

A QUICK GUIDE TO **SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE.**



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Social media is pervasive. You might well be using social platforms like Facebook and Twitter to promote your company, but your workforce too are also connecting, chatting and sharing information through social.

On the one hand you want to protect your organisation: make sure that sensitive information doesn't leak out in the chatter or that social media banter doesn't quickly turn sour, ending up in the courts.

And on the other hand you see the opportunity of using social tools to foster better collaboration, enhance productivity and create dynamic employee relations.

This quick guide to social media in the workforce provides a snapshot of the areas you might consider when looking at both how to protect your business from social litigation or enhance your collaboration using social media.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN A CURE

Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, provide vital tools for business communications, both in and out of the workplace. Social media use in the workplace is continuing to rise, with 60% of employees accessing their personal social media profiles more than once a day during work hours, with many staff checking social even more frequently.

As the use of social media in the workplace grows ever more popular, so do the legal ramifications. Social media lawsuits are increasing, and employment law is being challenged within the workplace and at tribunals.

60%

of employees **access their personal social media profiles more than once a day** during work hours

Tribunals are every HR leader's worst nightmare, as there are not only financial consequences to bear; there is the potential loss of reputation and the drain on resource.

The bad news is that the number of employment tribunals continues to rise, and it's costing UK companies an estimated £1.6 billion a year.

The average cost for an employer to defend themselves stands at £8,500, and with around 236,000 tribunals taking place each year, it is a costly experience indeed.

When it comes to social media, sometimes the most minor things can result in a tribunal. Take the case of Abraham Otomewo, which highlights to employers the dangers of "office banter" involving social media. Mr Otomewo was an employee at Carphone Warehouse. Other members of staff got into his account and updated his Facebook profile with the following - "Finally came out of the closet. I am gay and proud". After being dismissed for an unrelated matter, Mr Otomewo was successful in his claim for unfair dismissal on the grounds of sexual orientation harassment.



LIFT YOUR POLICY OFF THE PAGE

Instead of having to go through the pain of a tribunal and learning from your mistakes, prevention is a far better cure. Prevention in this case comes in the form of a unified internal social media policy for employees.

In a recent study, *Social Media and the Law*, we found that one fifth of respondents had no social media policy. Not only that, but with those that do have a social media policy, 77% of company policies do not cover out of work hours. This is putting companies in danger of employee tribunals if incidents do occur.

Your internal social media policy sets out the framework for good governance and protects the business. However, creating a social media policy is just the beginning.

With ever changing regulations and case law, it will need updating regularly and needs to become a living, breathing document.

Any old social media policy that sits in a cupboard gathering dust isn't going to cut it; you need a policy that becomes embedded in the company ethos and culture.

That means it can't just sit in a dusty cabinet. The business needs to constantly change structures, operations and working practices to ensure that social media communications are safe and the company is protected from unnecessary liabilities. The social media world is constantly changing – your company needs to be able to keep up.

1 out of 5

One fifth of companies don't have an internal social media policy

43%

of companies do not see social media litigation as a priority



77%

of companies' social media policy does not cover out of hours

£8,500 = the average cost of an employee tribunal

5

WAYS YOU CAN MAXIMISE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY



1. REFRESH TRAINING THROUGH COMMUNICATION

This means regular communications, meetings and mentoring. The best way to manage this is to create a cross-functional working group of senior people. Issues and changes can be discussed as well as programmes and communications refreshed. Better still, feedback and revisions to the policy will keep it fresh and relevant.

Top Tip: communicate effectively, and the rest will take care of itself.

2. GET YOUR ROLE-PLAY HAT ON

Nothing brings a policy to life better than playing out possible scenarios. Allow teams to ask the question 'what if?' and problem solve as a group. This allows you to create simulations of likely issues or play out potential social media crises. What is interesting about this kind of dress rehearsal is that it also helps refine your policy, as well as fix the guidelines in the heads of participants.

Top Tip: Prepare for every possible scenario, and you won't get caught out.

3. FOCUS ON THE DO'S, NOT JUST THE DON'TS

It's a good idea to spell out not just what employees should refrain from doing, but, more importantly, spell out how employees are encouraged to participate. Some of the best social advocates for your business are your employees and they should feel empowered to participate in the social conversation, with a clear understanding of where the boundaries lie. With that in mind,

a daily "Tip of the Day" style email on what employees should do today can work wonders.

Top Tip: Focus on the good, and not just the bad.

