

When to Decline a Friend Request: How Social Media Could Land You in Trouble at Work

Personal Social Media Posts Reflect on Employer

LinkedIn Safest Network to Connect with Coworkers

TORONTO, Dec. 30, 2020 – A recent survey released by Express Employment Professionals revealed 71% of hiring decision-makers agree social media is an effective screening tool for job applicants. But it turns out social media posts might not just affect your chances of getting hired, they could also hurt your ability to keep your job.

Express experts across the country advise employees to be vigilant about what they post online or they could risk getting in trouble at work.

Bruce Hein, an Express franchise owner in Sarnia, Ontario, notes that every company has its own workplace culture that can affect if and how employees use social media to connect with one another.

“Some workplaces have a very tight-knit team who are friends outside of work as well, while others view their boss and colleagues as a strictly professional relationship,” Hein said. “How you interact with colleagues at work really is based on where you work and the type of connection you have with your peers.”

Social media can be a great way to enhance teambuilding, according to Jessica Culo, an Express franchise owner in Edmonton, Alberta.

“Social media can be a great way to get to know colleagues and can help with bonding,” said Culo. “But it’s important that professionalism and respect is still maintained.”

But Express experts agree that what employees post on social media networks such as Facebook and Instagram is not just seen as a direct reflection of the poster, but the company they work for as well.

“Employees represent their company even outside of work, so their social media presence does reflect on their company,” Hein said. “Social media is a place for people to share content and connect with family and friends, but everyone should be mindful that what they post could be seen by their boss, co-workers, and customers.”

“What people post on the internet is a reflection of their decision-making skills,” Culo added. “The decisions we make reflect on the company we work for and what workplace cultures we fit in to.”

Regarding what employees should refrain from sharing online, Hein suggests “political rants or anything obviously controversial. If you are an employee who likes to post anything like that, it is best to adjust your privacy settings. Again, always remember that what you share could be seen by anyone, so be cognizant of what you publish.”

Culo notes that employees should refrain from personal social media use during work hours and suggests employers create a code of conduct.

“There is a responsibility for employers to create and implement codes of conduct to encompass diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace,” Culo said. “It is very important that social media posts are included in these codes of conduct, and that all employees commit to aligning their behaviors accordingly. While 'offensive' may be a very difficult item to address, codes of conduct are easier to implement and abide by.”

According to Express experts, some social media sites are safer than others.

“It is certainly appropriate to connect with your boss and colleagues on LinkedIn as it is a professional networking platform,” Hein said. “Facebook and Instagram are more personal, so I suggest waiting until you know the dynamics of the organization you work for.”

“The community social media fosters can provide many benefits to job seekers and employers, such as networking in a world frozen by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Express CEO Bill Stoller. “However, just like in the workplace, it’s important to present a professional demeanor in any online interaction.”

Stoller urges both those who have a job and those seeking a job to think before they post.

“As much as platforms promise privacy, there are always loopholes, and content online lives forever,” he said. “Don’t let a bad post cost you the job, before or after hiring.”

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Ana Curic at (613) 858-2622 or email ana@mapleleafstrategies.com.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 825 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa, and beginning in 2020 will expand to Australia and New Zealand. Since its inception, Express has put more than 8 million people to work worldwide.

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