



INTRODUCTION

People who are reading your policy document should have a clear understanding of why such policies have been created and to whom you are speaking. This is a space to define where your company stands with respect to its relationship with social media. You also need to decide where you stand relative to monitoring employee use of social media, too. You need to determine how far your company wants to go in utilizing social media for brand recognition, engaging your audience and employees in conversation, and for promoting your cause.

*Some agencies prefer to build policies organically, allowing them to evolve and change as each new problem or challenge arises. Others prefer to create a comprehensive framework that expands across all social networks. Both of these philosophies have certain advantages and disadvantages. Social media is in constant transformation, making it difficult to create a static policy that is not too rigid. On the other hand, a malleable policy may fail to foresee problems as new technologies become available. Regardless of the philosophy that you utilize, it is important that your policy emphasize what your employees **can do** rather than what they are not permitted to do. Perhaps the most effective way to develop your policy is to consult those in your company who have the largest social media presence. These employees will be able to identify potential pitfalls for your company and help forge the necessary paths around them.*

AGENCY COMMITMENTS

Define the expectation that the agency has of its employees — and in turn, the agency is expected to act in the same manner.

Core Values of **YOUR AGENCY NAME** in the Online Social Media Community

List and explain the values expected to be upheld by any employee who is using social media. This information can include — but is not limited to — respect, trust, transparency and culture. If you have core values written in your agency's mission statement, these same values should apply to the social media space as well.

AGENCY AND STAFF ONLINE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITIES

You can use this space to inform your audience that social media can not only be used to push the agency's cause, but that there are also potential implications around social media communication.

Expectations for Staff Personal Behavior in Online Social Media

*Make it clear that the following list of expectations is specifically referring to employees who are using **personal** social media accounts when referring to the agency. Write out each expectation and also provide more detail and examples of such expectations. This could include:*

- Making it clear whose views are being stated — the employee's or the company's.
- Allowing constructive criticisms.
- Responding to comments.
- Acknowledging mistakes.
- Respecting other agencies and viewpoints.
- Keeping confidentiality.

Expectations for Spokespeople

Make it clear that the following list of expectations is specifically referring to employees who are using social media accounts to speak on behalf of the agency. Write out each expectation and also provide more detail and examples of such expectations. In addition to those mentioned above, this could include:

- Making it clear that you are representing the agency.
- Using sound judgment.
- Using existing HR and Communication Policies.
- Protecting company and audience privacy.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR TWITTER (OR OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM)

If there is a particular social media platform for which your agency requires additional policies, write these here. Before doing so, determine what is different from this platform than other platforms — this should help you create special policies for that speak specifically to a certain venue.