

Social Media and Networking Policy for (Company Name)

These guidelines apply to (Company Name) employees or contractors who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of Social Media.

Whether you log into Twitter, Yelp, Wikipedia, MySpace or Facebook pages, or comment on online media stories — these guidelines are for you.

While all (Company Name) employees are welcome to participate in Social Media, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines. These rules might sound strict and contain a bit of legal-sounding jargon but please keep in mind that our overall goal is simple: to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects our reputation and of course follows the letter and spirit of the law.

1. Be transparent and state that you work at (Company Name). Your honesty will be noted in the Social Media environment. If you are writing about (Company Name) or a competitor, use your real name, identify that you work for (Company Name), and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to say so.
2. Never represent yourself or (Company Name) in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.
3. Post meaningful, respectful comments — in other words, please, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive.
4. Use common sense and common courtesy: for example, it's best to ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to (Company Name). Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate (Company Name)'s privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines for external commercial speech.
5. Stick to your area of expertise and do feel free to provide unique, individual perspectives on non-confidential activities at (Company Name).
6. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly: feel free to ask the PR Director for advice and/or to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on (Company Name).
7. If you want to write about the competition, make sure you behave diplomatically, have the facts straight and that you have the appropriate permissions.
8. Please never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties (Company Name) may be in litigation with.
9. Never participate in Social Media when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis situation. Even anonymous comments may be traced back to your or (Company Name)'s IP address. Refer all Social Media activity around crisis topics to PR and/or Legal Affairs Director.
10. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and (Company Name)'s confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Google has a very long memory.