

[Company Name] Social Media Policy

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by employees of [Company Name] and its related companies ("[Company Name]"). For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

[Company Name] employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. [Company Name] employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves as a [Company Name] employee (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to [Company Name]).

Before engaging in work related social media, employees must obtain the permission of the President of [Company Name].

Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by [Company Name] employees who are Directors, Managers, or Sales, as their position with [Company Name] would be well known within the community.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that [Company Name] employees must otherwise follow.

Setting up Social Media

Assistance in setting up social media accounts and their settings can be obtained from [Company Name]'s Social Media Manager.

Social media identities, logon ID's and user names may not use [Company Name]'s name without prior approval from the President of [Company Name].

Your profile on social media sites must be consistent with your profile on the [Company Name] website or other [Company Name] publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Social Media Manager.

Official [Company Name] photographs must be used for your profile photograph. [Company Name] photographs can be obtained from the Social Media Manager.

Don't Tell Secrets

It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our software, details of current projects, future product ship dates, financial information, research, and trade secrets. We must respect the wishes of our corporate customers regarding the confidentiality of current projects. We must also be mindful of the competitiveness of our industry.

Protect your own privacy

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the [Company Name] website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for [Company Name]. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. 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 [Company Name] own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

Respect your audience, [Company Name], and your coworkers

The public in general, and [Company Name]'s employees and customers, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the [Company Name] website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. 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 [Company Name].

Protect [Company Name] customers, business partners and suppliers

Customers, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a customer, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a customer engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a customer (e.g., Customer 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the customer or make it easy for someone to identify the customer. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a customer.

Controversial Issues

If you see misrepresentations made about [Company Name] in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts.

If you spot a potential issue and believe an official Company response is needed, bring it to the attention of a member of the Communications team, or President, before it reaches a crisis situation. Potential issues can often be resolved more effectively and efficiently if they are managed quickly.

If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

Think About Consequences

For example, consider what might happen if a [Company Name] employee is in a meeting with a customer or prospect, and someone on the customer's side pulls out a print-out of your blog and says "This person at [Company Name] says that product sucks."

Saying "Product X needs to have an easier learning curve for the first-time user" is fine; saying "Product X sucks" is risky, unsubtle and amateurish.

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your blog to trash or embarrass [Company Name], our customers, or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised.

Disclaimers

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 [Company Name], anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of [Company Name].

The Social Media Manager can provide you with applicable disclaimer language and assist with determining where and how to use that.

Don't forget your day job.

Make sure that blogging, or any other social media activity, does not interfere with your job (unless this is your job) or commitments to customers.

Social Media Tips

The following tips will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.

Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.

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 in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause.

Any questions, or further clarification on this policy, please contact the Social Media Manager at [Company Name] [Company Phone number].

I realize that social media is a powerful communication tool, and strive to respect and utilize it to support positive conversation and sharing of information, both personally and professionally.

- I will be truthful.
- I will be considerate and respectful to others.
- I will protect the privacy of offline conversations.
- I will clearly state that the views I express online are mine only when using my personal profiles.
- I will be honest about who I am.
- I will not share confidential information.
- I realize that everything I put on the internet is permanent, so will take extra care to choose my words and think twice before sharing, or responding to something/someone.
- I will not let any personal social media activity interfere with my work.

Signed _____ Date _____

Name _____