

How Social Media Can Destroy Your Career

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A social footprint can say tons a few people in a positive or negative way. Social media may be a great platform for workers and job seekers to post about their accomplishments, portfolios and volunteering activities. However, a slip-up can cost you on social cost your career or ruin your career.

Millions of people use social media every day. 72% of all Internet users. And social is not any longer just a platform for communicating together with your college roommate or your relatives. People, organizations and companies all over the world can see your activity on social media. And the people you work for – or who are considering hiring you? They're looking.

Your social media presence is how you present yourself to the world and that includes current and future employers. Your social media presence is often the first impression you make on potential employers. Advance in your current career, social media matters.

DO EMPLOYERS CARE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?

You use social platforms to look up your friend's old pictures and posts all the time. But employers don't have time to hunt down their employees and potential candidates on social media, do they?

They do and they are. Hiring managers and employers are increasingly incorporating social media, from Twitter to Facebook to Instagram, into their deciding processes. According to Forbes, quite a 3rd of employers screen potential candidates using their social media accounts. And as social media use continues to grow, that number will only continue to rise.

If you stopped reading this and rushed to delete all of your college pictures from Facebook, you're not alone. But it's not all bad news. For job seekers, employers' use of social media in the hiring process presents an opportunity as much as it presents a potential risk.

Before considering how you can take advantage of social media to secure your next position, though, make sure your social media presence isn't inadvertently hurting your career.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A lot of attention is given to the negative effects that social media can have on career opportunities. But social media can be beneficial, too. A CareerBuilder survey found that nearly one-third of employers hired a candidate because of something positive they saw on the candidate's social media profile. The key? First, cleaning up your profile. Then, use social media in creative ways to give yourself a competitive edge in the job hunt.

Social media gives employers a fresh, different check out a candidate. And social media can even be wont to showcase qualities that don't necessarily belong on a resume. Use your social profiles to show off your unique personality, your sense of humour, or your charitable nature. Don't shy away from posting (politically correct) jokes, musings on culture or current events, or photos of you running that 5k or helping out with that Habitat for Humanity build. After all, employers want to rent real folks that they'll enjoy working with – not hyper-professional social media bots.

And even if your activities on social media don't make you look like a saint or qualify you for the next Nobel Prize, social profiles can still be used to show that you are a well-rounded, interesting person. If you spend hours playing chess, share your interest by liking or sharing chess-related things. Your hiring manager will see that you have passion, as well as the ability to think critically and make informed decisions. If you love knitting and make your scarves, hats and tea cosies, use a social platform to display your creativity.

Perhaps most importantly? Use social media the way it was intended to connect, network and interact with people who have things in common with you. Follow big names in your industry on Twitter. Share content associated with the corporate or field you would like to interrupt into. Make connections, start conversations, and obtain your name out there it'll go an extended way when it involves setting yourself aside from the competition.

PRESENTING A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE

Your social media profile doesn't have to be as dressed up as your resume (unless it's LinkedIn, of course). But it should still be professional.

Don't post anything that potential employers or hiring managers would find off-putting. This includes references to drugs or alcohol, lewd posts or photos, and negative comments about previous employers, as well as racist, sexist or otherwise discriminatory remarks. A good rule of thumb? If you have to ask, you probably shouldn't post it.

Comb through your profiles to make sure you don't have anything you should delete. And remember to go way back. Many of us have had the same social media profiles for years, and you may not want potential employers to think of you the same way your high school classmates did. Also consider what posts and pictures you like and comment on, as these can also show up on your profile and affect how you are perceived. Make sure to remove, un-tag, or hide any content you don't want to be found.

UTILIZE PRIVACY SETTINGS

So, you removed all potentially offensive material from your social profiles. The next step? Control what prospective employers can see through your privacy settings. It may sound obvious, but according to ZDNet, 13 million Facebook users have never customized their privacy settings.

On platforms that you simply use primarily for private interactions, like Facebook, set your privacy settings so that only those closest to you'll see your posts, uploads, and tagged photos. However, keep in

mind that if you work (or hope to work) in a creative industry, like entertainment, your potential employers may want to see your personality on social media – and locking down your privacy settings could have a negative effect.

SOCIAL IS HERE TO STAY

One thing is clear social media is here to stay. And while social media is great for making personal connections, it can also be used to advance your professional goals. Put a little thought into your social media presence and actions, and you could see big returns. Social could even be the key to the next big step in your career.

Have you used social media to network or find jobs? What was your experience?

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