



Welcome to the Social Media World! Now that you've signed up for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Google Plus, Pinterest, YouTube and countless others, think to yourself, will

any of these websites affect my Career, now or in the future? I'm hoping the answer is no. But just because you aren't posting inappropriate selfies or negative comments all over the internet, don't think you are safe. There are some other mistakes that people make that can negatively impact their career.

So what is Social Media and social networking? It is all types of posting on the Internet or other electronic media, including but not limited to, social networking sites (i.e. Facebook or LinkedIn); blogs and other on-line journals and diaries; bulletin boards and chat rooms; microblogging (i.e. Twitter); text messaging; and the posting of audio/video content on YouTube and other similar media sites.

- Statistics from recent studies have shown that:
  - 70% of employers decided not to hire a candidate because of something they found online about the candidate.
  - 94% of job candidates reported LinkedIn was their top social media site for job hunting.
  - 80% of HR teams use social media for sourcing new staff but 78% think that using social media for this is a big challenge as there are few mobile-friendly careers websites available: only 35% have a mobile-friendly website devoted to jobs and careers.
  - The top two negative behaviors mentioned by employers were 1) provocative/inappropriate photos and/or information (50%) and 2)

information about candidate drinking or using drugs (48%).

- 33% of employers surveyed crossed candidates off the list for badmouthing a previous employer.
- Less than 40% of graduates said they would consider marketing themselves to recruiters online.
- 55% of employers who researched job applicants on social media claim they found something that caused them not to hire the applicant.
- 48% of recruiters currently use social networking sites to glean information on potential job candidates.
- 50% of recruiters used search engines to research potential job candidates.
- 45% of recruiters said drink and drug habits had put candidates in a negative light.
- 39% had rejected applicants who said bad things about previous employers and employees.
- 38% were put off by inappropriate photographs.

First, let's start with some of the common mistakes made when posting online. Most importantly, it's best to keep your professional life and personal life separate. These lines are becoming more blurred by the minute regardless of the social media site you use.

- NEVER post anything that you wouldn't want your boss, your Mom, your kids or your Grandparents to see. If you wouldn't want them to see it, then it's best not to share it. Most websites have privacy setting which can be highly restrictive, but there is always a chance that it will be seen whether it's shared by a friend or forwarded by someone else. Stay away from the content that contains



alcohol, drugs, nudity, etc. Even if you are over 21, posting photos with alcohol can cost you your job. When it comes to offensive comments towards a person or a group, just don't do it...even if it's meant as a joke. The joke won't seem as funny after you lose your job or an interview.

- Sensitive subjects such as politics and religion should be approached cautiously.
- Remember even deleted pictures and posts can be searched.
- Never badmouth the company you are working for or the client it serves. You never know if a fellow employee, a client or a potential future employer might see it.
- It is also very important to never associate yourself with the company you work for unless you have been given permission by the company or have included a disclaimer that the content posted is your own personal view and not the view of the company you work for.
- Sometimes it's best not to share job offers everywhere on the internet. Remember an offer is not a guarantee you got the position and if it's a confidential offering, sharing it on social media will show that you are untrustworthy. Most importantly, don't share any negative content about the offer.
- Plagiarism is not accepted in the business world. Make sure to give credit where credit is due.
- Just because you think you are posting or sharing something professionally, doesn't mean that your family and friends will see it that way. A lot of the time it's not the comment that you made, but rather an offensive or inappropriate comment or content added by someone else that can hurt you.
- Content that is posted to social media is permanent and may come back to haunt you...remember...zombies never die and neither will that content you shared.
- Make sure to balance the content you share. Make sure that you aren't perceived as "partying" more than you are working.

Remember that everything you share is time stamped and current and future employers can monitor your activity during working hours. Getting caught will usually have consequences and may get you fired. Posting photos that show you are at work and on social media at the same time can be trouble.

So what first impression do you make online? Go ahead, Google yourself and see what others are seeing. What's the first thing that popped up? Do you like what you see? Would you hire yourself for the position you are interviewing for? Are you focusing more on your social life or your career? Make it a habit to monitor your online professional image. Set up a Google Alert for your name so you always know if something about you comes up in social media.

Most workplaces will have a policy in place regarding the use of Social Media. Make sure you read it and fully understand the Do's and Don'ts of Social Networking.

