

Tips on managing your social media profile

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the perfect, immediate channels to reach and connect with friends, family and people with similar interests, but these platforms are also becoming increasingly popular with employers to recruit and monitor staff, according to Kay Vittee, CEO of Quest Staffing Solutions, who warns that although social media can be helpful for career seekers to get noticed by potential employers, being conscious of what they post could determine whether they get - and keep - the job.



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Vittee said: "With the growth in social media uptake, companies have access to more information on career seekers than ever before and are taking full advantage of these platforms to find and recruit top talent.

"Keeping this trend of online and social media recruiting in mind, making a good first impression on social media profiles can make a candidate more, or less, attractive to both recruiters and employers."

On the other end of the spectrum, Vittee highlighted that what both career seekers and employees post on their respective profiles can come back to haunt them if their potential or current employer stumbles across it online.

Controversial topics

She said: "Although our work and personal lives are - in most cases - distinctly separate, comments on social media that touch on controversial topics, as well as personal photographs of a career seeker's social life, may change a potential employer's opinion of them and lessen their chance of securing the position.

"A good idea may be to separate your profiles for personal and professional purposes, keeping your security settings tight on your Facebook page - only allowing your friends to view - and allocating Twitter or LinkedIn to share your professional insights and information," Vittee added.

Not only can social media posts impact on employers in their recruitment process, but Vittee notes that it can also cost

employees their jobs if found inappropriate or damaging by the employer.

"This is especially relevant if an employee posts negative, defamatory or disrespectful comments about his employer, company or co-workers, which can result in discomfort or conflict in the workplace," Vittee added.

In terms of the South African labour law, an employee owes his employer a common law duty of good faith, which includes a relationship of trust between employer and employee as well as the understanding that an employee does not conduct himself in a way that damages the reputation of the employer.

Guidelines

Kay Vittee's four social media profile guidelines are:

- 1. Think before you post, update, like, share, or tweet;
- 2. Check your privacy settings and be aware (and in control) of who can view your profiles;
- 3. Manage and monitor your profiles so you are able to delete or 'un-tag' unflattering posts or photographs you may be mentioned or 'tagged' in; and
- 4. Include and regularly update details of your education, work experience and career-specific interests on your public profiles (like LinkedIn) which you intend to reach potential employers.

"Do not be discouraged to join the social media community and open up potentially career-making doors, just be cautious when doing so," Vittee concluded.

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