

588 Social Media Policy

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The Agency encourages employees to share information with co-workers and with those outside the Agency for the purposes of gathering information, generating new ideas, and learning from the work of others. Social media provide inexpensive, informal, and timely ways to participate in an exchange of ideas and information. However, information posted on a website is available to the public and, therefore, the Agency has established the following guidelines for employee participation in social media.

Note: As used in this policy, “social media” refers to websites, blogs, forums, email blasts, and other social networking activities and/or sites, including but not limited to BlogSpot, Pinterest, Google+, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and MySpace, and Tumblr, just to name a few. Nothing in this policy is meant to, nor should it be interpreted to, in any way limit your rights under any applicable federal, state, or local laws, including your rights under the National Labor Relations Act to engage in protected concerted activities with other employees to improve terms and conditions of employment, such as wages and benefits.

Off-duty use of social media. Employees may maintain personal websites or web logs on their own time using their own facilities. Employees must ensure that social media activity does not interfere with their work. In general, the Agency considers social media activities to be personal endeavors, and employees may use them to express their thoughts or promote their ideas.

On-duty use of social media. Employees may engage in social media activity during work time provided it is directly related to their work, approved by their manager, and does not identify or reference Agency clients, customers, or vendors without express permission. The Agency monitors employee use of Agency computers and the Internet, including employee blogging and social networking activity.

Respect. Employees are expected to demonstrate respect for the dignity of the Agency, its officers, its customers and clients, its vendors, and its employees. A social media site is a public place, and employees should avoid inappropriate comments. For example, there should be no use of ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or use language that may be considered divisive or inflammatory. Even if a message is posted anonymously, it may be possible to trace it back to the sender.

Post disclaimers. If an employee identifies himself or herself as an Agency employee or discusses matters related to the Agency on a website or blog site under their control, or a social media site, the site or post must include a disclaimer on the front page or within the post stating that it does not express the views of the Agency and that the employee is expressing only his or her personal views. For example: “The views expressed on this website/Web log, or in this post, are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.” Place the disclaimer in a prominent position and repeat it for each posting expressing an opinion related to the Agency or the Agency’s business. Employees must keep in mind that if they post information on a social media site that is in violation of Agency policy and/or federal, state, or local law, the disclaimer will not shield them from disciplinary, civil, or criminal action.

Defamation. Employees should not use social media to criticize the work of other Agencies who have missions consistent with their employer.

Confidentiality. There must be no identification or reference to Agency clients, customers, or vendors without express permission. Employees may write about their jobs in general but may not disclose any confidential or proprietary information. For examples of confidential information, please refer to the confidentiality policy. When in doubt, ask before publishing.

New ideas and Agency plans. Please remember that new ideas related to work or the Agency's business belong to the Agency. Do not post them publicly, or on social media without the Agency's permission. Employees who have knowledge of Agency plans which have not been made public are prohibited from making such information available without permission.

Links. Employees may provide a link from a social media site to the Agency's website during employment (subject to discontinuance at the Agency's sole discretion). Employees should contact the Information Technology Department to obtain the graphic (subject to Executive Director approval) for links to the Agency's site and to register the site with the Agency.

Trademarks and copyrights. The Agency's logo, motto, images, or other intellectual property may not be used in any fashion without the approval of the Executive Director. Such intellectual property items of other entities, corporations, or agencies may not be used without proper consent from the property owner.

Legal. Employees are expected to comply with all applicable laws, including but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines, copyright, trademark, and harassment laws.

Discipline. Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Post-employment expectation. Following the end of your employment relationship with CSNT, you shall take prompt affirmative steps to ensure that no Social Media Website represents you to be a current employee of the Agency.