



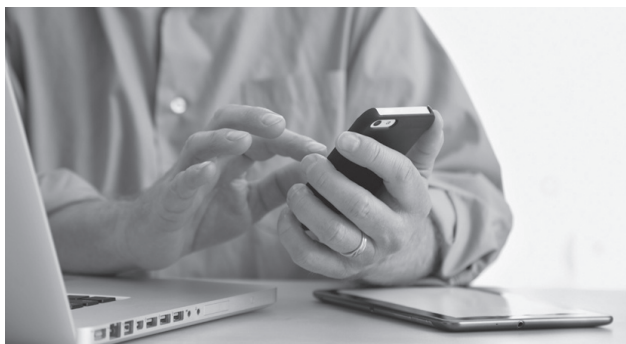
## How social media can affect your career

Social media has become an integral part of modern society. Millions of people around the world use social media to connect with one another. But this valuable tool also can be a detriment, particularly to men and women seeking employment.

What a person says or does on social media can come back to haunt them with regard to the impression they create with prospective employers. Questionable antics and comments may reflect negatively on a person without him or her even realizing it. According to a study by Reppler, a social media monitoring service, 91 percent of employers use social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn to screen prospective employees.

Many people are completely unaware how others view them through their social media profiles and usage, but social media profiles give away more information about a person's character and personality than many people would ever imagine. Even seemingly innocent remarks and observations can be misconstrued. Use of profanity or offering commentary on controversial subjects may be a person's right. However, such comments may not sit well with prospective employers.

Some may think the solution is not to have profiles on the popular social media sites. But avoiding social media entirely can send the wrong message to prospec-



tive employers. It may suggest that you are not a person who is current with the latest trends in technology and may give employers the impression that you are not adept at keeping up with the changing times.

The key is finding the right balance with social media. The following are a few tips to ensure your social media usage does not do more harm than good.

Do not post or tweet information that should be kept private. If you would not tell intimate secrets to another person, especially an employer, do not convey these details to your group of "friends."

Recognize that it's not always your comments that can affect perceptions of you. The friends you choose to accept and socialize with via social media can impact how others view you. If friends are prone to vulgarity and off-color commentary, employers may surmise that this type of behavior is acceptable to you. Screen friends and block those who do not meet your standards.

Know that security features on social media applications change frequently.

It's important to know just how private your information may be. For example, if you are tagged in another person's photo, people outside of your friends' list may be able to see that image. You have to police your sites and lock down the information as you see fit, only posting what is appropriate for the general public.

Do not complain about a job or boss publicly. Even if your boss is not on your list of friends, he or she may still learn about your comments through gossip. While verbal complaints with others may not be accurately tracked back to you, text is hard evidence to discredit.

Use social media as a networking tool to find other like-minded individuals in the same fields. Join industry-based groups and organizations so that you can share your ideas. Further expanding your reach through blogs and websites can also help your job hunt.

Social media is here to stay, making many details of people's lives more public, so exercise caution with social media so your career is not negatively affected.

## Tips to help students choose the right major

As recent college graduates can no doubt attest, the job market for young people can be difficult to navigate. Many recent graduates are still struggling to find full-time employment, and some might be wondering if they chose the right major.

Though choosing a major is about more than just finding a job, the financial burden of earning a college degree can't be ignored. According to the Project on Student Debt, 71 percent of college seniors who graduated in 2012 had student loan debt, with an average of \$29,400 per borrower. In fact, between 2008 and 2012, the average student loan debt at graduation increased an average of 6 percent each year. So while the right major should incorporate a student's interests, skills and strengths, it's also important to find a major that can help students earn a living after they walk across the stage and receive their diplomas.

The following are a handful of tips college students can employ to ensure they choose the right major.

\* Don't jump into it. Some students might want to pick a major before they ever step foot on campus. While that strategy might work for some, it should only be employed by those students who are wholly certain a major is for them. Some students choose a major early on because they feel they may get a head start at navigating their way through a job market that recently endured exceptionally high levels of unemployment. But the pressure of finding a job should not be what drives students when choosing

a major. Unless you're entirely certain that a particular course of study is for you, give yourself some leeway and wait to choose a major. The first year or two of college is a great time to expand your academic horizons so use that time to your advantage.

\* Don't procrastinate. While rushing into a major is a mistake, it's also foolish to procrastinate with regard to choosing a course of study. According to The College Board's annual survey of colleges, the average tuition and fees at private nonprofit four-year colleges for the 2013-14 school year was \$30,094, while public four-year in-state tuition and fees averaged slightly less than \$9,000 for the same year. So no matter which type of college or university a student enrolls in, he or she will be making a significant financial commitment. Waiting too long to choose a course of study may find you paying for courses you ultimately won't need, increasing your already expensive tuition along the way.

