

# ADDRESSING DIFFICULT ISSUES

*PA CareerLink Pittsburgh/Allegheny County offers additional help and resources for cover letters. Please see our workshop schedule or contact a staff member for more information.*

With the popularity of the internet, background searches are now easier than ever to conduct on a potential candidate. If you are going through the interviewing process at a company, you can most likely bet that your interviewer will Google your name before you set foot in the door. And, if you have not Googled your own name, now is the time to do it.

You need to prepare yourself for what the interviewer is going to learn about you through the internet. You should try and remove as much negative information about yourself that you can. For instance, make your personal profiles private, so that employers will not have a tainted view of what you do with your free time. You can also keep your image professional by posting your resume online and directing employers to it. You can make a Myspace (or Facebook) resume or even build a website about you and your portfolio.

If, however, you believe the negative information online (that you cannot remove or change) may be preventing you from going further in the job search process, you may be better off to address it up front in your cover letter.

## **Mistaken Identity**

Many people have common names, and if you believe that you are being mistaken for someone that is not you, please address

this in a short paragraph. “I am not the Jane Smith with 5 DUIs in the past year. I am the student athlete who graduated with honors.” It is important that you identify your attributes; you want to clarify the situation but still showcase your best qualities.

## **Tainted Past**

If you had a wild past that is available online for the world to see, you may want to address the concerns a potential employer may have. You should admit your wild behavior, but be prepared to discuss how you learned from your mistakes. Most importantly, be able to state how you are a very reliable employee with specific accomplishments.

## **Less than Perfect Credit**

A credit check could also be part of the interview process, and you should be able to discuss this if you have less than desirable credit. Explain what happened for you to achieve a low credit score, and identify ways you are attempting to improve your credit score. Tell the employer that you are making monthly payments and cutting back on your spending, and you expect to have an improved credit rating as time passes.

## Quick Tips

- Remove any negative information online
- Make personal profiles private
- Clear up any misconceptions
- Show growth from your mistakes
- Create a professional website about you
- Limit access to online photos
- Build positive credit

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