



THE ULTIMATE REPUTATION GUIDE FOR JOB SEEKERS PART 1 OF 2

By Jessica Merritt

A positive reputation is important for everyone, but it's especially important for job seekers. Employers today are researching candidates online before extending job offers, and they want to be impressed. Gone are the days when it was enough just to not have anything negative pop up: these days, you'll need to show that you can take initiative and build a positive reputation online. They want to see positive signs that you're the right candidate, and it's up to you to put them there.

Maybe you haven't done anything wrong to earn a bad reputation online – but that doesn't mean employers will be impressed. In fact, they may be bothered that there's a lack of information available about you online. Ultimately, they need to see that you're active, positive, and involved online – and if you can deliver on this, they'll be more likely to extend a job offer. Plus, developing a positive online reputation can help you build a strong network, become a trusted expert, and deepen your industry knowledge and access to resources.

The bottom line: a great reputation can back you up when you need it most.

Employers Are Researching Candidates Online: What Are They Looking For?

We live in an age of information, and it has employers and recruiters wanting more. They want to go past what's on your resume, cover letter, and references. They want to know more about your personality, how well you'll fit with company culture, how much you know about your industry, if you're trustworthy, a team player, and whether or not others respect you as an authority. They want to know all of this, and so much more.

Almost every company in America uses online reputation, and social media in particular, as a recruiting tool. With 92% of companies using social media and social networks to find top talent it's clear you just can't ignore the power of online reputation in your job search.

You should expect that employers will be researching your reputation and history online. Often, employers

research candidates around the same time they call references. In a sense, your online reputation is your new employer reference.

And while knowing that employers are checking out your life online might feel a little invasive or even creepy, research shows that for many employees, the result of online reputation searches is positive. A recent survey shows that candidates who have been researched online are more likely to be hired, plus their hires typically last for three or more years.

Ultimately, most employers are looking for signs that you're a positive influence. No, it's not OK just to not have anything about you online. Employers want to see positive signs, not just an absence of negative ones. Nearly 50% of hiring managers say that social media helps them determine a good fit within the company. They're looking to make sure that you are who you say you are and that others have faith in your abilities. Employers want to see if you're influential in your industry, if you're connected, knowledgeable, and others turn to you as an expert.

Some employers may find it suspicious if you have nothing to show for yourself online. They may wonder if you have something to hide. Additionally, not having anything to show for your online reputation leaves you open to negative attacks. If there's nothing positive about you online, a negative entry is that much more damaging.

Why It's Essential to Your Job Search That You Build a Positive Online Reputation

Developing a positive online reputation allows you to put yourself in your best light, showing your most flattering professional personality to employers when they search for you – and they will. It's also preventive medicine, stopping a negative reputation before it can start. With a good reputational foundation, you're less likely to be at risk for a negative attack. But with nothing about you online, a single negative entry could do all of the talking for you.

Being responsible for your own reputation gives you a voice and the opportunity to influence the online conversation about you. Creating your own content, links, and social profiles gives you control over what people, and employers in particular, are seeing about you.

Essentially, building your online reputation allows you to develop your own online resume. You can build resources for employers to discover and learn more about you and the work that you've done. Your online reputation can show off your strengths and expertise, as well as your personality and network. It can tell employers when they've found the right candidate, and ultimately, is likely to help you secure more interviews and job offers in your search.

How You Can Develop a Positive Reputation for Your Job Search

Clearly, it is important that you develop a positive online reputation that will support you in your job search. But how? We've outlined essential steps you need to take in order to get started building your positive online reputation, even if you're new to getting established online.

Get Started Today. There's no time like the present. Not tomorrow, not next week, TODAY. It's important to establish a presence now, especially if you're in the middle of a job search. Employers are looking today, so don't wait to give them something to find. Plus, developing a deeply positive online presence takes time, so the earlier you can get started,

the better. But any steps you can take today to develop your reputation will help move you in the right direction.

Using Social Media as a Professional

Social media is a fun tool for connecting with family, friends, and even colleagues, but it's more than just a social tool, it's a professional one as well. Social media is an outstanding resource for developing a positive online reputation, allowing you to establish a professional online identity, connect with others, and show employers what you're all about.

