



The Social Media Rulebook for Job Seekers

The Internet is a large piece of today's job search puzzle. Even if you don't find your job through an online channel, there are plenty of ways that a potential employer can see your social media activity and make a snap judgment about you (and your employability). Are you ready for that?

Here are a few rules all job seekers should follow when it comes to social media:

Rule 1. Don't post negative comments about your employers (this means any employer, whether past, present or prospective). Follow the same rule with regard to managers and co-workers. Hiring managers will be turned off if they find that you have a habit of speaking disparagingly about your employer. Before you hit send on a social media post, imagine being in a conference room with all of the company's "higher ups" while your message is displayed on the wall with a projector. Do you still want to press the 'send' button?

Rule 2. Don't post incriminating material online. Did you take a "sick day" and then post a photo of yourself at an amusement park? If you're connected on social media with your boss or co-workers, that could be a problem. Think before you post.

Rule 3. Keep things to yourself online. Don't post about your job search while you're employed or complain that you need a raise. Your boss won't want to read those posts. If you're unemployed, reaching out to your network about your job search can be a good tactic, but keep it strictly professional.

Rule 4. Check your digital footprint. Type your name into the most popular search engines online and see what pops up. (Tip: Use the name you put on job applications and your resume.) What results come back? What



are people seeing when they look for you online? Is everything positive, or are there any results that need to be remedied? Also remember to search through your own photos or photos your friends may have tagged you in. Take a good look at these photos and decide if this is how you want to be seen by potential employers.

Rule 5. Change your privacy settings. The default privacy settings for many social media sites often leave a lot to be desired. In fact, many of these default settings are actually set to be public, allowing anyone (including your employer) to see what you've been up to online. Adjust your settings on each network to ensure that you're putting the best foot forward. ■