

Bianchi PeRspectives

An e-newsletter offering PR-related info to use, challenge and amuse.

VOLUME 16 - FEBRUARY 2010

WORD NERD

Ac*ro*nym*os*ity *n.* - the animosity caused by an overload of acronyms. Made worse by instant messaging, texting, tweeting and our need to turn everything into an acronym to save time. Need help figuring out what all of those letters mean? [Click here.](#)

Latest Bianchi Biz Blog Post

"10 Tips to Stretch Your PR Agency Budget"

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Recent Results

Bianchi PR helped the [American Iron and Steel Institute](#) garner more than **1.8 billion** media impressions in 2009.

Client Kudos

Congratulations to ...

[NxtGen Emission Controls](#) on its recent grant of nearly \$500,000 from the National Research Council of Canada aiding them in further tackling emissions, reducing environmental impact and improving fuel economy.

71% of Companies Don't



A recent study by the HR/staffing firm Manpower indicated that 71 percent of companies **do not** have a social media policy. That means that almost three out of four companies run the **risk** of having employees saying things online -- via platforms such as Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn -- that could be detrimental to their employers' brand. Yikes!

Our feeling is that, even if your company hasn't officially implemented any social media platforms yet, you should have a corporate social media policy to help protect your brand and encourage your employees to do the right thing. Because if your employees have Internet access on the job, they either are already using social media on the job ... or will be soon.

If your company is one of those without a policy, this issue is dedicated to helping you get started. Our article below, as well as two articles from the social media source Mashable (links below) will provide additional insight.

Of course, if you have any questions or want additional help, please give us a call. That's why we're here!

Jim Bianchi, APR

President

<http://mashable.com/2009/04/27/social-media-policy/>

<http://mashable.com/2009/06/02/social-media-policy-musts/>

Freudenberg Simrit LP, the U.K. sister company of Plymouth, Mich.-based [Simrit](#) on being awarded the Pattonair Gold Standard Award for supplier excellence.

[Brooks Kushman](#) for being ranked among the nation's top intellectual property (IP) law firms selected by *Fortune* 100 companies. The list was featured in this month's *IP Law & Business* magazine.

LinkedIn

Don't forget to become a member of [Bianchi PR's LinkedIn group](#) for discussions on the latest trends and issues in PR, marketing, social media and business.

PR / Social Media Resources

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→ Does Your Company Need a Social Media Policy?

If your company is involved in social media, or even just thinking about it, there's a big question you should be asking. And while big, it's also pretty basic: what happens if someone does something stupid?

No, really. Mistakes happen to the even the best-intentioned. And since comments or content posted online are retrievable by anyone with an Internet connection, it's probably in your company's best interest to lay down some guidelines for your employees.

There are a few things that can make creating a social media policy difficult. How do you restrict enough but not so much that it defeats the purpose of social media? How do you make the policy relevant to all employees, not just those in the marketing or PR department?

Here are some suggestions to keep in mind when creating guidelines that will help regulate - but won't smother the personal and open nature of - social media:

Use Common Sense - Ah yes, our good friend common sense. Easily defined, yet often not easily followed. Remind employees that what is said on the web is searchable, permanent and traceable. Would they be comfortable with the CEO seeing the content they posted or comment they made? Would they be comfortable standing up in front an audience of industry peers and announcing it?

Have a Point - People engaged in social media on their company's behalf need to remember that the purpose is to provide value, ask questions, share content, make connections and get involved in conversations related to the industry. It's not an open forum to complain or insult competitors. Be professional, be helpful.

Identify Roles - It's probably stated in your general corporate communications policy that certain individuals are responsible for certain tasks. Not everyone on your staff should be responding to customer questions or complaints or making significant announcements on behalf of the company. This is the same for social media. Certain things should only be handled by certain, clearly identified staffers.

Put the Pitch Away - It's been said a million times but is worth repeating: Social media sites are not the place for sales pitches. It's annoying and users will discount your company as being one that "doesn't get it." Let employees know that linking to your company site or talking about what products and services you provide is fine, as long as it makes sense in the conversation and the intent is to help.

Divide and Conquer - Many social media users have separate profiles for personal and company use. This can be helpful since the separation serves as a reminder of what is appropriate when representing your company. Keep a Facebook and Twitter profile

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[LinkedIn](#)



that is strictly for work use and connect with people accordingly. Keep another profile to use when connecting with family and friends.

Prepare for Problems - Yep, someone is going to mess up at some point. It's not the end of the world. Your company might already have a crisis handbook or a detailed plan to follow in case there's an emergency or bad press situation. You should have something similar for a social media mistake. Relax, nobody has to pull an alarm or take cover. But there should be basic steps to follow in order to recognize, admit to and fix the problem in a timely fashion.

It's Alive! - Your social media policy should be treated as a living document. Changes and additions will be made as more is learned and experienced. When updating or revising your guidelines, keep communication open with all levels of your staff -- PR and marketing, human resources, IT, customer service, product managers, etc -- to leverage feedback across the board. See it as an opportunity for continuous improvement.

Remember that your social media policy should reflect your company's unique goals, needs and values. The rules for creating a set of guidelines isn't a cut and paste situation. That said, sometimes examples can help jump start the process.

[Click here](http://bianchipr.com/corporate-social-media-guidelines.html) to see some real examples of social media policies that might help you get a leg up: <http://bianchipr.com/corporate-social-media-guidelines.html>

