



Should You Check Candidates' Social Media?

Navigate the risks and rewards of online screening

The Social Media Screening Dilemma

Many employers use social media to verify candidate information. But this practice raises critical questions about accuracy, relevance, and legal compliance.



Identity Verification

Is the online profile truly your candidate?



Information Accuracy

Can you verify all posted content is truthful?



Relevance Filter

How to avoid irrelevant personal preferences?



Key Questions Before You Search



Platform Consistency

Do people use the same language on X, Facebook, and LinkedIn as in professional roles?



Access Requirements

Will you require candidates to provide social media handles and passwords?



Search Depth

Quick glance or comprehensive online profile investigation?

Legal Risks You Must Consider

Discrimination Danger

Online information can reveal protected characteristics, leading to **unlawful discrimination** claims.

Personal posts often contain details about age, religion, family status, or health.

Privacy Act 2020

Strict requirements govern gathering, storing, and using personal information.

Candidates have rights to access information you've collected about them.

The Discrimination Trap

Social media reveals information that could trigger bias, whether conscious or unconscious.

Personal Preferences

Movies, food, places—irrelevant to job qualifications but visible online.

Protected Information

Posts commonly reveal characteristics protected under discrimination legislation.

Unconscious Bias

Even well-intentioned reviewers can be influenced by irrelevant personal details.

Best Practice Framework

01

Establish Clear Policy

Define when and why social media checks occur.

02

Verify Identity

Confirm the profile belongs to your candidate.

03

Limit Scope

Focus only on job-relevant, professional information.

04

Document Process

Maintain records compliant with Privacy Act requirements.


05

Obtain Consent

Use proper authorisation forms before conducting checks.

Make Informed Decisions

Social media screening requires careful policy development and legal compliance. Protect your organisation whilst respecting candidate privacy.

 **Need expert guidance?** Contact HR Unlocked for tailored advice on compliant recruitment practices.

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