

Facebook, LinkedIn & Recruitment 7 things you really want to know

It's summer alright. Holidays are at peak. Whether abroad or locally all of us will at some point take some days off and try to relax, disengage and try to cool off. And I am not talking about just the heat or the humidity.

Digital cameras are out, facebook updates, uploads and links are red hot. Events are shared, travelling arrangements are now open to the public and social media are by long an integral part of our lives.

Facebook (www.facebook.com)

A lot of us are using Facebook. The last time I checked some 70,000 people from Cyprus are frequent Facebook users! Facebook, a Social Media Portal as they are officially named have gained massive popularity over the years as they are great tools to connect with people. We use them to find people whom we went to school or university with, ex colleagues and even high school sweet hearts!

We tell our "Contacts" or "Network" of our whereabouts, we upload pictures of ourselves, our kids, latest holidays, the songs and articles we like, events we are attending and the list goes on and on and on. We set up or join groups we feel represent our beliefs and "Socialise" in this new electronic era. It's an easy, fun and more importantly a fast way to "keep in touch". A number of people have used these media to sell their car, Playstation or even apartment.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com)

LinkedIn is another Social Media Portal. It's underlying principle is very similar to Facebook . Contrary to Facebook, LinkedIn is not used for updates of our social lives. People do not upload pictures, videos or updates of their off-work lives. It has a more business like look and feel.

LinkedIn has been created to serve a different purpose. LinkedIn is being used to tell the world of our professional lives. We put up our resume and connect with colleagues, friends , business associates. People use it to find business leads, upload company and corporate brochures, presentations and sales material. It is a fact that a lot of business deals and transactions have resulted through LinkedIn. We use it as well.

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This is where it gets really interesting. When we decide to use these social media, when we post things on Facebook and LinkedIn, we need to be aware of the fact that people will see them. People will read and download your pictures and messages. Once they are up there, they are of public use. Even though, these portals tell you that your information is private and public bla bla bla, it's not really. Think about it. If they were, then they couldn't use it for selling advertising space. Therefore, whenever you post something on Facebook or LinkedIn, people will see it. And by people we don't just mean your close friends or your network. People outside your network will see it.

Your colleagues or even manager/boss may see it or it may reach them one way or another. Your business associates will see it. Even your potential employer, the one that you have an interview next week may gain access to it.

As stated above, we frequently use these two social Media Portals (Facebook and LinkedIn). And this is where it gets interesting. We use both Facebook and LinkedIn in order to:

- Find, locate and target potential clients and candidates
- Set up company groups in order to promote our services and vacancies
- Research Clients and Candidates
- Get another angle on potential candidates prior to sending their profiles to our clients

Apart from reviewing a CV and perhaps having an interview, we are now using Facebook and LinkedIn in researching people. And I guarantee you we are not the only ones. We use them because we want to know things that may be important for our clients. For example, our clients want to know if you are a member of a fascist group (would you ever want to hire such a person, irrespective of their academic qualifications and skills? – didn't think so). We want to know whether you are part of a Sports Fan Group promoting violence against other people. Our clients are interested to know if you have a blog, as its content and what it represents may harm their business. We are interested to know that a candidate whom we will be sending to our reputable client does not post nude pictures of children on the internet.

Don't get me wrong. We are free people and we are entitled to our own private lives and choices. We are passionate advocates of having a private life and living it as one sees fit. What we are saying, what we are trying to highlight though, is the fact that **once you decide to publicise this personal information, people will see it and they may use it**. Consequently, we have put together a checklist of albeit it simple, logic and straightforward points that one should pay attention to:

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1. **If it's up there, people will find out.** Never put anything that you don't want people to see. If it's up there people (and I am not talking about your close friends and associates) will see it
2. **Be very careful of the groups you join.** Just because a friend or a colleague has suggested you join a group or become a fan of this page, it does not mean you should do it. If you join it, people will find out.
3. **Be very careful of the groups you create.** If you create a group you make a statement to the world. Have you ever thought of the consequences of this statement? If not, you really need to as people will find out and conclusions about you will be drawn.
4. **Do you really want to air your political beliefs?** We all, or at least most of us, have political beliefs. And since we live in democratic societies, we are entitled to. I see a lot of people "airing" these beliefs in very aggressive ways through Facebook. If this is how you feel, then that's fine. You must know though that what you are airing is now public information and people will know. Do you really want your existing colleagues, boss or the employer you have an interview with reading your strong political beliefs? What impact will this have on your job or prospective job? Do you even care?
5. **Does that video of you in private moments really need to be on Facebook?** Does it really, or are you better off keeping it to yourself.
6. **Is the CV or Resume you sent us or a future employer in line with what you have on LinkedIn or Facebook?** We came across cases whereby the content of CVs was dramatically different to the content of the profile on their LinkedIn account. What did that tell us? That the candidates in question were not very honest. Conclusion: do we or our clients want to deal with, not very honest people? I think we all agree on the answer.
7. **If you want to be found, post your CV.** Post your academic qualifications or past experience on LinkedIn or Facebook. Write your degrees, your business titles and the names of your current and past employers as well as the industry type. We frequently run queries and find potential candidates.

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