



PROTECT YOUR IMAGE !

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HOW TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE YOUR JOB SEARCH IMAGE

Job interviews often start with the interviewer saying something like:

“So, tell me about yourself!”

At this first moment of a job interview, most candidates launch into their ‘90 second info-mercial’ – a well-rehearsed thumbnail sketch of their training and skills, their interest in the job being sought, plus their perceived value to the company. This opening statement, or elevator speech as it is sometimes called, functions as both an ice-breaker with the interviewer and an introduction for the candidate.

However, long before this question is asked, you, the candidate, have already shared quantities of calculated information about yourself. You have gone to great length to control and present a positive image of yourself by writing a perfectly crafted resume and a dynamic cover letter.

And, just five minutes prior to the interviewer’s first words, you have presented and defined yourself in various other ways. Each interviewer carefully records behaviors such as:

- Arrival time to interview (early or late), and posture while sitting in the candidate’s waiting room
- Appropriateness of interview apparel and overall appearance
- Your perceived confidence--initial smile, handshake, greeting, and overall energy

JOB SEEKERS: BEWARE OF “DIGITAL DIRT”

Additionally, in this hi-tech era, the job search process for current job candidates is complicated by company access to **digital dirt**, random personal information obtained by using search engines such as Google, Yahoo and MSN, and other specific websites such as MySpace, Friendster and Facebook. Increasing numbers of recruiters report that they are finding personal information, including provocative photos and descriptions of excessive partying, that is helping them weed out some candidates *prior to the interview*.

If you are actively looking for a full-time job or internship, or are applying to graduate school, be sure to consider clearing up your “digital dirt”, i.e., your own information that appears on websites such as MySpace, Facebook, or Friendster. Don’t let information that recruiters might consider unprofessional or inappropriate keep you from getting an interview or a job offer. If you are uncertain about the kinds of things to eliminate, feel free to consult a member of the Career Services staff for feedback.

In addition, conduct an Internet search on yourself – yes, “narcisurf” on a regular basis – to determine what kind of data is available about you online. Remember that public information is available via governmental and university sites. Such data as misrepresented academic qualifications, driving records, and participation in legal proceedings may be available to a competent web researcher. Finally, review your own voice mail recording and personal website; be sure that they represent you in the best professional light.

If you are in the process of seeking and applying for jobs take full advantage of the wealth of resources provided by Career Services, located in 228 Roosevelt Hall. Visit our web site at <http://career.uri.edu> and call 874-4832 for an appointment with a career advisor.

Don’t let “digital dirt” mess up your chance for a highly successful job search.