# **Company social media policy for employees**

This sample **Employee Social Media Policy** is a good starting point for fleshing out your own policy for use of social media in the workplace by your employees.

## **What is a corporate social media policy?**

Most of your employees are likely to use one or more social platforms. Whatever they post on their personal accounts can be a potential risk for your company (e.g. if they share sensitive information). And, more importantly, using social media at work can affect productivity and focus. This is one of the reasons you need a company social media policy – to address limitations on what employees can post and to potentially place restrictions on social media use inside the workplace.

The other reason is your own social media profile; as an organization, you’ll want to have a consistent voice on your social media and want to avoid posting potentially risky statements or information. A social media policy for employees can give them the instructions they need to know how to handle corporate accounts.

**How restrictive should my company social media policy be?**

Your employees own their social media profiles, so what they post there can’t be restricted by your organization. You can, however, provide them with reasonable guidelines about what they shouldn’t post about (e.g. confidential data) and provide any potential disciplinary actions if their posts affect your company’s image (e.g. hate speech). As far as your own company’s social media accounts are concerned, you’re entitled to set the rules of posting.

## **How do I distribute it?**

Your social media policy should be part of your employee handbook or live inside your policy database (e.g. in your HRIS). Make sure all employees have read it, especially those in your social media team.

Of course, remember that this policy is a living document – this is because the social media landscape changes often, new rules and regulations about privacy are introduced and trends can also play a part (e.g. the #metoo movement). Make sure you keep up-to-date with changes and think about whether your company social media policy might need some revamping.

Here’s a simple social media policy template to get you started with the essentials:

## **Policy brief & purpose**

Our **social media company policy** provides a framework for using social media. Social media is a place where people exchange information, opinions and experiences to learn, develop and have fun. Whether you’re handling a corporate account or using one of your own, you should remain productive and avoid damaging our organization in any way. This policy provides practical advice to avoid issues that might arise by careless use of social media in the workplace.

## **Scope**

We expect all our employees to follow this policy.

Also, by “social media”, we refer to a variety of online communities like blogs, social networks, chat rooms and forums – not just platforms like Facebook or Twitter.

This policy is built around two different elements: one, using personal social media at work and two, representing our company through social media.

## **Policy elements**

### **Using personal social media**

We *[allow]* our employees to access their personal accounts at work. But, we expect you to act responsibly and ensure your productivity isn't affected.

Whether you’re using your accounts for business or personal purposes, you may easily get sidetracked by the vast amount of available content. So, please restrict your use to a few minutes per work day.

We ask you to be careful when posting on social media, too. We can’t restrict what you post there, but we expect you to adhere to our confidentiality policies at all times. We also caution you to avoid violating our anti-harassment policies or posting something that might make your collaboration with your colleagues more difficult (e.g. hate speech against groups where colleagues belong to). In general, please:

#### **We advise our employees to:**

* **Ensure others know that your personal account or statements don’t represent our company.** You shouldn’t state or imply that your personal opinions and content are authorized or endorsed by our company. We advise using a disclaimer such as “opinions are my own” to avoid misunderstandings.
* **Avoid sharing intellectual property** like trademarks on a personal account without approval. Confidentiality policies and laws always apply.
* **Avoid any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content.** It may be considered as a violation of our company’s anti-harassment policy, if directed towards colleagues, clients or partners.

### **Representing our company**

Some employees represent our company by handling corporate social media accounts or speak on our company’s behalf. When you’re sitting behind a corporate social media account, we expect you to act carefully and responsibly to protect our company’s image and reputation. You should:

* **Be respectful, polite and patient,** when engaging in conversations on our company's behalf. You should be extra careful when making declarations or promises towards customers and stakeholders.
* **Avoid speaking on matters outside your field of expertise** when possible. Everyone should be careful not to answer questions or make statements that fall under somebody else’s responsibility.
* **Follow our confidentiality policy and data protection policy** and observe laws on copyright, trademarks, plagiarism and fair use.
* **Inform our [*PR/Marketing department*]** when you're about to share any major-impact content.
* **Avoid deleting or ignoring comments** for no reason. They should listen and reply to criticism.
* **Never post discriminatory, offensive or libelous** content and commentary.
* **Correct or remove** any misleading or false content as quickly as possible.

## **Disciplinary Consequences**

We'll monitor all social media postings on our corporate account.

We may have to take disciplinary action leading up to and including termination if employees do not follow this policy's guidelines. Examples of non-conformity with the employee social media policy include but are not limited to:

* Disregarding job responsibilities and deadlines to use social media at work.
* Disclosing confidential information through personal or corporate accounts.
* Directing offensive comments towards other members of the online community.

If you violate this policy inadvertently, you may receive a reprimand. We expect you to comply after that, or stricter disciplinary actions will apply.

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