

Does your firm have a social media policy?

So your firm has one or more social media accounts they use to deliver its message. But do you have a social media policy for your employees to use? In this day and age, many of your employees have personal (Facebook) and professional (LinkedIn) accounts that may be effectively associated with the firm, based on the employee's sharing of information. It's best to have a general guideline to help the lawyers and staff at your firm know the risks and to guide them through how their online activity may affect their professional lives.

A few points to consider when creating a policy or guideline:

1. Firm culture

- Keep in mind the culture that has been built in your firm over the years. Instill messages in the document that are consistent with the firm vision, values and mission. Review other firms' social media policies when doing your research.

2. Partner/executive and department input

- Once the drafting process has begun, ask your partners, executive team and departments for any input they may have from their experiences.
- Have a meeting with other employees in your company as you start to get the process rolling. You may not be able to have everyone involved, but larger firms should be sure to have HR, communications and IT present.

3. Personal vs. professional

- Remind lawyers and other staff to be good online citizens and to be mindful of what they post, especially when their accounts name the firm as their place of employment.

4. Make it short

- Keep your policy short and easy to read. Remember this policy is for all members of the firm, who will have different levels of experience with social media. If it's too long and complex, it will cause confusion for your readers and will be ignored.

5. Clarify policy rules

- Remind employees of the privacy policies implemented at your firm. If your goal is to have more employee engagement and active voices on social media being clear helps.

6. Train employees on the policy

- Now that your social media policy is in place, it's time to hold a training session for lawyers and staff. Run through why you've created this policy, the contents of it and where they can find it. This will help motivate employees to get started and give them clear expectations up front. ■

Victoria Caruso is Communications Coordinator at LAWPRO.

Social media profile: Mahwash Khan



Mahwash Khan

Training and
Communications Counsel



Time at LAWPRO: Nine years

Mahwash has been active on LinkedIn, Twitter and Pinterest for the past two and a half years.

She also manages our TitlePLUS social media channels:

@TitlePLUSCanada on Twitter and the TitlePLUS Home Buying Guide – Canada Facebook page since inception two years ago.

Target audience:

- Real estate lawyers and professionals
- Consumers in the home buying and mortgaging processes
- Lenders and banking institutions
- Consumers interested in renovations, maintenance and DIY projects around the home

Topics of interest:

- Real estate issues
- Copy editing and grammar
- General issues of balancing work and home life
- Feminist issues
- Inspirational and thought provoking articles

When asked how social media has shaped her career, Mahwash notes:

“With such busy schedules, it's a great way to get caught up with the world and to find out about things that interest you in a short period of time. It's also a fun way to share and learn.

As a legal and communications professional, I find my job has changed significantly over the past two years – creating and managing two social media channels means we can share news as it happens. A message can be shared at the click of a button directly to the palm of people's hands.”