

ESGMARK®

QUICK GUIDE

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



What is a Social Media Policy?

A social media policy is an official company document that provides guidelines and requirements for your organization's social media use. It defines the procedures and guidelines for social media and covers your brand's official channels, as well as how employees use social media, both personally and professionally.

A social media policy is a crucial tool for any organisation—even if your organization doesn't use social media because your employees almost certainly do.

The policy should apply to everyone from your founder/CEO to your summer interns.



Why do you need a social media policy?



An official company social media policy is an important document. It helps maintain your brand voice while mitigating social media risks. It defines what an employee can or cannot say about the company for whom they work – this is especially important given that 8 in 10 workers report using social media in the workplace, and 98% of employees use at least one social media site for personal use, of which 50% are already posting about their company. Given the stats, you can be sure that a small number of employees will be posting about their company whilst at work. But regardless of where they post, it is crucial that employees understand their personal

responsibility – and accountability – when it comes to sharing their opinions about their employer online.

It is also important if your company maintains its own online presence – however small that might be. Even if you have just one person running social media, they need to be clear on your brand position. And if you have multiple people managing multiple accounts a strong policy will ensure every post is consistent and on brand. It also means that if an unexpected social media storm erupts, you have the tools to handle it swiftly and seamlessly.

What

There are a number of Social Media Policy templates vary between organisations, at least the need for a policy.

1. Define Social Media

Social media is a huge term. You may wish to follow in your definition social networking

ness to ensure your list of these needs will in every case there is at

to cover might include: engagement, advice, planning

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weekly or as-needed. It is helpful to include names and addresses for key roles in other teams known to

3. Security protocols

Social media comes with a set of risks and security issues. A social media policy is an opportunity to provide identifying and dealing with them.

Topics to cover include:

- How often do you get changed?
- Who maintains them and has access to them?
- How often is your software updated?
- What devices can network?
- Can employees use accounts on other devices?
- Who should employees want to escalate to?

A solid social media policy with proper security protocols protects accounts against phishing and impostor accounts.

4. A plan of action for or PR crisis

One goal of your social media policy is to prevent the need for a crisis management plan, or both.

Consider whether the social media policy is a separate document or part of a larger crisis management plan.

- Your crisis management plan should include:
 - An up-to-date emergency contact list with specific roles and responsibilities for the team, legal and other relevant departments, and up to senior management
 - Guidelines for dealing with the crisis
 - An internal communication plan
 - An approval process for public statements
 - Being prepared for your response and for those directed at you





5. An outline on how to comply with the law

Details will vary from country to country (and in America, even state requirements are more varied). Organisations in regulated sectors are sure to consult their legal department and – if you have one – of your compliance team. At the very least, your policy should cover the following:

- How to comply with applicable laws on social media, especially regarding third-party content
- How to handle customer data and other private information
- Restrictions or disclosure requirements on testimonials or marketing
- Confidentiality requirements to protect the organization's intellectual property

Employees' personal accounts. This is the most common application for your policy to involve itself in an employee's life.

Make clear that your policy takes note of that employees' online social activity if it takes reference to their work. If you have a social media management platform or can't get too specific on how employees use their accounts. Especially if you're a casual observer to an employee of your organization.

However, there are several policy points related to social media accounts:

- Guidelines about social media use in the workplace
- Guidelines about social media use in uniform
- Whether it's okay to use social media for a company in profit
- If yes, what disclosures are required when representing your company or corporate opinion
- The requirement to disclose when you are discussing the company or competitors

7. Employee advocacy

Your social media team is your brand's voice. Is it your Founder or CEO, or everyone else?

Employees who are not in work can be some of your advocates on social media.

They don't always know exactly when to say and when. For example, you don't want an overly keen employee tweeting about a new product or service launches. Once that happens, though, you want them to be able to share it with their contacts.

Items to include in this policy are:

- An approved content list
- How can employees access social media
- Who is allowed to engage with customers
- How to mention the brand on social media

How employees deal with negative comments about the brand, and who should be responsible for them.





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