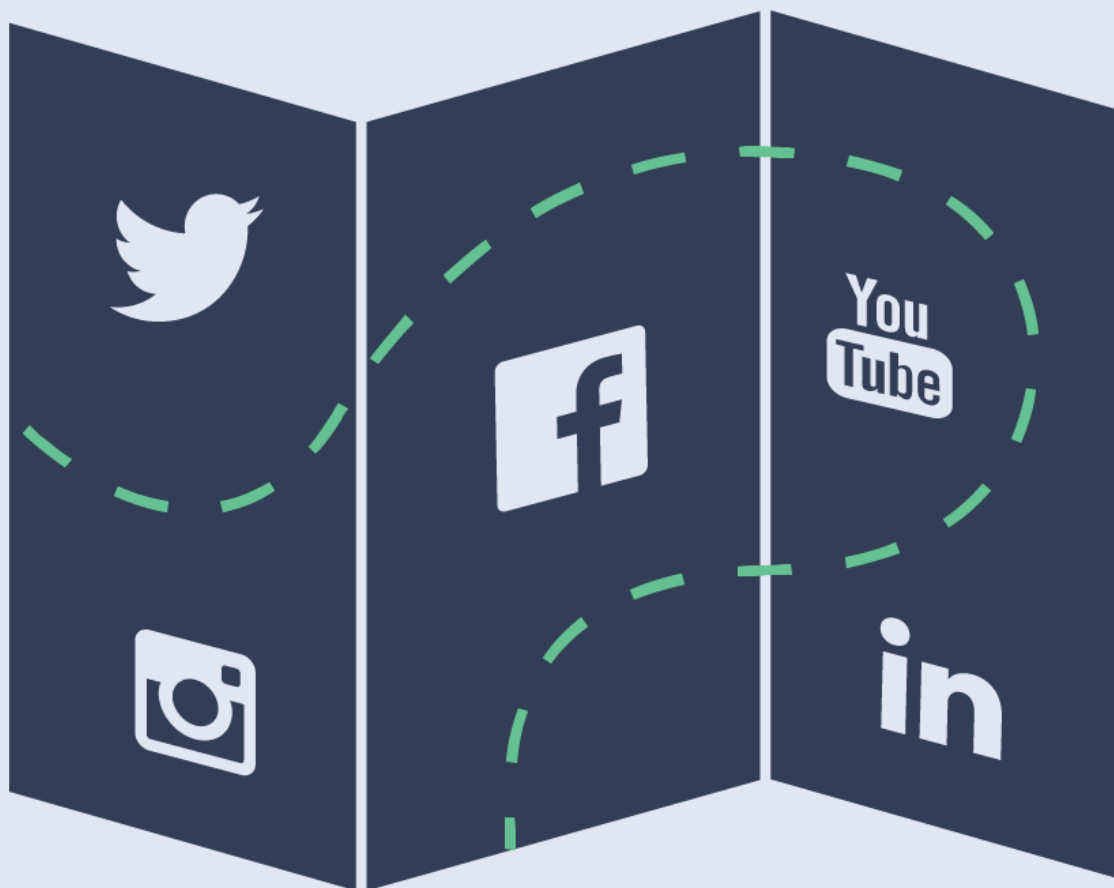




EMPLOYEE SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES





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01

Introduction

Social media has become a regular part of everyday communication. According to [Weber Shandwick](#), 98% of employees use at least one social media site for personal use, of which 50% are already posting about their company. So it's important that your company has established social media policies and guidelines to protect your employees and customers. Social media policies and guidelines are used and put in place to ensure that employees know how they should use social media on the company's time and how to best represent the company online. In this guide, you'll learn about what you should include in your company's social media policy, and a few best practices for interacting on Twitter and LinkedIn.

02

The Purpose of Social Media

Before we get started, it's important to note that the most important thing to remember with the social media policy is that you want to encourage employees to participate, and NOT scare them. The main goal with the policy and guidelines is to make employees comfortable to use social media at work.

This needs to be emphasized throughout the entire policy.

Now, the first part of any social media policy should include a brief introduction about why using social media at work is important to the company. Many employees feel uncomfortable to use social media while working, as they might be scared that managers will think they're losing focus and not doing their job.

But actually, social media is a viable channel to use for communicating with customers and prospects. It's good to remind and encourage employees to use every communication tool at their disposal.



03

What is Social Media?

Every company has a different definition of what they consider social media. Most policies will include guidelines around the big social networks (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn), but social media can include other forms of online communications, like blogs, forums, Youtube, private chats, etc. It's good practice to add a definition in the social media policy that outlines what your company considers as social media and social networking. Not everyone will have the same view of what's included as "social media," so it's important the company establishes this definition in the social media policy.

