

SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN TODAY'S WORKPLACE

In my business, with Social Media being an integral part of Marketing and Business Development, I am often questioned on the role it plays when employees have access to Social Media while working.

Certain aspects of Marketing often overlap with Human Resources and many policies need to be integrated into an Employee Handbook which are essential to the development of the business.

Do you really know what your employees are posting on the Internet?

The increased use of social media sites can create some questions and concerns within the workplace. The expansion of the Internet and sites where individuals can post information have been a great asset for business, particularly small businesses. Your business might even have a Facebook page and you can use this as a communication tool to reach existing customers and potential customers. However, there are also some challenges that come along with this increased technology, particularly when it comes to employee privacy rights.

The key concern that enters the picture is the employees' use of time on social media sites while they are supposed to be working, thus, creating loss of productivity. When can an employee use social media, and what are employees allowed to post?

The more challenging aspect of social media sites for employers is the actual information that an employee may post on a site. Is it potentially harassing behavior toward another employee? Is the employee posting information about the company that could violate any nondisclosure policies or agreements? In order for companies to gain a better handle on these situations, it is recommended that organizations have clear Internet usage and social media policies written into their Employee Handbooks.

A good policy should provide the following:

- Instructions to employees on what is and is not permissible with regard to using the Internet at work.
- Clear information about the employer's right to monitor employee computers within the workplace and require employees to acknowledge in writing that they should not have an expectation of privacy for anything that is sent, received or stored on the company's computer systems.
- Restrictions on the use of personal phones and other electronic devices while on company time.
- Consequences for employees if they are in violation of the Internet Usage and Social Media policies.

For more information on Social Media policies or Employee Handbooks, please feel free to contact Maria Novak, owner of Marketing Solutions & Business Development.

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