

Bulk Up Your Job Ready Social Media Skills

"I got my first smartphone before I started high school, and I use it to connect with friends throughout every day. I don't spend as much time talking with people face to face as I do on social media. I've heard bosses don't want employees to use personal social media at work and that bothers me because I like to be connected always."

This statement by a GenZ student who has grown up in a connected world may be a concern you also have about going to work for a company that does not allow personal social media use on the job. Here are some things you should consider:

- Social media etiquette with customers, colleagues, coworkers, vendors and others should be more formal than casual social media behavior among people with whom you have a personal relationship.
- Used wisely and responsibly, social media can polish your professional image, but used improperly, it can bring negative consequences. One of the biggest mistakes of new employees is assuming that everyone has the same set of standards for use of social media.
- Handled irresponsibly, your social media posts are likely to be passed along to your coworkers and supervisors. Losing your job for lack of online professionalism is a smear that may be documented in your personnel file and follow you if you ask for references from your current employer.
- While many GenZs are not users of Facebook, one question that pops up is, "Should I Friend my boss on Facebook?" Many human resource and leadership professionals say, "No." If, however, your boss Friends you, the decision can be tough. On the one hand, you don't want to reject your boss's request, but, on the other, you may not want your boss to see all your posts. If you decide to add your boss as a Friend, you should be very careful about displaying yourself in a bad light.
- While you may use many abbreviations such as "LOL," "OMG," and "BTW" when communicating with family and friends through social media, abbreviations may be misinterpreted in a professional setting. You certainly don't want a customer to think you mean "Lots of love" when you use "LOL"!



Action: What social media abbreviations do you use currently that should be eliminated from your communications if you use social media on the job?

Note to teachers: *Job Ready Career Skills* offers ten lessons on Cell Phone and Email Etiquette. For the 2019 school year, ten lessons on Using Social Media will be added. You will find the 210 lessons currently available in *Job Ready Career Skills* to match the soft, employability requirements of your local employers.