

Creating a Social Media Policy:

Organizational Social Media Policy Elements

Policy statement

This is an outline of the policy's purpose, referencing the organization's usual professional and ethical standards.

Guiding principles

These are the basic dos and don'ts of your social media policy. Focus on the things people CAN do rather than making this a detailed list of prohibitions. Recommended general principles:

| Do | Don't |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be honest • Be yourself: it's OK to have a personality • Be polite • Write what you know • Be clear: it's easy to be misunderstood. • Add value to your content (comment, summarize, expand, point to other references, etc.) • Have conversations • Respect copyright laws • Protect your privacy and that of your organization, partners, supplier and clients (respect PIPEDA) • Respect your audience, your organization and your colleagues • Attribute content to its original author or source • Make sure what you share is factually correct | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell secrets • Pretend to be someone else • Spam • Pick fights |

Handling controversy

Providing guidelines for staff on dealing with challenging commentary or feedback will help them make the most of the situation. Always view negative comments as an opportunity.

| Do | Don't |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge the issue: be the first to respond to your own mistakes • Thank people for their feedback and respond with respect • Apologize sincerely and gracefully • Use mild and/or self-deprecating humour, if appropriate • Fix the problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fail to respond • Ignore, deny, or panic about the problem • Overreact when mistakes are made – mistakes happen • Get into pointless arguments |

Disclaimers

If you would like employees using social media to include a disclaimer about their personal posts not necessarily reflecting the opinions of the organization, outline when and how in this section. Offer sample text to make it easy for employees to comply.

Enforcement

Outline repercussions for policy violations. This section can be quite short as it probably only needs to reference your main personnel policy.