

The Dos and Don'ts of Social Media

Employers check out candidates on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media sites. As a job seeker, you should maintain an online presence that will provide you with the opportunity to extend your professional network.

Dos

Do ensure that your brand message is consistent across all platforms. Your resume and LinkedIn profile must align. The resume you submit should be the same as what is searchable online. It is fine if you rework your job descriptions, for example, because targeting your resume is a good thing when applying for a job. What is not okay is if your job titles, companies, and dates do not match. That is a red flag for prospective employers.

Do upload a profile photo that aligns with the industry in which you work. Marketing and creative roles allow more freedom, while accounting and financial professionals are better suited to serious photos.

Do include keywords in your profile that reflect the industry in which you currently work or the position you are seeking. This allows your profile to be included in searches and a professional headline should ultimately reflect what you could offer a potential employer.

Do review your privacy settings on all social networking sites. Best be vigilant not to post anything you would not mind an employer or potential employer seeing. Understand that your online persona is a direct reflection of your candidacy as a professional. If you use Facebook primarily for personal networking, keep a close watch on the photos that you are tagged in and who has access to view them. Check your privacy settings. Potential employers turn to social media to review candidates' online activity and may discount your credibility.

Do maintain your accounts on a regular basis. Do not just establish a LinkedIn presence stay connected. Update your status about major projects you have completed and professional successes you have had.

Don'ts

Don't upload a photo that includes other people – LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that serves to leverage your personal brand, use this opportunity to make it count. Equally important is actually uploading a photo. In the same token as remaining engaged and driving conversations online, do not post updates to your timeline too frequently. Effective networking is judged by the quality of your postings, not necessarily the quantity.

Don't share too much personal information online or offer insight that you would not want an employer or potential employer to see. Keep in mind that you are solely responsible for the content that you publish online, and understand that the information is often irretrievable.

Don't forget to proofread your updates before posting online. Limit your use of acronyms and abbreviations. If all your posts contain slang and misspellings, employers will think twice about extending an invitation to interview.

Don't give up! Building a diverse network across platforms and connecting with decision makers requires consistency and patience. Offer insight and bring value to your network – connections will grow and so too, will your proficiency in social media.

Don't let your guard down once you have been hired. Once you have the job, you still need to monitor your online presence. Be as discreet as possible about anything personal you post online, and remember that more than a few people have been fired over controversial or offensive comments they have posted on social media.

Social media is a continually evolving medium and the platforms ever changing, so the rules are still being written.