Omaha Community Foundation

Let good grow.

The Omaha Community Foundation Social Media Policy and Guidelines

Overview

In the current online environment, almost all online activities can be traced and can have an impact (for better or worse) on an individual or an organization. It is not our intent to control what is said on personal social networking websites, but our policies on anti-harassment, ethics and organizational conduct extend to all forms of communication.

There is an etiquette that you should abide by when participating online, especially if you're using social networks for any work-related purposes. The goal of this document is not to be restrictive, but to provide some guidelines on proper social networking etiquette. Much of this is common sense, but it is important that OCF has a consistent policy so employees know what is expected.

The following policy applies to the use of social media for work-related purposes.

What Is Social Media?

Social media can be roughly defined as the tools and content that enable people to connect online, share their interests and engage in conversations. Examples include blogs, microblogs, wikis, media-sharing sites, social networks, and bookmarking sites.

Why Participate?

- Engage with our target audiences and the community
- Extend our network
    - Formalize relationships with prospects and nonprofits
    - Establish new relationships with people you may not have met otherwise
    - Learn who your acquaintances are connected to and ask for introductions
- Establish your credentials and build your professional reputation
    - Become an authority in your area of expertise
    - Be the go-to-person for information and referrals
- Build trust
    - Sharing good information and engaging in conversations will help OCF become more trusted by the community over time.
- Learn new things
    - Connect with thought-leaders and learn about new tools and trends.
    - See what others are saying about key issues and news.

OCF recognizes that blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social media sites are shaping reputations and providing new avenues to engage with the audiences we want to reach. OCF employees are actively encouraged to use social media to engage in conversations regarding the Omaha Community Foundation and the issues we champion.

Our goals include:
- Raise awareness about OCF — tell people who we are, show them what we do in the community.
- Cultivate new relationships within the community.
- Introduce OCF to a new audience.
- Increase the "approachability" of OCF.

Our online audiences include:
- Current donors
- Prospective donors
- Nonprofit organizations
- Professional advisors
- The Omaha community at large

Like any form of communication regarding the organization, some rules and guidelines apply. Please review this document and always check with the Vice President of Community Relations if questions or concerns arise.

Core Values in the Online Social Media Community

OCF recognizes and follows core values in the online social media community and expects the same commitment from all OCF representatives – including employees and associates of our agencies, vendors and suppliers. Any deviation from these commitments may be subject to disciplinary review or other appropriate action.

1. **Transparency** in every social media engagement. OCF does not condone manipulating the social media flow by creating "fake" destinations and posts designed to mislead followers and control a conversation. Every Web site, "fan page", or other online destination that is ultimately controlled by OCF must make that fact known to users and must be authorized according to applicable internal protocols in order to track and monitor OCF's online presence. We also require bloggers and social media influencers to disclose to their readers when they are associated with OCF and communicating for OCF's benefit.
2. **Protection** of the privacy of our donors, nonprofits, and partners. We should be conscientious regarding any personally identifiable information that we collect, including how we collect, store, use, or share that information, all of which should be done in accordance with applicable privacy policies, laws and IT policies.
3. **Respect** of copyrights, trademarks, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the online social media space, including user-generated content.
4. **Responsibility** in our use of technology. OCF will not use or align itself with any organizations or Web sites that deploy the use of excessive tracking software, adware, malware or spyware.
5. **Utilization** of best practices, listening to the online community, and compliance with applicable regulations to ensure that our online social media guidelines remain current and reflect the most up-to-date and appropriate standards of behavior.

Rules and Guidelines for Posting Content Online

1. **Adhere to OCF's policies.**
   These include restrictions on sharing confidential, proprietary, and financial information, and any and all copyrighted materials; policies forbidding OCF personnel to engage in discrimination, hate speech, personal threats, or sexual harassment online or in the workplace.

