

# How to Be You, Inc.

*Build a personal brand that gets you noticed.* BY GINA ROBERTS-GREY

**WHETHER YOU'RE ITCHING TO SWITCH JOBS**, or can't imagine ever having a different professional zip code, experts say it's important to constantly work on your personal brand. But it's hard to know how to build an online profile that best represents you—without over-sharing or not showing off enough. We've got the lowdown on how to sprinkle in the right amount of personal Facebook posts about your kid's soccer game or the killer casserole you whipped up last night amidst updates about how you rocked it at the staff meeting last week.

## / **Picture reading your posts out loud**

Before hitting "post" on Facebook, imagine sitting across from a hiring manager as s/he combs through your social-media accounts. "If there are absurdly personal posts or pictures you'd find embarrassing to reread with a professional, they shouldn't be part of your online presence," says Valerie Streif, a senior advisor with thementat.com.

## / **Split it up**

Consider having two social-media personas: one that's strictly professional, and the other all personal, says Cheryl E. Palmer, M.Ed., owner, Call to Career. Just remember to set those accounts to "private" so the only eyes on them are ones you've approved.

## / **Pass on political rants**

Instead of mocking any party, retweeting negative messages, or getting sucked into a political or religious debate, Streif suggests sticking to personal passions like racial injustice or environmental policy. "It's a fine balance between making it clear what you value vs. having a negative tone."

## / **Get detailed**

If networking sites feature a section for interests, Palmer suggests sharing your hobbies and passions outside of work. "That can build a professional connection with someone who also enjoys the same activities, be it yoga, photography, surfing, or swimming."



## / **Know your audience**

Overwhelming isn't good on a professional or personal account, cautions Palmer. Your friends will usually be interested in pictures of your kids, but they may not be interested in a blow-by-blow account of every minute of your day.

## / **Be choosy**

Resist the urge to be everywhere. Instead, stick to two or three sites you're comfortable with and envision being part of the foreseeable future, says Streif. And before starting a personal website, assess your goal. "If you aren't going to maintain it, having one might be a waste," she says. "If it's the means to showcase your art, website building, and design skills, and you enjoy updating it regularly, then go for it!"

## / **Clean house**

Delete any posts, pictures, memes that don't align with the brand you want to build, says Tomas Ondrejka, cofounder of Kickresume. And untag yourself from photos that you find socially dubious.

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