4. GET CREATIVE

A poster with a list of rules or a big handbook that gets stuffed into the bottom of employees' drawers isn't going to get employees to be aware of and follow your social media policy. Encourage sharing, tell them what they can do (as opposed to what they cannot) and get creative. Why not transform your social media policy into an amusing cartoon or interesting infographic?

Top Tip: No one likes a boring document. Think visually and create graphics, use pictures and create video.

5. THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX (LITERALLY)

Your social media policy should cover what your employees can (and cannot) say on social media, but does it cover out of work? It needs to, as a staggering 77% of company policies do not cover out of work hours, putting them at considerable risk.

When it comes to your policy, bear in mind that it needs to also apply to conversations with suppliers and partner organisations, in addition to employees.

76% of companies fear the disclosure of confidential information on social networking sites, so make sure your employees, and who they deal with, are well informed.

Top Tip: Cover all bases to keep private information just that – private.

CREATE A 'COLLABORATIVE CULTURE' IN YOUR COMPANY

When implemented properly internally, social media has the potential to foster strong team relationships, boost collaboration and streamline communication in your company. There are three things you need to care about: Connection, Collaboration and Communication – the three C's.

As HR professionals, you want to attract the right level of talent for the business, and the three C's are the key to creating a winning culture that will attract the best staff.

Are you currently doing enough? Ditch the tired notices and unused company intranet and use social to get the message across. Check out our top tips to increase collaboration and productivity in the workplace this year:

The **TOP TEN** ways to create a collaborative workplace culture:

1. OPEN UP THE HR DEPARTMENT

An internal social network can be a place to communicate with staff, transforming the

perception of the HR department in the process. Some employees may be nervous about approaching you with an issue they may have, so make sure to create a space where people can find you and ask questions. It can be an internal blog, wiki, or an internal discussion group.

2. INSPIRE YOUR TEAM

One of the main benefits of an internal social media policy is that it is all about inspiring others and boosting their creativity. Make sure you communicate information to employees in a way that appeals to them. If they find it boring and it's not grabbing their attention, it will not register with them – no matter how important the message.

3. COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET

As with any conversation, make sure your communication is a two-way street. Listen to what your employees are saying and show that you've listened by acting upon what they've said. If you listen but don't act, then employees are likely to become cynical about internal communications.



4. HAVE YOU CONSIDERED “WIIFM”?

People always want to know “What’s In It For Me.” Make sure to address why the message is important for them in your communication. If you are targeting a specific sector of your business, personalise the message for them and only include what is relevant and will push their buttons.

5. GET EVERYONE SHARING

In order to get your team collaborating with one another, you need to get them sharing. As mentioned above, this starts by pushing out creative content and messages to employees. Encourage sharing in the workplace to spread the message about what you are doing and (if it’s not confidential) with external parties as well.



41%
of executives believe
social media helps build
a company culture

6. GET COLLABORATING

Has one of the team in London got a problem with a specific issue? That’s where an internal social network comes in handy. Instead of having them spend hours trying to find a solution, they can ask another employee in a different location, who may have already solved the problem. Collaboration: it’s the key to boosting employee productivity.

7. ENCOURAGE BEST PRACTICE

Gamification is a great way to motivate staff and encourage best practice. Deloitte are one of the most recognised pioneers of gamification, where they integrate levels, “badges” and top-scoring leaderboards for staff. The result is that employees become more motivated, boosting productivity. It helps company messages resonate much better.

8. CREATE A MEANINGFUL CONNECTION BETWEEN LEADERS AND EMPLOYEES

Often in large companies, there is a distinct divide between leaders and employees. An internal social network breaks down the barriers, allowing anyone – from the CEO to a new intern – to communicate with the team and share ideas.

9. IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT SENDING MESSAGES

When it comes to creating a great culture for employees, a negative member of staff can disrupt everything. Whether they are being rude to other team members or saying bad things about the company, you can use your internal social media system to monitor and act on disruptive employees.

10. THE TRICK IS TO FOLLOW-UP

Once you have planned and set objectives for your internal communications, you then need to get regular feedback to ascertain how effective it is. Set up a committee with a mix of senior, middle-management and junior staff that can regularly audit the process to check it is working. Any internal communications strategy will need constant revision to ensure that it is meeting the needs of your employees and is moving with the times.



50%

of employees say **regular communication has the largest impact** when it comes to building a strong workplace culture

Companies that use internal social media achieved year-on-year improvement of 18% - compared to 1% of those who didn’t

SOCIAL TOOLS CAN HELP YOU DEVELOP POWERFUL EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

So you have your internal social media policy in place, and you have your heart set on creating a harmonious, collaborative workforce where everyone wants to work. Now it comes down to what socially collaborative and engaging tools work best for you? Facebook and Twitter? Too public. LinkedIn? Too formal. For an internal social media tool, you want something that's private, easy to use and focuses on one thing: making it simple for your staff to collaborate.

