

Now that more and more businesses are embracing social media in their businesses, let's talk about social media policies. It's not only for the big businesses. Everyone who is using social media in their business should consider writing and sharing a social media policy.



Let's get started.

What is a social media policy?

Remember to keep in mind the [National Labor Relations Act Section 7](#) as you begin developing your policy to help ensure the policy you create does not break any NLRA regulations.

A social media policy often takes into account several other policies you may already have in place. In many cases it:

- Is a corporate code of conduct;
- Is a series of guidelines for employees who post content on the Internet as a part of their job or a private person;
- Outlines online behavior; and
- Identifies what content may be shared.

Why do you need it?

There are many reasons to create and share a social media policy. Often, it boils down to the need to create a process when others may be posting on your behalf; when you hire an agency to manage the process for you; or when you need a crisis plan for the good and bad times. Here are ten best practices for a lawful social media policy.

1. **Goals:** Keep your overall business goals in mind. This helps to formulate the process

and to keep those posting on your behalf to focus on the end game.

2. **Specific and clear language:** When sharing your policy with others, the language is very important to make sure they can easily understand their expectations.
3. **Define key concepts and terms:** If you state that confidential information may not be shared, define what that means. Terms that may be interpreted in many ways should be defined.
4. **Plain English:** Much like specific and clear language, be sure to use plain language. For example, legal teams are often involved with the process, but legal language can often time be confusing. Be sure to consider who will be reading the policy (i.e., every employee), write the policy for them.
5. **Specific examples of prohibited conduct:** If there are “don’t” in the policy, share examples of what is prohibited, for example including a statement that client information may not be shared. When doing so, provide specific examples.
6. **Do not restrict more than necessary:** Over-restricting employee’s actions and the actions of your marketing staff and firm can cause more problems than it’s worth. Keep the mentality of “more do’s than don’ts” when developing the process.
7. **Do not prohibit employees from identifying themselves with the company:** When it comes to brand advocates, employees can be your biggest champions. Allowing them to share your firm’s social media posts helps to increase brand awareness and reach to more people than you can on your own.
8. **Advise employees of employer’s right to monitor them:** If you plan to monitor your staff’s social media posts about your company, divulge that information up front. Remember, censorship is frowned upon. Restrictions cause hostility, so embrace employees’ willing to share your content.
9. **Tailor the policy to your company:** Rather than lifting another company’s social media policy, leverage the ideas, but be sure to write something that fits your company culture and expectations.
10. **Do not rely on “savings” clauses:** Even though you may include a [savings clause in your policy](#), don’t rely on them to get you out of legal trouble with the National Labor Relations Board.

Additional Resources

Now that you’re ready to begin, check out these helpful resources to help you collect your thoughts, create a policy that stands up to the NLRA regulations, and aids you in completing your goals.

- [Social Media Superhero? – Tips For Using a Savings Clause to Rescue Your Social Media](#)

Policy

- [Social Media Toolkit](#) is filled with checklists and tip sheets to help you develop a solid social media policy.
- [Sensis Social Media Policy Announcement](#) (video sample)
- [Grant Thornton Social Media Policy Announcement](#) (video sample)
- [Social Media Online Database](#) (samples of many company's social media policies)