7 tips to ensure you have the right profile on social media

According to a 2017 study by CareerBuilder, 70% of employers now evaluate job candidates' social media presence before they make any final hiring decisions. Don't let a photo or tweet keep you from landing that gig! Here are seven useful tips on how to build an employer-friendly online reputation.

1. Google yourself.

While it might feel a little self-centred to Google yourself, it's important to know what potential employers might find. For example, there could be someone with the same name as you who has a criminal record. An employer who searches your name could potentially confuse the two of you. In cases where you share a name with someone, consider adding your middle name to your resume and the social media accounts you don't mind future employers seeing.

Also, check your search results for old online accounts you may have forgotten, personal information you don't want shared, photos friends have tagged you in and anything else you aren't comfortable with an employer seeing online. You might have completely forgotten about an account you had on a message board from years ago, but they can still show up when someone searches for you.

2. Delete. Delete. Delete.

Have a Twitter account from when you were 16 that embarrasses you today? It could also give employers pause. No one needs to know how angry you were at your best friend or a famous sports star when they did something you felt was traitorous. Delete the account.

Or if you're still using the account, read back through your posts and delete the ones you would rather not share to minimize the chance that a potential employer will find them. You might also appear in photos that don't present you in the most professional light, so delete those as well if you own them, and consider changing your privacy settings to control who can see them. Leave no account behind!

3. Ask to have posts taken down.

Maybe your friend shared photos or stories of your escapades on social media and now it's the first thing that people see when they Google you. Reach out to friends and ask them to remove the story or photos of you, and change your account settings to control who can tag you in photos.

You can also contact websites that have information about you online and request to have that content removed. While they don't have to oblige, if you explain why you want them to do it, they might be willing to help.

4. Become more private.

In an age of online sharing, it may feel disingenuous to delete all your Instagram photos or Facebook posts. If this is the case, consider making your accounts private

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so you can better control who sees them. You could also change your account names to be less personally identifiable. As long as it can't be Googled, it can help you maintain your privacy.

5. Review anything potentially controversial.

Of course, it can be important not to give up too much of yourself to get a job. If it's important to you that you marched in a protest and only want to work for an employer who thinks that's cool, then keep it! It could get you the right gig.

However, have you ever felt the need to weigh in on a controversial topic on social media on a whim? You might want to delete your rant before heading to your interview, or at least take out the curse words.

Employers will look at your social media to not only evaluate your communication skills, but also determine if you are conducting yourself professionally online.

6. Add new accounts.

Your online presence can also be an opportunity to impress employers and confirm you have the skills for a job. Add a LinkedIn profile – if you don't have one – with your accomplishments and recommendations from people who worked with you in the past.

Start a blog or YouTube channel about one of your professional passions. You might even consider becoming a moderator of an online community related to your professional goals.

Your new online presence could help you seal the deal.

7. Update your profile frequently.

Don't just create a profile and let it collect dust. It's important to stay active on all social media sites. Start a new job? Post an update. Get a promotion? Update your title. Ensure your accounts are consistent and demonstrate who you are and what you've achieved.

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