

Number of Employers Using Social Media to Screen Candidates Has Increased 500 Percent over the Last Decade

-- Sixty percent of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, up from 52 percent last year and 11 percent in 2006

-- More than a quarter of employers have found content online that has caused them to reprimand or fire an employee

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CHICAGO, April 28, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- Spending your work day browsing social media? You're not the only one in the office. According to CareerBuilder's annual social media recruitment survey, 60 percent of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, up significantly from 52 percent last year, 22 percent in 2008 and 11 percent in 2006, when the survey was first conducted. Additionally, 59 percent of hiring managers use search engines to research candidates – compared to 51 percent last year.

The national survey was conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder between February 10 and March 17, 2016, and included a representative sample of 2,186 hiring managers and human resource professionals and 3,031 full time, US workers in the private sector across industries and company sizes.

"Tools such as Facebook and Twitter enable employers to get a glimpse of who candidates are outside the confines of a resume or cover letter," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer of CareerBuilder. "And with more and more people using social media, it's not unusual to see the usage for recruitment to grow as well."

Hiring managers in information technology and sales are the most likely to use social networks to screen candidates; professional and business services were least likely.

- **IT:** 76 percent
- **Sales:** 65 percent
- **Financial services:** 61 percent
- **Health care:** 59 percent
- **Retail:** 59 percent
- **Manufacturing:** 56 percent
- **Professional and business services:** 55 percent

Most hiring managers aren't intentionally looking for negatives. Six in ten employers who currently use social networking sites to research job candidates (60 percent) are "looking for information that supports their qualifications for the job," according to the survey. For some occupations, this could include a professional portfolio. Fifty-three percent of these hiring managers want to see if the candidate has a professional online persona, 30 percent want to see what other people are posting about the candidate, and 21 percent admit they're looking for reasons not to hire the candidate.

Why Can't We Be Friends?

There's a lot of buzz about the various ways social media blunders can cost you a job, but that doesn't mean you should keep your profiles completely private. More than two in five employers (41 percent) say they are less likely to interview job candidates if they are unable to find information about that person online — a 6 percent increase since last year.

Thirty-six percent of employers who screen via social networks have requested to "be a friend" or follow candidates who have private accounts. Of that group, 68 percent say they've been granted permission – down from 80 percent last year.

Depending on what hiring managers find, candidates' online information can help or hurt their odds of getting a job. Forty-nine percent of hiring managers who screen candidates via social networks said they've found information that caused them not to hire a candidate – on par with last year 48 percent. The following are the top pieces of content that turned off these employers:

- Provocative or inappropriate photographs, videos or information – 46 percent
- Information about candidate drinking or using drugs – 43 percent
- Discriminatory comments related to race, religion, gender, etc. – 33 percent
- Candidate bad-mouthed previous company or fellow employee – 31 percent
- Poor communication skills – 29 percent

About one-third of employers who screen candidates via social networks (32 percent), however, found information that caused them to hire a candidate, including:

- Candidate's background information supported job qualifications – 44 percent
- Candidate's site conveyed a professional image – 44 percent
- Candidate's personality came across as a good fit with company culture – 43 percent
- Candidate was well-rounded, showed a wide range of interests – 40 percent
- Candidate had great communication skills – 36 percent

Anyone Can Be Screened or Screen

It's not just potential employees who should keep their digital tracks clean. Forty-one percent of employers say they use social networking sites to research current employees, nearly a third (32 percent) use search engines to check up on current employees, and more than one in four (26 percent) have found content online that has caused them to reprimand or fire an employee.

Further, a separate survey found that some savvy job seekers are using social media to their own benefit. Nearly a fifth of workers (18 percent) check out hiring managers on social media when job hunting.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,186 hiring and human resource managers and 3,031 workers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed, non-government) between February 10 and March 17, 2016 (percentages for some questions are based on a subset, based on their responses to certain questions). With pure probability samples of 2,186 and 3,031, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have sampling errors of +/- 2.10 and +/- 1.78 percentage points, respectively. Sampling error for data from sub-samples is higher and varies.

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