

## Sample internal Social Media Policy for Employees

This social media policy governs the publication of - and commentary on - social media by [your organization] employees. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and new tools as they emerge.

- This policy is in addition to, and complements any, existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the Internet.
- **[your organization]** employees may publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy.
- Employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a **[your organization]** employee.
- Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by **[your organization]** employees who use social media platforms on behalf of the company as their position with **[your organization]** would be well known within the community.
- Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.
- **Employees should be aware that what they say on social media is permanent.**
- When using social media, employees are required to follow the same ethical standards they would otherwise use when communicating about our work.
- All conduct standards stated in the employee handbook apply to any employee's use of social media.

### **Protect the privacy of [your organization]**

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it is not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details of current projects, research, and comments shared in confidence during meetings within the organization or any coalition work.

### **Protect your own privacy**

Due to the sensitivity of the work that [your organization] does, the Communications staff at [your organization] recommends that upon hire, employees set their privacy settings on social media platforms to private. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names in any personal or organizational capacity. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name and be clear about who you are. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out. **But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy.** What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

### **Respect copyright laws**

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including [your organization]'s own copyrights and brands. **Never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source.**

### **Respect your audience, [your organization], and your coworkers**

The public in general, and [your organization] employees and partners, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Do not say anything contradictory or in conflict with the [your organization] brand or website. **When using social media on behalf of [your organization], employees must use caution when commenting on topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion.** In all social media outreach, employees should be respectful of diverse cultures and points of view (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, etc.). Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of [your organization].

### **Controversial issues**

If you see misrepresentations made about [your organization] in the media, you should immediately point this out to the Communications team and management. **Never** respond on behalf of yourself or the organization to claims made about [your organization]. Do not goad opposition or others into inflammatory debates.

### **Be the first to respond to your own mistakes**

If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal

action. If you make an error that has the potential to cause harm or embarrassment to [your organization], please alert management, even if you have deleted or modified the post.

### **Think about consequences**

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your social media to defame or tarnish the reputation of [your organization], or your coworkers, will lead to disciplinary action or termination. Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. **This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect. Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for [your organization], anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of [your organization].** The Communications staff can provide you with applicable disclaimer language such as "All thoughts and opinions expressed here are my own," and assist with determining where and how to use that. Don't forget your day job. Unless you are part of the Communications staff at [your organization] it is vital to you sure that activity on social media does not interfere with your specific job or commitments to projects.

### **Social media tips**

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media. Beware of joining a conversation or group online if you aren't familiar with the topic. **Don't just join in for the sake of joining or because it is gaining traction or attention.** Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, play it smart and check with a Communications staff member or member of the management team before posting.

### **Enforcement Policy**

Violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination at the discretion of the [Management] of [your organization].