidently to secure their first job, rather than be afraid and resist else it could be a stumbling block for them, especially with Industry 4.0 transformation or Industry 5.0 for that matter.

Question

What are your opinions on the increasing popularity of games and gamification and its applicability to career services? Is it appropriate to design games in order to drive engagement in career development topics and development of job search skills (e.g. resume writing, interview, and networking)?

Answer

Prof Sampson – I think gaming can be a very powerful mode of teaching, including simulation strategies to teach people about career decision making, how to use social media and good use of ICT, especially since we have such a large proportion of our population who've been active in gaming growing up. Similarly, with regards to gamification, where we are providing more competition and badges for achievements, where people are getting feedback from an application as to how much they've done, how much they've achieved, it can be particularly useful. But gamification may run into some limits as users become overwhelmed with the

number of badges that they have (or have not) achieved. So we need to be somewhat careful in its use. We need some experimentation for both gaming and gamification, but I think it is worth a try, to see what kind of contribution, what sort of difference it makes.

Jeremiah – Let me share with you a case with a client I served recently who was uncertain about his career goals. During our session, he shared that he enjoyed playing the game Starcraft 2. I discovered that in fact he has quick thinking and has strong hand eye coordination. Eventually, the client found a job he was both interested in and used his strengths – it involved moving content, video editing, and graphic manipulation. Hence, I think gamification would be helpful in understanding the strengths and abilities of clients to support their career decision making.

Yoges –I think gamification is a useful way to engage clients. It would involve framing learning in a way that engages the learner more. The ULeap mobile app is a bite size learning platform that uses online quizzes to make the learning experience more engaging for the individual, but this method would not work for clients who are reluctant to use technology.

Kristin – I think this is a very good suggestion. Many of our employers already use gamification as a tool to assess and shortlist candidates, and is fun and engaging from an undergraduate perspective. We will definitely explore how to take this new idea further.

Question

Are there any countries that already use gaming and gamification in career decision making?

Answer

Prof Sampson – I'm not aware of any country that has done any policy work where they stress gaming and gamification as part of a strategy for reaching unemployed youth, or other populations. What I've seen is mostly individual career practitioners who have been experimenting with this in the delivery of career interventions. My colleague Debra Osborne at Florida State University has done some work in this area. We have not created a uniform guidance policy as yet. We haven't talked much about a guidance policy tonight but it is important to look at this aspect of career intervention and see where games and gamification can make a difference.

Jeremiah – I don't think gamification is part of any policy or integrated into wider practice in Singapore yet but it is worth exploring.

Question

I find that while many career practitioners are open to using social media, they may hesitate to address questions from the public for fear that someone may "screenshot" their reply and send it all over the Internet. As a result, the public walks away feeling even more disconnected with our services. It is a legitimate fear for the practitioner. How do you think we can counter that?

Answer

Prof Sampson – This is both a policy question and a practical question. I would clarify the legal issues in Singapore regarding the dissemination of inaccurate information via Internet websites and social media. To what extent is a career practitioner liable for information dissemination when they are acting in good faith and within the limits of their training and experience? Are practitioners speaking for themselves, their organization or the government? Career practitioners have always been expected to provide information to their clients that can be considered a public good similar to public health information. How are public health officers in Singapore handling this situation? The relatively permanent and public nature of digital information means that practitioners face a higher level of accountability than ever before. These questions need clarification. A practical question is how are career practitioners being trained and supervised in responding to social media posts? Are new staff members expected to complete a probationary period where a supervisor reads their posts and approves them prior to posting?

Question

I agree with Kristin's point about using LinkedIn. What I feel is more important, however, is that students are able to present themselves well in writing. Being able to write well about themselves on their LinkedIn profile is important. For example, knowing the importance of using proper grammar, punctuation, etc. This might seem to be a minor point, but if a student should write in the way that they text (e.g., "L8r" or "ur"), this would not be beneficial nor reflect well on them to potential employers.

