

## USING FACEBOOK TO SCREEN JOB APPLICANTS

Maria L. Novak

These days, almost every business checks Facebook as part of their applicant screening process. And it turns out many employers are misreading the information they glean from this social media giant.

A new study from North Carolina State University shows that many organizations may have a fundamental misunderstanding of online behavior and, as a result, may be eliminating desirable job candidates.

Finding: Employers may be looking for the wrong things on social media profiles.

Researchers at NCSU tested 175 study participants to measure the personality traits that companies look for in job candidates, including "conscientiousness, agreeableness and extraversion." The participants were then surveyed on their Facebook behavior, allowing researchers to see which Facebook behaviors were linked to specific personality traits.

But the researchers found no significant correlation between conscientiousness and an individual's willingness to post content on Facebook about alcohol or social drug use.

Companies that are looking for extroverts, such as those hiring for sales or marketing positions may be doing themselves an even worse disservice.

This same study found that extroverts were significantly more likely to post about drugs or alcohol on Facebook. So companies weeding out those applicants are likely to significantly limit the pool of job candidates who are extroverts.

However, the researchers did find one online indicator strongly correlated to the personality traits that employers look for: Study participants who rated high on both agreeableness and conscientiousness were also very unlikely to insult other people on Facebook.

Conclusion: If employers plan to keep using social media to screen job applicants, this study indicates they may want to focus on eliminating candidates who "badmouth" others or share generally negative posts and strong opinions and not necessarily those who post about drinking beer or socializing on the weekends.

***Maria L. Novak Dugan is president of Marketing Solutions & Business Development, a firm in West Chester, PA, offering creative marketing services and goal implementation for small & medium sized businesses. For more information, contact Maria at 610-405-0633 or MariaNovak001@yahoo.com or visit [www.Maria-L-Novak.com](http://www.Maria-L-Novak.com)***