- **Claim your Online Identity:** It's essential that you claim important online properties to establish your personal brand online. While you don't have to sign up for every opportunity, don't miss the big ones like LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter. Even if you're not ready to become active yet, it's important that you sign up for your profiles, claim vanity URLs, and establish your presence on major websites before someone else has a chance to do it.
- **Be a Real Person:** Employers searching for you online are looking for the real you, so don't hesitate to give it to them. Use your real name so that search results reflect the real you. Share full details, including a photo that features your face.
- **Back Up What's on Your Resume:** Often, employers want to see information that supports what you've shared on your resume. This information makes you more credible and trustworthy. Connect with employers and coworkers on LinkedIn, post photos of your projects at work, and share recommendations to show that you really have been there and done that.
- **Connect with Others:** Add connections with everyone you legitimately know. This can include friends, family, colleagues, classmates, and especially mentors. Developing a strong network shows that you're trusted by many.
- **Respond to Interactions:** Show that you're personable and friendly by responding to others, especially when they interact with you. Comment back if someone says something about a photo, or mentions you on Twitter. Say thanks for endorsements and connections on LinkedIn.
- **Highlight Your Skills:** While you don't want to come off as arrogant or self-centered, social media is a good place to show off. Highlight your accomplishments and what you're good at. Of course, you should also take time to applaud the skills and accomplishments of others. Use social media as your own online portfolio with accomplishments, linking to projects, events, and other moments in your professional life that you're proud of.
- **Use a Professional Photo:** If you want to project a professional persona (and you should), it's important to use a professional photo. You may love how you look in a photo from your latest beach vacation, but sunglasses and a drink is probably not the message you want to send to employers. Invest in a professional head shot that you can use on social media, your domain, blog, guest posting opportunities, discussion boards, and more. With a great photo to share of yourself that's spread widely online, you can dominate image search results for your name.
- **Add Keywords to Your Profiles:** Ask any recruiter out there: keywords can get you hired. These days, employers don't read everything, not even your resume. Instead, they perform searches, using keywords and other parameters to find the right candidates. Have the right keywords on your resume and profiles, and you'll be found. If not, your profiles may never see the light of day, at least where employers are concerned. Use opportunities to add keywords from your area of expertise in headlines, bios, and more. Consider using words like your desired job title, important skills in your industry, and areas of expertise. Of course, be careful not to go overboard. Keywords should fit naturally into the text on your profiles rather than dominate over your personality and make you sound like a robot.
- **Ask for Social Proof:** One of the most powerful ways social media can help your reputation and job search is with social proof. Essentially, your contacts can back up your good name with reviews, endorsements, recommendations, and positive comments. One specific way you can ask for social proof is to encourage former employers or coworkers to leave recommendations for you on LinkedIn. You should do the same, as it's a great way to build positive rapport, and your glowing comments for others will show on your profile as well.
- **Join Relevant Groups:** Learn from others and show that you're tuned in to the industry by joining and becoming active in relevant groups. A particularly good idea is to seek out groups on LinkedIn, where you can find like-minded professionals in your area of specialty and expertise. These groups can not only support your positive

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reputation, they can grow your network and help you get connections that may lead to employment opportunities.

- **Connect with Influencers:** Go beyond your small circle of friends, family, and coworkers to reach out to those you admire in your industry. Social media offers a great opportunity for getting to know key people, learning from them, and taking part in discussions with them. Plus, your connection with influencers will make your reputation grow by association.
- **Show Your Knowledge:** Employers want to see that you know your stuff, so be sure to let them know that's the case. Show off your knowledge of the industry with links and thoughtful contributions to conversations that show you understand what's going on.

Stay tuned for Part Two of this article to be featured in the April 2016 issue of "ie" Magazine, where you will learn about Developing Your Online Presence; Networking Online for Reputation Management; Being an Expert; Online Reputation Tools and much more!

Jessica Merritt is the Editor at Reputation Management. Reputation Management is growing more and more each day as user generated content continues to dominate the Internet. Ensuring that your online reputation is protected is essential whether trying to get a job, or even go on a date. The mission of Reputation Management is to educate both individuals as well as corporations as to the best methods to protect and enhance their reputation online. Please view our featured guides as well as the articles as to the intricacies of reputation management, and how you can use them to your advantage.

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For more information, go to: <https://www.reputationmanagement.com/>

For a full guide to managing your online reputation, visit our Ultimate Guide to Online Reputation Management. In addition to resources for building a positive reputation as a job seeker, this guide includes tips for repairing, improving, and monitoring your reputation.