

Workers filming themselves being fired for social media warned to ‘be careful’

A surprising new viral video trend had experts warning workers to think before impulsively posting.

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In a new social media trend, people are letting the world in on the moment they are let go from their jobs.

Careers

Young workers are filming themselves being sacked from their job and sharing it on social media, sparking fears of long-term damage to careers. Experts admit they are powerless to stop the lay-off videos from being posted to TikTok, conceding that telling young people not to do it will likely lead to more joining the latest workplace craze.

“No one’s going to listen if you say, ‘don’t do it’ so, I guess, if you’re going to do it, be smart because it’s on there (online platforms) forever,” says Roxanne Calder, founder of recruitment firm EST10.

“Be careful about what you say about your boss, about the business and about your workplace.

“Have a look at what you posted (to social media) five years ago – do you regret any of that? It’s likely you will regret this in another five years too.”



Lay-off videos have become popular on TikTok.

Attention seeking

TikTok videos of workers being sacked from their job are going viral, with some racking up millions of views and thousands of online comments.

Experts say the videos are hardly surprising, given young people have long been comfortable posting even the most intimate details of their lives to social media.

But Calder says the trend is fraught with danger and will likely harm future job prospects.

“If I was a potential employer and ... saw a post (a candidate) put up about leaving their job and it was quite emotional, I would be nervous about how impulsive they would be if I hired them,” she says.

“What if I had to deliver a message that they didn’t like? Would they post about my business?”

At the very least, Calder suggests those sharing a job loss on social media express gratitude towards their former employer – and opt for professional platforms such as LinkedIn, rather than TikTok.

“Don’t just react (post) impulsively and don’t become a victim,” she says.

“Protect your reputation and your personal brand and have a level of control over your emotions and how you are being portrayed.

“If you’re really smart about it, you could be (posting something) like, ‘I’ve just been made redundant, I’m available from Monday, I’m a really good worker, this is what I’m good at and, in particular, I want to work for this firm’ – and then hashtag them.”

Not alone

People and behaviour expert Mark Carter believes the intentions of most young people who share these videos are genuine.

“If you put yourself in their shoes, potentially people might feel that by doing this, they’re not alone, that they’re genuinely going to get some support around this and that they will get comments such as, ‘that’s shocking’,” he says.

“Having said that, you also go, ‘why are you doing this?’ Because let’s be frank, if you are hoping it goes viral and becomes a talking point, that’s not a good thing ... but that’s absolutely the reason some people will do it.”

Carter says those posting lay-off videos to social media must be mindful of any contractual obligations not to disparage their former employer or breach defamation and privacy laws.

“Understand there could be repercussions and people may look at you through a lens that you don’t want them to,” he says.

“Use caution because there are downsides – there are legal risks and (the potential for poor) character references.

“Don’t do it purely because it’s a trend and it’s viral and it’s a hashtag.”



Laure Legros used social media to help secure a job at WorkforClimate.

Be strategic

Millennial worker Laure Legros says she would never film herself being fired or quitting and post it to TikTok. But she does believe there are benefits in sharing news of a job loss to social media.

The 36-year-old resigned from her role as a sales manager at Google in 2020 and says her strategic use of online platforms, notably LinkedIn, was key to successfully transitioning to a new role in the sustainability sector.

Legros used social media to connect with like-minded climate activists, which led her to non-profit organisation WorkforClimate, where she now works as the head of experience.

“LinkedIn was a big help,” she says.

“People are very open to having chats and I wasn’t necessarily going in and asking for a job but I was really interested in understanding what people were working on and where they thought the sector was heading.

“I would connect with one person and then ask who else they thought I should connect with and if they gave me one or two people (suggestions)

then I would connect with them and my map (network) just grew from there.”

How to handle being fired

1. Stop and think before posting your job loss to social media. What seems like a good idea now may not be viewed the same way later.
2. Take the high ground. Rather than adopting an attitude of ‘this is what my boss did to me’, consider what you can learn from your experience and take that learning to your next role.
3. Move forward. Instead of sitting around feeling sorry for yourself, spend time investing in your professional development in preparation for a new job.
4. Build your networks. Who you know still matters so build and strengthen your professional and social networks and let them know you are looking for new work.

Source: Mark Carter