

Hunting for a job? Be careful what you post

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Think before you post, job-seekers: Your potential employer is likely watching your social media feeds.

Seventy percent of employers said they look at what job candidates post on their Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter and other accounts, according to a survey by CareerBuilder. Fifty-seven percent of companies said they have ruled out hiring someone because of the content they found.

Job-hunters may want to keep those statistics in mind and clean up their social media presence before searching for work, said Michael Erwin, a senior career adviser for CareerBuilder.

"When it comes to social media and looking for a job, we let our guard down too often," he said. "We may be posting things that may not put us in the best light to potential employers."

That doesn't mean job-seekers should wipe your social media accounts clean. Indeed, 47 percent of employers said they were less likely to call a candidate in for an interview if they couldn't find the person online, the survey found.

The national survey, conducted by The Harris Poll for CareerBuilder, was done between April 4 and May 1. The survey sampled more than 1,000 hiring managers and human resource professionals.

In 2008, CareerBuilder found that only 22 percent of employers looked at the social media presence of job seekers, he said.

Employers aren't just eyeballing people's social media, Erwin said. About two-thirds of companies said they use search engines to conduct research on job candidates.

"Always be prepared to be 'Googled' by a potential employer," said Katie Linendoll, a consumer tech expert. "If you have to think twice about something, then you shouldn't post it. If you feel comfortable with any post being put up as a billboard in Times Square, then it's acceptable."

If an online search turns up information you wouldn't want an employer to see, tech is available to help clean your slate, Linendoll said. Quick cleanup tools such as Tweet Deleter, or a browser extension for Chrome called Social Book Post Manager, will do the trick, she said.

Employers are particularly on the lookout for inappropriate photos; discriminatory race, religious or gender remarks; information about drug and alcohol use; and evidence of criminal behavior, according to CareerBuilder. Another red flag is a person badmouthing former employers. The tech and manufacturing industries are the most likely to search your social media accounts.

The searches don't stop after an employee is hired. Nearly half of all employers said they monitor the social media sites of workers regularly, the survey found. About a third said they have reprimanded or fired workers because of social media posts.

"People need to use common sense with social media," Erwin said. "Unfortunately too many people are not."

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