

# Social Media Policy

## Introduction

Employees, freelancers or other associates of Articulacy UK Ltd may be able to access social media services and social networking websites at work, either through company IT systems or via their own personal equipment.

This social media policy describes the rules governing the use of social media at Articulacy UK Ltd.

It sets out how employees, freelancers or other associates 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 is particularly relevant to staff using social media.

## Why this policy exists

Social media can bring significant benefits to Articulacy UK Ltd, particularly for building relationships with current and potential customers.

However, it's 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 or damage the company's 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 employees, freelancers or other associates at Articulacy UK Ltd who use social media while working – no matter whether for business or personal reasons.

It applies no matter whether that social media use takes place on company premises, while travelling for business or while 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 **Reevo** and **Trustpilot**
- Sharing and discussion sites like **Delicious** and **Reddit**
- Photographic social networks like **Flickr** and **Instagram**
- Question and answer social network like **Quora** and **Yahoo Answers**
- Professional social networks like **LinkedIn** and **Sunzu**

## Responsibilities

Everyone who operates a company social media account or who uses their personal social media accounts at work has some responsibility for implementing this policy.

However, these people have key responsibilities:

- The Directors are ultimately responsible for ensuring Articulacy UK Ltd uses social media safely, appropriately and in line with the company's objectives.
- The Directors are responsible for providing apps and tools to manage the company's social media presence and track any key performance indicators. They are also responsible for proactively monitoring for social media security threats.
- The Directors are responsible for working with the Business Manager to roll out marketing ideas and campaigns through our social media channels.
- The Business Manager is responsible for ensuring requests for assistance and support made via social media are followed up.

## General social media guidelines

### The power of social media

Articulacy UK Ltd recognises that social media offers a platform for the company to perform marketing, stay connected with customers and build its profile online.

The company also believes its employees, freelancers or other associates should be involved in industry conversations on social networks. Social media is an excellent way for employees to make useful connections, share ideas and shape discussions.

The company therefore encourages employees, freelancers or other associates to use social media to support the company's goals and objectives.

### Basic advice

Regardless of which social network employees, freelancers or other associates are using, or whether they're using business or personal accounts on company time, following these simple rules helps to avoid the most common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** Employees, freelancers or other associates should spend time becoming familiar with the social network before contributing. It's important to read any FAQs and understand what is and is not acceptable on a network before posting messages or updates.
- **If unsure, don't post it.** Employees, freelancers or other associates should err on the side of caution when posting to social networks. If an employee feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence – or be otherwise unsuitable – they should not post it. Employees, freelancers or other associates can always consult the Business Manager for advice.

- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have got into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. Employees, freelancers or other associates should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- **Look out for security threats.** Employees, freelancers or other associates should be on guard for social engineering and phishing attempts. Social networks are also used to distribute spam and malware. Further details below.
- **Keep personal use reasonable.** Although the company believes that having employees, freelancers or other associates who are active on social media can be valuable both to those employees and to the business, staff should exercise restraint in how much personal use of social media they make during working hours.
- **Don't make promises without checking.** Some social networks are very public, so employees, freelancers or other associates should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of Articulacy UK Ltd without checking that the company can deliver on the promises. Direct any enquiries to the Business Manager.
- **Handle complex queries via other channels.** Social networks are not a good place to resolve complicated enquiries and customer issues. Once a customer has made contact, employees, freelancers or other associates should handle further communications via the most appropriate channel – usually email or telephone.
- **Don't escalate things.** It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. Employees, freelancers or other associates should always take the time to think before responding and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

## Use of company 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 the company's social networking accounts may do so.

Authorisation is usually provided by the Directors. It is typically 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 in the company's name must not be created unless approved by the Directors.

The company operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most-appropriate social networks, given available resources.

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

## Purpose of company social media accounts

Articulacy UK Ltd's social media accounts may be used for many different purposes.

In general, employees, freelancers or other associates should only post updates, messages or otherwise use these accounts when that use is clearly in line with the company's overall objectives.

For instance, employees may use company social media accounts to:

- Respond to customer enquiries and requests for help.
- Share blog posts, articles and other content created by the company
- Share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the business, but created by others
- Provide fans or followers with an insight into what goes on at the company
- Promote marketing campaigns and special offers
- Support new product launches and other initiatives

Social media is a powerful tool that changes quickly. Employees, freelancers or other associates are encouraged to think of new ways to use it, and to put those ideas to the (Business Manager).

