

A little More about Social Media Policy

Since writing the “Social Media Policy for the Win-Win” I have had numerous calls and emails from members asking to use the Halifax Chamber of Commerce’s social media policy as a template. While I am flattered that my article has generated so much buzz for policy creation I am hesitant at saying yes to the dress... I mean request. Social Media accounts are diverse. There’s twitter, Facebook, Instagram, the list goes on. Not only are they different platforms, each organization is going to use them differently, thus requiring their own unique organizational social media policy.

Policies are rarely standard across organizations. What may “fit” in one, might create issues in another. I have decided to write a more detailed explanation of what “could” be in a social media policy to get your creative juices flowing, but some parts may not be applicable, also there could be information I have left out that would make a positive impact for your organization.

So here we go..

The first thing in any policy is usually the “**background**” information. A little bit of history on the current organizational use of social media. Is the account open to all employees, has there been incidents in the past or is this the beginning of a new relationship with social media platforms? This section can be one line, one paragraph or a whole page depending on what has occurred or will be occurring in the future.

The second section is the policy **objective/purpose/statement**. What is the policy hoping to achieve? Something like... “this policy will reduce the number of times information about our company will be released prior to approval” or “this policy will set expectations for appropriate social media policy and protect the company and employees from potential social media crises”. Basically, this section is the **WHY!**

Following that is the **scope**. Who is this policy written for and what social media accounts does it apply to? Most of the time it will apply to all platforms utilized by an organization, but listing them explicitly is always a good policy.

Definitions. What is social media? What is twitter? What is a twitter handle? Anything that might need to be described for any employee that will help reduce the number of questions they could have.

Forms. Are there any forms that may go with this policy? Do employees need to sign up somewhere to use the organizations social media accounts?

Following the forms section is **Responsibilities** is where the most valuable information lies. This section, as mentioned in the article should define who is responsible for what. Approval for posts, legal issues, implementation and training, and more generally who can post to what platform and what information can and cannot be used.

Procedure. Sometimes, organizations like people to follow rules. Actually, I would say most organizations always want people to follow their rules and social media policies are no exception. The procedure outlines how an employee or manager can actually go about tweeting, Facebooking, Instagraming, essentially, all the ing’s.

Enforcement is usually left until near the end of the document. Don’t want to scare anyone right off the bat....or platform.... What happens if someone posts something unacceptable? Who will be enforcing

the rules? A little repercussion might be enough for an employee to shut-down their heated argument with the printer toner guy on twitter.

And finally, **related information**. Is there another policy that might relate to this one? Is there any other information that could potentially impact you new amazing social media policy?

With all this said, creating a social media policy could be a fun group activity. Get your employees together and ask them what they want to see in it. What works for them now and what might make Instagram posting or twittering easier and more beneficial for customers/clients?

If you are really stuck there is a multitude of social media templates online which can guide you to your own, but please don't just copy and paste. As the article said having consistency across social media platforms does wonders for your brand, but that's YOUR brand I'm talking about... not Nike's.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call me at 902-481-1351 or email, Kathleen@halifaxchamber.com