

Social Media Policy

Implemented:	June 2019
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Reviewed:	June 2020 (JH), June 2021 (JH), June 2022 (HB), June 2023 (HC)
Next Review:	June 2024

Introduction

Employees of STAR Exeter can access social media services and social networking sites at work, either through company IT systems or via their own personal equipment.

This social media policy describes the rules governing use of social media at STAR Exeter and sets out how staff must behave when using the company's social media accounts. It also explains the rules about using personal social media accounts at work and describes what staff may say about the company on their personal accounts.

This policy should be read alongside other key policies (Emergency Action Plan and the Safeguarding Policy). The E-safety and Acceptable ICT Use Policy is particularly relevant to staff using social media.

Why this policy exists

Social media can bring significant benefits to STAR Exeter, particularly for building relationships with current and potential customers.

However, it is important that employees who use social media within the company do so in a way that enhances the company's prospects. A misjudged status update can generate complaints, could offend or damage our reputation. There are also security and data protection issues to consider.

This policy explains how employees can use social media safely and effectively.

Policy scope

This policy applies to all staff, contractors, interns and volunteers at STAR Exeter who use social media while working - no matter whether for business or personal reasons. It applies no matter if social media use takes place on company premises, while travelling for business or working from home.

Social media sites and services include, but are not limited to:

- Popular social networks like Twitter and Facebook
- Online review websites like Reevoo and Trustpilot
- Sharing and discussion sites like Delicious and Reddit
- Photographic social networks like Instagram and Snapchat
- Question and answer social networks like Yahoo Answers
- Professional social networks like LinkedIn

Responsibilities

Everyone who operates or is linked to a company social media account, or who uses their personal social media accounts at work, has a responsibility for implementing this policy. However, the following have key responsibilities:

Social Media Policy

- The social media manager is ultimately responsible for ensuring that STAR Exeter uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the company's objectives. The Social Media Manager is responsible for monitoring STAR Exeter's posts, interactions and performance and to remove inappropriate content that may appear on our social media sites. Profanity filters are set on the current sites we use including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
- The Director is responsible for working with the social media manager to communicate marketing ideas and campaigns through our social media channels.

General social media guidelines

The power of social media

STAR Exeter recognises that social media offers a platform for the company to perform marketing, stay connected with customers, interact, and build a profile online.

STAR Exeter encourages employees to use social media to support the company's goals and objectives and represent us in a positive way.

Basic advice

Regardless of which social networks employees are using, or whether they are using business or personal accounts in company time, following these simple rules helps avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** Employees should spend time becoming familiar with a social network before contributing. It is important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable before posting messages and updates.
- **If unsure, do not post it.** If an employee feels a post or update may cause offence, upset or a compliant - or be otherwise unsuitable - they should not post it. Staff members can always consult the social media manager for advice.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Observe basic good manners online. Employees should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- **Look out for security threats.** Staff should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks can also be used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.
- **Keep personal use reasonable.** Although STAR Exeter believes that having employees who are active on social media can be valuable, unless specific to your job role, personal use on social media should be restricted to break times and out of core hours.
- **Do not make promises without checking.** STAR Exeter's social media channels are all public, which means anyone can view the content. Employees should not make any promises or commitments on behalf of STAR Exeter without checking these promises can be delivered. Direct any enquiries to the social media manager.
- **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and issues. Once someone makes contact, employees should manage further communication internally (by email, phone or in person).
- **Do not escalate things.** It is easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. Employees should always take time to think before responding, and hold back if there is any doubt at all.

Social Media Policy

Use of STAR Exeter 's social media accounts

This part of the social media policy covers all use of social media accounts owned and run by the company.

Authorised users

Only people who have been authorised to use STAR Exeter's social networking accounts may do so.

Authorisation to use our social media networking accounts will typically be granted when social media-related tasks form a core part of an employee's job.

Allowing only designated people to use the accounts ensures the company's social media presence is consistent and cohesive.

Creating social media accounts

New social media accounts may only be created by the social media manager. The company operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focusses on the most appropriate network, given available resources.

If there is a case to be made for opening a new account, employees should raise this with the social media manager.

Purpose of company social media accounts

STAR Exeter's social media accounts may be used for many different purposes. In general, employees should only post updates, messages, or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with our overall objectives. For instance, employees may use company social media accounts to:

- Respond to customer enquiries and requests for information
- Share relevant articles and other content created by STAR Exeter
- Share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the business, created by STAR Exeter and others
- Provide followers with an insight into what goes on at STAR Exeter
- Promote marketing campaigns and, on occasions, special offers
- Support new initiatives

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. Employees are encouraged to think of new ways to use it and to put those ideas to the social media manager.