

Is your social media presence hurting your job search?

You hear a lot about what you shouldn't post on social media, but employers are starting to grow weary of hiring candidates who lack a social presence all together. Take control of your brand by balancing your personal and professional image to attract recruiters. Whichever way you swing it, you can't avoid social media anymore, and how you manage -- or don't manage -- your social presence can make or break your job hunt. It's time to take control of your image and start thinking of social media as personal branding.

Why does it matter?

Managing a Twitter feed and updating your LinkedIn profile might not seem important, but these outlets have become strong elements in recruitment. If you have a lax attitude to your social media accounts, it can hurt you just as much as having no social presence at all.

According to a 2015 survey from [CareerBuilder](#) of more than 2,000 employers, "35-percent of employers say they are less likely to interview job candidates if they are unable to find information about that person online."

You might think keeping your personal profiles set to private is the right thing to do, but many employers are starting to view a lack of public social presence as a red flag.

Take control of your brand

It's important to be aware of your social presence and to take control of what you put out there. Recruiters aren't really searching for salacious details about your life; most are looking to confirm that your skills and qualifications make you the best person for the job.

John Jersin, former Google executive and current CEO of [Connectifier](#), says "you should have updated and accurate information everywhere someone might look. It helps you look consistent and organized, but it also gives you an opportunity to briefly emphasize important parts of your resume."

And don't forget, just because hiring managers and recruiters might be checking your social profiles, that doesn't mean you can't take a look at theirs. Learning more about the company you are working for as well as the hiring manager or recruiter can better prepare you for the interview.

Industry matters

In CareerBuilder's survey, 76 percent of information technology recruiters and 64 percent of financial services recruiters turned to social media to find and vet potential candidates. Other industries that rely heavily on social media include sales, professional and business services, manufacturing, healthcare and retail. If you work in any of these industries, it's definitely time to take your social media seriously.

Get Recruited

If you aren't actively searching for a new job, but are open to interesting positions, maintaining a strong social presence can help recruiters find you. Controlling your personal brand can help ensure that potential job offers come straight to your inbox, rather than finding job listings and applying directly.

You should take note of not only LinkedIn as a strong recruitment platform, but Twitter as well. More [recruiters are turning to Twitter](#) to find potential candidates, and it is quickly becoming a resource for job seekers and recruiters.

In a [recent study](#), Twitter was cited as having more job listings than any other platform, and 174 of the companies on the Fortune 500 have a dedicated Twitter account for recruitment. Your Twitter profile might not only help you find an opening with a company, but it might help the company find you.

A little mystery is good

Don't run off and unlock all of your social media profiles right away. Some things are better left private, such as your Facebook profile or a personal Twitter account.

Dawn Edmiston, clinical associate professor of marketing at the College of William and Mary, says "I would definitely wonder about the background of a tech professional who had zero presence on social media, rather than the individual who has a well-managed LinkedIn and Twitter presence, but prefers that their personal social media such as Facebook remains private."

The keyword here is "well-managed," try to draw a line between your professional image and your personal image. Keeping your Facebook account private is probably a smart idea, but you might consider having two separate Twitter accounts – one professional and one personal.

What are they looking for?

The CareerBuilder study also revealed the top five things recruiters are looking for in your social profile, which includes inappropriate photos, alcohol or drug use, negative posts about past employers or coworkers, a lack of communication skills as well as any discriminatory or inflammatory content regarding race, gender, religion, and other issues.

"Forty-eight percent of hiring managers who screen candidates via social networks said they've found information that caused them not to hire a candidate -- down slightly from 51 percent last year," according to CareerBuilder.

However, the survey also revealed what type of social content made recruiters move forward with a candidate. This included any background information that supported the candidate's qualifications, signs that the candidate's personality would be a good fit for the company, a professional image, strong communication skills, and creativity. Proving to recruiters that you can maintain professionalism on social media is a good sign that you will carry that over into your working life.

Time to get on board

If you're waiting to see if social media is a passing phase, you're going to be left behind. Recruiters using social media to find candidates has gone up 43 percent since last year and 39-percent since 2013, according to CareerBuilder.

"Researching candidates via social media and other online sources has transformed from an emerging trend to a staple of online recruitment," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer at CareerBuilder. It's time to get smart about your social presence and view it as a personal brand, rather than a personal outlet.

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