Are Your Selfies Affecting Your Chances of Getting Hired?

by JOHN FELDMANN (http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/author/john-feldmann/)

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Let’s say you’re applying for a job. You most likely have the foresight to remove any damaging photos from your social media profiles (http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/how-to-clean-up-your-facebook-profile-for-college-admission/) that would send the wrong message to prospective employers. Certainly any photos depicting drinking, drug use or nudity are off limits.

But you already know this.

How about selfies? I don’t mean the occasional photo you take of yourself to capture an accomplishment or special occasion. I’m referring to the dozens of bathroom mirror selfies on your profile, or the pics of you in every outfit you’ve tried on in the last two months, or the photos taken in inappropriate locations just for the shock value. You may feel these photos are all in fun and shouldn’t give an employer any reason to question your hirability. However, many employers would disagree.

**Selfies:**

Ever since the word “selfie” was added to the Oxford dictionary and declared the word of the year in 2013, they have been ubiquitous. Kim Kardashian recently announced her plans to release a 352-page hardcover book of nothing but selfies, showcasing but a few of the reportedly 1,200 selfies she took on a recent vacation. According to a Pew Research Center Survey, 55 percent of Millennials have posted a selfie on a social media site, and 26 percent of all Americans have done the same. The world has gone selfie-crazy. But the difference in Kim Kardashian and most people is that Kim will never have to look for a job. Is this really the im-
Narcissism:

According to Dr. Tracy Alloway of the University of North Florida:

>“Every narcissist needs a reflecting pool. Just as Narcissus gazed into the pool to admire his beauty, social networking sites, like Facebook, have become our modern-day pool.”

Like it or not, posting multiple pictures of oneself for all to see in hopes of receiving positive feedback is typical narcissistic behavior. Psychiatrist Dr. Carole Lieberman describes the selfie epidemic as a desperate cry for help from those who didn’t get enough “mirroring” from parents while growing up. Without sufficient mirroring, people look for their reflections in other people’s eyes in order to get attention, validation and approval.

Employment:

Now let’s look at it from the point of view of an employer. Is this the type of insecurity you want on your workforce? Employers wanting to hire top candidates are looking for a number of qualities, among them confidence and self-assurance. Yet posting numerous selfies sends the opposite message. In an article for Psychology Today, Dr. Pamela Rutledge, Director of the Media Psychology Research Centre in Boston, Massachusetts, states, “Preoccupation with selfies can be a visible indicator of a young person with a lack of confidence or sense of self that might make him or her a victim of other problems as well.” She believes that excessive or provocative taking of selfies is a form of “acting out” in young people and can be a cry for help. If you’re a job seeker and a selfie poster, you’re associating yourself with personality traits that employers find less than desirable.

Obviously, not everyone who posts selfies on their social media profiles suffers from narcissism and a lack of confidence. Right behind the narcissistic selfie on the chain of an-
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nourance stands the disrespectful selfie. Funeral selfies are the new online rage, along with selfies showing an equal lack of respect at sacred places such as Auschwitz and the 9/11 Memorial. Popular as the trend may be, if you were an employer, how would you feel about such individuals representing your company?

A recent survey (http://www.eurocompr.com/prfitem.asp?id=14921) by Eurocom Worldwide shows that nearly 40 percent of companies use social media to research job candidates, and one in five technology firms has rejected a candidate because of what they found on his or her social media profile. According to Mads Christensen, Network Director at Eurocom Worldwide, “The 21st-century human is learning that every action leaves an indelible digital trail. In the years ahead, many of us will be challenged by what we are making public in various social forums today. The fact that one in five applicants disqualify themselves from an interview because of content in the social media sphere is a warning to job seekers and a true indicator of the digital reality we now live in.”

The world is constantly evolving, and many of the most unique and innovative introductions have come from recent technology. But others, such as selfies, run counterproductive to the goals of employers and hiring managers. The younger you are, the more difficult it is to see things through the eyes of someone older. But if you’re old enough to be seeking employment, try to ask yourself what your future employer would think before taking that next selfie.
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John Feldmann (http://www.linkedin.com/in/johnfeldmann) is a writer, blogger and content developer for Insperity (http://www.insperity.com) Recruiting Services in Houston, TX. He has more than seven years of copywriting and editing experience in the advertising industry, and seven years of recruiting and sourcing experience in such industries as real estate, construction, engineering, accounting and health-
care. He currently specializes in employment branding and advertising. Follow John on Twitter @John_Feldmann (http://www.twitter.com/john_feldmann) or connect on Google+ (http://www.google.com/+JohnFeldmannJr).

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