

Social Media Policy for the _____BOR

Adopted: (date)

Last Update: (date)

Social Media Definition:

'Social media' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools that allow users to interact with each other in some way - by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. As the name implies, social media involves the building of communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement.

Principles:

These are the official guidelines for social media at _____BOR. If you're an association employee, contractor, or volunteer creating or contributing to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media both on and off our association website, these guidelines are for you. We expect all who participate in social media on behalf _____BOR to understand and to follow these guidelines. These guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge—so check back occasionally to make sure you're up to date.

Emerging social media platforms for online collaboration are fundamentally changing the way our association engages with customers/members, colleagues, and the world at large. As an association we believe social computing can help us build a stronger, more successful real estate community, and it's a way for staff, members, and the public to have conversations about matters important to our real estate environment

As a member of the _____BOR staff, keep the following principles in mind:

- 1. Be professional; remember that you are an ambassador for our organization both on and off the job. Wherever possible, disclose your position as a representative of _____BOR.*
- 2. Be responsible and honest at all times.*
- 3. Be credible, accurate, fair, and thorough.*
- 4. Post meaningful, respectful comments - in other words, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive.*
- 5. Respect proprietary information and confidentiality both of our members, and of our internal operations.*
- 6. When disagreeing with others' opinions, be objective and respectful.*
- 7. Always remember that your online comments are permanently available to all, and may be republished in other media.*

8. *Stay within the legal framework and be aware that anti-trust, libel, copyright and data protection laws apply. Don't plagiarize.*
9. *Don't disclose sensitive or "inside" information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of ___BOR unless you are authorized to do so. If you are in doubt, avoid any contribution until you have received express permission from the AE. In other words, "If in doubt, leave it out."*
10. ***Even in your private communications, don't forget your day job. You are a representative of ___BOR.***

A more thorough explanation of these guidelines includes the following:

Be honest and transparent. Social Media is no place to hide. Use your real name if you are commenting about the association or its programs and identify yourself as a staff member. Don't violate _____BOR's privacy though, and protect your own personal privacy as well. Remember that what you post will be available for a long time, as will photos of you and your personal comments. In other words, think before you post.

Make a mistake? If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction. For example, if you're posting to a blog, you may choose to modify an earlier post—just make it clear that you have done so.

Be Fair. There can be a fine line between healthy debate and hysterical reaction. Do not badmouth ours or other associations and, even more importantly, other staff, our leaders, members, and their profession in general. See if you can invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Remember that once ~~the~~ words are online, you can't recall them. And once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it's hard to stop.

Add value. There's lots of traffic on today's social media. The best way to get yours read is to contribute subjects or information your readers will value. Social communication from our association should help our members and co-workers. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses or solve problems, or if it helps them understand our association better—then it's adding value. If you are

tempted to post about your breakfast cereal or your new haircut...don't.

Be Conversational. *Social Media is conversational, so talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. Encourage comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing other experts in your blogs, or by 'reTweeting' others' comments.*

Perception is reality. *In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as an ____BOR employee, you are creating perceptions about our association by our members and by the public.*

Write what you know. *Make sure you write and post about your areas of expertise. Use the first person. If you publish to a website outside ____BOR, please use a disclaimer something like this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent ____BOR's positions, strategies or opinions." Also, please respect brand, Realtor trademark, copyright, fair use, confidentiality and financial disclosure laws. If you have any questions about these, see your AE. Remember, you are personally responsible for your content.*

Moderating Content: *The ____BOR encourages its staff to maintain a responsible and balanced online dialogue, and respects each staff person's responsibility to maintain adherence to that principle. However, ____BOR does reserve the right to moderate content of employee postings. Should ____BOR staff exercise that prerogative, content moderation will be based solely on whether or not the content violates the law, or is offensive and/or denigrating to the organization or to personalities involved.*

Respecting Association Commitments: *Unless specifically assigned, social media activities should not interfere with regular work commitments. Association staff is expected to respect other appropriate policies relating to work performance.*

Resources:

BBC, "[Editorial Guidelines for Social Networking](#)"

Carl Haggerty, "[Carl's Notepad](#)" (blog)
IBM, "[Social Computing Guidelines](#)"