

One-in-Four Hiring Managers Have Used Internet Search Engines to Screen Job Candidates; One-in-Ten Have Used Social Networking Sites, CareerBuilder.com Survey Finds

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You may want to think twice about posting photos from your last toga party or road trip. According to CareerBuilder.com's latest survey, one-in-four hiring managers (26 percent) say they have used Internet search engines to research potential employees. One-in-ten (12 percent) say they have used social networking sites in their candidate screening process. The CareerBuilder.com survey was completed in September 2006 and included 1,150 hiring managers nationwide.

Of those hiring managers who used Internet search engines to research job candidates, 51 percent did not hire the person based on what they found. Of those who used social networking sites to research candidates, the majority (63 percent) did not hire the person based on what they found.

When asked to divulge the types of information discovered on the Web that caused them to dismiss potential employees, hiring managers pointed to the following:

- * 31% - candidate lied about qualifications
- * 25% - candidate had poor communication skills
- * 24% - candidate was linked to criminal behavior
- * 19% - candidate bad-mouthed their previous company or fellow employee
- * 19% - candidate posted information about them drinking or using drugs
- * 15% - candidate shared confidential information from previous employers
- * 12% - candidate lied about an absence
- * 11% - candidate posted provocative or inappropriate photographs
- * 8% - candidate's screen name was unprofessional

"While sharing information online can have a potentially negative impact on your job search or career plans, it can also be leveraged as a tool to differentiate yourself to employers," said Rosemary Haefner, Vice President of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "Highlighting professional and personal accomplishments and showcasing your creativity can help a candidate make a positive lasting impression on employers and validate why he/she is the right person for the job."

Hiring managers said the following information discovered on the Web helped to confirm their decision to hire a candidate:

- * 64% - candidate's background information supported their professional qualifications for the job
- * 40% - candidate was well-rounded, showed a wide range of interests
- * 34% - candidate had great communication skills
- * 31% - candidate's site conveyed a professional image
- * 31% - got a good feel for the candidate's personality, could see a good fit within the company culture
- * 23% - other people posted great references about the candidate
- * 23% - candidate was creative
- * 19% - candidate received awards and accolades

Haefner recommends workers keep these tips in mind to safeguard their online persona:

1. Be careful. Don't post anything on your site or your "Friends" sites you wouldn't want a prospective employer to see. Derogatory comments, revealing or risqué photos, foul language and lewd jokes all will be viewed as a reflection of your character.
2. Be discreet. If your network offers the option, consider setting your profile to "private," so that it is viewable only by friends of your choosing. And since you can't control what other people say on your site, you may want

to use the "block comments" feature. Remember, everything on the Internet is archived, and there is no eraser!

3. Be prepared. Check your profile regularly to see what comments have been posted. Use a search engine to look for online records of yourself to see what is out there about you. If you find information you feel could be detrimental to your candidacy or career, see about getting it removed -- and make sure you have an answer ready to counter or explain "digital dirt."

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online by Harris Interactive on behalf of CareerBuilder.com among 1,150 hiring managers, ages 18 and over, within the United States between August 31 and September 5, 2006. The 'Employer' segment was weighted by number of employees to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population. The segment was weighted using propriety algorithms in order to align the online population to be more representative demographically and behaviorally of the total population of online and offline workers.

With a pure probability sample of 1,150, one could say with a 95 percent probability, that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 4 percentage points. Sampling error for data from subsamples is higher and varies. However, that does not take other sources of error into account. This online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

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