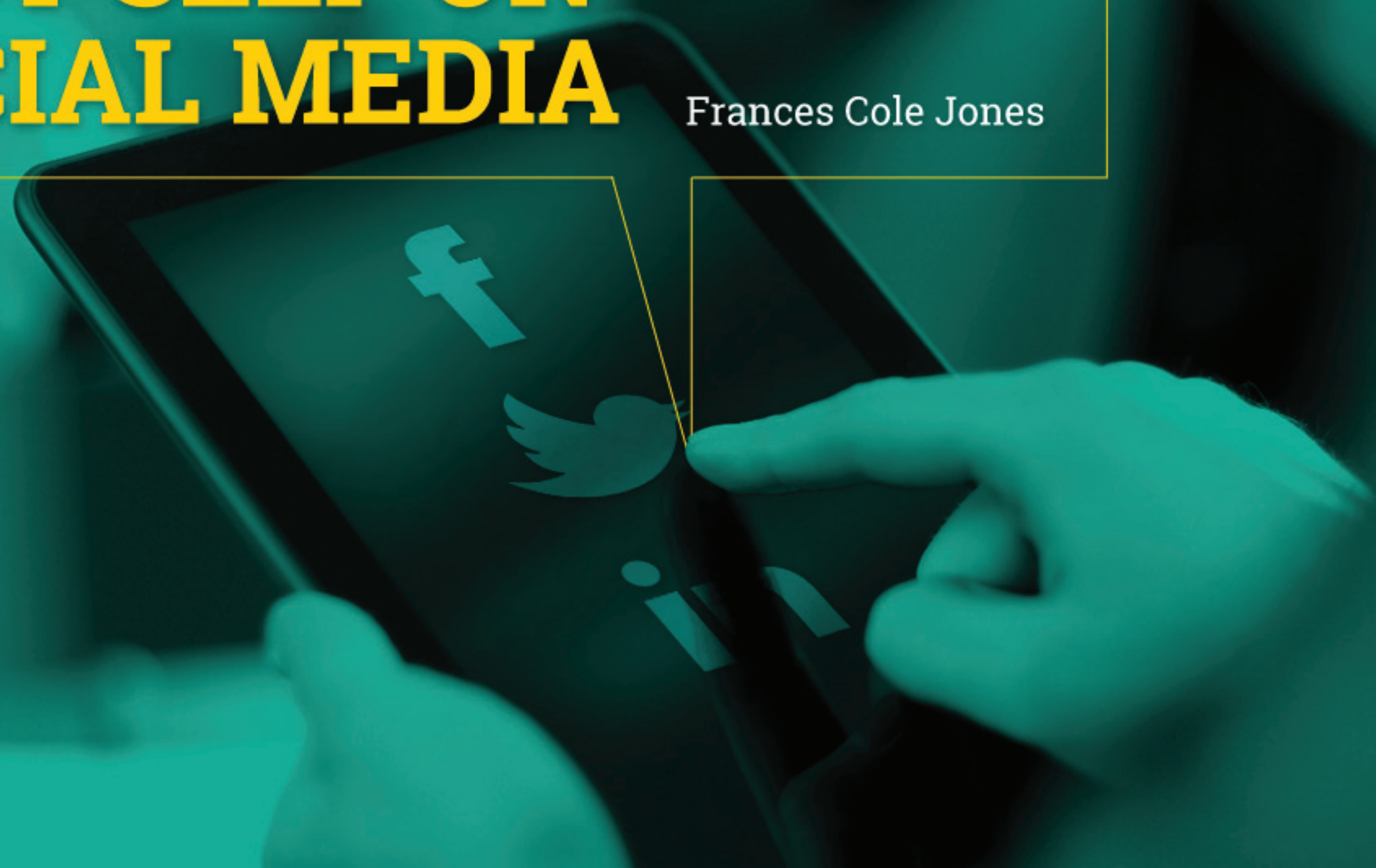


PRESENTING YOUR BEST SELF ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Frances Cole Jones



With millions of job candidates using social media for their job search-- while still using it socially-- there are thousands of opportunities for things to go awry. With this in mind, here's a quick, down-and-dirty primer on what to remove, what to keep and how to present your best self on **Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter—all of which are your shop windows to the world.**



First let's take a look at **why it's important to manage your online presence:**

Unless your skill set is extraordinarily specialized, I guarantee that the majority of other applicants have (essentially) the same resume that you do. Consequently, **it's all too easy to be knocked out of the running for seemingly small things like an inappropriate photo or post.**

Should you think that employers are not looking at your social media pages, you are delusional. In addition to checking them out when you aren't present, many interviewers are stopping interviews halfway through and saying, "Let's just open up your Facebook page."

