

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Our company strives for a balanced online dialogue. When we moderate postings to the company blog, or run across any postings put on public access social media, we expect our employees to act in a professional manner.

If you participate in social media, such as MySpace, FaceBook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, a blog, etc. on business or personal time we expect you to follow the following guidelines. If you have any questions about this policy, please [start by checking the FAQ and then] contact the human resources department or IT department, for further information or clarification.

1. **Prohibited Conduct** - The Company absolutely prohibits revealing its name on social media or other websites, which include sexual, violent, or illegal content. It also prohibits postings on any social media discussing competitors or their products or services, without express permission to do so. The same goes for clients, customers, and potential clients and customers. The company also prohibits language that is defamatory, harassing, disparaging, or violates obscenity laws.
2. **Transparency** - Always identify yourself; especially if you're saying anything related to our business, including our company, the competition, or any products on the marketplace. Indicate you are a company employee where appropriate.
3. **Have Integrity and Be Honest** - Stick to your area of expertise. Don't pretend to be a know-it-all. Half-truths and outright lies will be quickly ferreted out by today's social media watchdogs, competitors, regulators and others. Whether it's a comment you make on a MySpace page or in an update to a Wiki page, chances are, somebody may be monitoring your activities; if not the company, the government, the corporate media, or some other watchdog is likely to be paying close attention.
4. **Your Opinion vs. Company Opinion** - Unless you have *specific permission* to speak on behalf of the company, clearly indicate that all postings represent *your opinion*. When posting to any site outside of the company, please use the following disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent the company's positions, strategies, or opinions."
5. **Protect the Brand** - Be careful when using the company brand, logos, copyrights, trademarks, etc. If you intend to use them on social media at all, you must obtain permission prior to doing so. Same with the property of any client, customer, or competitor.
6. **Company Policies and Procedures Apply** - Your social media activities are subject to the same policies and procedures as your other workplace activities. So, for example, if it is inappropriate to engage in sexual harassment while at work, then it is equally inappropriate to do so through the context of social media.

7. **Confidentiality** - Maintain the confidentiality of company, client, and customer information. Just like you can destroy the value of a company trade secret by sharing too much information at a trade show, you can do likewise while posting it online. If you're not sure what is/isn't appropriate to share in these areas, please do not hesitate to seek out advice first. If you do not feel comfortable speaking about this with your supervisor, please contact human resources or the head of IT.
8. **"Friending"** - If you are in management, think twice about friending an employee.
9. **Be Professional** - Watch for typos and misspellings. All the protocols surrounding proper e-mailing also apply to the use of social media (i.e., no "shouting," defamatory language, or incendiary words).
10. **Watch Any Advice You Give** - Whatever you do, don't offer legal, medical, or psychological analyses, unless you are in fact a lawyer, doctor, or psychologist... Even if you did sleep at a Holiday Inn last night!
11. **Don't Waste Company Time** - Personal social media use is restricted to personal time *only*. This is no different than it is for phone calls or e-mails. Make sure that you have permission to access Social Media sites on company equipment. Otherwise, you should not use the company's time and equipment to participate in personal use of social media.
12. **Be a Watchdog** - If you find a negative, disparaging, or otherwise concerning posts about the company, its products, services, or clients, let us know! Please contact your manager, HR or the IT department ASAP. Please do not respond to it without first receiving instruction unless you have specific permission to do so.