



Chapter 3 Reading Social Media and Employment

Name _____
Class _____

Social media can be a practical tool and a significant liability during the job search. This is especially true for young adults. A Pew Research Survey in February 2021 found that 84% of 18-29 year-olds used at least one social media platform. That means that most young adults have a social media footprint that a potential employer can review as part of the screening and hiring process. A recent business website survey found nine out of ten employers look at job candidates' social media posts. 79% of those employers rejected a candidate based on what they saw.

What social media content is likely to cost you a job? It does depend on the type of job you are applying for, but content that has gotten candidates rejected includes:

- Illegal or illicit activities
- Hate speech
- Crude jokes or comments
- Negative comments about former employers or fellow employees
- Excessive partying
- Argumentative posts
- Poor grammar and spelling

You can take several steps to clean up your personal social media profiles and content before beginning the job search.

- Delete any content in the previously mentioned categories and anything else that could hurt your chances with a potential employer.
- Set the filters on personal social media to private. Do not assume doing so will shield the content from a potential employer.
- Make sure any professional content on your pages, such as employer and job title, is consistent and up to date.

Once your social media accounts have been cleaned up, it is important to keep them clean. Companies have terminated employees over social media content, resulting in the loss of a job and income.

While the content on your personal social media accounts can hurt your employment chances, professional social media content can help them. LinkedIn is the leading professional social network, with over 190 million users in the United States. An appealing LinkedIn profile can support your candidacy for any job you apply for. Recruiters may contact you with employment opportunities you may not know about based on your profile.

Creating a LinkedIn profile is free. You will have most of the necessary information if you already have a good resume. A good LinkedIn profile also contains content not

included in a resume. A professional-looking headshot photo is critical. The "About" section is a place to share information about yourself beyond education and work experience that an employer might find appealing. Describe your passion for a specific type of work or desire to be part of an organization with a particular mission or purpose. Avoid negative commentary or sharing too much personal information.

There is also a section where you can self-identify the skills you possess. Some skills are specific to the job or career you are interested in, such as Cost Accounting or Pediatric Nursing. Most of the skills a young adult will list are the ones necessary to succeed in most workplaces. What are these skills? Self-management (strong work ethic), punctuality, time management, teamwork, and written and verbal communication are some of the skills required for most jobs today. Skills such as technology, leadership, management, and fluency in a foreign language may be optional but are desirable for most positions.

When listing a skill, link it with the work, volunteer, or educational experience where you demonstrated it. LinkedIn members can also recommend other members' skills. Positive recommendations from members with professional credibility will attract the attention of employers. Another way to get noticed is by creating a personal webpage that will appear in an internet search of your name. However, creating a LinkedIn profile is easier, will show up in internet searches of your name, and will expose you to prospective employers using LinkedIn specifically to hire employees.

You can also use social media sites like LinkedIn and Twitter to follow specific thought leaders in an industry. You can also follow companies you are interested in working for. Besides learning about them by reading their posts, you can also comment on them. Intelligent comments might lead to an individual or company becoming interested in you.

1. Why must you clean up your social media profiles and content before beginning your job search?
2. What are three types of content you should delete from your social media?

3. What are the advantages of having a LinkedIn profile when looking for a job?

4. What skills are considered necessary for most jobs?

5. What advantage does a LinkedIn profile have over having the same information on a personal webpage?

6. What is the benefit of following specific companies or individuals?

7. Consider your current social media footprint. Are there things you would need to clean up before looking for a job? Explain.

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