## What's Your (Online) Name? Consistency helps streamline profile online

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I like to help job seekers by doing a quick internet search on their names and showing them what employers are learning about them online. Here is what one person called, "a completely weird question" regarding finding oneself online:

"When you printed out your online search for my name, Sandra B., nothing popped up specific to me. However, when I type in Sandra H.B. or Sandy B., I get lots of information about myself. So, do you think I should change my name on my resume?"

This is a provocative question, and not completely weird, when you realize that most employers will, at some point in the hire or promotion process (or just on a slow business day) do an online search to discover more about who you are online.

You have two options. You can change your name on your resume to Sandy H.B., which is a quick and easy way to connect your current name to your online presence.

Or, go with Sandy B. as your professional name, which I will tell you is easy to remember and easier to spell correctly than H.B., and force your information to turn up. In the long run, a name that is memorable, easy to spell and easy to file could turn out to be a benefit to you.

Forcing your information to the top of an online search is not complicated, but it helps to understand how online searches work. One of the ways Google, for example, evaluates which results to show in a search is by gauging how many links there are to a web page from other pages, and the rating the quality of the linked sites. Thus, the more often your name appears in or is linked to established (commonly used and useful) websites, the more likely it is to come out on top in a web search.

Type your names into a search engine and notice where your information comes up, especially on recognizable sites. Edit your profile where possible so your name appears as Sandy B. Continue your search and click on any sites related to you, editing where possible.

If you have good press, an award or an Olympic World Record, for example, under an alternate name, you can connect it to your chosen name by adding a link to it from your primary profiles on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and other sites.

Finally, if you want to be sure people who are looking for your portfolio will find it, simply tell them where to look by providing actual links. By consistently using Sandy B., you will gradually develop a presence on the web as Sandy B.

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