

5 Elements to Include in Your Corporate Social Media Policy

BY: LAUREN FORMALAIRE

Living in the days that social media has become a common tool for corporate crisis management – in some cases causing the crisis and in others attempting to tame the uproar a crisis has produced – it has become necessary and mandatory for businesses to have a social media policy. This should be a document that is often re-visited and reformatted to keep up with the times. But how are they written? What should be included in one? After dissecting several major corporate social media policies, I came up with a list of findings that I think should be included and what to steer away from.

Where to Start? The Basics

It is key to think about the readers when creating your policy. Are all employees required to read it or only a select group? The entire company should be responsible for reading a company's social media policy, just as they need to read all other company policies. This could mean there are a number of different skill levels, positions within the company and ages of employees reading it, therefore it must be short, to the point and easy to understand.

My Findings:

Consistently use consistency. A social media policy should not replace or be a part of the company's Code of Conduct, but should include similar principles. A company's mission statement or 'vision' should even be included within the details of the document in order to keep it fresh in people's minds and make sure their actions are uniform across all platforms that a business is being represented on. It is very important that community managers of a company's social media sites stay consistent in how they are representing the company and are also transparent.

Keep it [In]formal. I discovered that most of the social media policies seem to be written informally, as opposed to very structured, boring and wordy company policies you often see. Since social media is so informal and a place to be fun and well, social, it makes sense for the policy to be. After all, you want people to read it

and retain the information, so why not make it an easy, even fun read?

Who you gonna call? Many of the policies even go as far as to include someone's contact info for further questions. For a large company, I would say this is a must; especially if all employees are required to read it. What if someone writes a nasty post on a company Facebook page and an employee who is not responsible for managing the company's social media catches it first? Who can he/she call? What should he/she do? If they know to refer to their company's social media policy and the answer isn't covered, tell them who to contact ahead of time.

School, at work? I found many of the policies included optional courses so that employees could understand how to use social media for the company in more detail. This has become an option that many large companies are starting to incorporate in their business practice. Some type of social media training should be a requirement for any community manager of the company's social media accounts. Many companies are even starting to employ online courses and tests, whether mandatory or optional, that will grant employees 'certifications' after successful completion.

Social Networking vs. Social [Not]working.

I was surprised to find a lack of rules about using social media in the work place. Since most people who are managing a company's social media sites (along with most of the general public) have at least one account in some type of social media, I find it important for people to understand they are not immediately granted access to waste their work days away playing on Facebook after they have read and agreed to the company's social media policy. There is a huge grey area here that is certainly difficult to address, but I think it's important to at least mention in some way that there is a difference between managing a crisis for the company on Facebook and uploading all the pictures from the bar last night during work hours. **C**

The Isis Mobile Commerce Platform™ offers your merchants the opportunity to build more customer loyalty, increase customer engagement and mobilize their existing rewards cards and offers.

Visit us at Booth #524 at RetailNOW to learn more.

ISIS
Pay smarter™

Isis, Isis Mobile Commerce Platform, Isis Mobile Wallet, Isis Pay Smarter and the associated Isis logos are trademarks of JVL Ventures, LLC. Contactless Symbol is a trademark of EMVCo, LLC. © 2012 JVL Ventures, LLC.



About Lauren Formalaire
Lead Project Manager/Trainer
SayItSocial
www.SayItSocial.com

Lauren is in charge of client engagement and project management. After running her own successful social media marketing business, she decided to take it to the next level and join the growing, all-star team at SayItSocial. When she's not posting on Facebook, she can be found outdoors enjoying nature.