



PAID SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDE

People leave. Agencies change. Contracts end. Does access follow?

A guide to uncovering lingering access across paid social and programmatic advertising, and extending coverage to additional supported accounts.

The access question

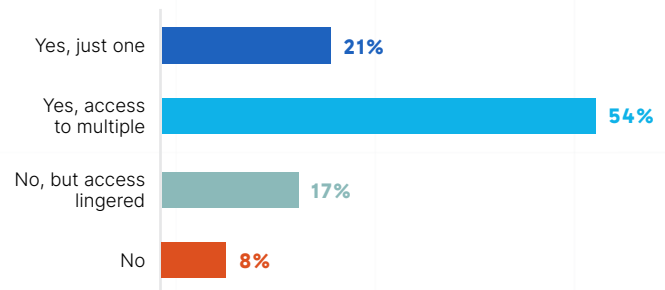
You already manage access to organic social accounts with Cerby. But a brand's publishing profile is not necessarily the same asset as its advertising account, business portfolio, or associated administrative roles. Paid social can introduce additional permissions, partners, billing relationships, and privileged access that deserve the same lifecycle controls.

An employee departure, agency change, or completed contractor engagement should end the access granted for that work. But disabling a corporate login or closing a contract may not remove direct platform invitations, business-manager roles, partner grants, shared credentials, or ownership assigned inside an ad platform or DSP. If those permissions remain, a person or partner may still be able to sign in, act on behalf of your brand, change campaigns, or spend budget, depending on their role. The account stays active; the authorization to use it should not.

What Marketers say

In a recent [poll done on LinkedIn](#), 21% of respondents said they had access to a past employer/client social media account. **54% of respondents said they had access to multiple.** Only 8% reported having no access.

HOW MANY PEOPLE STILL HAVE ACCESS TO A PREVIOUS EMPLOYER AND/OR CLIENT'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS (ORGANIC OR PAID)



A departure date or contract end date is a trigger to verify access, not proof that access was removed. The same review applies when an agency is replaced, a freelance media buyer finishes a project, or a contractor rotates off the account.

Organic and paid social carry different kinds of risk

ASSET	WHAT ACCESS CAN ENABLE	WHAT TO ESTABLISH
Organic social profile	Publish, edit, or remove content; respond as the brand; change some page/profile settings depending on permissions.	Who has access, what role they hold, and how access is removed when responsibilities change.
Advertising account	Create or alter campaigns; change targeting or creative; pause activity; and, depending on role and platform, influence or authorize advertising spend.	Which users have campaign, admin, billing, or other privileged roles separate from the organic profile.
DSP / programmatic buying platform	Create or alter programmatic campaigns; change budgets, audiences, inventory, or targeting; access performance data; and, depending on role, direct media spend across publishers or channels.	Who owns each advertiser seat, who has admin or buying privileges, which agencies or partners are attached, and how access is revoked.
Business manager / portfolio	Administer connected assets, users, partners, and permissions across multiple social or advertising properties.	Who owns the container, who holds privileged roles, and whether any former employee or external partner remains attached.
Agency / partner access	Allow external teams to operate on brand and advertising assets, sometimes across multiple accounts.	Who approved access, what assets it covers, how long it should persist, and who is responsible for revocation.

The risk depends on what access remains and what the role permits. Organic publishing access can enable unauthorized posts, messages, or profile changes. Paid-social access can add campaign changes, audience exposure, and unauthorized spending. DSP access can extend those consequences across programmatic campaigns, advertiser seats, and multiple publishers. Not every role permits every action; review permissions asset by asset.



What changes when the account can spend?

Consider three common transitions. A departing employee retains a direct invitation to an ad account after their corporate account is disabled. A former agency keeps a partner grant to Business Manager or a DSP advertiser seat after the new agency takes over. A freelance contractor retains campaign permissions after a launch ends.

If those grants are not explicitly reviewed and revoked, the former user or partner may still be able to change creative, targeting, budgets, or campaigns, and in some roles initiate spend. Separately, if the departing party is the sole owner or administrator, the business may lose the ability to operate or recover its own account.

RISK	ORGANIC SOCIAL ACCESS	PAID SOCIAL / AD ACCOUNTS / DSPS
Brand & reputation	Post, edit, delete, or respond publicly as the brand, depending on permissions.	Can create or alter ad creative and messaging that appears under the brand. In paid channels, those changes can be amplified through active media spend.
Financial exposure	Usually limited direct spend exposure from the organic profile itself.	Depending on permissions, can launch or modify campaigns, increase budgets, direct company ad spend, or change programmatic buying settings across paid social accounts and DSPs.
Operational disruption	Can disrupt publishing, community management, or account recovery.	Can pause campaigns, alter targeting or inventory, disrupt lead generation, interfere with billing, change partner access, or block current teams from administering active media.

Paid access can also expose more than money. Social ad platforms and DSPs may contain audience definitions, campaign strategy, performance data, billing details, connected data, partner relationships, inventory and buying controls, and privileged roles. What is visible or changeable depends on the platform and permission level, which is exactly why role-level inventory matters.

Organic access asks: “Can they still speak as us?” Paid-social and DSP access add: “Can they still spend as us, change our campaigns, or access our audiences?” The common root is access that survives the job, contract, or agency relationship that originally justified it.

