# SOCIAL MEDIA
# SAMPLE POLICY

This sample policy is meant to serve as a guide to create a unique policy for your organization. It is not meant to be copied and adopted, as every organization has its own needs and expectations of its staff. Use this sample to draft your own policy and have your organization's legal counsel review it. If your organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit ,consult with your attorney about what is permissible for your staff to post on their personal channels using organization-owned computers and phones, as that aspect is not included in this policy.

(Your Organization Name) developed this social media policy to govern how employees publish and comment on social media. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation: blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube and any new tools as they emerge. This policy is designed as a complement to existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, email and the Internet.

(Your Organization Name) employees may publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Employees are subject to this policy to the extent that they identify themselves as a (Your Organization Name) employee.

Notwithstanding the previous section, this policy applies to all uses of social media, including personal, by (Your Organization Name) employees who use social media platforms on behalf of the company.

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any kind of publication or commentary. Employees should be aware that what they say online is permanent.

When using social media, employees are required to follow the same ethical standards they would otherwise use when communicating about our work. All conduct standards stated in the Employee Handbook apply to employee use of social media.

## Don't Tell Secrets
Talking about your work outside of the office is acceptable, but publishing confidential information is not permissible. Confidential information includes unpublished details of current projects, research, coalition work and comments shared in confidence during meetings within or outside of the organization.

## Protect Your Privacy
Set your privacy settings on social media platforms to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what can be accessed on the (Your Organization Name) website. Set all other privacy settings – that might allow others to post information or see personal information – to limited access. Be mindful about posting information that you would not want the public to see.

## Be Honest
Do not blog anonymously by using pseudonyms or false screen names in any personal or organizational capacity. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name and be clear about who you are. Nothing makes you stand out more on social media more than honesty – or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something that you are discussing. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and be cautious about disclosing personal details. If you cannot post something without being deceitful, then you shouldn't be posting.

## Respect Copyright Laws
Show respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including (Your Organization Name)'s own copyrights and brands. Never quote more than short excerpts of someone's work and always attribute such work to the original author/source.

## Respect Your Audience, (Your Organization Name) and Your Coworkers
Your audience, including (Your Organization Name)'s employees and partners, reflects a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory that could be in conflict with the (Your Organization Name) website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully.

When using social media on behalf of (Your Organization Name), employees must use caution when commenting about topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory – such as politics and religion. In all social media outreach, employees should be respectful of diverse cultures and points of view (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, etc.). Use your judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of (Your Organization Name).

## Controversial issues

If you see misrepresentations made about (Your Organization Name) in the media, you may correct them. Be sure to check with senior staff before responding. If you decide to respond, always do so with respect and lead with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure that what you say is accurate and does not disparage anyone. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad opposition or others into inflammatory debates. Bottom line: Make sure what you say is factually correct.

## Be the first to respond to your own mistakes

If you make an error, be upfront about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, be clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as copyrighted material or a defamatory comment), deal with it quickly. It's always better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action. If you make an error that has the potential to cause harm or embarrassment to (Your Organization Name) or its partners, please alert management, even if you have deleted or modified the post.

## Think about consequences

Once again, sound judgment is essential: Using your blog to trash or embarrass (Your Organization Name), our partners or your co-workers, is dangerous and ill-advised and may lead to disciplinary action or termination.

## Disclaimers

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. Disclaimers are good practice and are encouraged, but don't count on your disclaimer to avoid trouble because its legal protection is minimal.

Wherever practical, you should use a disclaimer, which states that while you work for (Your Organization Name), anything that you publish is your personal opinion and not necessarily the opinions of (Your Organization Name). Senior staff can provide you with applicable disclaimer language such as "All thoughts and opinions expressed here are my own," and assist with determining where and how to use disclaimer language effectively.

## Don't forget your day job

Make sure that personal activity on social media does not interfere with your job or commitments to work-related projects.

## Social media tips

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble and have fun is to write about what you know. Beware of joining a conversation online if you aren't familiar with the topic. Don't just join in for the sake of joining or because it is gaining traction or attention. Bring your perspective to the conversation and explain why your opinions are relevant.

Quality matters. Use a spell checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is about your blog and take their advice about how to improve.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt about a post or if something does not feel right, wait and review the post before publishing or ask someone for a fresh opinion.

When in doubt, ask. If you have any questions about what is appropriate, play it smart and check with a senior staff member before posting.

## Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination at the discretion of (Your Organization Name). Email digital@spitfirestrategies.com and we'll send you a customizable social media policy template.