

What is "Social Media"?

Social media refers to online communication through which users create and share content, collaborate, and network. Popular examples include Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but social media also includes blogs, discussion groups and forums, reviews, photos and videos, document sharing, and much more.

Social media is here to stay, and with it has come **social media recruiting (social recruiting)** and employers using social networks to research and screen applicants. One survey by Jobvite¹ found that 93% of hiring managers review candidates' profiles before making a hiring decision. Perhaps more impactful, a CareerBuilder study² revealed that 35% of employers would NOT interview a candidate they could not find online.

Anything you put online can be there for forever. This includes text, photos, video, and audio. Even if you remove your content, somebody else may have captured it. Think carefully before posting to social media, and avoid using it as a platform to rant or belittle.

WHAT ARE RECRUITERS LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY CHECK CANDIDATES' SOCIAL MEDIA?

When checking candidates on two of the more popular social networks (LinkedIn and Facebook), recruiters say this is what they evaluate:

- Professional experience
- Length of professional tenure
- Industry-related posts
- Mutual connections
- Specific hard skills
- Cultural fit
- Examples of written or design work³

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TURN-OFFS FOR RECRUITERS?

According to CareerBuilder, 48 percent of hiring managers who screen candidates say they have found information on social media that caused them not to hire a candidate. Here is the type of content likely to repel recruiters:

- Provocative or inappropriate photographs – 46 percent
- Information about candidate drinking or using drugs – 40 percent
- Candidate bad-mouthed previous company or fellow employee – 34 percent
- Poor communication skills – 30 percent
- Discriminatory comments related to race, religion, gender, etc. – 29 percent⁴

HOW CAN YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE POSITIVELY INFLUENCE RECRUITERS?

About one-third (32 percent) of employers report that finding the following information on a candidate's social media had influenced them to hire the candidate:

- Candidate's background information supported job qualifications – 42 percent
- Candidate's personality came across as good fit with company culture – 38 percent
- Candidate's site conveyed a professional image – 38 percent
- Candidate had great communication skills – 37 percent
- Candidate was creative – 36 percent⁵

SECURITY SETTINGS

Security settings vary depending on the site, but a good rule is to review every setting in order to customize it to your situation. Be aware of cross-posting information. For example, if you post on Facebook, will it be cross-posted to Twitter? Many people get too relaxed with their password use. To protect your security, do not set your browser to remember passwords, but instead log out when you leave the site. In addition, use two-step verification on your social media accounts, and periodically change your password.⁶

Develop Your Online Brand

The first rule in developing a positive, professional brand (aka reputation) is to clean up any “digital dirt,” which includes profanity, inappropriate images, etc. Then use social media to promote yourself as a professional and to network with others.

PROMOTE YOURSELF

- Show that you are a well-rounded professional who offers expertise in your field.
- Throughout your profiles, share your knowledge of and enthusiasm for your interests and career field.
- Make sure your social media persona is consistent throughout all your sites.
- Create a blog to write about your interests and/or career field. Make sure to edit and proofread carefully and to cite other sources.
- Develop original content instead of only linking to others’ content; post regularly, but don’t over-post or over-share.

REACH OUT TO OTHERS

- “Like” companies on Facebook, join groups on Facebook and LinkedIn, and “follow” companies and influencers on Twitter. You can also “follow” blogs. These can be for professional or personal interests, but realize that what and whom you follow could affect your reputation.
- Use social media to make new contacts and to follow up with people you have met, but when you have the opportunity, meet with individuals in real life.
- Don’t view networking as “what’s in it for me?” Instead, focus on the value you offer. What information can you provide? How can the other person benefit from connecting with you?

What do I say when connecting/posting?

This is similar to your “30-Second Commercial,” also known as the “Elevator Pitch.” (See handout on the Career Center’s website.) First, introduce yourself and explain your connection with the person. What are you seeking? Be clear on why you are reaching out to them. Following are a couple of examples for connecting with others, but tailor your words to match your personality and situation.

Example 1:

Hello, my name is _____, and I am a student at/graduate of Missouri State University. I have been following your discussion posts on _____ and thought you might be interested to read this related article, _____. I feel inspired after seeing your profile, because I’m interested in working in _____. It is great to see a successful _____ such as yourself, and I would appreciate the chance to talk with you about how you got to where you are now. Therefore, I’d like to add you to my professional network on LinkedIn. Thank you, and I look forward to corresponding with you.

Example 2:

Hello, my name is _____. I am a student at Missouri State University, majoring in _____. Because you are an alumnus/alumna who currently works in _____, I hope you can offer me some tips on applying for an internship in your company. I would be the perfect fit for this internship, because _____. I am passionate about _____ and am very thankful for your insight. I appreciate your time, and thank you for your advice.

Sources

¹<http://www.jobvite.com>

^{2,4,5}<http://www.careerbuilder.com>

³<http://careersherpa.net/social-recruiting-staying-strong/>

⁶<https://www.reputationmanagement.com/blog/protect-privacy-security-social-media>

⁷<https://www.themuse.com/advice/45-things-to-do-on-social-media-to-find-jobs>