\* Use the resources at your disposal. Students undecided about a college major should make use of their schools' career development departments to help them get on the right path. Many such departments provide assessment tools to help students find a major that synthesizes their interests and skills with a field of study. In addition, the personnel within career development departments have dealt with hundreds, if not thousands, of previous students who found themselves in similar situations, and that experi-



ence can prove invaluable to students who might feel lost with regard to choosing majors.

\* Know the requirements if you have a specific career in mind. While many majors are not difficult to navigate, some fields of study have strict guidelines that students should be aware of almost immediately. For example, students hoping to attend medical school after graduation need to determine which courses they absolutely must take in order to qualify for medical school. In addition, students with such specific plans in mind often must choose their majors as early as possible so they can plan their curriculum in accordance with the standards they will need to meet to be considered for postgraduate work.

Choosing a major is a decision college students should not take lightly. But students who are unsure of what they want to study should approach the process of choosing a major with patience and an eye on finding a course of study that matches their interests with their skills.

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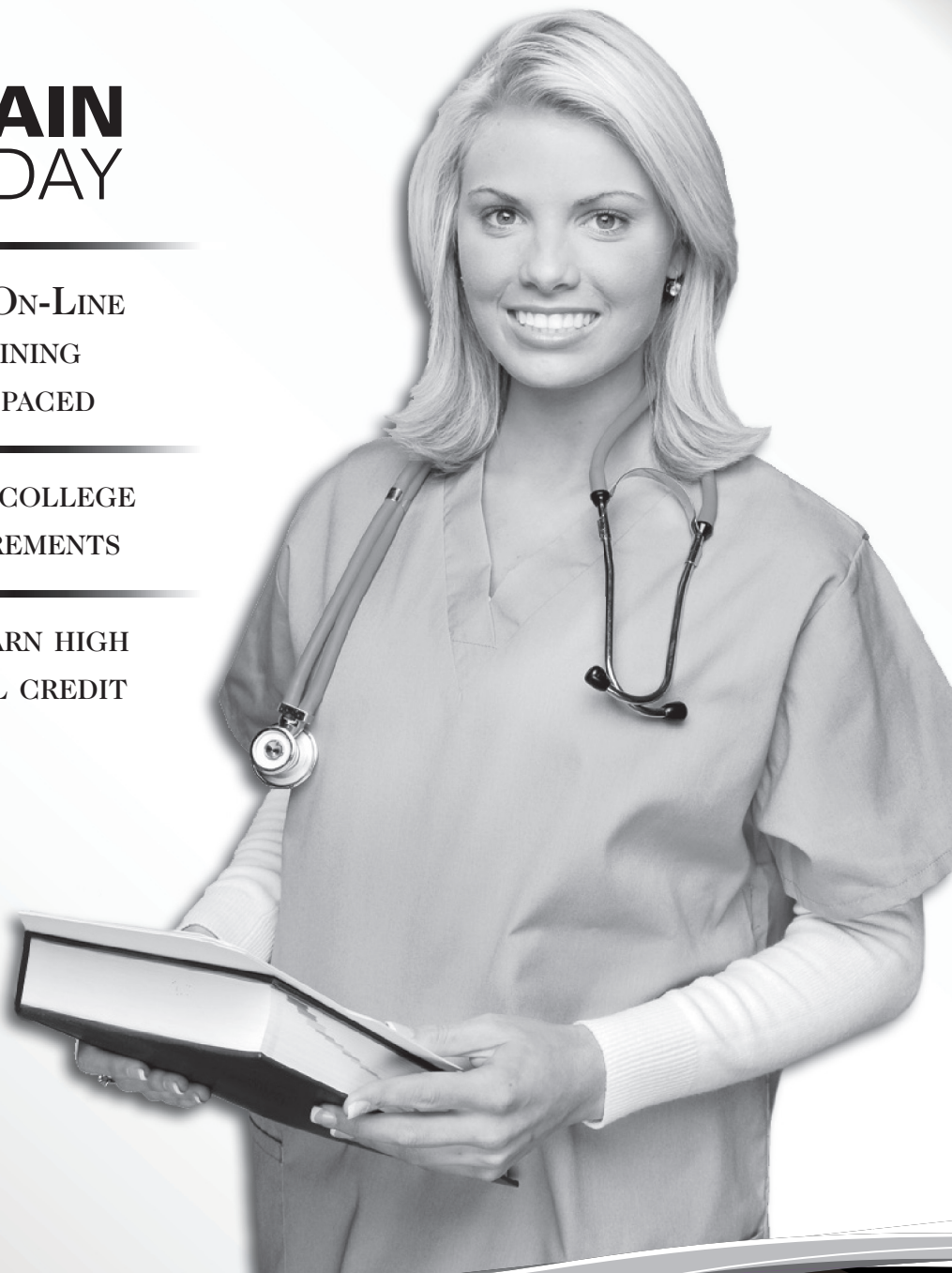
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