

Tech Topics

Expert Tips To Help Job Seekers Clean Up Their Social Identity

(NAPSA)—Social media is a popular pastime for work and play for nearly 70 percent of Americans.¹ For job seekers, social networking sites can be useful tools to share professional experience, network with peers and employers, and seek job openings, but the content that individuals post on social platforms could be detrimental during the job hunt.

Companies often use social media to research job candidates during the interview process to learn more about them. And, unfortunately, if a candidate's social media presence contains unsavory photos, comments or posts, that information can be factored into the decision about whom to interview and ultimately hire.

The bottom line: Individuals seeking a new job would be wise to remove any potentially damaging photos or content. That said, can you truly hide your social identity? Dan Konzen, Phoenix Campus chair for the College of Information Systems and Technology at University of Phoenix, said the answer may be “no,” but he has tips to help clean up your social identity.

Can Social Media Cost Me My Job?

The easy solution to hide your social identity seems to be to delete it entirely, but this may not be the best option for job seekers. Hiring managers are actually less likely to interview candidates who don't have a social media presence.²

Individuals must be careful, though, of what content is posted online. Knowing that a potential employer may be looking at your social media presence, it's best to present yourself in the most flattering way. It's not just about what you post, it also applies to what friends are posting about you, as the content is discoverable.

Some social media snafus include inappropriate photos, videos or content; alcohol or drug use; discriminatory comments; slander toward previous company or fellow employees; and poor communication skills.

Current employees should also be wary of their online presence. Nearly half of employers said they use social media to research current employees, and one-fourth have fired an employee for what they found.³



Job seekers may care to consider the reaction of potential employers before posting on social media.

Tips to Clean Up Your Social Identity

Konzen warns that what individuals post online can never be completely hidden, but people can take steps to help clean up their social identity.

“Consider how your social media accounts are perceived by others of different backgrounds, such as a recruiter sharing it with a hiring manager,” Konzen said. “The best way to clean up your social identity is to be aware of what is already out there and be mindful of what you post.”

Konzen shares the following tips to help clean up your social identity:

- Remove any provocative, inappropriate or distasteful photos or comments. This includes ones you've been tagged in by friends. Contact the poster and ask him or her to remove the photo or content. If that isn't possible, untag yourself.
- Tools such as justdelete.me and Lightbeam can help you manage accounts and see who's viewed your profiles.
- Google yourself and set up Google Alerts to monitor your online presence. If you find anything concerning, chances are, hiring managers will, too.
- Edit past social media and blog posts for grammatical errors. Poor communication skills on social media are a reflection of your brand. Consider making your social media profiles more career focused. Think of the type of candidate the employer is seeking and model your social media accounts after that. Creating a profile under a pseudonym can be used to keep in touch with old friends or post content that may not be work appropriate.

¹www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheet/social-media

²www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?ed=12/31/2016&id=pr945&sd=4/28/2016

³www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?ed=12/31/2016&id=pr945&sd=4/28/2016