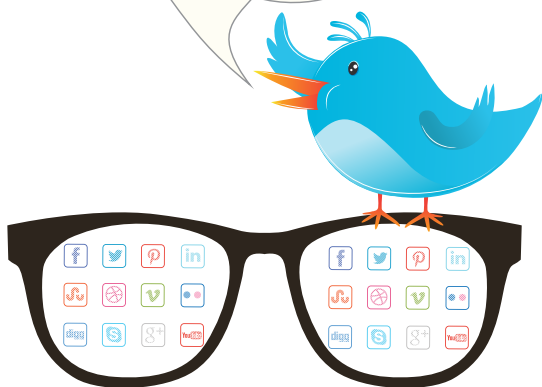


WORK ON YOUR *Social Media Brand*

Are you looking or thinking of looking for employment? Here's something you need to give some thorough thought: Your online brand. Have you taken a look at your online presence lately?



It has become routine for recruiters to do a social media check about candidates they are interested in. For that reason and others, your digital footprint counts. We thought we should give you a few tips to spruce up your social media brand.

1. *First things First: Google Yourself*



What happens when you type your name on google search? What pops up? Just so you know, this is one of the obvious things your prospective employer does before making that final call. Are you comfortable with what pops up or do you cringe as you read on? Ask a friend to do the same so you have some idea of what people read about you when they google your name. If you have a LinkedIn account, you'll probably see that first including your comments on twitter, Facebook and other social media networks you participate in. If you have written an article or more on a blog, complained about some service in a particular company's Facebook page, made a comment in a public Facebook group or a celebrity's twitter account, all those may appear in the search results.

Are you proud of what people read about you or do you think you need to improve your online image?

Thought-provoking blogs or comments are a great way to start. Interesting websites, articles, thesis especially on platforms like ResearchGate, or even great newspaper articles written about you and your involvement add value to your online presence. The pages and groups you liked, what you're tagged on, the publications you write for and even the books you read say a lot about you.

2. *Have inviting Profile Pictures*



Is your profile picture one of those in a sexy little number or that of a macho man? Remember, employers aren't looking for models. If your profile picture is something you're proud of and would gladly provide on your CV if requested to do so, then by all means keep it where it is. However, if it's something you'd hide from mom, your granny, your pastor or reverend or even your prospective employer then think twice. What's the point of keeping it there if you'd rather hide it from certain people? I mean, think about it: if you have about 500 FB friends (me being modest), what are the chances that it's not available for viewing by 5 times your number of friends? Remember, your profile pic can be viewed by friends of friends and friends of acquaintances at odd times. Which means inevitably so, a reverend, mother, granny or worse, recruiter WILL see it.

*In summary: Place something you're proud of in that small box, PERIOD!
That's non-negotiable!*



3. *Put on new reading glasses*

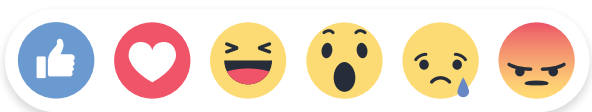


While they are mostly on social networks writing what's on their mind, reading other people's posts commenting or reading comments, and going through others' profiles, some people forget to view their own profiles to see what others see when they want to know a little more about them. I'd like to believe you're not one of those. But if you are, this is your chance to do so NOW!

Are there posts you'd rather not see? Have you been tagged in activities you don't want to see on your timeline? Do you have people sharing stuff you're less interested in or comfortable with on your timeline?

You might not find anything "offensive" in your timeline/profile but do take off your "glasses" and replace them with those of a recruiter.

Paradigm shift: from an employer's perspective, are you looking at a candidate who is a perfect fit for your company? You know what to do.



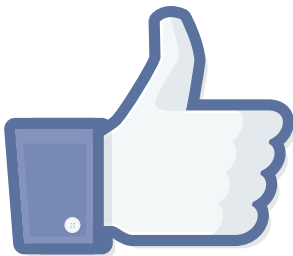
4. Clean up!



Spring cleaning or what in Facebook terms is coined “pruning”¹ is necessary every once in a while, especially by a job-seeker. Search for every speck of dirt in every corner of your online existence, then press delete whenever you can where you see a comment, response, tag, etc. you are not necessarily proud of on your own walls, tags, groups, pages, etc. Setting your privacy settings too secure is dodgy. So, instead of hiding stuff, simply clean up. Squeaky clean, however, is just as bad.

“Having a perfect profile in which all pictures show the candidate studying, doing charity work or cuddling puppies is unlikely to be a true representation of their personal life, personality or true character.”²

Your posts, likes, groups etc. must be a good reflection of a proud owner.



5. Be on LinkedIn



The Centre for Student Counselling and Development has LinkedIn's 10 tips to building a strong profile.

Click [LinkedIn Profile Tips](#) to download them directly from the Career Services page of the Centre's website. Alternatively, go to the Unit for Graduand Career Services at 43 Victoria Street Stellenbosch to get hold of a hard copy.

6. It's work in progress

Working on your online presence is never an ending job. Keep interrogating your social media brand constantly and make the changes necessary every time.

Remember: if you don't work on your brand, someone else will.



1 **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Facebook Marketing: John Wayne Zimmerman and Damon Brown published by Penguin Group 2014**

2 **CareerCampass presented by Wetfeet, Career Guide 2013**

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