2. **Disclose your identity.**
   - It is widely considered best practice to avoid using pseudonyms online. Social media is a forum for humans to interact with one another, so do as you would in any social situation and introduce yourself.
   - If employees wish to post content online anonymously, they should not discuss matters related to OCF.
   - If OCF-related topics are mentioned on an employee's personal blog or other social media forum, or if employees are blogging or commenting online in an official OCF capacity, they should disclose their name and OCF affiliation from the very first encounter.
   - The manner of disclosure can be flexible as long as it is clear to the average reader, directly connected to the relevant post, or provides a means of communicating further. (Example disclosure methods could include: usernames that include the company name, link to "about us" page, or statement in the post itself "I work for The Omaha Community Foundation, and this is my personal opinion.")
   - Personal writing that does not mention work-related topics does not need to mention the employment relationship.

3. **Give credit to your sources.**
   If you are referring to or citing research or opinions of others, acknowledge it with an attribution and/or a link to that person's blog or organization's website. Give credit where credit is due.

4. **Be honest and accurate.**
   Remember, the internet has a long memory. If you include factual information in your post, double-check it for accuracy. If you mistakenly post an inaccuracy, correct your error as soon as it becomes apparent to you. Also, before you post, spell-check; and consider whether your information is complete, or whether you're omitting facts that are crucial to put your post in proper context.

5. **Be respectful and professional.**
   RSS readers make it very easy for many people from all over the world to "subscribe" to your online content. You don't necessarily know who will be reading your post. Profanity and obscenity are obvious no-nos, but tone is just as important. Be respectful, even if you disagree with your fellow commenters, and avoid accusations.

6. **Be mindful of company time.**
   Employees are allowed to participate in work-related social media engagement during normal business hours. However, if it is determined that your involvement online is distracting from or preventing you from performing your primary duties, your manager may choose to restrict or prohibit your online involvement at work.

7. **Be yourself.**
   OCF has a talented and dedicated staff with unique personalities – this makes each individual very valuable to the organization. Let your personality shine through in your posts by using a human, conversational voice.

8. **Be interesting.**
   The best way to be interesting is to write about what you know. OCF has many experts with a deep understanding of relevant community and philanthropic issues. Share your expertise, and avoid discussing that which falls outside your purview. If you think someone on staff should respond to something but you don't have the knowledge to do so, please call it to the attention of the Director of Communications. Also remember to participate, not promote. Bring value to our audience without "hard-selling" our services or organization.

9. **Consider your audience.**
   Each online community has different rules (spoken and unspoken) for engaging in conversations. Listen before speaking and learn the rules before you join the conversation.

Commenting Policies for Commenting on External Sites

Before responding to an article or post on the Web, consider whether it makes sense to engage in the discussion.

As soon as possible, but within one business day, OCF should respond to correct misinformation about the organization or our work. As with all online posts related to OCF, disclose your identity and affiliation with the organization, be respectful, be honest and accurate, and give credit to sources.

As a general rule, OCF staff should not respond to the following types of posts:
- Spam and off-topic comments (Likewise, never post an off-topic comment on someone else's site for the purpose of promoting your work or OCF.)
- Defamatory remarks
- Rants
- Satire
- Individuals who consistently engage in negative communications

We should continue to monitor sites with these types of posts to be aware of what is said about OCF and our work in the communities we serve. OCF need not have the last word if someone disagrees. We welcome spirited discussions and opposing viewpoints, but should guard against being defensive or combative.

OCF staff is encouraged to post comments if their thoughts will enrich a reasonable discussion and/or correct misinformation. Here's the Golden Rule for commenting:

Does my comment add to a reasonable conversation? If it is determined that the post is worth responding to, the challenge is to craft a post that truly will add to the conversation. "Nice post!" or "Off base" do state opinions, but do not enrich the discussion. What new information can you add? Add it, with links (preferably back to the OCF's website) when appropriate.

When posting a response, all rules and guidelines for posting original content apply.

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