So now, let's learn how Social Media can be used effectively...

- Create a professional online presence. It will be in your benefit if your name appears when searched. It shows that you are involved in recent trends, community, and professional organizations. This can supplement the traditional Resume and CV normally provided to potential employers and recruiters.
- Keep a positive tone online, avoid being negative. Share all the positive things you do.
- LinkedIn is the premier social media site for professionals and companies looking to connect. This site has proven to be an effective networking tool allowing candidates to expand connections to professionals in your desired field. Some companies have started using LinkedIn as a primary method of recruitment, but it can

also be used to search for job openings. Make sure you have a professional photo and that your page sells you as a good candidate for hire; it's your online CV; google tends to link quickly to LinkedIn and tends to list them towards the top of search results.

- It's always on – information is available to anyone, anywhere, at any time on anything – this includes your online resume and CV.
- Communicate changes in your career as they happen - One advantage of having a strong social network is that you can keep your associates informed about changes in your career real time. As you spread the news, the people in your network, especially professional contacts, can provide timely advice or help finding the resources you need.
- There are, however, some potential downsides to keeping your social network informed about your career moves.
  - If you start openly seeking a new job before leaving your current one, the message may get back to your current employer and put your job at risk.
  - You might reveal information that's confidential to your current employer, putting you in violation of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), which could get you fired or even put in jail.
- Discover career paths you hadn't thought of - When you're focused on the responsibilities of your current job, sometimes it's easy to overlook opportunities waiting around the corner.
- Make new contacts through people you know.
- Let the job find you.
- Be sure your presence is consistent across all media and true to who you are.

Today your online presence is your calling card, particularly when it comes to your career - so use it wisely. Make sure recruiters and hiring

managers will be talking about you in a good way.

Whether it's email, chat, or a social network, word count isn't just a matter of style—it's often a technical requirement. Add to that the expectation that your online voice should sound conversational, engaging, or even funny, and communicating online may be the biggest (and certainly most frequently encountered) writing challenge that we face in business today. Here are some guidelines that can help make those messages productive and satisfying—rather than a liability.

- **Relax but don't relax too much.** The biggest difference between online writing and traditional business communications is that most online interaction is a lot less formal—especially social network updates and text messages.
- **Calibrate your voice to your platform.** Spend some time reading and listening to any new network you join before you jump in, so you get a feel for the tone that's appropriate—and pay particular attention to the tone used by the people you admire, or who seem to get a positive response to their posts.
- **Embrace humor...cautiously.** If in doubt, don't post it, forward it, or share it.
- **Easy on the acronyms.** Acronyms and abbreviations are extremely common online, particularly on Twitter, where the 140-character limit means you'll often see terms like HT (hat tip, to acknowledge a source), MT (modified tweet) or FTW ("for the win!", a celebratory term). This kind of shorthand has its place, but use too many LOLs and OMGs, and you sound like a teenager.
- **Be nicer online than you are offline.** Aim for online communication that makes you sound about 30% nicer than you actually are. Why? Because we're notoriously bad at judging how what we write—or rather, what we intend to write—will sound to the person reading it. A good rule of thumb is to

read anything you write out loud before you post or send it, particularly if it's a challenging or controversial communication (ideally, you'll set those aside for 24 hours, show them to another person first, and/or take the conversation offline). If you aim to be nicer online than you are face to face, you'll probably avoid the accidental lapses in tone that can cause real relationship and business problems.

- **Beware of bragging or groaning.** The occasional victory cheer is totally warranted, particularly when you're sharing good news and complaints have their place too, but generally only if you're asking for concrete support.
- **Lead with your key point.** Online readers have notoriously short attention spans. Whether you're sending an email or posting to a social network, make sure that any actionable items, or any questions you want addressed, appear at the very top of your message. Then you can provide the context to go with that question.
- **Avoid Buzzwords!** - Buzzwords make you sound like just another faceless candidate, a plastic applicant with no real personality who just cuts and pastes from other people's CVs. According to LinkedIn here are the top 10 overused buzzwords used in Profiles in the USA in 2010
  - Extensive experience, innovative, motivated, results-oriented, dynamic, proven track record, team player, fast-paced, problem solver, entrepreneurial

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