

Blogging & Social Media Policy

1.1 Version and Date

Version 0.2

July 16, 2008

1.2 Purpose

We've developed this Blogging and Social Media Policy for our mutual protection.

As PR professionals, we are in an interesting position; because we are paid to promote our clients services and products, we may be regarded with understandable mistrust by the “ordinary person” on the web.

Despite this, we are extremely keen to give you the freedom and confidence to experiment (or continue to experiment) with online media in your own way. The freedom and confidence to try out new things, to make the occasional mistake, and to discover new opportunities.

Rather than telling you what we think you should do, where possible we've reduced this policy to as short a list as possible of the things that you *mustn't* do.

We've tried to give you some guiding principles. Please read them and understand them, and you'll be able to make your own decisions about what you should do in a new situation.

1.3 Scope

The blogging policy has been extended in an attempt to cover all forms of social media.

While you might have believed that the old blogging policy didn't apply to you because you don't keep a blog, you might well already do things like:

- maintain a profile page on one of the social or business networking sites (like LinkedIn, Facebook, or MySpace);
- comment on other people's blogs for personal or business reasons;
- leave product or service reviews on retailer sites, or customer review sites;
- take part in online votes and polls; or
- take part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards).

You may even have edited a Wikipedia page. Most of these activities can be grouped together under the heading “social media”¹.

¹ The term “social media” describes the way that certain web technologies amplify existing social dynamics.

So – we’ve tried to extend this policy to include:

“Anything you do online where you share information that might affect your colleagues or clients”

1.4 Guiding Principles

- 1) The web is not anonymous. Assume that everything you write can be traced back to the company, if not you personally.²
- 2) There is no longer a clear boundary between your personal life and your work life.
- 3) Do not lie or withhold the truth.
- 4) The web contains a permanent record of our mistakes. But do not try to change things retrospectively.

Be honest, straightforward, and respectful, and you will enjoy everything you do on the web.

"All I can promise is that I will be honest with you and never write something I don't believe in because someone is paying me as part of a relationship you don't know about. Put differently: All I'll hide are the irrelevancies."

David Weinberger³

² If in doubt this read this story:

http://www.plasticbag.org/archives/2005/09/on_cillit_bang_and_a_new_low_for_marketers/ (retrieved May 21, 2008) or this http://www.wired.com/politics/onlinerights/news/2007/08/wiki_tracker (retrieved May 21, 2008)

³ <http://www.hyperorg.com/blogger/misc/disclosure.html> (retrieved May 21, 2008). Dave Weinberger was a co-author of “The Cluetrain Manifesto” (1999)

2.0 Social Media Policy

2.1 All media

All your current responsibilities to the company remain in force. For the sake of clarity: whatever you do online:

- it must not interfere with your work commitments;
- you must not contain or link to libellous, defamatory or harassing content, *even by way of example or illustration*;
- you must not publish information that is confidential or proprietary to Porter Novelli, our affiliates, or our clients; and
- you must do nothing to bring the company into disrepute.

Furthermore:

- you may not use the Porter Novelli brand to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate; and
- it must be abundantly clear to readers that all opinion is yours, and does not represent the views of the company.

2.2 Company blogs

- Posts must not contain or link to pornographic or indecent content
- The company has the right to remove any content
- Employees must not use company blogs to promote personal projects. Links to your social media presences can be included in your blogger profile, and on your byline)..
- All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties⁴.

2.3 Personal blogs, social networks, forums, microblogs, social news etc.

2.3.1 All media

- No paid blogging.

⁴ By default (and except where stated, or where previous copyrights have been asserted) all material published on Porter Novelli's own company blogs will be licensed under the *Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0* license or local equivalent where appropriate. This means that readers are free to copy, distribute and transmit the material, and to adapt it for their own purposes, subject to the following condition:

“You [the reader] must attribute the work in the manner specified by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).” <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/> (retrieved May 21, 2008)

Certain companies will pay bloggers to post articles about or reviews of their advertisers' products on their blog (or other social media presence). You may not do this.

2.3.2 Anonymous or pseudonymous

- Write as though everyone knows who you are. Do not hide behind anonymous or pseudonymous postings
- You shall not maintain anonymous accounts on Social Media sites for the purpose of seeding, voting etc. Only named accounts can be used for client work.

2.3.3 Named

- Your profile must include an explicit statement that you work for Porter Novelli. Include the following minimum information:
“I work for Porter Novelli, a global public relations company.”
- You may repost your own stories, between your blog and a company blog. However (except by prior arrangement) explicit reference must be made on your blog towards the company blog (“cross-posted at [[porternovelli blog URL](#)]”, “reposted at [[porternovelli blog URL](#)]” or “reposted from [[porternovelli blog URL](#)]”)

2.3.4 Friends & Connections

Use your own best judgment in deciding whether and how deeply to connect to clients, peers, supervisors, vendors and journalists on social networks.

Understand that the agency stands fully behind your right not to befriend anyone who requests this in a professional relationship, just as you have that right personally.

2.4 Comments on blogs, forums, etc

2.4.1 Anonymous

- You must never post anonymous comments.

2.4.2 Pseudonymous

- For various reasons, sometimes you may want to comment using a nickname. Write as though everyone knows who you are.

2.4.3 Named

- Where relevant, include an explicit statement that you work for Porter Novelli. If you're

working on behalf of a client, say “I work for Porter Novelli, a global public relations agency employed by [client brand]”, not “I work for [client brand].”

Consider carefully when something may be relevant. A comment on a friend’s blog or wall is still a comment in a public space. Be guided by the content of your comment, not the context.