

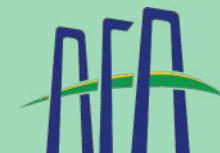


Effectively Cleaning Your Social Media

*A Guide for Young Professionals & Job Seekers
with colorful advice from Sarah Burtch of Direct Contact, Inc.*

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How can you effectively clean up your past activity on social media, so it doesn't come back to bite you in your professional career?

Social media is often said to be forever. When trying to clean your online presence, it is important to go back to the very beginning.

Employers look back as far as they can to make sure there is nothing unsavory in your feed; they have to protect the company.

The first things employers look at when they check social media is the profile picture. If the picture is inappropriate, a job candidate will more than likely be put aside without a second look.



What Sarah Has to Say

Sarah Burtch

*Recruiting Manager, Sales &
Operations Manager, Director of Social
Media & Online Marketing
Direct Contact, Inc.*

**“Delete, delete, delete and
no repeat, no repeat, no
repeat.”**



What are some specific things to avoid posting or clean off of your social media?

- Party pictures
- Argumentative threads
- Hateful comments
- Party pictures
- Unkind or derogatory posts or memes (and even reposts or shares)
- Improper spelling or grammar
- Skimpy clothing pictures
- Party pictures



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“Get with the program and commit to posting appropriate content for your goals and align your posts with your future.”



What about a beach vacation? Are swimsuits bad then?

It is recommended you only post pictures that are tasteful. As the ag industry tends to be more conservative, it is better to error on the side of caution.



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“Attire matters. As does a lack of attire. Sexy pictures do not need to be seen on social media. Do you really want your clients or subordinates seeing you less than fully dressed?”



What about political posts?

Respectful, tasteful and articulate posts are perfectly acceptable.
It is important to be vigilant and remove posts when things go sour.

Just always remember, user-beware.



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“I don’t pay attention to political views because for me personally, this seems to be fecal festival number one right now.”



Can you have alcohol on your accounts if you are over 21?

If you want to post these types of pictures, make sure your feed isn't only made up of this content. Guys' trips and wedding pictures may lead to a few unavoidable alcohol shots, but really ask yourself if it's absolutely necessary to have on your account. If not, it's probably better to keep it to yourself.

From Sarah Burtch: "Why? Sure, the foodies and bloggers have a glass of wine on a beautiful tablescape. But does it really need to be there? You don't have any beautiful shots without the beer in hand? Try harder. I would make sure that my feed wasn't ONLY that content."



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"You don't want it to look like you're just a party animal and not a responsible, employable person who is ready to put the Coors Light down and get to work."



How far back should I go to make sure my social media is clean?

According to Sarah, FOREVER! Because employers are responsible for protecting their businesses.

Make sure you pay attention to not only what you post and share but what you are tagged in as well.

To make sure you don't miss anything have a friend or mentor scroll through your feed and provide you with feedback.

As Sarah added, "If you have to question what would happen with said picture on social media, you should be questioning whether or not you are in a good place with your life choices."



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"A strict 'I don't want to be tagged on social media' policy is healthy. If friends and peers can't respect that, they don't belong in your life."



How can employers even find your accounts?

All employers start with a simple Google search. They have to respect and adhere to employment laws and rights. The sole purpose of reviewing your social media is to protect everyone involved. Seeing what you're putting on the internet is the best way for employers to ensure no issues will arise later.

Even if your accounts are private, some photos will always manage to get through in some fashion. People can screenshot what you post and use it for their own agendas.



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**“Fair weather friends’ is
my warning.”**



What if I have a “Finsta” or a separate or private account?

It is best to steer clear of these temptations. The exact things you are trying to hide will always manage to leak out.

Remember that Google exists. And anyone can screen grab or share your photos and out you one way or another. In Sarah’s words, “I’ve seen it a million times.”



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Operations Manager, Director of Social
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**“If you are wild on the
Finsta, it is definitely going
to find a way to come out.”**



Questions? Want to talk more?

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