

**Hed: "Clean it Up"**

**BY: Molly Blake**

Nothing *stays* in Vegas anymore. That pre-party photo and the embarrassing vine video of you twerking wildly on the dance floor will wind up on online. There's the GIF, the Instagram pictures, the Facebook tags, reddit, tumblr and the tweets.

Schadenfreude aside, compromising social media posts and pictures will not only squash your pride but possibly your job prospects.

Despite a wishy-washy economy and job market, service members transitioning out of the military will find the climate warm and sunny. In other words, it's not a bad time to get out and launch your 2.0 career thanks to a general reputation that service members have for being drug-free, dependable, dedicated and hard-working. But landing a job is not without its challenges – many of which are just a few clicks away.

"A hiring manager is absolutely going to go online and research the person they plan on interviewing or hiring," says Stacy Swearingen, a certified career management coach and owner of Portable Career Planning. In fact, according to Jobvite, a social recruiting site, 94 percent of recruiters are already using or plan to utilize social networks/media to find employees.

The first thing that usually pops up on a Google search? Your LinkedIn profile, says Swearingen which should include a professional looking photo (no dogs in the picture), and well-written summary and experience sections.

Amy Schofield, an HR and resume expert says developing a solid, optimized LinkedIn profile plays a critical role in a person's brand. The Navy spouse works with active duty service members - analyzing their fit reps to develop a profile that sets forth clear employment goals in order to stand out among civilians who may already have well-established connections and a leg-up on the job search. But that's where the military community comes in handy she says. Scores of military-affiliated groups are among the 225 million people on LinkedIn. Join your unit or military branch's group and start making connections – then as your connections expand, "engage, ask questions, post interesting articles and demonstrate your interest in groups relevant to your career," says Schofield. Schofield also recommends taking a LinkedIn tutorial to unlock some more of the powerful networks' secrets.

But the spring-cleaning doesn't end there.

"Facebook is going to be the downfall for some," says Swearingen who recently worked with a client perplexed by her unsuccessful search for a job despite a stellar resume and several recommendations.

“I told her to Google herself,” says Swaengen. What the young woman saw online shocked her.

It’s not uncommon but unfortunately often a surprise to see how many racy photos are linked to a person’s name. And for anyone hoping for a job that requires security clearance, nearly nude photos or snaps of keg stands and motorcycle wheelies will not win the confidence of hiring managers.

Jen Hatzung, the social media manager for non-profit organization Blue Star Families, says social media isn’t all bad. Hatzung suggests using sites like twitter to research companies, employees and the overall culture of a workplace. Just before an interview, job seekers can do a quick search on the interviewer.

“You might see that person has attended an event or read an article you commented on which gives you a usable data point,” says Hatzung. Afterwards, send a LinkedIn request with a personal note thanking them for taking the time to speak with you. In fact, Schofield always recommends writing a short personal note with a LinkedIn request following any personal connection.

All three caution against using silly or inappropriate twitter handles or email addresses.

“Social media isn’t going away,” says Schofield. “It can be a huge setback or a huge opportunity.”

#### SIDEBAR: Common Pitfalls and How to Turn them Around to Work for You

LinkedIn Pitfall: Your profile projects the question, “what can you do for me?”

Opportunity: “Turn it around to sell yourself and what you can do to make a company better,” says Swaengen.

LinkedIn Pitfall: Too much military lingo.

Opportunity: Ask a former commander or peer who you have worked with to recommend you instead and let your military experience shine through that way.

Facebook Pitfall: Your settings allow anyone to see everything.

Opportunity: Change your personal settings to friends only.

Facebook Pitfall: Your friends tag you in unflattering photos you’d rather not share.

Opportunity: Check the box that requires your approval before tagged photos appear online.

Instagram pitfall: “It’s a huge window into your world and people forget that they’ve got photos from when they were 18 and engaging in rather reckless behavior,” cautions Hatzung.

Opportunity: Change those settings to private and keep things ... you guessed it: private!