# Your Online Image Matters

Imagine that you have applied for your dream job. You've had a successful interview and you're just waiting for the job offer. However, it never comes because the hiring manager searched your social media and found a TikTok video of you complaining about your former work place.

Fair? Maybe not, but your social media can make or break a job opportunity.

According to Business News Daily, more than 75% of hiring managers use social media to learn about potential candidates. Other polls put the number even higher and say that 79% of HR managers have rejected someone because of what they learned about them online. The Muse say that among those who look at a candidate's social media, 65% are looking to measure a potential employee's professionalism and how they conduct themselves in social situations, 51% are looking to see
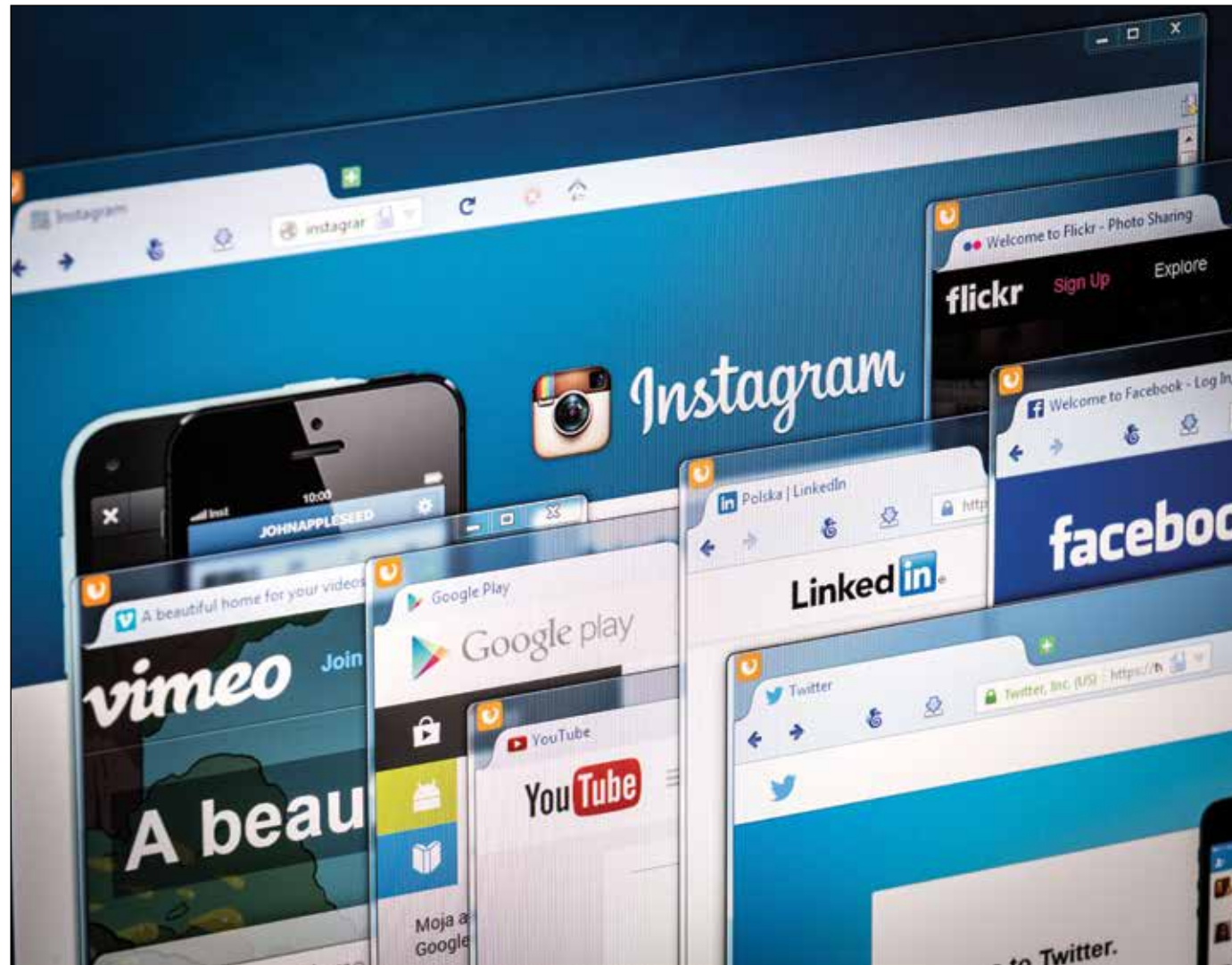
whether the person would fit in their company culture and 45% are looking to find more information about a person's qualifications.

Sometimes your social media can help you get the job. Employers say they are more likely to hire someone if their social media showed that they had a good personality, a professional image, a wide range of interests and that their background information was accurate.

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

Does this mean you have to delete everything personal? No, but it does mean you need to pay attention to who has access to what. Most social media accounts give you the option to make your profile or specific posts private. Use this feature.

Be careful about who you friend and give access to your account. Is your account a pro-

fessional one that you want co-workers and potential employers to see? If it isn't, then only allow friends and family to see it.

GOOGLE YOURSELF

Learn what potential employers will find. Do you have old accounts floating around that should be deleted?

Look for things that you wouldn't want employers to find and try to clean them up.

If they belong to you, you can make the posts private, archive photos or change your settings to "only me." If they belong to someone else, reach out to them and ask them to remove the posts.

Switch to the "images" tab to see what photos are out there of you. Are they professional? Google yourself in incognito mode so you have a greater chance at seeing what hiring managers will see.

BUILD YOUR ONLINE BRAND

Your user name on social media and your handles are part of your brand. Be consistent across platforms and choose something professional. Your real first and last name—the one you use on your resume—is best for such platforms as LinkedIn and Facebook. If your name is taken on a platform, Makeuseof.com recommends using your name followed by a qualifier that is related to the work that you want to do such as YourName_Programmer.

Show that you are invested in your career by following accounts relevant to your profession. Make posts about trends and news in your profession, but be sure to keep them positive and upbeat.

Curate content that is relevant to what you want to do and will show potential hiring managers your expertise.