Answer

Prof Sampson – This is a good example of a need that multiple students and adults have that would benefit from the creation of video or text based instructional resources that could be used in educational or employment service settings focusing on writing skills for social media posting. This could also include how to write about or describe exemplars or artefacts that are attached to posts such work samples.

Question

Social Media is a very powerful career branding tool. My strategy is always to support my clients in their career development journey, especially tapping on experiences, ideas and strategies of other individuals in the "same boat".

Answer

Prof Sampson – Social media is especially suited to tapping in on experiences, ideas and strategies of other individuals in the "same boat." This is an example where group-based social media can use a co-careering strategy to extend the effectiveness of career interventions. Helpful references on this topic include:

Kettunen, J., Sampson, J. P., & Vuorinen, R. (2015). Career practitioners' conceptions of competency for social media in career services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling, 43*, 43-56. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2014.939945 doi:10.1080/03069885.2014.939945

Kettunen, J., Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, J. P. (2015). How do career practitioners experience social media in career services? *The Career Development Quarterly, 63*, 268-282. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12018

Kettunen, J., Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, J. P. (2013). Career practitioners´ conceptions of social media in career services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling, 41*, 302-317.

Question

What is the role of general education (e.g. ECG, including university career offices) in preparing students to use the kind of career information and tools wisely, especially via ICT, as part of lifelong support for their career development for both employment and employability?

Answer

General education has a crucial role in teaching critical thinking skills that are a foundation for multiple disciplines. Understanding how to identify needed information, potential bias in information, and use of information in problem solving are important topics in general education that can be subsequently included in career education interventions delivered by university career offices. Helpful references on this topic include:

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2000). *Information literacy competency standards for higher education*. Retrieved from www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency

Hooley, T. (2012). How the internet changed career: Framing the relationship between career development and online technologies. *Journal of the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling, 29,* 2–12.

Kim, K. S., Sin, S. J., & Yoo-Lee, E. Y (2014). Undergraduates' use of social media as information sources. *College & Research Libraries, 74,* 442–457. doi:10.5860/crl.75.4.442

Sampson, J. P., Osborn, D. S., Kettunen, J., Hou, P. C., Miller, A. K., & Makela, J. P. (2018). The validity of social media-based career information. *The Career Development Quarterly, 66*, 121-134. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12127 doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12127

Question

As someone new to career coaching what are the guidelines in selecting the right career profiling tools to use as there are many out there?

Answer

Career profiling tools are generally country and language-specific resources. In Singapore, I would start with the Singapore GCDF training materials. After that, I would seek career profiling tools that are specific to various levels of education and employment services.

Question

To what extent can the career guidance practitioners also work closely with career communities (e.g., professions, tertiary / advanced / VET education) to provide career support to newcomers to (the future of) their vocation or professional career field? Can we also leverage on ICT to build this social capacity for group career counseling?

Social media sites can provide a vehicle for communicating among various career communities, including professions and tertiary / advanced / VET education. Discussions among stakeholders should include the occupational, educational, training, and employment needs of newcomers, as well as interventions that can be delivered by specific stakeholders. It is important to encourage newcomers to fully explore their values, interests, and skills as well as fully exploring the options available to them. Social media sites can also be used for group career interventions for clients with similar needs. Helpful references on group interventions can be found at:

Kettunen, J., Sampson, J. P., & Vuorinen, R. (2015). Career practitioners' conceptions of competency for social media in career services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling, 43*, 43-56. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2014.939945 doi:10.1080/03069885.2014.939945

Kettunen, J., Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, J. P. (2015). How do career practitioners experience social media in career services? *The Career Development Quarterly, 63*, 268-282. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cdq.12018

Kettunen, J., Vuorinen, R., & Sampson, J. P. (2013). Career practitioners´ conceptions of social media in career services. *British Journal of Guidance & Counseling, 41*, 302-317.