**BUSINESS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

**SOCIAL MEDIA PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

Participating in blogs, social media outlets, and contributing to relevant online communities can significantly enhance [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s business presence and your reputation as an industry expert. [EMPLOYER'S NAME] has determined that you have the necessary professionalism, industry knowledge, and experience to represent us in the social media space, subject to the terms outlined in these guidelines.

OR

If your job duties require you to speak on behalf of [EMPLOYER'S NAME] in any social media environment, you must seek prior approval from [your manager/the [DEPARTMENT NAME] Department], who [may/will] require you to attend training before participating in social media on behalf of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. You must also adhere to the following guidelines.

The following guidelines are designed to help you represent yourself and [EMPLOYER'S NAME] in the best possible way online. These guidelines apply when using social media as part of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s strategic marketing, public relations, corporate communications, shareholder relations, or recruiting programs.

If you are not a member of the [DEPARTMENT NAME] Department and are contacted for comment about [EMPLOYER'S NAME] for publication, including in social media outlets, you must direct the inquiry to the [DEPARTMENT NAME] Department and refrain from responding without prior approval.

All social media use by employees, whether for business or personal purposes, is subject to [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s social media policies, rules, and contractual obligations, as set forth in these guidelines and:
[APPLICABLE POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS].

Blogs and social media offer innovative ways for [EMPLOYER'S NAME] to thrive, and your involvement is key in strengthening our public presence. If you have any questions regarding social media, these guidelines, or [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s expectations, please contact [[NAME]/[DEPARTMENT NAME] Department].

**SPEAK KNOWLEDEABLY**

As an industry leader in your field, it is important that your online posts and communications reflect your expertise. Speak only about topics you are knowledgeable about and ensure your contributions are valuable. Before posting content, take the time to review the context and previous discussions to ensure you are adding meaningful insights. Consider linking to other [EMPLOYER'S NAME] posts to strengthen and expand our online presence and leadership.

**BE TRANSPARENT**

When promoting [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s [products/services/websites] on social media, always clearly and conspicuously identify yourself as an employee of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. For guidance on how to make these disclosures in a clear and conspicuous manner, please refer to [NAME OF SOCIAL MEDIA ENDORSEMENT POLICY].

**BE INTERESTING AND INTERACTIVE**

Write in the first person and, where comfortable, share personal insights or experiences that others may find engaging to increase the appeal of your posts. If you're discussing [EMPLOYER'S NAME], always make sure to identify your affiliation with [EMPLOYER'S NAME] and your role within the company. Share your enthusiasm about the work you're doing, and invite others to engage in a conversation so you can learn from their experiences and exchange ideas.

**ADD VALUE**

Before posting, consider whether your contribution will add value to the community. If what you are sharing helps others—whether it's solving a problem, offering valuable insights, or assisting your peers or customers—you are contributing meaningfully. Additionally, if your posts enhance the sense of community around [EMPLOYER'S NAME] or improve the perception of [EMPLOYER'S NAME] and its products or services, you are adding value.

**RESPOND TO YOUR MISTAKES QUICKLY**

If you make a mistake in a post, address it promptly by correcting the error. Your credibility is built on both your accuracy and your willingness to acknowledge and correct any mistakes. If you modify a previous post, be transparent and let your audience know that you’ve made an update.

**DON’T BE ARGUMENTATIVE**

If you choose to disagree with others online, always do so respectfully and factually. Avoid speaking negatively about a competitor's business, and if you must make a point, ensure you focus on the facts without disparaging them. Engaging in arguments or inflammatory debates can harm your credibility and, by extension, that of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. Always maintain respect for others in the online community.

**HAVE RESPECT**

Always ensure that your posts are respectful and appropriate for all audiences. Never post anything that could be considered offensive, such as sexual comments, racial slurs, or inflammatory language. Be mindful that discussions about religion or politics can easily offend others, so approach such topics with caution or avoid them altogether.

**ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH [EMPLOYER'S NAME’S] POLICIES**

If a post would violate any of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s policies in other forums, it will also violate them in online spaces. Do not use social media to disclose confidential or proprietary information, harass or discriminate against colleagues, defame or disparage [EMPLOYER'S NAME] or fellow employees, or breach any other company policy. Additionally, do not use social media in a deceptive or misleading manner, such as pretending to be someone else or artificially inflating attention around [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s business, products, or stock.

