



Social media job titles grow, but will they work in IT?

By: **Shane Schick** On: 08 Jun 2011 For: CIO Canada

More companies are searching for experts in Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, but they're settling for junior staff and not paying that much. And they may have a dotted-line relationship to technology departments

As IT departments grapple with how their organizations will use social media and the implications on enterprise systems, companies are trying to hire so-called specialists who may face an uncertain reporting structure and career path.

According to the job site Indeed.com, there are more than 1,300 **social media-related job opportunities** in Canada. Many of these are not traditional IT roles. Neither are they always strictly marketing and communications roles, given the need to use advanced monitoring tools and sophisticated dashboards to manage communities on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and proprietary Web sites.

Sandra Miles, president of Miles Employment Group in Vancouver, some of the most popular titles being sought by companies include social media communication coordinators, social media strategists and social media marketers.

"We're seeing more hybrid roles where people are combining a number of skill sets and abilities and grouping them for what's happening in the workforce today," she said. "It's more of an interdisciplinary function filled with programming as well as copywriting skills."

Some of the requirements for this positions can be quite varied, Miles said, with demands for a background in marketing, history or something more technology-related. "I don't think people know what to do. It's such a new field and they want everything from an understanding of Google Analytics to creating a mobile app to managing all the outreach of social media."

Alex Blom, CTO of innovation and social practice lead at Helix Commerce, who also works as an instructor in **IT World Canada's Tech Learning Space social media program**, said many organizations simply don't understand the role for which they're hiring.

"You see companies recruiting an external person but really, the most successful people are the internal champions who urge others to use these tools," he said.

Miles said from what she's seen do far, most of the social media jobs in Canada are relatively entry level – with a salary to match.

"I do think this is a great opportunity for youth," she said. "There is always a desire for people who are mature and have more experience of how the business operates, but combining that with the social media skills is rare. People are having to take a risk."

Blom warns that some firms may regret bringing on someone too junior or too green. "You would never put a first-year grad in charge of you press release, or associate a statement with a brand without any management oversight," he said, "but that's what's sometimes happening in social media."

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Shane Schick is the Editor-in-Chief of IT World Canada, a media company that brings together communities of technology professionals. Shane joined the IT Business Group in 1997 as a sta... [more](#)

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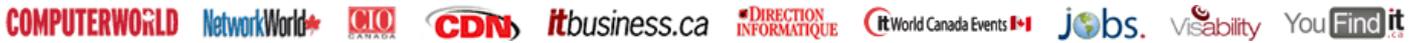
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