Social Media Policy Template

A social media policy is an integral part of a company's code of conduct because it protects your brand's reputation, along with privacy, security and legal interests. But there are plenty of other benefits—like nurturing your **employee advocacy content** strategy, maintaining a cohesive brand identity, and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. An effective social media policy will outline clear rules and protocols so that everyone can play a role in unlocking these outcomes.

Use this template to draft a social media policy to communicate how employees should represent themselves and the brand online.*

***Note**: The information provided in this does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice; all information and materials are for general informational purposes. This template is a good starting point, but consult with legal counsel to finalize your social media policy.

Purpose of Policy

How to use: The purpose of the policy section explains why the organization uses a social media policy. Use the template below and adjust as needed according to your brand's needs:

Here at _____ we encourage employees to have an active voice and presence on social media. Whether you're establishing relationships with potential prospects or engaging current customers, we know that social communities are where people communicate.

We have compiled the following guidelines for you to make the most of your social media network as an employee of _____. We want to embrace open communication and we encourage you to post about your experiences at _____. Below, you'll find our policies for posting and engaging on social media and other online spaces to ensure our employees and our brand are protected.
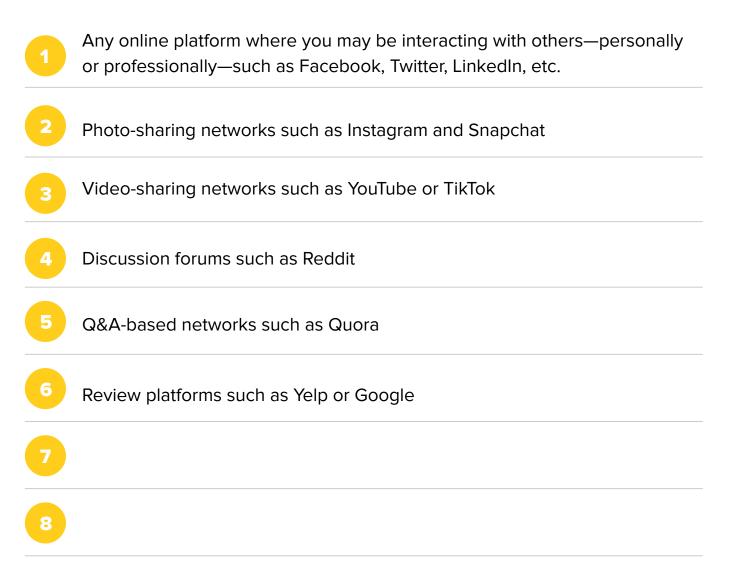
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Who the Policy Applies To

How to use: Use the section below to clarify who the social media policy applies to.

_____'s social media policy applies to all team members, as well as freelancers and interns, who use social media during or after work to post company-related information.

Company-relation information includes:

1 Photos or videos taken at work or at company-sponsored events

2 Photos or videos taken of fellow team members

3 Confidential or personal information pertaining to clients, prospects or employees

4 Company-owned content such as blogs, presentations, videos etc.

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Who the Policy Applies To

Social media includes:

1 Any online platform where you may be interacting with others—personally or professionally—such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

2 Photo-sharing networks such as Instagram and Snapchat

3 Video-sharing networks such as YouTube or TikTok

4 Discussion forums such as Reddit

5 Q&A-based networks such as Quora

6 Review platforms such as Yelp or Google

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Always review your content before posting. Review grammar and spelling and do a fact check to ensure the information you share is accurate.

If you're unsure about the content you want to share, email _____.

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Personal Account Guidelines and Company Association Rules

How to use: You can't control everything your employees do and say on their personal social media accounts, but it's important to show how their behavior on personal profiles affects your company. Use the list of do's and don't to provide rules for personal accounts.

The dos ✓
Here's a list of dos and don'ts to consider to stay compliant with our policy:

☐ Write in first person to make it clear you aren't speaking on behalf of the company. A great way to do this is to include "all opinions are my own," in your social profile bio.

☐ Read and follow _____'s Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook before posting to further familiarize yourself with how and why we use these policies.

☐ Post about topics such as_____, _____, _____, _____, when engaging with audiences or connections.

☐ Share audience questions or feedback with our social media team.

☐ Connect and interact with relevant prospects and/or customers.

☐ Monitor competitor or company accounts.

☐ _____

☐ _____

The Dont's

☐ React to negative or offensive posts about _____ or our employees. Share the post(s) with our team at _____.

☐ Share sensitive information about our employees, customers, partners, _____ or_____.

☐ Post inappropriate or offensive messages/images.

☐ Post content published by competitors.

☐ Answer audience questions that do not pertain to your field of expertise (instead, direct them to a relevant employee).

☐ Post material that could be interpreted as libelous or defamatory.

☐ Share content that may damage the company's public image.

☐ Discuss employees, customers, partners and suppliers without their expressed consent.

☐ Harass others by sending them offensive content or messages.

☐ Communicate with company competitors in a disrespectful manner.

☐ Distribute spam and chain messages.

☐_____

☐_____

If you have questions regarding what is acceptable and unacceptable to post as an employee advocate, please speak to our designated social advocacy leader, _____ or our social team.

Other Rules to Follow

Friend/Fan Requests
Being a visible brand online, you will inevitably receive "friend" requests through sites like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. It is totally up to you whether you are comfortable accepting these requests.