There are plenty of tools that you can choose from the Twitter-like tools of Yammer, to tools to cover all bases, such as Clearvale and Socialcast. We picked some tools that you should take a look at.

SIX INTERNAL SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS TO HELP FOSTER BETTER EMPLOYEE RELATIONS



As used by: *Deloitte, Shell, Nationwide*

Why you need it: Yammer can be a hugely effective tool for internal communications. To get the best out of it, create internal groups or external networking groups and herd conversations into these more specialist spaces, as opposed to the general discussion areas, where topics can easily get lost.



As used by: *Nikon, Saatchi & Saatchi*

Why you need it: It works similarly to Yammer, but has some nice extra features, as you can integrate Google documents and gadgets and you can create project pages as well as the standard group features. Part of Salesforce it also integrates with your wider CRM.



As used by: *T-Mobile, BUPA, IBM*

Why you need it: While Chatter and Yammer have a limited amount of integration between traditional internal office systems, Jive connects with your office suite of tools and allow users to view colleagues' social activities on Twitter and Facebook when in Outlook. This increases the quantity of communications channels for users to communicate and it provides the user with more information about the person they want to communicate with.



As used by: *Phillips, Nokia*

Why you need it: A social networking tool for the whole workforce to use. In Socialcast, users can bring conversations from public social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+ into a company's private enterprise community, which makes it much easier to share thought leadership pieces and useful articles to train and educate staff on what's going on in the industry.

 **As used by:** *Dell, Microsoft, P&G*

Why you need it: Telligent can be used to create internal, external facing and completely external communities. It is a platform that integrates well with a number of other platforms, such as Sharepoint, CRM and Salesforce, and offers good tools for employee social collaboration.

 **As used by:** *Warner Bros., Getty Images, Weight Watchers*

Why you need it: Need to get a colleague to look at an important document quickly? Socialtext is fully integrated with Microsoft SharePoint to provide customers easy access to Microsoft documents. You have the ability to upload, view, and edit Microsoft PowerPoint, Excel, and Word files within a browser window through the collaboration platform, making working together much easier.

WANT THE ULTIMATE INTERNAL SOCIAL MEDIA SYSTEM?

Using tools is one thing, but in order to create the ultimate internal social media system, creativity and innovation is key. Take a look at two of the top brands who have invested in internal social media comms and reaped the rewards.

NOKIA

Nokia have invested in a social media communications team, with the sole aim of improving inter-company communications and engaging employees. Using unique social media tools such as BlogHub, VideoHub and Infopedia, Nokia fosters knowledge sharing amongst their 125,000 employees to drive engagement online.

IBM

IBM has embraced the internal sharing of information amongst employees by setting up a number of internal wikis on their in-house system, Bluetwit. They have set up a “Digital Village” to build connections and foster good employee relations.

This guide is just a snapshot of some of the key factors that will help you protect your business from the threat of litigation or create a vibrant employee culture:

Lift your policy off the page

– don’t expect employees to seek out your social media policy. Be proactive and present it to them in unique ways that will stick in their minds

The key to creating a collaboration culture is all about the 3 C’s: **Collaboration, Communication and Connection**. Get these right and you will have a workplace culture that will attract the best talent to your business

Think about using social media collaboration tools to enhance employee relations and increase productivity by **creating a more collaborative and sharing workforce**

ABOUT IMMEDIATE FUTURE

immediate future is one of the UK's most respected social media agencies. As a specialist agency we are immersed in the latest thinking, tools and techniques that allow us to provide best-practice social media engagement for our clients.

We offer strategic and planning consultancy alongside managed services (including monitoring, influencer relations and performance evaluation) based on nine years of social media experience working with some of the biggest brands around the world. We are committed to finding the most appropriate solution for each of our clients, and developing a long term plan to support their business objectives.

We're impartial. We are channel and technology neutral; we look at your business and recommend the best channels, tools and strategies to meet your needs.

We're leaders. We sit at the forefront of the social media industry and we educate tomorrow's practitioners; we're the official social media trainers for the IDM, we set best practice guidelines with IAB and CIPR and we run CPD courses with the CIM.

We have a social media heritage. Since 2004 we've been using social media to raise profiles and manage reputations of worldwide clients and blue chip organisations.



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