



## **Your Social Media Image: The “First” First Impression**

Have you ever thought about your image? I’m not talking about what you look like in a mirror but rather how you portray yourself to others in other venues. Most people are probably unaware of what their Facebook page or LinkedIn profile page actually says about the type of person they are. If you are seeking another job and submit your resume for a position, have you ever wondered if the HR Department or the hiring authority checks potential social media sites first in order to decide whether you should even be considered? I mean, would a potential employer be excited about interviewing someone who calls himself a “baron of love” on his social media profile? (taken from an actual profile)

Now that social media is everywhere, a candidate considering a job change is especially transparent to any company considering employing him. It is not difficult for a company to quietly explore many facets of someone’s background through social media and even dismiss that candidate from consideration based on the resulting perception. In other words, a candidate interested in a particular position may never get the opportunity to make a first impression in person if he is unable to achieve a good first impression on-line. So it behooves any serious candidate to present the most polished and professional image possible in every venue before venturing out into the employment market. Even email addresses that may have fun or sentimental meanings to someone should be ditched for more professional-sounding ones when it comes to a job search. One interesting one recently viewed was something like [bunnylove@aol.com](mailto:bunnylove@aol.com). So how does someone go about portraying the best image on-line, an image that would cause a potential employer to want to meet?

First of all, your style and language should fit the industry you’re in. While “Ace” and [fastwheels@aol.com](mailto:fastwheels@aol.com) may be perfect for someone in the automobile business, it may not be impressive to a hiring authority in the Insurance Claims industry. Secondly, be professional in whatever you say about yourself, avoid complicated and unusual words (which tend to only impress you) and avoid inappropriate humor. Your friends may understand the abstract references to a private joke but it just makes everyone else think you’re odd. Look it over for errors in grammar, spelling, spacing and punctuation. I know that it’s not a formal document but errors give the impression that you are careless or simply don’t care. Don’t lie or embellish the truth. Sometimes it is read by someone who knows the truth and if that someone happens to be the potential employer, you have left a clearly negative impression. And thirdly, choose carefully the picture you download to a social media site. The wild and crazy pictures of you at the company Christmas party may evoke smiles from your friends but maybe not so much for someone considering you for a more serious position.

Realize that in this day and age when everything you post or do on-line takes on a life of its own, there is a trail of information on you that is easily accessible to anyone who takes the time to look. If you are a job-hunter, assume that any employer you apply to will be one who will take the time to look. Make sure what he finds gets you in the door to contend for the position you want rather than eliminate you from further consideration.