

Worksheet: Social Media Policy

Content: Networked Nonprofits have a social culture. They use social media to engage people inside and outside the organization to improve programs, services, or reach communications goals. Before this can happen, they need leadership buy-in, address concerns head on, and codify the organizational rules around using social media.

Organizational Concerns

- Loss of control over their branding and marketing messages
- Dealing with negative comments
- Addressing personality versus organizational voice
- Privacy and security
- Perception of wasted of time and resources

Share Pair:

- Review the list of concerns and identify which ones you think may be relevant for your NGO
- What are they?
- Are there other concerns that might arise?

Social Media Policy

Different organizations can have very different policies. In practice, “social media policy” could refer to a detailed set of procedures for using social media, a legal document written by lawyers, a high-level vision document, or pretty much a mix of all of these. What kind of social media policy do you want?

How much guidance do you want to give staff in your policy: (select one)

1. Our policy should spell out pretty much everything staff should or should not
2. Our policy should provide tactics for important situations and guidelines to inform staff decisions
3. Our policy is a vision and strategy document to help staff make their own decisions

How would you define the purpose of your policy, based on the answer your selected?

How Widely will You Distribute It? (pick one)

1. Only a few key personnel will need to read, understand, and use the policy
2. A number of staff will need to read and use the policy
3. Everyone in the organization will read, understand, and use the policy

Is Your Policy Part of Something Else?

Will the policy be part of another document, like an employee handbook, or does it need to be incorporate into another document? Do existing policies already include information about social media? How To apply to your organization?

- Who should be involved writing the policy?
- Who will vet the policy?
- How will you educate staff about the policy?
- How will you enforce the policy?
- Don't reinvent the wheel, borrow from other policies. What did you see in the examples of policies that you might borrow or adapt for your organization?

Creating Your Policy

- Review policies created by other organizations – you'll find many examples here:
 - <http://socialmedia-strategy.wikispaces.com/Social+Media+Policy>
- Creates the first draft of a social media policy, important to revise it and discuss it <http://socialmedia.policytool.net/>

Some Specifics in Your Policy

Posting Guidelines

1. What types of things will you encourage people in your organizations to post that fits with your overall vision?
2. What will require prior approval?
3. What types of topics should never be shared or discussed on social media?

Responding to Negative Comments

It's hard to figure out when and how you should respond to a post about your organization, or on your own social media sites. Always? Never? What if it is really bad? Think through your own policy for the situations below:

If someone says something bad ...	
1. Could you turn the complaint into an opportunity?	If yes, respond
2. Does the post have misinformation in it?	If yes, respond with correction. Who should respond? What should you say?
3. Will it damage your community?	If yes, consider removing it. Who is in charge? Is this in your stated community policy?
4. Does it include vulgar or purposely inflammatory language?	If yes, consider removing it.
5. Are they likely to keep posting objectionable posts simply because you are responding?	If yes, and none of the above is true, better to ignore.

Privacy and Permissions

Social media channels are a great way to share information, but it's important to make sure that they information is yours to share. This is especially important for organizations that work on sensitive areas – in which something as simple as a person's name or photo might be a problem for the person.

What you can post	Never	With Permission	Always	Under these Circumstances
Photos or videos where individuals are identified?				
Photos or videos with clearly identified clients, students, or other people you work with?				
Photos or videos with clearly identified supporters or stakeholders?				
Photos or videos with clearly identified children				
Full names of your clients				
Information about the services you've provided to a client, student, or other person you are working with				
Someone's name associated with a photo or video?				
A location associated with a photo or video?				
Other:				

Additional guidelines and resources: <http://socialmedia-strategy.wikispaces.com/Social+Media+Policy>