I hope that gave you pause.

With this in mind, let's take a look at what I deem **inappropriate for Facebook**. Among the basics:

- Any photos where you (or your companions) look intoxicated/medicated
- Any photos showing you in revealing clothing
- Any photos in which you (or your chums) are holding alcoholic beverages.
- Any posts that include profanity
- Any posts that could be construed as racist/misogynistic
- Any posts that boast about sexual conquests
- Any posts that complain about your job search
- Any posts that badmouth your current employers
- Any posts that declare you'd rather be shopping/hanging out with friends/getting a Slurpee than at an office.



In addition, I've heard clients complain about the following **pet peeves**:

- Posts that talk ad nauseam (pun intended) about your food allergies/eating plan/body fat percentage/workout routine
- Posts announcing your breakup with your boyfriend or girlfriend (and how you're feeling about it...minute to minute)
- Posts/photos detailing the ongoing cuteness of your kitten / puppy / pony....
- Pictures of rainbows/unicorns/fluffy creatures
- Dubiously sourced, inspirational quotes.

If it seems like I'm being a killjoy, consider this: **if you have that much time to spend mucking around on your social media pages, you don't come across as wanting a job.** Additionally, you 'read' for a future employer as someone who will spend a lot of time doing exactly the same thing should they hire you.

Wouldn't you agree?



Next, **my rules for Twitter:**

Like Facebook, Twitter began as a way to make your opinions known, and one of its supposed 'benefits' is its immediacy. But how often is our first reaction our best? I say, rarely. Consequently, and forthwith, my #1 rule for Twitter:

- Tweets are forever: Don't tweet anything you wouldn't want to see on the front page of the New York Times.

After that, the other elements I consider mandatory:

- Be amusing without being mean-spirited.
- Offer actionable information people can use to run their business, or their life, more efficiently.
- Do not fall back on abbreviations, emoticons, and/or any other trappings of the high school set. You're not in high school anymore-- your tweets shouldn't sound like you're stuck in detention.

Now that you have those accounts in-hand, I recommend getting **a LinkedIn account if you don't have one already** and reaching out to those working in the field you'd like to enter.

That said, when you do, please keep the following in mind. **You must add value every time you interact.**

What do I mean by this? Well, the same way you don't enjoy receiving an email, post, or IM from a friend along the lines of, "Hi, I'm very special so I was thinking you should do X for me" your potential boss doesn't enjoy receiving an email, post, etc. from you saying anything along the lines of, "Hi, I'm really talented and I think you should give me a job."

Make sense?

So what should you do?



With this in mind, when you do write them **make it clear you respect that boundary**. This might sound like, “Dear Mr. So-and-So, I am writing you via in-mail as I recognize it’s unlikely you have the time/stamina/inclination to respond to every request to link in, but I wanted to let you know how much I admire/appreciate your work in X field (be specific!) and I was hoping my recently acquired skill set could contribute to your/your firm’s goals.”

That’s a note that’s likely to get a reply.



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What else can you do to present your best self?

I recommend **buying your name as a URL**. You will be taken much more seriously if you are yourname@yourname.com than you will if you are using google/hotmail/yahoo, etc. If you must use a generic delivery system don't have an email address along the lines of hotkitty@xxx.com or shaft@xxxx.com

Additionally, I'm not a fan of obscure combinations of letters and numbers. While it might be immediately apparent, and a helpful aide memoire for you, that your address is your initials and your birthday or the date Beyonce rocked the Super bowl or some such, you are making others work too hard to remember it.

And when you make me work too hard I feel stupid, and when I feel stupid, I don't like you.



