

## Effects a Social Media Image Can Have on Future Careers

Dan Bernardini, Emily Perez, and Aaron Templin

### Abstract

*Individuals in society today present their personality through various platforms on social media. Applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Indeed are just a few examples of the mainstream social media accounts digested by people every day. These applications help people network, connect with various parts of the world, and share personal life events with the world. Students seeking entry level or mainstream jobs after graduating need to be aware of the positive and negative aspects of their social media image. The image can play a major role in an employer deciding to hire them or pass to a different applicant. The goal of this presentation is to inform students how their social media image impacts the chances in landing a job. We plan to offer examples of good and bad ways to present a social media image, while providing real life examples on how different presentations of media accounts have affected real people.*

---

Potential employers will weigh a social media identity. In her article, Hannon cited a statistic from Career Builder's 2016 social media recruitment team that 60 percent of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates (Hannon). Applications such as Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Indeed allow employers to get an inside view of candidates. This allows them to check what they are looking for qualifications wise outside the confines of a resume or cover letter for the position (Hannon).

Employers put a lot of stock into what they see from the candidate's social media pages. Three out of five employers say they

are less likely to interview an applicant for a job if he or she cannot find the candidate online, or if what the employer finds online represents them in a poor way (Hannon). Examples of a poor image includes but is not limited to excessive partying, drug or alcohol related content, profanity, inappropriate photos, and supporting content not otherwise seen appropriate by the mass majority of the general public. This can include posting a photo binge drinking out of a keg at a college party, smoking marijuana with friends, or bragging about some form of vandalism.

**Body**

It is essential for students to understand what digital identity they are presenting to the world. The need to know that what is put out there will always be there even if deleted is a concept not many understand. Think before posting anything (Hannon). Comprehension of what employers are looking for versus what they aren't is common knowledge but can also be expanded on in the classroom or by personal research.

Scrub the social media pages that contain questionable posts. While all data posted online is retrievable, it is better to review your pages and remove any unflattering content posts employers can see. (Hannon). Contact the site manager if necessary and request to have information removed especially if tagged in something you do not want a connection with (Morgan, 2017).

Fine-tune privacy. These settings are things users overlook often. Set privacy settings to a specific group of people so that information is not reachable by just anyone. Similarly, make sure to stay active on platforms and commit to specifics. Social media experience is essential in the job market and having an active presence is important (Morgan, 2017).

In order to use social media platforms in order to achieve a dream job it is essential to follow a few important steps in order to have a strong social media image.

**Research**

Consider creating a list of ideal employers or organizations in which you hope to obtain a job (Pfledderer, 2014). Find and follow all their social media accounts. Be active by liking, commenting, and sharing their content. This helps you stay up to date with trends and companies can notice presence on their accounts. Seek out people who already work for that company and check out their social media profiles comparing and contrasting their image to yours (Pfledderer, 2014). Think about ways to strengthen and

build your online presence that best matches representation for that company or organization.

**Brand Yourself**

Invest in a brand and image that you wish to build. Assess the digital footprint by conducting a search of your name on Google to see what information you is out there about (Pfledderer, 2014). It is common for employers to use the internet to discover more about you. Remember to present good and professional information that showcases the best qualifications. Remove any dirt and take notice to people who have the same name as you.

**Network and Connect**

Dedicate your time to being active on social media platforms and grow an online network (Pfledderer, 2014). Import email and phone contacts to connect to colleagues using the same sites. Use the advanced search function to search for alumni and former colleagues in a specific field or area of study. Reach out to people you meet professionally and build connections by being active on other people's accounts.

**Conclusion**

So why does it matter? Social media platforms are such powerful tools that millions of people use every day. Applications are addictive and what people send out on the internet can never be fully taken down. Personally, one of the authors had a family member that recently made it into the police force. It was brought to his bosses' attention that a questionably racist meme was shared on this family members' account almost ten years ago. This one post from ten years ago led to the questioning of the new police deputy and almost his suspension from the force.

Social media usage can heavily affect a person's life in a positive or negative way in

the future. A history of inappropriate social media use can ruin a person's reputation seeking employment and can kill the chances of landing an entry level or dream job before it even can get started. In contradiction, positive, correct, and smart social media use

can be a distinct advantage over the hundreds or thousands of people applying for the same job. Overall, it is important to understand the affects social media use can have long term and people should start practicing better media habits today.

## References

- Hannon, K. (n.d.). How social networks impact your job search. Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/work/job-hunting/info-2016/social-media-impacts-job-search.html#quest1>
- Morgan, H. (2017, August 3). How social media can help and harm your job search. Retrieved from <https://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/outside-voices-careers/articles/2017-08-03/how-social-media-can-help-and-harm-your-job-search>
- Pfledderer, K. (2014). 3 Ways Social Media Can Help You Land Your Dream Job. *Diversity Employers*, 45(1), 38. Retrieved from <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/95408527/3-ways-social-media-can-help-you-land-your-dream-job>

---

### Recommended Citation

Bernardini, D., Perez, E., Templin, A. (2020). Effects a social media image can have on future careers. *Made in Millersville Journal*, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.mimjournal.com/bernardini-perez-templin-2020>