HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PUBLIC IMAGE.

Sometime after the interview and before a formal offer is made, a professional reference checker may investigate your public image.

You may be asked for the names of former employers, peers, and subordinates.

Do not give out names without first getting permission from the person. And make sure you prepare the person for questions to be asked and the best way to "present" you.

Most people listed as references want to be helpful. You need to take the initiative to structure what is important to emphasize (and not mention)..

In addition, Recruiters may check out your "Brand" on the Internet.

This is a non trivial concern.

There are two types of recruiting errors made by Hiring Authorities:

1. Failing to hire the Best Person for the job.
2. Hiring a Jerk.

Hiring Authorities make Type 1 Errors all the time. Nobody knows except the Hiring Authority that the best catch "got away." Type 1 errors are not fatal.

 Type 2 Errors are public and can be fatal for the Hiring Authority.

Does your Internet presence suggest you are a "jerk?"

STEPS IN DOING A REFERENCE CHECK ON YOURSELF

We recommend you conduct a search for your name on Google, Google.news, technorati.com, boardtracker.com,search.twitter.com, and backtype.com. In addition we recommend you review your profile on linkedin.com, twitter.com, and facebook.com

GOOGLE AND NEWS.GOOGLE

Search it in Google and news.google. Is there anything negative? Go "two levels deep" and don't' settle for what is on the first page. Use your formal name and your frequently used name.   Thus my formal name is "Laurence Stybel" but my commonly used name is "Larry Stybel."

REVIEW YOUR PROFILE ON LINKEDIN.COM, FACEBOOK, AND TWITTER.

What is the image you project? Do you have the privacy settings on you wish to have on? Is the photo appropriate to your professional status?

POST YOUR NAME ON TECHNORATI.COM

This will show who is using your name in blogs.

POST YOUR NAME ON BOARDTRACKER.COM

What discussion threads contain your name.

POST YOUR NAME ON HTTP://SEARCH.TWITTER.COM

What are people saying about you on Twitter.

POST YOUR NAME ON HTTP://WWW.BACKTYPE.COM

How many people comment on what you have written on twitter.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE NEGATIVE COMMENTS THAT MIGHT NEGATIVELY IMPACT YOU?

The great thing about the Internet is freedom of expression. The awful thing about the Internet is freedom of expression.

We have worked on behalf of clients to get false information eliminated from popular search engines.

But it is hard.

This is one of the reasons you have a professional outplacement firm working on your behalf.

Do you have a website? Are you blogging? Are you getting friends to read your blog, comment on your blog?

Bury, Bury, Bury.

We had a client who was arrested for assault in New York. The article about the arrest appeared in news.google. We worked with this client to create a website and a blog. He wrote about professional issues and had friends comment on his writing.

The result was that the article about the arrest was burred on page 5 of news.google.

A good reference checker will find it.

You are lucky: most reference checkers aren't that good!

THE FIVE YEAR 'BRAND" REVIEW

Once you have done the Brand Review, go into your electronic calendar and schedule yourself for another Brand Review five years from the time you conducted this one.

It is your career. If you don't be careful about the integrity of your public image, who will?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Please email me your reactions to this piece and let me know if I can publish them on our internet.

Laurence J. Stybel,Ed.D., CMF

STYBEL PEABODY LINCOLNSHIRE, an Arbora Global Company

Boston, MA

Tel. 617 594 7627

lstybel@stybelpeabody.com

www.boardoptions.com

www.stybelpeabody.com.

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