Finally, if you're not already the proud possessor of a website, I suggest putting up a splash page with the following elements:

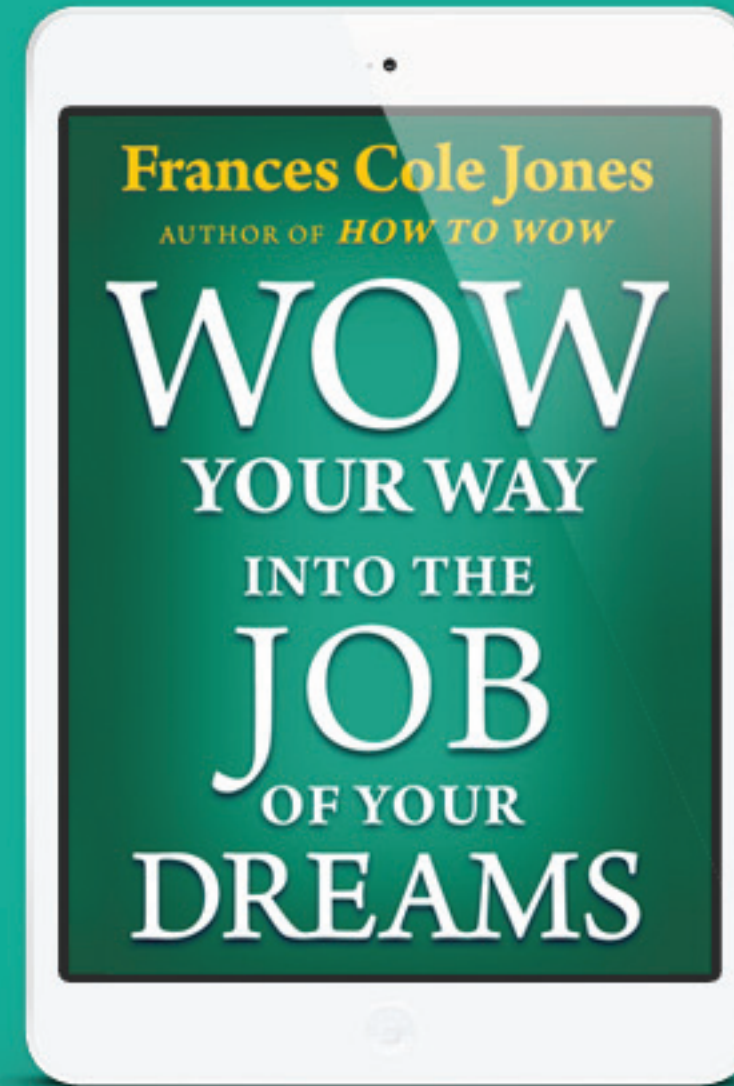
- Your bio. (This is not a resume, but a paragraph or two filled with active language that lays out specific details about what you've accomplished, and why others should care.)
- A professional headshot (While I know these can be expensive, they are well worth the money. In my dream world, they're not only professional-looking, they convey your personality, too—there's nothing wrong with smiling. I don't recommend having your arms crossed over your chest, or leaning your chin on your hand, both of which 'read' as discomfort.)
- A statement of your goals
- Your contact details
- Links to sites you frequent (Again, be appropriate! If you have any doubt in your mind, do not include it.) If these can show a breadth of interests to demonstrate general curiosity, then you really make my heart sing.
- If available, you might also include a portfolio of papers and/or Power Point presentations that you've written or executed, photos and/or video of you presenting at conferences, and—perhaps—one or two general interests. (If you do choose to include these, I will tell you that one of my clients who works in the banking industry told me that they do look to see if you've played team sports.) If you do post samples of your work, make sure you assert copyright by adding a © your name or organization, and the year.

Happy hunting!!








Now that you're a social media maven, I invite you to read my latest eBook ***Wow Your Way into the Job of Your Dreams*** if you really want to stand out amongst the competition when job hunting.

You're smart. You're self-aware. You have a lot to offer. So why do you need this book? Because you're savvy enough to know it's what you don't yet know that can make all the difference in whether you land or lose that coveted job. Distilled from ***The Wow Factor***, ***Wow Your Way into the Job of Your Dreams*** takes all your skills, smarts, and willingness to learn and transforms your vision into a reality. By the time you finish reading this book, you will have the edge you need to set yourself apart from even the toughest competitors.



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