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Employers have dramatically increased their use of social media when looking at potential job candidates, and the trend is growing, according to a new survey by job website CareerBuilder.

According to the annual social media recruitment survey, 60 percent of employers use social networking sites to research job candidates, up significantly from 52

percent last year, 22 percent in 2008 and 11 percent in 2006, when the survey was

candidates are outside the confines of a resume or cover letter," said Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer of CareerBuilder. "And with more and more people using social media, it's not unusual to see the usage for recruitment to grow as well."

Hiring managers in information technology and sales are the most likely to use social networks to screen candidates; professional and business services were least likely.

- Information Technology: 76 percent
- Sales: 65 percent
- Financial services: 61 percent
- Health care: 59 percent
- Retail: 59 percent
- Manufacturing: 56 percent
- Professional and business services: 55 percent

Most hiring managers aren't intentionally looking for negatives. Six in ten employers who currently use social networking sites to research job candidates (60 percent) are "looking for information that supports their qualifications for the job," according to the survey. For some occupations, this could include a professional portfolio.

Fifty-three percent of these hiring managers want to see if the candidate has a professional online persona, 30 percent want to see what other people are posting about the candidate, and 21 percent admit they're looking for reasons not to hire the candidate.

Why Can't We Be Friends?

There's a lot of buzz about the various ways social media blunders can cost you a job, but that doesn't mean you should keep your profiles completely private. More than

two in five employers (41 percent) say they are less likely to interview job candidates

candidates via social networks said they've found information that caused them not to hire a candidate – on par with last year 48 percent. The following are the top pieces of content that turned off these employers:

Provocative or inappropriate photographs, videos or information – 46 percent Information about candidate drinking or using drugs – 43 percent Discriminatory comments related to race, religion, gender, etc. – 33 percent Candidate bad-mouthed previous company or fellow employee – 31 percent Poor communication skills – 29 percent

About one-third of employers who screen candidates via social networks (32 percent), however, found information that caused them to hire a candidate, including:

- Candidate's background information supported job qualifications – 44 percent
- Candidate's site conveyed a professional image – 44 percent
- Candidate's personality came across as a good fit with company culture – 43 percent
- Candidate was well-rounded, showed a wide range of interests – 40 percent
- Candidate had great communication skills – 36 percent

Anyone Can Be Screened or Screen

It's not just potential employees who should keep their digital tracks clean. Forty-one percent of employers say they use social networking sites to research current employees, nearly a third (32 percent) use search engines to check up on current employees, and more than one in four (26 percent) have found content online that has caused them to reprimand or fire an employee.

Further, a separate survey found that some savvy job seekers are using social media to their own benefit. Nearly a fifth of workers (18 percent) check out hiring managers

on social media when job hunting.

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