

Should Employers Use Social Media in Hiring Decisions?



Employers often check out social media sites to learn more about a job candidate. Often, what they learn is a deciding factor in hiring or not hiring someone. Careerbuilder conducted a survey in 2017 to learn how social media information was being used by employers in their hiring procedure. Their survey also revealed that 66% of the employers surveyed also used search engines such as Google to for their research.

Beware - California Places Limits on the Use of Social Media Researching

Employers can visit social media sites such as Instagram, Twitter or Facebook to look at the public information of an employee or a potential employee. However, they cannot ask an employee or a candidate for their password or ask to “be a friend” or allow the employer to “follow” them.

Not Always Good Stuff

Employers may find negative information in their social media research that causes them to decide not to hire a candidate. According to the Careerbuilder survey, 57% of the employers reported such a situation.

Employers said they choose not to hire job candidate when the job candidate:

- Posted provocative or inappropriate photographs, videos or information: 40 percent.
- Posted information about them drinking or using drugs: 36 percent.
- Made discriminatory comments related to race, gender, religion, etc.: 31 percent.
- Lied about qualifications: 27 percent.
- Had poor communication skills: 27 percent.
- Bad-mouthed their previous company or fellow employee: 25 percent.
- Had an unprofessional screen name: 22 percent.
- Shared confidential information from previous employers: 20 percent.
- Posted too frequently: 12 percent.

One other consideration for employers is that they may come across information that they are prohibited from using in a hiring decision, such as age, pregnancy or a criminal background. Employers are required to comply with stringent procedures and notice requirements when dealing with criminal history information.

Also, if a candidate who is a member from a protected class sues you, your social media searches will be discoverable and can lead to legal problems.

There is Some Good News

58% of the employers in the Careerbuilder survey found that their online searches produced positive information which led them to hire the candidate. 37% reported that the potential employee's social media information proved their professional qualifications for the position. Using social media and online research can be helpful in determining a candidate's worthiness when it is done lawfully.

Source: <http://press.careerbuilder.com/2017-06-15-Number-of-Employers-Using-Social-Media-to-Screen-Candidates-at-All-Time-High-Finds-Latest-CareerBuilder-Study>