

## Steps to Developing Your Organization's Social Media Policy

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If you haven't already integrated social media into your communications, marketing or public relations efforts, 2011 is the year to do it. As you begin to develop (or re-develop) your social media strategy, keep a few things in mind, including employee access to internal or external social networks and who to include in the development process.

When forming your social media team, it's important to remember that those involved come to the table for different reasons - every group has different goals and objectives. As PR professionals, it's our job to help summarize everyone's needs into one policy. It's also critical to do your research first by asking questions - where does your organization or brand communicate now, what are the messages, and where do executives and employees want to see the organization moving forward?

As you address these questions, keep the 3 "R"s in mind - respect, responsibility and representatives. Identify employees who can accurately address questions from your customers, members, the media, bloggers, etc., and incorporate them into the social media process.

Additionally, you may want to break up your social media policy into two sections: internal and external. This will help ensure that you're successfully reaching both your employees and outside audiences through social media efforts.

### Internal Policy Considerations:

- Employee Social Media Use: Will you provide rules for how/where they engage online?
- Executive Summary of Guidelines: Create one set of guidelines for all employees to follow to avoid confusion and to establish a consistent company "voice".
- Employee Training: Consider developing training documents for each department, depending on who's recruited for your organization's social media team.

### External Policy Considerations:

- Outbound Communication: Address communication within networks (i.e., Twitter vs. Facebook, etc.). How will the organization be presented on each network; will the tone and formality of your message vary accordingly?
- Blog Assessment & Comment Guidelines: How will the social media team address positive and negative comments? If comments are negative, what information will be provided to address them? (see the [Air Force Blog Assessment](#) chart for examples)
- Disclosure Codes for Affiliation: Identify how employees will disclose their association with the organization and how it affects their personal messaging.

Thanks to [Deidre Breakenridge \(@dbreakenridge\)](#) for her presentation on social media policy during January's PRSA webinar.



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