

Soft Skills for Employment

Chapter Five: Technology and Employment



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V. Lesson Five: Technology and Employment

| Teaching Materials: | Duration: | Learning Objective: |
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| PowerPoint to accompany the discussion regarding rules/guidelines for technology usage and employment | 45 minutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raising an awareness of employment considerations when using social media, texting, emailing and telephone. ➤ Raising an awareness of how to determine when to use personal technology on the job. |
| Setting and Method: Classroom presentation and discussion | | |

Lesson Summary for Instructors:

Technology in today’s world involves many different types of gadgets, programs and applications. As fast as technology changes, a year from now, the types of technology will most certainly look differently as they do today. At this point, technology that impacts the workplace may include email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kick, etc.), and cell phones. Even as the types of social media change, the basic rules of conduct will remain consistent. This lesson discusses the basic rules of etiquette for social media, cell phones and email. Because they each have unique purposes, there are fundamental rules for use in relation to their effect on employment.

There is an accompanying PowerPoint to give visual examples and discussion prompts to each rule. Much of this lesson will be in-class discussion and sharing. The accompanying PowerPoint may be used, or the facilitator can develop his/her own examples and pictures to share with the class. However, it is important that students have some real-world insight about how appropriate use of technology can help or hurt them on the job. Many of the examples in the PowerPoint are of adults who have misused technology and have gotten fired, or could get fired as a result. The students should leave this lesson with strategies on how to be smarter and savvier than the adults shown.

Technology and the Workplace

Technology in today's world involves many different types of gadgets, programs and applications. As fast as technology changes, a year from now, the types of technology will most certainly look differently as they do today. At this point, technology in the workplace may include email, social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Kick, etc.), and cell phones. Even as the types of social media change, the basic rules of conduct will remain consistent. This lesson discusses the basic rules of etiquette for social media, cell phones and email.

Social Media

Rule #1: Keep your private life and professional life separate.

Who to include in your social media network is a constant source of concern. You now have a new job, you have met new people and you like most of them. Your boss is a pretty cool person, too. So...make them all friends on Facebook, right? Text with them on your off time? NO! Not unless you want your boss to know your every move when you are off work, keep your personal life personal and your work life professional.

THINK ABOUT THIS... from your employer's perspective.

You go out with your friends on a Friday night—maybe out bowling or to a movie and then to dinner afterward. You put pictures on Facebook about what a great time you are having and it is implied that you stayed out late that night and enjoyed yourself immensely. That night, unrelated to your fun, you start to feel ill. By morning you have a stomach bug that is keeping you in the bathroom. Problem is, you were supposed to work the afternoon shift at work on Saturday, but there is no way you can leave the house, and you call in sick.



Now that your boss is a Facebook friend, do you think she believes you are “suddenly” sick, or does she now have proof that you are a partier who can't be counted on to make it to work for scheduled shifts?

We have been caught in a Social Media trap in our society. We have become “friend” collectors and often feel compelled to include everyone we are connected with at school, at work, at church, etc. in our social media networks. It is wise to remember that not all these people are our friends. When we work, we should have friendly connections to the people that we spend that time with, but keeping a professional relationship is important as well.

Rule #2: Remember that social media is public and your boss can see it

Even if you put protections on your social media and you have it set so that only your friends can see your posts, you never know the connections that exist between people and you should not take it for granted that your boss or prospective boss will never see what you have on your social media profiles. Many employers search the people they are interested in hiring on Facebook, Twitter, etc., just to see what these people are posting. If they see posts about excessive living (drinking, partying, slacking at school, etc.), they will think twice about hiring you.

Rule #3: Don't use social media to communicate work related information

Social media is easily accessed and it can feel comfortable to just message your boss on Facebook, but don't fall into the social media trap! If you have a work message to deliver, be professional and use whatever the process is that your employer has set up to share information.

Rule #4: It is NEVER okay to go to other pages or use your own page to make fun of others.

This includes commenting about annoying customers you may have worked with, co-workers who frustrate you, bosses who make rules you think are stupid, friends you are fighting with, etc.

Rule #5: Watch your language

Yes, we live in a free country and have a guaranteed right to free speech. Free country or not, however, how you speak directly impacts how people think about you. Now that you are of working age and you are being evaluated as a co-worker, employee, potential candidate for scholarships, etc., you need to be aware of how you look to people. Your language and your comments are an easy way for people to get an impression of you, good or bad.



ANSWER THIS...

1. Do *YOU* accept all of the friend requests you get on Facebook? Why or why not?

2. When you are offended or concerned about the type of content that your friends put on social media, what do you do?

Nothing

Remove them from your friend list or 'unfollow' them

Complain about them to your other friends

Other: _____

3. Do *YOU* have teachers or supervisors in your social media contacts?

Email

Rule #1: Read EVERYTHING before clicking “send”. There is no way to get it back once it is gone.

This is especially true if you are handling a sensitive or emotional situation. When they get angry, people far too often send an email in response and then regret what they said. Re-read what you wrote, ask someone else to read it for an outsider’s opinion and/or wait for a few hours before sending an email that are concerned about being misinterpreted.

If you are angry, consider NOT sending the email you would like to send and calling or talking to the person face to face instead. At the very least, don’t respond at all until you have had time to cool down and collect your thoughts.

Rule #2: If you are using a work computer or email account, your every keystroke is their property.

Most places of employment have their work computers networked and have backup systems for those computers. That means that anything you do on a work computer and any email you send on a work email account is saved. This is a good thing to remember when you are tempted to send inappropriate emails or search inappropriate topics online. NOTHING you say or do is private.

Rule #3: Don’t replace face-to-face communication with emails or texting

Discussions that you need to have with your boss or co-workers that involve personal situations, asking for time off, concerns about work matters, etc. should most likely be done in face-to-face communication. Messages sent through email or texting can too often be misinterpreted and even though it may seem easier and quicker to communicate this way, it often creates more problems in the long run.



Cell Phone

Rule #1: Find out what the workplace policy for cell phone use is before you start work

Some employers say no cell phones may be used at work and some allow them at work. If cell phones are not allowed, keep it shut off and in your car or coat pocket so you won't be tempted to use it.

If your employer allows cell phones, remember to use *good etiquette*:

- ~ Keep the volume shut off during working hours,
- ~ Use break times to return phone calls and
- ~ NEVER interrupt a work interaction with a personal call or text. Let your incoming calls go to voicemail and return the calls later.

Rule #2: Don't take your cell phone into the restroom....EVER

This rule should apply to using your cell phone at work, at school or anywhere else there is a public restroom. Why? It is simple — you never know who's in there; the person on the other end of the line will hear bathroom sounds, e.g., toilets flushing; it is an invasion of your co-workers' privacy.

Rule #3: Don't bring your cell phone to meetings

If you need to have it for the calendar function or to take notes on, first of all, make sure this is cool with your boss. Then, make sure you only use it for these reasons. Do not use it to text, play music or check your Facebook page. You need to make sure you are engaged with what is happening in the meeting and you are making appropriate eye contact.

Preferably, you just bring your calendar and a notepad.

Rule #4: Find a private place to make personal phone calls.

While it's okay to use your cell phone at work for private calls during breaks, find somewhere else to talk. Even if your conversation isn't personal, you should go someplace that your conversation can't be overheard. You may be on a break but your co-workers have a job to do.

Also, if you are using a shared space like a break room to talk on your cell phone, remember to respect other people's use of the space. If your conversation is personal or going to be a long one, find another space (ex. outside) to talk.

