

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

“If You Desire Personal Boundaries, Keep a Diary”

LinkedIn Safest Network to Connect with Coworkers

OKLAHOMA CITY, Dec. 22, 2020 – After a recent survey revealed 71% of hiring decision-makers agree social media is an effective screening tool for job applicants, Express Employment Professionals experts say employees must also be vigilant about what they post online after they accept an offer or it could land them in hot water.



From Jacksonville, Florida, over to Fort Worth, Texas, and clear up to Grand Rapids, Michigan, Express franchise owners and internal office staff agree that what employees post on social media networks such as Facebook and Instagram is usually seen as a direct reflection of the poster ... and the company.

“You can share anything, just make sure it is consistent with how you want to present yourself,” said Mike Brady, Express franchise owner in Jacksonville, Florida. “Remember, what you post will be public for a long time and don’t assume that posting anonymously will keep your identity secret.”

Regarding what employees should refrain from sharing online, Brady adds “just like in sales, stay away from politics and religion. In today’s contentious environment, it’s best to keep away from sensitive topics.”

Nic Dampier, marketing manager for the Express franchise in Grand Rapids, Michigan, says it’s important to know your audience and how they will receive personal social media posts.

“If you have to question if someone could be offended, odds are they will be and that could

reflect on your employer,” he said. “If you are out of touch with what is offensive, ask your employer for feedback.”

At a new job, it may be tempting to connect with coworkers on social media networks as a show of comradery, but this also has the potential to backfire.

“LinkedIn is a very safe place to connect with coworkers, but other social media platforms tend to be more personal,” said Jan Riggins, general manager of two Ft. Worth, Texas, Express offices. “Consider not only what your coworkers will see when you share, but also what you might see when they share. If others are not as conscious as you are about post content, what will you do if you see something controversial or inappropriate?”

Dampier, however, believes with the amount of time employees spend at the office, it’s important to connect with others outside work.

“I spend as much time, if not more time, with coworkers than my family, and I would like to be involved in their lives,” he said. “However, never force or critique them to be connected on social media with you if they view differently.”

So, what is safe to post on social media as a professional? Riggins suggests family updates, community events and unbiased articles as generally safe topics. Many appreciate uplifting articles and stories, as well as sharing any good news. To help establish yourself as a professional online, also include thought leadership articles in posts and other content you find interesting in your job field.

And above all, employees should remember everything they post online is a direct reflection of their employer.

“Social media is often viewed as another outlet for personal free speech without consequence, but it’s in a very public forum, so everything you say whether well-intentioned or not is now a reflection of you, your family, your job and your employers,” Dampier said. “If you desire personal boundaries, buy a diary.”

The feeling of community social media fosters provides many benefits to job seekers and employers, such as networking in a world frozen by the COVID-19 pandemic, says Express CEO Bill Stoller.

“However, just like in the workplace, it’s important to present a professional demeanor in any online interaction,” he said. “As much as platforms promise privacy, there are always loopholes, and online content lives forever. Don’t let a bad post cost you the job, before or after, hiring.”

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

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 830 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.

About Express Employment Professionals

At Express Employment Professionals, we're in the business of people. From job seekers to client companies, Express helps people thrive and businesses grow. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, OK, our international network of franchises offers localized staffing solutions to the communities they serve, employing 552,000 people across North America in 2019. For more information, visit www.ExpressPros.com.