

WHIPPING THE CAT'S SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

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As the frequency, scope and scale of social media platforms increases exponentially, so too does the risk. However, many companies still regard social media engagement as a function to be “administered” at a low level within the company or outsourced to a digital company without proper due diligence on their ability to manage legal and brand risk.

With the ink barely dry on some recent social media blunders, we thought it may be useful to share some thoughts on the legal and ethical considerations that should be taken into account when your company elects to use social media as a platform for engagement with stakeholders.

From a legal, ethical and brand protection perspective, here are a few tips to provide guidance for managing your social media space.

- 1 Agree a set of principles that will guide you in all communications. These principles could be, for example, to always communicate honestly, to act with integrity and to be respectful to others.
- 2 Establish guidelines regarding content and posts. Consider our “Traffic Light” system: Red – not appropriate for online posting; Amber – send for prior legal review and Green – no legal review required.
- 3 You may also want to establish guidelines for response to social media posts about your company. Know in advance how you will deal with rants and raves. Know how to identify and assess risk.
- 4 Understand and apply principles around the use of intellectual property – both your own and that of others.
- 5 Be familiar with and stick to the T&Cs of the social media platforms that you are using. For example, “opt-in” or “opt-out” rules.
- 6 The use of social media by a company is advertising. ASA, WASPA, etc. codes apply as does the CPA. Be careful of misleading.
- 7 Normal legal principles also apply. Be careful about what you “publish” (particularly when using someone else’s content or celebrity endorsement).
- 8 Social media is global (and can go “viral”) but try and stay “local” in content and messaging to avoid unintended consequences or interpretation.
- 9 Mistakes will happen – know in advance how you are going to deal with them when they do.



**USED RESPONSIBLY AND ETHICALLY,
SOCIAL MEDIA CAN DELIVER
SIGNIFICANT BRAND ENGAGEMENT.
USED INAPPROPRIATELY, THE
BENEFITS CAN BE FOREVER
DESTROYED TOGETHER WITH
YOUR BRAND AND REPUTATION.**



**WHIPPING
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