Privacy Settings
Be mindful of the information you're sharing about yourself and your family. Each network has specific privacy settings to help you control which information you share—choose only information you feel comfortable disclosing.

Interacting on behalf of _____
If your particular role at _____ has you interacting with folks on social media, please be sure that you are properly identified with your title and a link to the company (@_____).

Personal Information
It's never okay to share personal information about any other team members such as their name or location unless verified by the team member. Be careful about what you mention online from your personal account.

Social Media and Employee Advocacy

Knowing that employee advocacy yields clear company benefits—such as amplifying content reach, boosting engagement and driving lead generation—_____ understands that there are nuances around what employees post.

Employees use social media not only to build their personal brands, but to promote the company at large. Therefore, it's important to develop a set of mutually agreed-upon guidelines.

Employees can help amplify 's _____ brand and cross-departmental initiatives by:

- Posting original content pieces such as blog posts, webinars and infographics
- Sharing third-party (curated) content pieces relevant to target audiences
- Announcing special offers, events and contests
- Promoting product demonstrations or how-to guides
- Engaging with audience members, including providing timely responses
- Monitoring social channels for brand mentions, customer questions and competitor activity
- _____
- _____

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Social Media Team Protocols

How to use: Use this section to develop guidelines for the social media team.

_____ 's social media accounts must only be used and created by authorized individuals for the purpose of meeting defined company goals.

Goals and purposes of _____'s brand on social media:

- Build strong relationships with clients and prospects
- Drive traffic to the company website
- _____
- _____
- _____

Publishing
When drafting comments, staff must maintain the highest levels of courtesy and professionalism, particularly when dealing with difficult or emotionally charged situations—including careful attention to detail, accuracy and grammar. All comments and posts should always clearly identify you as an employee representing _____. All posts should be consistent with our company's overall mission, priorities and philosophy.

If you make a factual error in a post, update it with a correction. Deleting or editing the original post should come at your own discretion, depending on the situation. In case of a social media blunder, don't walk away—address the mistake and rectify the situation with an apology or private message.

Social Media Team Protocols

Questions

Any questions directed to our company should ideally be answered as quickly and completely as possible. If you are unsure of the answer, let the customer or prospect know that you're looking into their question and will respond as soon as you have more information.

If someone asks a question via social media, they will likely want to have their question answered there as well. However, if you would like to make the discussion private or prefer to answer over email, share an email address at which the customer can reach you and request that they contact you there to continue the discussion. When possible, refer to the person by their first name and @-mention their handle within posts and comments. This helps with cross-promotion and further reach of the message.

Negative Sentiment

Content or posts expressing a negative view of our company are important, and responses should be carefully thought out. Your initial response may be to delete or suppress the author's message, however, this may still be an opportunity to elicit good feedback from the author. Handling these interactions well will demonstrate superior customer service, and reinforce transparency and trust with customers. In some cases, we may even convert critics into devoted superfans.

Choose responses based on the probable return on time and energy you invest. Favor opportunities on sites with large audiences, influential users, high-profile celebrities or thought leaders, high-level supporters/corporate partners/superusers, journalists, etc.

Social Media Team Protocols

Negative Sentiment Continued

If one particular user continues to provide only negative and non-constructive feedback, check to see if they have a large following. It could be that they are just baiting our company to grow their audience—in which case, you should refrain from matching their negative tone and stop engaging.

Remember: You don't always know the background in a situation, so treat all interactions with courtesy and respect.

Risk Management and Compliance

Any content in blatant violation of a platform's terms and conditions should be deleted immediately. When a post is deemed to be well intended, but is in violation of the policies and consequently must be deleted, a private message should be sent to the author of the post with an explanation for the removal.

Documentation

Before deleting a post, a screenshot of the post should be recorded and retained for future reference. Screenshots are not required for posts auto-generated by widespread spam viruses. When in doubt, document.

Social Media Team Protocols

Accessibility

At _____ we want everyone to be able to interact with us online. Please make sure to always follow these social media accessibility best practices when posting from brand accounts:

- Add alt text to images
- Use accessible text such as using CamelCase in social copy and add captions to videos
- Use inclusive language and imagery
- _____
- _____
- _____

Review our **social media accessibility** guide for more information about what to include and examples to model.

Policy Violation

Employees who violate the social media policy should be informed promptly. Depending on the nature and severity of the violation, it's up to the company to decide how to handle the matter. Before taking any dramatic action such as termination of employment, consider the employee's past social media activity to determine the motives behind his or her violation.

This includes management, interns, freelancers and everyone in-between. If you're working with independent contractors or people who may act on behalf of the company, they should also receive a copy of this policy.

Anyone who has read the policy should acknowledge it in writing.

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Other Considerations for Your Social Media Policy

Beyond the information above, you should also incorporate security, privacy and legal guidelines. A few example details you may want to include:

- How to create secure passwords, including two-factor authentication for brand and personal social media accounts
- How to keep software updated and devices secure
- How to respond if a security breach takes place
- Privacy and disclosure procedures
- Regulatory challenges
- Regional and location-specific compliance requirements

Review our **social media policy** guide for more information about what to include and examples to model.

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About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's unified platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 34,000 brands so they can make strategic decisions that drive business growth and innovation. With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, connected workflows and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's **award-winning** software operates across all major social media networks and digital platforms. For more information about Sprout Social (NASDAQ: SPT), visit **sproutsocial.com**.

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