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Employers' Latest Social Media Nightmare: Vine

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If you are still learning how to navigate Facebook, Tweet, or Instagram in order to keep up with your employees, you better add Vine to your list. Vine is a new mobile service app from Twitter that allows users to capture and share short, 6 second, looping videos. Like Twitter and Facebook, users have a homepage where they can upload their videos. Users can also follow others, which allows users to see the videos of people they are following on their homepage. This is the same concept as Facebook or Twitter except instead of status updates or short messages users are sharing videos.

Recording videos is easy. Any two-year-old can work this app. The user simply taps and holds his or her finger on the screen to begin recording and lifts his or her finger when finished. Once the video is complete, the user has the option of adding his or her location and a hashtag with a caption. For those of you who are new to the social media craze, a hashtag is what used to be referred to in America as the pound symbol (#) plus a word or words. Hashtags were originally created as a way to categorize and search for messages and are now used to mark keywords or topics in a post. In case you are still confused, here are some examples. Currently, the top hashtags are #love with 184,519,839 tags, #me with 87,162,957 tags, and #cute with 77,190,943 tags. Back to the point, once the location and hashtag are added, the video is ready to be shared with millions of other users, which is called “revining.”

I am sure you are wondering, why does this matter to me? How could videos about #love or #cute impact my business? You are right. You should not necessarily be worried about #love, but you should be worried about these videos: #worksucks, #bored, or even just #work. Although the videos must be 6 seconds or less, they can still be damaging to your business if you keep in mind that Vine crossed the 40 million user mark on August 21, 2013. Try searching some of these tags and you will quickly see employees goofing off at work, complaining about their jobs, sleeping, or engaging in a myriad of other inappropriate behavior. You will also notice that many employees are wearing uniforms with their employer's logo or posed in front of large signage.

Other frightening behavior can be more innocuous such as employees providing insight into what they do on a day-to-day basis. These employees, however, may forget that they are videoing confidential information or trade secrets.

I think you get the point. Instead of just posting on Facebook, employees are now using Vine to take videos of their workplace or videos discussing their workplace. Even short videos can be very harmful to a business' reputation, especially when they loop over and over again. Now, I am sure you are wondering, what can I do to protect my business or brand? Your first step should be developing and instituting a social media policy for all employees. Vine also provides employees with another avenue to engage in conduct protected by the National Labor Relations Act, so employers should proceed with caution in disciplining employees based on their Vine posts.