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CAREER EDUCATION

Social Media 10 Do's and Do Not's

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Social media, including sites like Twitter and Facebook, can help you find a job and connect with people who can assist you grow your career. However, it works both ways. Social media, when used incorrectly, can backfire and jeopardize a job offer or even your current job. It is important to be careful and consider what you should not do, as well as what you should do, when using social media to job search.

- 1) **Do create an online presence.** When you are looking for a job or positioning yourself for career growth, it is important to have an online presence where you can showcase your skills and experience. Your online profiles will also help you connect with contacts who can expedite your job search and assist you with moving up the career ladder.
- 2) **Do be consistent.** Does the employment history on your resume match what is on your LinkedIn profile? Does the information you have on your Facebook page (if it is public) match up with the information you have elsewhere online? It is fine if you rework your job descriptions, for example, because targeting your resume is a good strategy when applying for job. What is not okay is if your job titles, companies, and dates do not align. That is a red flag for prospective employers.
- 3) **Do not get fired.** Employers are checking out candidates on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites. If you post it, someone will read it and that very well could be the wrong person (i.e. a hiring manager). Posting company business (good or bad) and posting inappropriate information on Facebook are just two examples of what can get you in trouble, or even cost you your job, especially when you do it from work.
- 4) **Do Goggle your name and check what is online.** There is a ton of information that can tell employers a lot about you online including tweets, instant messages, blogs, and the content and photos you post on social networking sites like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. It is quite easy for employers to find information you may have preferred to keep private. Much of it can be found by googling your name.
- 5) **Do be careful what you tweet.** Be really careful what you tweet. You do not know who might read it. Search Twitter for "I hate my job" for an example. Hiring managers and bosses are using Twitter too, and if you write it, someone will probably read it. Tweets show up in a Google search, and you do not want to lose your job because you did not think before you tweeted, even if you hate your job.

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- 6) **Do not forget your Facebook privacy settings.** Here is an example of what can happen when you are not careful about your privacy settings on Facebook. I received third party photos from one of my Facebook Friends. She was able to send me photos of her friends because they did not limit who their photos were shared with. I was able to see photos of someone I did not know simply because the person was not careful about her privacy settings. If I was an employer, I would not be impressed—she was having a really, really good time.
- 7) **Do network before you need to.** Build your network well in advance of when you need it. Make connections in your industry and career field. Follow career experts. Talk to your contacts on Twitter or the other networking sites. Join Groups or LinkedIn and join the discussion. Be engaged and proactive in your communications. By building a network in advance, you will not have to scramble if you unexpectedly lose your job or decide it is time to move on.
- 8) **Do give to get.** In a nutshell, give to get. Networking works both ways—the more you are willing to help someone else, the more likely they will be to help you. Take some time every day to reach out to your connections. Write a recommendation on LinkedIn, offer to introduce them to another connection, share an article or news with them. Giving to get really does work—your connections are more likely to return the favor when you have offered to help them.
- 9) **Do not connect with everyone.** There is a school of thought that says you should connect with everyone when you are using social media. I do not agree. When connecting, quality is more important than quantity. The first question you should ask yourself when making connections is, “How can the person help me?”. The second questions is, “What can I do to help them?”. Before you ask someone to connect, consider what you have in common. That common denominator, regardless of what it is, should be what is going to help with your job search.
- 10) **Do not spend time online on your boss' dime.** The temptation, of course, when you are job searching, is to spend time looking at job postings, perhaps uploading your resume to apply, talking to contacts, or posting about the trials and tribulations of your job search on Facebook. If you were to do that, you certainly would not be the first (or the only) person to do so. Many people job search from work, but given the way companies monitor employees, it is not wise to use your work computer or e-mail account for job searching. Or, if you do, be really careful how you do it.

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