

YOUR DIGITAL IMAGE

You know how to create a great first impression when meeting a potential employer face to face for the first time. **Do you know you need to make an equally great impression when “meeting” online?** What does an online first impression involve?

FIRST IMPRESSION : EMAIL

Often your first contact with an employer will involve an email message or online application to that employer. Just as the style of your suit clothing makes would make an immediate impression on someone meeting you, the manner in which you portray yourself online will make an immediate impressions on prospective employers. ??? gives them some immediate impressions of you.

ENHANCE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSION

- **Is your email address professional in nature?** This means you should **NOT** be sending emails to an employer from your hotmama@email.com box. It also means that your email should be set up in your own name. I recently received a resume sent from Bob Smith, but the email name was sallysmith@email.com. That immediately made me think that Bob couldn't use a computer and his wife had to send out his messages.
- **Are your messages grammatically correct?** Sometimes people think that they don't have to follow the rules of grammar or punctuation when sending out an email message. They think they can send out something that looks like a text message to a family member. Wrong! If your spelling and grammar areis not good, write your messages in advance in Microsoft Word and ask someone to proofread them before sending.

FIRST IMPRESSION : INTERNET

If I were a potential employer and you applied to my company, I might want to learn a bit more before contacting you. How could I do that? I might visit Ggoogle (or any search engine) and type your name into the search box. What is revealed? Perhaps, I will learn that your name was published in the local paper recently when you won a recipe contesnt. Or I might learn that you are actively campaigning for a politician whom I oppose. I might find a comment that you recently posted on a blog about vacation sites, or a contractor, or a local store. I can check your grammar, your tone, your attitude. A great deal can be revealed through a search engine!

ENHANCE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSION

There is limited amount that you can do about what search engines are revealing about you right this minute. You should, however, though be aware of what an internet search reveals is revealed about you. in any internet search. What can you do to correct poor impressions? Don't post inflammatory comments online. Don't get arrested. Do involve yourself in positive community events that might be recognized online. Most newspapers are now available online. If you have the opportunity to be featured in a newspaper article, realize that thee positive impact of this article could be magnified online.

FIRST IMPRESSION : FACEBOOK

Potential employers might also check into your social media habits. Do you have a Facebook account? If so, what does it say about you? Have you recently checked it may have been some time since you checked to see what an “outsider” can see about you on your Facebook page? Look yourself up (as a stranger) to see what a “non-friend” can see. Is the fact that you spent 10 hours last week on “Farmville” viewable to all? That might seem innocuous to you, but an employer might wonder why you are spending so much time online playing games. Remember, that an employer will evaluate,, not only your comments, but those of your friends. Your friend Joe’s swearing streak might cause you to lose an invitation to interview for a job.

ENHANCE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSION : FACEBOOK

Review the privacy tools on Facebook and learn how to limit what “non-friends” can see about you. A few employers have come up with a new strategy to get around this. They’ve begun asking candidates for their Facebook user name and password, so that they can see the entire account! If an employer asks this of you, you’re going to need to make a decision. Do you really want to work for an employer who disregards your personal privacy in this manner? My answer would be “no”. However, if your answer is “yes”, review your account and purge potentially negative comments and associates before “handing over the keys” to your account.

Privacy settings change frequently, so plan to review your account on a monthly basis.

FIRST IMPRESSION : LINKED IN

Linked In has become the premiere professional networking site and can be a wonderful tool for anyone seeking employment. Employers tell us that they are using the website to “source” candidates (i.e. to find a great candidate rather than waiting for the right person to apply). If I were to visit your Linked In account, would I see someone who I would want to contact right now about a job? Does your account site include a professional photo, polished job descriptions, and recommendations posted by your co-workers? Do you show yourself to be active and involved in your field? Are you a member of appropriate groups and companies? Do you post comments relevant to your field?

Or would I see a partially completed page without a photo and dated education? Your Linked In page can make a world of difference when you are looking for work!

ENHANCE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSION : LINKED IN

Update your entire Linked In page including posting a professional photo, preferably a “head shot.” ” or photo of yourself. Attach a copy of your resume. Find and join organizations within your field through Linked In. Request that co-workers, customers and others you associate with post a recommendation on Linked In for you. (Grease the wheels toward a good recommendation by posting a recommendation for your associates on theirhis Linked In pages.) Then “advertise” your account by posting a link to it on your resume and in your email signature. (Linked in offers you the ability to tailor your account URL—make sure yours is short and easy to spell.)

You can use Linked In to research potential employers. Look up the profiles of individuals who work for an organization that you would like to work for. Request an introduction from any of your associates contacts who might know that person.

Join groups related to your profession oin Linked In. Often these groups post relevant job listings.

TWITTER

If you think that Twitter is just for people who want to know what Justin Bieber had for breakfast, think again. Twitter recently replaced the local newspaper in my daily routine. Now, I sip a cup of tea first thing in the morning and browse through my Twitter account to see what people have posted about topics relevant to me. I can retweet articles that might be of interest to those who are following my followers. I can also set up my account so that my tweets appear on my Linked In page!

Do you absolutely need a Twitter account to find employment? No. But it can help you keep current within your field.

ENHANCE THEIR FIRST IMPRESSION : TWITTER

Sign up for a Twitter account if you don't have one and make an effort to follow thought leaders in your field. Who is discussing your field and what are they saying? This might be information that you could insert mention during into your next interview!

BLOGS & OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

The list of additional social media is infinite: Pinterest, Ggoogle+, Bblogger.com, Wwordpress.com . . . Think strategically. What do you want to accomplish using social media? Do you want to “show” a potential employer graphic representations of your work? Pinterest might be a good choice. Do you want to position yourself as a thought leader in your industry? Research and start a blog. Because your choices are so varied, you will need to budget your time. It is more effective to create a strong presence in one online media, than to give a poor showing in many forms of social media.

Ultimately, remember that these online tools—while fascinating—are not a substitute for live interaction. Make sure that you budget time to meet face to face with potential employers and network with those in your career every week.



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