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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monitoring Your Online Brand

NETWORKING APPS ANOTHER METHOD TO MEET, SCREEN PROFESSIONAL CONTACTS

CHICAGO, July 24, 2018 – Social media is immutably intertwined with professional branding. Not only do companies need to assess their online images, as stakeholders and consumers are able to comment and share their opinions on every action a company takes, but professionals must monitor, update, and polish their own online presences. Now, there is another reason to ensure your social media presence is highly representative of how you want to be perceived by employers, according to one workplace authority.

“The networking and professional meetup apps that have popped up in recent years are just one more way hiring managers can vet potential candidates. As people use these apps to try to find mentorships or get coffee with established professionals in their fields, they will need to make sure their social media accounts reflect their best selves,” said Andrew Challenger, Vice President of global outplacement and executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

“Once you connect with someone on these apps, it’s likely the other party will use a search engine to see what other information is out there about you,” he added.

A recent Challenger survey found that nearly 80 percent of recruiters check social media to vet candidates and 43 percent said it hurts candidates to have no social media presence.

Bumble, which began as a female-focused dating app, introduced a networking feature in late 2017 that allows users to swipe right on potential professional contacts or mentors. This feature, called “Bumble Bizz,” was created to foster professional growth by helping connect users with people in their field who may have job opportunities or are looking to be mentors.

Bumble allows you to create a profile completely separate from your Bumble dating profile to show off your professional side, and you are encouraged to list your previous experience and upload professional headshots. Bumble had an audience of 1.4 million in 2017, according to Statista.

“The good news is that networking is no longer confined to company happy hours or informational interviews over coffee. Networking can now be done from the comfort of your home using your smartphone,” said Challenger.

“The bad news is that due to its ease, users may forget that these are not dating apps. For example, it’s not a good idea to ‘ghost’ professionals with whom you make plans to meet,” he added.

In addition to meetup apps, there are now options that locate networking events as well. An app called Happening allows users to locate where networking events are occurring locally, using GPS, and stores the events in the user’s phone calendar.

Although apps like Bumble allow for completely separate profiles, anything you put online acts as a representation of your personal brand.

“Professionalism goes beyond just networking apps. Making sure that your social media is an accurate representation of you is important. You can do this by increasing the security on your accounts to make it so that you must approve any tagged photos or videos. Another option is to be very selective about who you connect with on each platform,” said Challenger.

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TIPS TO KEEP SOCIAL MEDIA PROFESSIONAL

Vet your network. It's easier than ever to connect to people through social media. However, these apps mine not only the data you share, but also the data of your network to suggest connections to you. While you should build your network, it's important to be selective about those with whom you connect.

Build your brand. Advertise your professional skills, abilities, and accomplishments. Include only the information you want people to see publicly. For platforms like LinkedIn, ask your colleagues or business partners to endorse you.

“The story of your professional journey can be very compelling, so make sure you include the relevant details that will help you impress potential networking contacts or hiring managers,” said Challenger.

Share wisely. Choose carefully the kind of information you share on any of your networks.

“Sharing interesting articles that are relevant to your field, writing posts and tips on best practices, or creating original content that discusses trends in your industry are all great to share,” advised Challenger.

“If you are going to share content that may be controversial or political, ensure it comes from a reputable source and can be backed up with provable facts,” he added.

Use privacy controls. If you are using social media to connect with friends and family and not for professional purposes, make sure you turn on the most stringent privacy settings. On most platforms, there are options to share posts and content only with connections.