

Forty-five Percent of Employers Use Social Networking Sites to Research Job Candidates, CareerBuilder Survey Finds

Career Expert Provides DOs and DON'Ts for Job Seekers on Social Networking

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As social networking grows increasingly pervasive, more employers are utilizing these sites to screen potential employees. Forty-five percent of employers reported in a recent CareerBuilder survey that they use social networking sites to research job candidates, a big jump from 22 percent last year. Another 11 percent plan to start using social networking sites for screening. More than 2,600 hiring managers participated in the survey, which was completed in June 2009.

Of those who conduct online searches/background checks of job candidates, 29 percent use Facebook, 26 percent use LinkedIn and 21 percent use MySpace. One-in-ten (11 percent) search blogs while 7 percent follow candidates on Twitter.

The top industries most likely to screen job candidates via social networking sites or online search engines include those that specialize in technology and sensitive information: Information Technology (63 percent) and Professional & Business Services (53 percent).

Why Employers Disregarded Candidates After Screening Online

Job seekers are cautioned to be mindful of the information they post online and how they communicate directly with employers. Thirty-five percent of employers reported they have found content on social networking sites that caused them not to hire the candidate. The top examples cited include:

- Candidate posted provocative or inappropriate photographs or information - 53 percent
- Candidate posted content about them drinking or using drugs - 44 percent
- Candidate bad-mouthed their previous employer, co-workers or clients - 35 percent
- Candidate showed poor communication skills - 29 percent
- Candidate made discriminatory comments - 26 percent
- Candidate lied about qualifications - 24 percent

- Candidate shared confidential information from previous employer - 20 percent

Fourteen percent of employers have disregarded a candidate because the candidate sent a message using an emoticon such as a smiley face while 16 percent dismissed a candidate for using text language such as GR8 (great) in an email or job application.

Why Employers Hired Candidates After Screening Online

Job seekers are also encouraged to leverage social media when advertising their skills and experience. Eighteen percent of employers reported they have found content on social networking sites that caused them to hire the candidate. The top examples include:

- Profile provided a good feel for the candidate's personality and fit within the organization - 50 percent
- Profile supported candidate's professional qualifications - 39 percent
- Candidate was creative - 38 percent
- Candidate showed solid communication skills - 35 percent
- Candidate was well-rounded - 33 percent
- Other people posted good references about the candidate - 19 percent

- Candidate received awards and accolades - 15 percent

"Social networking is a great way to make connections with potential job opportunities and promote your personal brand across the Internet," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder. "Make sure you are using this resource to your advantage by conveying a professional image and underscoring your qualifications."

Haefner recommends the following DOs and DON'Ts to keep a positive image online:

1. DO clean up digital dirt BEFORE you begin your job search. Remove any photos, content and links that can work against you in an employer's eyes.
2. DO consider creating your own professional group on sites like Facebook or BrightFuse.com to establish relationships with thought leaders, recruiters and potential referrals.
3. DO keep gripes offline. Keep the content focused on the positive, whether that relates to professional or personal information. Makes sure to highlight specific accomplishments inside and outside of work.
4. DON'T forget others can see your friends, so be selective about who you accept as friends. Monitor comments made by others. Consider using the "block comments" feature or setting your profile to "private" so only designated friends can view it.
5. DON'T mention your job search if you're still employed.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com between May 22 and June 10, 2009 among 2,667 hiring managers and human resource professionals (employed full-time; not self-employed; with at least significant involvement in hiring decisions; non- government) ages 18 and over. With a pure probability sample of 2,667 one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.9 percentage points. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

About CareerBuilder

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