**SAFEGUARD STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION**

Do not mention or refer to our customers, suppliers, business associates, or investors by name, nor reveal any confidential information about them without obtaining their [explicit/written] permission in advance. Additionally, you must secure prior approval from [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s [[DEPARTMENT NAME] Department/[POSITION]] before sharing such information. Avoid discussing or conducting business with customers, suppliers, business associates, or investors in any online forums.

**REFRAIN FROM COMMENTING ON BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OR PLANS**

Disclosing or commenting on [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s confidential business information is strictly prohibited. This includes details related to sales, customer lists, financials, business or marketing plans, performance, or future prospects. Do not engage in discussions or speculation about such matters. If asked directly, [do not respond or] simply state "no comment."

**COMPLY WITH WEBSITE TERMS OF USE**

Do not expose yourself or [EMPLOYER'S NAME] to legal risks by accessing or using websites in violation of their terms of use. Always review the terms of use for all social media sites you visit to ensure your activities comply with them. Pay special attention to the following key areas:

* Restrictions on use: Be aware of any prohibitions or restrictions, particularly those related to advertising, marketing, promotions, or other commercial activities (e.g., Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities and Promotion Guidelines outline terms for businesses administering promotions through Facebook).
* Intellectual property ownership: Understand the ownership of intellectual property used on or generated through the use of the site, such as [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s copyrighted material, trademarks, or user information the company may collect.
* Licensing requirements: Ensure any use of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s intellectual property, including trademarks, by the site owner or third parties is authorized with the proper licenses or permissions.
* Privacy rights: Be mindful of the privacy rights and responsibilities for both the site owner and users.

**OWNERSHIP OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS**

Any social media accounts created or used on behalf of [EMPLOYER'S NAME] are the sole property of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. This includes all log-in information, passwords, and content associated with the account, including followers and contacts. [EMPLOYER'S NAME] retains full ownership of these accounts at all times, including all associated content and access credentials.

You agree not to create or manage any social media account for [EMPLOYER'S NAME] or for business purposes without [EMPLOYER'S NAME]'s express prior authorization. If you have questions about creating or managing a social media account, please contact [[NAME]/[DEPARTMENT NAME] Department].

**CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATING THIS POLICY**

Violation of these guidelines, especially if it exposes [EMPLOYER'S NAME] to liability, will result in appropriate disciplinary action, which may include termination. If you are uncertain whether your actions might violate any of these guidelines, please consult [[POSITION NAME]/[DEPARTMENT NAME] Department] for clarification.

**APPLICABILITY TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS**

The terms outlined in this policy work alongside, and do not replace, modify, or supplement any provisions in a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between a union and [EMPLOYER'S NAME].

Employees should refer to the terms of their collective bargaining agreement for clarification. In cases where this policy differs from the terms of the applicable CBA, the CBA will take precedence.

This policy complies with all applicable Virginia laws regarding social media use, employee conduct, and related protections. Where Virginia laws provide more favorable rights or protections, those provisions will take precedence.

**CONDUCT NOT COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

This policy is not intended to prevent or discourage employees from engaging in legally protected activities/activities protected by state or federal law, including the National Labor Relations Act, such as discussing wages, benefits, or terms and conditions of employment, forming, joining, or supporting labor unions, bargaining collectively through representatives of their choice, raising concerns about working conditions for their own and their colleagues' mutual aid or protection, or other legally required activities.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT AND REVIEW**

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (employee name), acknowledge that on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date), I received and reviewed a copy of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]’s [NAME OF POLICY]. I understand that it is my responsibility to familiarize myself with the policy and adhere to its terms.

I also acknowledge that this policy is not intended to create an employment contract or alter my at-will employment status, unless otherwise specified in a written agreement signed by an authorized representative of [EMPLOYER'S NAME]. Any delay or failure by [EMPLOYER'S NAME] to enforce the provisions of this policy does not constitute a waiver of its rights to enforce them in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date