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What this looks like in the real world

In public, self-reported Reddit discussions, one organization described a former employee who could still switch into its business account long after leaving. Another described a museum whose only Business Manager administrator had departed. A newly hired marketer reported being unable to complete advertising payment setup because an unidentified former employee remained associated with the business account. These are illustrations, not verified incident reports or evidence of frequency.

These self-reported stories illustrate different failure modes: a former user retaining access, an ex-employee remaining the only administrator, and campaigns blocked because the current team cannot control the account. Agency changes and contractor end dates create the same need to verify revocation and ownership, even when no employee leaves.



MARKETING PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO PREVIOUS EMPLOYERS ACCOUNTS VIA [LI POLL:](#)

I have had access to a previous employer's socials (and ad accounts!) for over 7 years. I have asked them to remove me. They don't. It's mind-boggling to me.

- JESS COOK, VP OF MARKETING

Provably 8-9 right now. Both social and various ad platforms, plus Search Console. The number would be double digits if I didn't proactively reach out to let them know they need to kick me.

- TAMARA CEMAN, HEAD OF MARKETING

Why do they do that? I've reached out to former clients and asked them to remove me but they don't seem to care. Good thing that I don't go into their accounts anymore or have intentions on doing something with them. It's a major security breach issue on their end.

- ARI PAULIN, SR. MARKETING STRATEGIST

Yes, multiple! Sometimes you can't remove yourself...so I've made sure to have a paper trail of me requesting that past clients remove me.

- TOM BASGIL JR., VP OF GTM & GROWTH

Still have access to a client's LinkedIn six years later...

- KIRAN SHAHID, B2B CONTENT WRITER

Want more? Keep reading for checklists and a guide!



CHECKLISTS

FIND YOUR PAID-SOCIAL ACCESS GAPS IN 20 MINUTES

- ☐ Inventory advertising platforms in use, including Meta, LinkedIn, X, Reddit, and DSPs used for programmatic media buying.
- ☐ Record each actual ad account, advertiser seat, business portfolio, and DSP instance, not just platform names.
- ☐ Identify the business owner, technical administrator, privileged users, service identities where applicable, and external agencies for each asset.
- ☐ Map access paths: direct user assignments, business-manager roles, partner grants, and any shared or recovery credentials.
- ☐ Reconcile permissions against employee departures and role changes, completed contractor projects, agency replacements, expired partner agreements, and existing Cerby-managed assets. Check both direct user access and organization-to-organization partner grants.
- ☐ Prioritize orphaned ownership, standing administrator access, unknown external access, accounts or DSP seats with active spend, and any role that can change budgets, payment settings, audiences, inventory, campaigns, partner access, or other users.
- ☐ Review gaps with your Cerby team to confirm platform support, onboarding prerequisites, and applicable identity-management workflows.

ASK ACCOUNT OWNERS FOR THE FULL PICTURE

- ☐ Send to your marketing/ and or social media team:
We're reviewing access across our social and advertising environment after employee changes, completed contractor work, and agency transitions. Please share the organic profiles, social ad accounts, business portfolios, DSP advertiser seats, and related assets you manage; their owners and administrators; current agency/contractor grants; and any access that should have ended. We'll compare this inventory with existing coverage and identify supported accounts to bring under management.

MAKE THE NEXT REVIEW MEASURABLE

- ☐ Accounts discovered
 - ☐ Supported accounts not yet onboarded
 - ☐ Departed employees and completed contractor engagements with access still present
 - ☐ Former-agency partner grants awaiting removal
 - ☐ Assets with sole or unknown administrators
 - ☐ Privileged roles reviewed
 - ☐ Access confirmed revoked
- NOTE:** Recheck after every agency handoff/ contract end, not just employee offboarding.

EXTEND IDENTITY COVERAGE BEYOND THE PUBLISHING PROFILE

- ☐ Bring your organic, paid-social, and DSP inventory to your Cerby customer team.
- ☐ Confirm supported platforms and applicable capabilities
- ☐ Identify additional accounts for coverage.
- ☐ Prioritize active-spend assets, external partner access, and ownership gaps.
- ☐ Verify revocation in each platform rather than assuming a terminated employment or agency relationship removed it.

GUIDE

Three transitions that should trigger an access review

01. EMPLOYEE LEAVES/SWITCH ROLES
Their corporate identity may be disabled while a personal login, direct platform role, or shared credential remains active. Confirm removal from each relevant social profile, ad account, business portfolio, and DSP seat.

02. AGENCY CHANGES
The outgoing agency may still hold a partner-level grant, advertiser-seat access, or the only administrator/ownership role. Confirm ownership stays with your business, revoke the outgoing agency's grants, and validate the incoming agency has only the permissions it needs.

03. CONTRACTOR FINISHES
A freelance buyer, creative specialist, or consultant may have been invited directly for a short project. Check expiration and removal of their individual permissions, tokens or shared credentials where applicable, and any access to audiences, reporting, or billing.

FOR EVERY TRANSITION:

- ☐ Identify assets
- ☐ Identify direct and partner permissions
- ☐ Transfer ownership if needed
- ☐ Revoke unneeded access
- ☐ Verify removal in the platform
- ☐ Document the result