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| http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/images/895.jpg | http://www.profitablehospitality.com/members/images/space.gif |

**Sample Guidelines for Staff on Use of Social Media**

**There's no avoiding Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and a wide range of review websites.**

Most of your staff and managers are actively involved with these sites, interacting with friends and making new connections. It's essential that they have guidance on what is acceptable and not acceptable to say, especially as it relates to the business they work for.

Use this template to create a policy that everyone can understand and follow:

**Guidelines for Social Media Participation at (COMPANY)**

These guidelines apply to (COMPANY) employees or contractors who create or contribute to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of Social Media. Whether you log into Twitter, Yelp, Wikipedia, MySpace or Facebook pages, or comment on online media stories -- these guidelines are for you.

While all (COMPANY) employees are welcome to participate in Social Media, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines. These rules might sound strict and contain a bit of legal-sounding jargon but please keep in mind that our goal is simple: to participate online in a respectful, relevant way that protects and promotes our reputation and of course follows the letter and spirit of the law.

1. Be transparent and state that you work at (COMPANY). Your honesty will be noted in the Social Media environment. If you are writing about (COMPANY) or a competitor, use your real name, identify that you work for (COMPANY), and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to say so.

2. Never represent yourself or (COMPANY) in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.

3. Post meaningful, respectful comments - in other words, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive. Watch your language - avoid swear words and profanity and remember that your sense of humour may not be shared by others. You should avoid comments based on religion, politics, sex, sexuality or racial issues.

4. Use common sense and common courtesy: for example, it's best to ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to (COMPANY). Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate (COMPANY)'s privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines for external commercial speech.

5. Stick to your area of expertise and do feel free to provide unique, individual perspectives on non-confidential activities at (COMPANY). Chefs - comment on food and menu items, and bar staff, share about new products and services. Keep it interesting and light-hearted - that's what our customers expect.

6. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly: feel free to ask senior manager for advice and/or to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on (COMPANY).

7. If you want to write about the competition, make sure you behave diplomatically, have the facts straight and that you have the appropriate permissions. In general, we do not make negative comments about competitors. While you are working at (COMPANY), do not write critical comments about a competitor on an online restaurant or hotel review site eg Yelp, Eatability, TripAdvisor etc.

8. Do not comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties (COMPANY) may be in litigation with. Do not offer what could be considered 'legal advice' - this could include advice on pay rates and working conditions.

9. Never participate in Social Media when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis situation. Even anonymous comments may be traced back to your or (COMPANY)'s IP address. Refer all Social Media activity around crisis topics to a senior manager.

10. Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and (COMPANY)'s confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully. Google and Microsoft have long memories!

NOTE: Mainstream media inquiries must always be referred to senior management.