Social Media at Work
Reap the Rewards and Avoid the Risks

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Business Benefits of Using Social Media

Using social media effectively can enable your organization to:

- Promote its products or services.
- Increase visibility and goodwill in the community.
- Engage more directly with customers.
- Improve and increase networking relationships.
- Recruit new employees, attract potential clients, and establish new vendor relationships.

Email Etiquette

- ✓ Reread before sending: proofread for typos and check for appropriate tone.
- ✓ Don't say anything that you wouldn't say in public (even deleted emails can be retrieved).
- ✓ Be clear and succinct.
- ✓ Say if you don't need a response.
- ✓ Don't write in CAPITALS.
- ✓ Limit use of "cc" and "reply all."
- ✓ Recognize that emails can be considered a contract.

Categories of Risk

- **Defamation:** Injuring of a person's or an organization's good name or reputation.
- **Cyber-bullying:** Using technology to threaten, intimidate, insult, or humiliate another person.
- **Trademark/copyright infringement:** Illegal to use trademarked or copyrighted material without authorization.
- **Revealing trade secrets:** Disclosing confidential information that has economic value to an organization and is not easily discoverable.
- **Privacy violations:** HIPAA protects the privacy of "individually identifiable health information."
- **Policy violations:** Failing to comply with company guidelines for appropriate behavior.
- **Discrimination:** Biased treatment of an employee or potential employee based on information about his/her personal life.

National Labor Relations Act (NLRA)

Enforced by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), this law prohibits employers from interfering with an employee's right to engage in "protected and concerted activity," which includes discussions or actions regarding wages, hours, or other working conditions.

Guidance document issued by NLRB in May 2012 found that policies that do any of the following may be considered unlawful:

- Discourage "friending" of coworkers
- Discourage disclosure of personal information on social media sites
- Specify that employee grievances be addressed through internal procedures rather than aired online
- Prohibit employees from including non-employees in their discussions about the workplace
- Restrict/prohibit employees from commenting on legal matters related to their employer

Why Have a Social Media Policy?

A social media policy provides:

- ✓ Protection to the organization against liability for the actions of its employees.
- ✓ Guidelines to employees about appropriate and inappropriate use of social media.
- ✓ Guidelines to employees about what they can and cannot say about the organization.
- ✓ Clear consequences for employees who violate the policy.
- ✓ Clear information about how employees' use of social media is monitored.

Develop your company's social media policy in conjunction with a broad range of employee input to raise awareness and gain commitment.

Building a Social Media Presence

- **Employer:** Know and share your social media vision, seek out internal experts, and encourage employees to "own" your company's presence.
- **Employee:** Read carefully before you respond, identify yourself, and show your personality.

Stand alone or as part of a Coaching Engagement.   www.ColemireConsulting.com