04

Protect Company and Customer Information

At every company, there's certain information that's confidential and proprietary. It's important to remind employees of what information is appropriate to share publicly. At this point, it would also be good to add specific examples of what employees should or should not share. You could provide a list of what kind of content and information is acceptable to share.

For example, you should, and are encouraged to share:

- Company blog articles
- Company press releases
- Industry reports that are publicly available
- Corporate videos
- Third party articles that don't mention competitors

Using a platform like [PostBeyond](#) will make it easier for employees to feel comfortable sharing, as administrators of the platform are pre-approving content to add to a searchable library for employees to schedule or share at a click of a button.

This part of the policy is meant to protect the company, along with all employees and customers.

05

Be Authentic and Transparent

It's important to use real names and identities when creating social media accounts. People can quickly see through fake interactions and fake names these days.

You should also encourage employees to identify themselves as representatives of the company. This helps build overall customer experience and brand health.

It's important to note, however, that employees should not use your brand or company name when choosing their username, unless specifically asked to by the company.

Social media accounts are personal property, and should remain so (unless it is a branded account, like John_CompanyX). You should never ask employees for their personal passwords. The social media policy is in place to protect the employees and the company, and this should be enough.

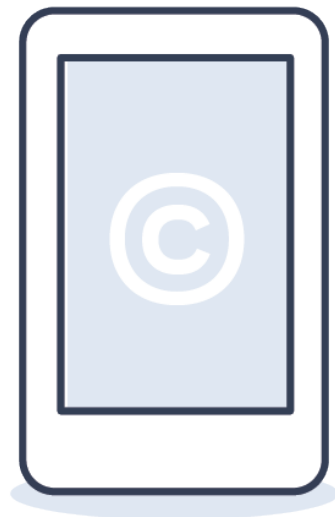
06

Copyright and Fair Use

Not everything on the internet is free to use. Just because it's easily accessible, doesn't mean that you're not infringing on copyrights if you share it.

For example, you can't just find an image in a search engine and share it without giving credits to the photographer. By doing this, you're infringing on copyright laws, and could get in trouble if the artist/photographer decides to take action against you.

Make sure to remind employees to give proper credit when sharing articles, images, videos, and other content.



07

Ethical Standards

At this point of the policy, you should refer back to your company's code of conduct and ethics policy.

The internet is very much permanent, and it becomes very hard to fix or edit anything that gets published. Even though you can use the edit functionalities and delete posts after publishing on most social networks, unfortunately there's always the possibility of someone taking a screenshot of what you shared.

Make sure that employees are aware the information they share can be tracked, and any false information, rumors, or information used against the company could result in liability.

08

Be Responsible And Use Common Sense

This part of the social media policy is used to emphasize certain behaviours employees should or should not do on social media. For example:

- Never participate in a Social Media conversation when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis for the company. Even leaving anonymous comments can be traced back to you or the company through your IP address
- Refrain from participating in sensitive topics, such as religion or politics. Conversations around that nature often result in heated debates.
- Don't slam the competition or [your company]. Make sure you speak diplomatically, and have the facts straight.
- Don't speak "on behalf" of [your company]. Stick to what you know, if you're not an expert on the subject, refer people to someone who has that expertise.

- Add value: Make sure when you're sharing content that you add your point of view, opinion, and expertise. There are millions of words to choose from, choose yours carefully to create the best impact.
- Keep it cool: There's a fine line between healthy debate and provocative reactions. Remember, you're trying to connect with people and have fun. If you made a mistake, just be upfront about it. People prefer honesty.

08

Social Etiquette: Be Nice, Have Fun, and Build Relationships

This part of the social media policy reminds and encourages employees to communicate and connect. Social media is about building relationships.

These relationships will be much more rewarding if you have meaningful conversations instead of just pushing agendas.

Also, nobody wants to be “pitch-slapped.” You're there to learn and have fun. There will be an appropriate time to push the sale, but not on the first interaction.



Finish off the policy with contact information of team members responsible for any questions or concerns. After the initial policy, add a social media best practice guide for employees who are new to social media or that need some extra resources.

Social Media Policy Checklist

- ☐ Make sure your social media policy covers all legal aspects, but is still easy to read and approachable for employees
- ☐ Minimize the use of legal jargon
- ☐ Get input feedback from multiple departments, not just marketing and legal
- ☐ Create your own definition of what your company considers as “social media”
- ☐ Make sure you encourage employees to share - you don't want to scare them away
- ☐ Remind employees why you're encouraging social media use at work
- ☐ Design a simple, easy to read document for your employees
- ☐ Plan how you will communicate this to employees
- ☐ Have fun!

Want to learn more?

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