

DO IT FOR THE GRAM...

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Half of the world's population regularly uses some sort of social media platform. Just think about that for a second. The opportunities for businesses to reach their target audiences are greater than ever! We are now able to create and promote our brand almost exclusively online.

While the ability to communicate so effectively can humanise your brand and extend your reach, it can also leave you exposed to constant criticism. A clear social media policy ensures that employees have a thorough understanding of what is and isn't acceptable content to post.

There are three main benefits of having a well drafted and comprehensive social media policy:

Firstly, it's a simple and effective way to defend your business against security risks and legal issues. Defamation, privacy, intellectual property and copyright infringements create more trouble than they're worth. A decent social media policy outlines the dangers of sharing certain content online and can keep your business and employees on the right side of the law.

Further, a good social media policy will allow you to unlock the benefits of employee advocacy, without putting the reputation of your business at risk. Your employees are your greatest asset. Harnessing their abilities in the right way is imperative for the growth of your business. However, there need to be some guidelines in place to ensure that your brand is not impacted negatively.

Finally, a good social media policy ensures that whenever someone interacts with your company online, they get a consistent experience. This develops a reliable, trustworthy identity for your company.

There are 5 significant aspects to keep in mind when drafting your social media policy:

1. Rules and regulations

There should be a section that outlines your company's expectations for appropriate employee conduct on social media. For example, employees shouldn't swear or state controversial opinions when posting about the company. This section may also include what can and cannot be shared, as well as the consequences for non compliance with the social media policy.

2. Roles and responsibilities

This section should define who is responsible for specific social media governance tasks. Start by creating a table broken into two columns. These responsibilities may include message approval, crisis response, customer service, staff training and social media monitoring.

3. Potential legal risks

There are obviously many legal risks involved with social media. Your social media policy should, therefore, provide clear guidelines on how to handle any areas of potential concern. This includes crediting sources and including employee disclaimers in employee bios. For example “the views expressed are mine and don’t necessarily reflect those of my employer”.

4. Security risks

Companies need to be hyper-vigilant when it comes to protecting their online presence. Social media policies can help safeguard against risks such as phishing scams by making employees aware of the threats that are out there, how to avoid them, and what to do if an attack occurs.

Your policy should provide guidelines on how to create secure passwords and set up two-factor authentication, keep anti-virus software and devices updated, how to identify an attack, and how to respond in the event of a security breach or attack.

5. Accountability

Even when employees have an “opinions are my own” clause, it’s necessary to emphasise that this is not a “you can post anything” clause. What your employees say online can still affect the company’s reputation.

It’s also a good idea to remind employees that the company’s code of conduct extends to what they say and do online. Basically, if you could be fired for doing something in person, you could be fired for doing it online.

In a world where likes and retweets equate to a great reputation, a good social media policy benefits both your company and your employees.

Contact us for more good, clear, precise advice.