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# WINDOW

## on rental housing

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## COMMUNICATING EYE TO EYE

PRESENTING YOUR  
PROFESSIONAL SELF  
ONLINE

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JENNIFER MESSINA  
*San Miguel Management*

**S**heer humiliation was felt when corporate employee James Andrews Tweeted an insult about Memphis, the hometown of Ketchum's client FedEx. This is an example of the importance of professionalism online. One social media slip-up is all it takes to break long-standing professional ties, or in Andrews' case, lose your job. The devastating repercussions of a seemingly benign post can happen in the few seconds, or as long as it takes to post a Facebook status or Tweet. As FedEx put it, "This lapse in judgment demonstrates the need to apply fundamental communications principles in the evolving social networking environment. A hazard of social networking is that people will read what you write." Ultimately, this translates to exercising caution and sound judgment not just in the workplace, but in cyber space as well.

The presentation of your professional self is an important cornerstone of the multi-housing industry. Whether you're a college student entering the workforce, business associate, or in senior level management, self-presentation online remains an integral part of one's overall image. The following tips will ensure the creation and maintenance of a successful online profile for today's career person.

Recently, employers have taken to "googling" the names of their employees or prospective employees to find out if there's anything they need to know about their personnel or candidates lives. A fast and easy step you can take to make sure that you are promot-

ing your finest online self is to "Google" your name every few months or so. That way you can stay in front of any questionable or malicious content that might be associated with you online. Unless you are proactive, you might not even know it's out there.

A respectable online appearance is vital to remember in regards to the decision-making process of creating a profile on Facebook, Twitter, Linked In or Google Plus. In a professional industry, reputation is everything, and it is important to remember that fellow coworkers, current, and prospective employers viewing your online profile are doing so for a reason. A successful profile requires a showcase of your worthy attributes and publishing good

qualities about oneself in relevance to the business arena. It does not include one's personal religious and political views. Unless your job function requires you to reflect on political views or religious affiliations, it's best to leave content concerning these subjects out of your online profile. Your online profile should not include any aspect of yourself that leaves room for personal bias or judgment. Just as we are monitored on site by Fair Housing regulations, we are monitored online as well. I

You should also refrain from adding anything to the "activities and interests" section of your profile that could possibly serve as fodder for judgment in the workplace. You may want to think twice if you are part of an online group

that has courted a lot of controversy, such as an extreme activist group or one that has negative press coverage. You must remember that the actions of your network are also a reflection on your personal brand.

Boundaries in the professional arena are very much alive and well today. Overtly sexual comments can easily be sensationalized or misconstrued and become a major HR problem. This includes explicit Facebook statuses and tweets, wall posts, incriminating photos, or "likes" on questionable Facebook pages. Employers are looking for anything that makes them pause and question your character, honesty, commitment and judgment. Always remember that photographs posted and tagged by friends can get indexed into search engines and stay online as well. Make sure that your friends practice good judgment also.

Many employees incorrectly assume anonymity when participating in blogs on-line. However an alias is often traceable and many employers check blogs or are "informed" by your peers about postings on various sites. Your postings may not only harm your chances of obtaining opportunities but may also reflect poorly on you.

One red flag that companies look at is the use of vulgar or profane language you may use. Whether the words are used by you or a friend, they have a strong bearing on your professionalism and shed the wrong light on your communication skills. Employers want to see

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their employees exercise good judgment and appropriateness on and off the job.

When posting online, be careful in regards to ranting about employers or coworkers. Even if you don't use a person's or company's exact name, what you post online about employers can still have repercussions. This goes for venting about a previous company or boss as well. Since you are essentially always a representative of your company, your comments should always be positive. As usual, the old adage applies: If you have nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all.

A common mistake that employees make it to create personal email addresses that are unprofessional. For instance, using an email address like "fuzzybunny21" or "goodtimegirl" can give employers the wrong idea about you. It shows that this is how you want to represent yourself. Take the time to create an email that is more generic, like your first and last name. In the same vein, be mindful of any signature quotes that you may have on your email account. Be sure that these and other personal stamps present you in a polished manner.

A significant rule to remember is that most social networking website are in real time. This means that if you are posting or communicating during work hours, there is a chance that your coworker or boss may know. No employer will want to see their employee playing online instead of working during their company time on the company issued computers. This can be seen as a distraction from your job related output.

“ Even if the company you work for does not control your personal accounts on social networks, that doesn't mean that the things you post on those accounts does not have consequences in your professional life. ”

Make sure that you are not using social media to tell a lie and even worse, get caught in one. Think about the following scenario. You want to join your friends' all-day all weekend party but you are schedule to work. What do you do? Call in sick and go to the party! Once you get back to the office, you pretend that you are still recovering from that sickness. What you don't know is another friend has posted the party's pictures on their Facebook page. Harmless enough, yes. But what if your boss happens to see the pictures and the date when it was taken? Not quite harmless anymore. If there is anything an employer dislikes, it is having an employee who is dishonest.

Even if the company you work for does not control your personal accounts on social networks, that doesn't mean that the things you post on those accounts does not have consequences in your professional life. When post-

ing it is valuable to remember a few key rules. Assume that everything you put out there is public and permanent. Deleted comments are almost always cached and still available somewhere, so be careful about what you post. Remember to always use the right tone. Think about whether the tones of your remarks match the company culture and ideals. Don't forget to never react when you are angry. If someone has you really fired up, take some time to cool off before you type anything in response. Remember to always look over what you write before sharing it. Yes, mistakes and typos happen to the best of us, but taking a little extra time to proofread will help ensure that such mistakes are rare. Always use the "mom" test. Before communicating anything, think about whether you would feel embarrassed if your mom saw it. If so, then it probably isn't appropriate to share.

Self-presentation means

tailoring your image to market yourself as a professional while simultaneously selling yourself as the best candidate for the job you are seeking or for your current position. Remember, the job hunt doesn't end once you get the job; it is a constant process in order to maintain the job you have. When representing yourself online, feel free to include a wide range of your talents, and special skills, no matter how seemingly insignificant they appear to be. You cannot foresee the full extent of qualities employers are looking for. Therefore, it is imperative to include all relevant skills you possess. This is also pertinent when considering the intense competition of today's workforce. When putting your opinion online, remember that if the material is questionable, it is better not displayed. This, in addition to the aforementioned points, remains an integral part of effectively marketing yourself.

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*Jennifer Messina, CAM, CAPS, is Marketing Director for The Quarters on Campus, a San Miguel Management property.*

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