

## The New First Impression and Your Dream Job



The best piece of advice I received as I began looking for a summer internship during my Senior year in college was given to me on complete accident. A good friend of mine from my Communications program was getting ready to graduate and not only had he already completed an internship but scored his first job with the same company he interned for. We all considered him one of the “lucky ones” because a lot of our classmates were still frantically looking for their first full time gig.

We were sitting in the hallway waiting for our Gender and Ethics class to begin and were listening to a fellow student have a small, heart attack because she was applying for jobs everywhere and not even receiving a call back, much less an interview. After she walked into the classroom, my friend stopped me outside of the door and said, “I bet that part of her problem is what she keeps posting on Instagram, did you see her picture from this weekend?”. I didn’t really think to much into it at the time and we shrugged it off.

Fast forward to my summer semester, I had just begun working in New York City as an intern for a Public Relations company in SoHo. The woman I was working for was in the middle of trying to hire a new, Publicist and asked me to put together the “profiles” of all the applicants so she could decide which ones to interview. As I was putting them together she asked me “to do some digging” and see what I could find out about them on Facebook. I immediately thought about my friends comment from months ago and realized that social media really did matter.

Now more than ever, companies in every industry are taking the social media “stalker” approach before hiring a new employee or intern. With so many applicants to choose from employers are looking for more than just professional qualifications, they want to see who you are as an individual and if you will represent their companies well. **According to a recent survey by careerbuilder.com, over 70% of companies are looking at social media pages prior to hiring someone new.**



Here is a list of what they may be looking for:

- Candidate posted provocative or inappropriate photographs, videos or information.
- Candidate posted information about them drinking or using drugs.
- Candidate had discriminatory comments related to race, gender, religion.
- Candidate bad-mouthed their previous company or fellow employees.
- Candidate lied about qualifications.
- Candidate had poor communication skills.
- Candidate was linked to criminal behavior.
- Candidate lied about an absence.

Though this may seem unfair or a little “judgy” if you think about it, you can use this to your advantage when trying to land your dream job or internship. **The most important thing to understand in this entire letter is that you can control what you post!** If you don’t read anything else, read that statement because understanding this one simple thought puts the control back into your own hands.

Second, there are four very easy things you can do to make sure that your social media is “job hunt” ready.

- Post on social media using correct grammar and spelling.
- Try to keep your posts ‘G’ rated (meaning no bad language, hand gestures or rude comments about anyone).
- Keep the pictures you post “G” rated as well. (This means refrain from posting any photos where you are partying/drinking/clubbing or are wearing anything too scandalous or that shows too much skin).
- Keep it positive! As a rule, don’t bad mouth or speak ill of anyone on social media. That doesn’t mean you can’t post your viewpoints but keep your post as factual and general as possible.

It is important to keep in mind that when someone looking to hire you sees your social media before meeting you that becomes their first impression of you. They can see what you’re interested in, how you speak to your friends, what you do in your free time and more. Make sure if you were in their shoes you’d like what you saw and don’t let your “dream job” slip away because they checked you out online and got the wrong impression.

For more information or to get into more details about social media and the job market feel free to reach out to me.