Social Media Rules

From Twitter and Facebook to YouTube and the blogosphere, social media dramatically increase employers' exposure to potentially costly and protracted risks including lawsuits, regulatory fines, security breaches, mismanaged business records, and productivity drains among others.

Guidelines for Creating Effective Social Media Policy

1 Combine policy with training, monitoring technology, and URL blocks to help manage use, content, and risks.

2 Establish rules to limit or ban social media use during working hours.

3 Stress that compliance with social media policy is mandatory at all times—during business hours and on employees' own time.

4 Prohibit employees from mentioning the organization or identifying themselves as employees via text, photos, logos, uniforms, or other content.

5 Prohibit employees from defaming, harassing, or otherwise posting inappropriate commentary about anyone.

6 Prohibit employees from disclosing confidential, sensitive, proprietary, secret, or private information about the company, employees, or customers.

7 Prohibit the use of company or personal Smartphones to take, transmit, download, or upload photos or videos of coworkers, executives, customers or third-parties without written permission.

8 Prohibit employees from disclosing financial information about the company and customers without permission.

9 Insist on adherence to all employment policies including content and language guidelines.

10 Notify employees that violation of the social media policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

11 Require employees to sign and date a copy of the policy, acknowledging that they have read it, understand it, and agree to comply with it.

12 Monitor internal and external social media sites to see what is being written about the company, and how employees are spending their time.

BEST PRACTICE

Establish Social Media Policy to Combat Potentially Costly Risks

Best practices call for the establishment and enforcement of social media policies. Even if your organization doesn't currently operate a business blog, or have a corporate presence on Twitter, you cannot afford to ignore emerging technology. Fail to provide the hot, must-have technology tools of the day, and your employees (particularly younger employees whose lives revolve around Tweeting, texting, and networking) will bring them in through the back door.

Through the strategic implementation of a comprehensive social media management program that combines written rules with employee education, supported by policy-based monitoring and blocking technology, you can minimize risks while maximizing compliance.