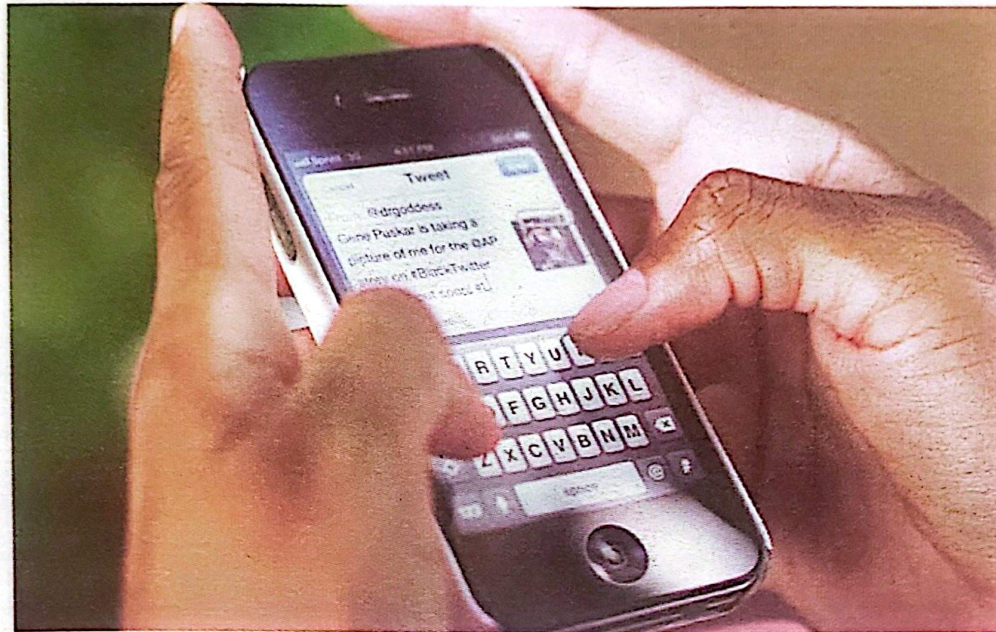


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MAKE THE ULTIMATE CAREER DECISIONS

Social media mistakes that will ruin your career



Because we are living in a digital world, potential employers are beginning to check background of their prospective employees using what the latter shares or posts on social media. NET PHOTO

Social media with all its advantages can potentially ruin your career or scare away prospective employers.

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Anthropologist and Makerere University research fellow Dr Stella Nyanzi's recent troubles with the law is a clear example of how dangerous social media can be. With her humour and bawdy descriptive language,

the professor had followers hanging onto her every post. And then she decided to express her disgruntlement against President Museveni on her social media account.

Her posts landed her in jail and also causes a rift with her employers. There is so much that can go wrong if you do not use social media carefully.

Linda Mbabazi, a human resource consultant, reveals that they usually run a social media check on the people they interview before placing them with prospective employers.

She recounts one embarrassing incident where a candidate walked into the interview room and she recognised her as one of those wannabe socialites that use their social media as an extension of their sexual lives.

"There is no way I would have been okay with letting her into someone's office basing on the things she talks about her previous employers and workmates," Mbabazi explains. She adds that thankfully the socialite did not perform that well in the interview anyway.

There are so many things that can turn off a potential employer, from controversial comments, snidely remarks about others, verbal fights and compromising pictures among others. While it is a plus to have an active social media platform, it should not look like you spend your every waking minute engrossed in it.

"An employer will be skeptical about your concentration on the job if you are the kind who updates their social media every five minutes completely," Mbabazi explains. She recommends updating once or twice a day and keeping the posts decent and intelligible.

"As a rule of thumb I do not post anything that I would not want my mother or children to read," Kenneth Okoth, a creative designer, responds to the question on how one should go about their social media. He advises people to separate their private lives from their professional ones because this blurring of lines has the potential to cause problems. "We all need somewhere to let off steam from and social media offers

this opportunity, however, these things are never that pretty and might bias a potential employer," Okoth adds.

TIPS ON USING SOCIAL MEDIA POSITIVELY

Get active on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. 94 per cent of recruiters are using LinkedIn to discover talent, while 65 per cent are using Facebook and 55 per cent are on Twitter. Involvement on these sites is an easy way to put your face, resume, skills and experiences in front of recruiters.

Highlight your unique skills. Employers want to see that you are a well-rounded person, vested in different groups, activities and volunteer efforts. Just like the rest of us, recruiters are typing in keywords when they search, so within your skill sets be sure to include specific words and phrases that match the qualifications of jobs you are seeking.

Use correct grammar. More than half of recruiters had a negative reaction to grammar and spelling mistakes on candidates' social media profiles, according to a 2013 study conducted by web recruiting firm Jobvite.

Join industry groups. Show future employers that you care about the field you are hoping to get into. Take part in online groups and discussions that are relevant to your future job prospects. "Four out of five recruiters liked to see memberships and affiliations with professional organisations on a candidate's profile," according to *Time Magazine*.

Start a discussion. Whether you are most active on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn, display your leadership skills and enhance your online credibility by posing questions frequently and engaging in intelligent dialogue.

Source: www.rasmussen.edu