

Is Social Media Costing You That Dream Job?

You're looking for a job and you have a social media account, which makes you entirely normal. It also means that the first impression any employer may have of you is from what you posted yesterday or last week or even last year on Facebook.

Are you, and your social media profile, prepared for that reality?



According to a 2014 article in *Time*, 93% of recruiters and hiring managers used social media accounts as one of their first impression of job applicants. Two years later, it's safe to assume that number has grown to include nearly everyone. What those recruiters and hiring managers see definitely affects hiring decisions.

Even with basic privacy settings in place, your social media profiles can still be an ally or an enemy to you in your job search. Google yourself—you might be surprised by what you can see, which is just a fraction of what someone with advanced research skills might be able to find on the Internet.

So how do you make sure that your profile is interview ready?

- **Police Your Tags:** One of the best features on Facebook is “Timeline Review,” a privacy feature that allows you to see any picture or article or post that “tags” you and appear on your timeline. You can reject any picture, post, or article that may not present you in a positive light. On any platform, make sure you know what your handle or name is being attached to so that you can eliminate any problems.
- **Watch What You Say:** It seems like common sense, but watch what you post. We're not just talking about mentioning illegal activity (including underage drinking, illegal drugs, or even reckless behavior) but also sexually explicit or profane posts. We genuinely hope that you are already aware that you should be professional and discreet in your online communications, but if this is news to you, clean up your language.
- **Delete, Delete, Delete:** If you have posted something that you now regret, from pictures to rants about a former employer, go back and delete it now. Think about your profile as if it's a portfolio. Go back for the last six months, and get rid of anything you don't think reflects kindly on you.
- **Keep It Private:** Know your privacy settings! Certain platforms, like Twitter, are inherently public; you're not going to be able to hide your tweets unless you take them private through a direct message. Instagram will allow you to be private, and Facebook allows a bit of a hybrid. Make sure your settings are what you want them to be, both for your entire account and for individual posts and pictures. Remember: profile pictures are ALWAYS public!

Social media can be fantastic networking tool, a great way to get to know co-workers and potential employers, and a wonderful relationship builder. But if you're not careful, your college glory days or angry rants about an unfair job evaluation could be the reason you don't get the job of your dreams. Keep it clean, keep it professional, and keep it an excellent first impression of your life.