## Inappropriate content and uses

Company social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or to take part in any activities that could bring the company into disrepute.

When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, employees should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on a headline.

Further guidelines can be found below.

## Use of personal social media accounts at work

### The value of social media

Articulacy UK Ltd recognises that employees, freelancers or other associates' personal social media accounts can generate a number of benefits. For instance:

- Make industry contacts that may be useful in their jobs
- Discover content to help them learn and develop in their role
- By posting about the company, can help build the business' profile online

As a result, the company is happy for employees, freelancers or other associates to spend a reasonable amount of time using their personal social media accounts at work.

# Personal social media rules

## Acceptable use:

- Employees, freelancers or other associates may use their personal social media accounts for work-related purpose during regular hours but must ensure this is for a specific reason (e.g. competitor research). Social media should not affect the ability of employees to perform their regular duties.
- Use of social media accounts for non-work purposes is restricted to non-work time, such as breaks and during lunch.

## Talking about the company:

- Employees, freelancers or other associates should ensure it is clear that their social media account does not represent Articulacy UK Ltd's views or opinions.
- Employees, freelancers or other associates may wish to include a disclaimer in social media profiles: 'The views expressed are my own and do not reflect the reviews of my employer.'

## Safe, responsible social media use

The rules in this section apply to:

- Any employees, freelancers or other associates using company social media accounts
- Employees, freelancers or other associates using personal social media accounts during company time

## Users must not:

- Create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur liability for the company.
- Post message, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate.

Inappropriate content includes: pornography, racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults, gambling and illegal drugs.

This definition of inappropriate content or material also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by law.

- Use social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send offensive or harassing material to others via social media.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage Articulacy UK Ltd's image or reputation.

- Interact with Articulacy UK Ltd's competitors in any ways which could be interpreted as being offensive, disrespectful or rude. (Communication with direct competitors should be kept to a minimum.)
- Discuss colleagues, competitors, customers or suppliers without their approval.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.

## Copyright

Articulacy UK Ltd respects and operates within copyright laws. Users may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party.
- If staff wish to share content published on another website, they are free to do so if that website has obvious sharing buttons or functions on it.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.

## Security and data protection

Employees, freelancers or other associates should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social networks.

## Maintain confidentiality

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the company that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive.
- This might include sales figures, details of key customers, or information about future strategy or marketing campaigns,
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another company or person that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive.
- For example, if a competitor's marketing strategy was leaked online, employees of Articulacy UK Ltd should not mention it on social media.
- Share or link to data in any way that could breach the company's data protection policy.

## Protect social accounts

- Company social media accounts should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and shared only with authorised users.
- Wherever possible, employees should use two-factor authentication (often called mobile phone verification) to safeguard company accounts.
- Employees, freelancers or other associates must not use a new piece of software, app or service with any of the company's social media accounts without receiving approval from (the social media manager).

## Avoid social scams

- Employees, freelancers or other associates should watch for phishing attempts, where scammers may attempt to use deception to obtain information to either the company or its customers.

- Employees, freelancers or other associates should never reveal sensitive details through social media channels. Customer identities must always be verified in the usual way before any account information is shared or discussed.
- Employees, freelancers or other associates should avoid clicking links in posts, updates or direct messages that look suspicious. In particular, users should look out for URLs contained in generic or vague-sounding direct messages.

## Policy enforcement

### Monitoring social media use

Company IT and internet resources – including computers, smart phones and internet connections – are provided for legitimate business use.

The company therefore reserves the right to monitor how social networks are used and accessed through these resources. Any such examinations or monitoring will only be carried out by authorised staff. Additionally, all data relating to social networks written, sent or received through the company's computer systems is part of official Articulacy UK Ltd's records. The company can be legally compelled to show that information to law enforcement agencies or other parties.

### Potential sanctions

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees, contractors and other users may also be held personally liable for violating this policy. Where appropriate, the company will involve the police or other law enforcement agencies in relation to breaches of this policy.

**This policy was last reviewed by Articulacy on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020**



Signed on behalf of Articulacy

Print name here

Leanne Fennell

Date

12<sup>th</sup> February 2020