



ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

DISTRICT 9510

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT POLICY



Approved 9th October 2021

Purpose

Why do we have this policy?

Social media offers the opportunity for people to create, share and consume content, connecting and engaging with others around the world. The popularity of social media has grown to the point where it is often a primary source of information and interaction for a growing proportion of the world's population.

Rotary embraces social media as an important tool for Public Relations, attracting new members, connecting with like-minded people and organisations and creating new opportunities to serve. Rotary also recognises the value of social media to members on a personal level, sharing information and ideas with family, friends and communities.

With the rapid growth and impact of social media, Rotary District 9510 recognises the need to provide some guidelines to ensure that members understand the organization's expectations and standards for social media engagement, particularly when members are involved in communicating about Rotary, its services, its people, its community partners and partner organisations.

Rotary sees social media as an important tool for community engagement and creating volunteering opportunities. Rotary also encourages its members to use social media in a personal capacity to reach out and share information and views with friends and communities. Rotary recognises the need to have a policy which ensures that members who use social media either as part of their volunteering, or in a personal capacity, have guidance as to the Rotary's expectations where the social media engagement is about Rotary, its services, its people, its community partners and partner organisations.

Scope

Under these guidelines social media includes any online tool, platform, website or digital publishing medium that allows individuals to interact, upload, share or engage online.

These tools include, but are not limited to

- Social networking sites-Facebook, Snapchat, Whatsapp, LinkedIn.
- Video and photo sharing sites-Flickr, Instagram, Youtube, Vimeo.
- Microblogging sites-Twitter, Tumbler.
- Blogs-corporate, personal or media hosted.
- Forums and discussion boards-Whirlpool, Yahoo! groups, Google groups.
- Information portals-Wikipedia, Answers.com.
- Review websites-Trip advisor, Yelp.
- Crowdfunding websites-GoFundMe, Kick Starter, MyCause.

We recommend that all Rotary Clubs invest time into researching which platforms might suit their needs and how best to utilise them for Rotary objectives.

Application

D9510 Rotary’s Social Media Engagement Guidelines are intended for all D9510 Rotary Clubs and members of those clubs. Clubs are encouraged to apply these guidelines and ensure they are circulated and understood by all members. It is expected that Clubs may wish to develop these guidelines further, as may be deemed relevant to specific club activities, or to address any concerns raised by members—please circulate your Club Guidelines/Statement/Policy to all members.

The golden rule of social media is to maintain the same core principles and values as you would do in any off-line social interaction. As Rotarians, we already hold ourselves accountable to a high standard of conduct and we must be mindful of this, even in new and unfamiliar forums. If you become aware of any Social media interaction that is detrimental to Rotary, whether on your Club social media sites or otherwise—DO NOT engage in response—make your Club President aware of the incident who may seek District guidance to develop a Plan to address the matter accordingly.

This policy applies to District, Clubs and Club members in promoting or sharing information about Rotary and its programs and when commenting on or about Rotary, its members and partners.

If you are representing Rotary in social media, or if you are discussing Rotary or Rotary business related issues in your personal use of social media platforms, you are required to adhere to this Policy.

This policy does not apply to members’ personal use of social media platforms where the member makes no reference to Rotary related issues. It only applies to occasions where the member makes reference to Rotary or includes images relating to Rotary.

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1. General Guidelines

1.1 Be respectful

Your behaviour will affect how people perceive you as well as Rotary / Rotaract in general. Please be courteous and respect others and their opinions, even if you disagree with them.

It is okay to disagree with other posters and have vigorous debates without insulting anyone. State your opinions and build your case without deriding those with different views. Let your facts stand for themselves. You are more likely to achieve your preferred outcome or sway others to your point of view if you are constructive and respectful while disagreeing with a person or concept or discussing a negative experience. If someone makes negative comments about something you hold dear or you personally, resist the urge to be negative in return. Always apply the Four Way Test, and if in doubt, don’t post.

Avoid discussing divisive topics such as religion and politics in Rotary-related social media groups, pages or accounts.

1.2 Keep on topic

Keep to one topic per post, to make it easier for people to follow threads they are interested in. Keep comments on topic. If you want to branch off into another topic, create a separate thread or post specifically for that topic.

If you are jumping into a topic that has numerous replies, it is courteous to read all the replies prior to chiming in so that you don’t repeat a question or comment that has already been added or dealt with. If you don’t want to take the time to read all the replies, don’t get involved with that thread.

Make sure that when you do participate in discussions that you contribute valuable insights; don’t hijack the discussion purely for self-promotional purposes.

1.3 Don't spam

If you have a particular cause, event, or other piece of information that you would like to disseminate widely, avoid the temptation to post it to as many pages, groups, profiles or accounts as possible: this is spam! If a news feed is filled with posts from one source, people will tune you out – at the very least they will hide news from you in their feed, or more likely they will unlike or unfriend you completely. You may also be flagged as a spammer by the social media site and prevented from being able to post if you post the same content in multiple places in a short space of time.

If there is a particular event or cause that you would like to spread, post it to your own club presence(s), pinning it to the top of your page in Facebook or making it a “Managers Choice” in a LinkedIn group, and share it from there to select other pages or profiles on a delayed basis – wait several hours between each share. When you do share, add a personal note as to why it is of interest or relevant to that particular audience and invite them to Like your page or join your group for more updates.

1.4 Observe copyright and common courtesy

If something is posted publicly, then it is generally fine to share or repost that content, provided that the original source is attributed. This is easily done by:

- “Sharing” a post, as the original source is included in the shared post,
- “Linking” to the original external source,
- “Retweeting” if sharing something posted in Twitter.

Do not download an image or video and post it as if it was your own contribution. You should only share content that you have created or that you have permission to post.

If someone posts something to a non-public audience on their own profile that you would like to share, please seek their permission before sharing it to a wider audience.

Where possible, seek the permission of any people pictured in a photo prior to posting, particularly if it is going in a public forum. Some people may be concerned about their privacy; this is especially important if any children appear in a picture. Also consider whether an image is flattering; be very discriminate with any photos that you upload, even to “private” audiences.

1.5 Be accurate and correct mistakes

Make sure that you have your facts right before you post. Take time to verify information, either by discussing the matter with someone authoritative or by a quick google search to check if something is a known hoax. It is better to delay posting something to check with a source first than to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to sources wherever possible.

If you do post something that contains an error, be quick to correct it and be upfront about what correction has been made.

2. Guidelines for posting as an individual

2.1 Adjust your privacy settings

Check your general privacy settings at least every 3 months, to ensure that both your privacy and the privacy of “friends” is adequately protected. Also ensure that your privacy settings for each post and album have been adjusted appropriately.

Be aware that you can limit access to information to a fair degree, but you have no control over what someone else may share. The safest way to protect information is not to enter it in the first place.

2.2 Don't share anything that you don't want or wouldn't post in the public arena

Anything that you share digitally – and that includes email – can be distributed quickly and easily on the internet. Even if you share a comment, picture or video in a site that you believe is private, anyone with access to it can take it and share it beyond its intended audience. Others may also print or take screen shots of content that can be held up as proof long after the original post has been removed.

Any content that is posted in a public forum, including open groups and pages, can and will be indexed by search engines, and even if the original content is deleted, it can still be retrieved from Google's cache.

Consider whether certain sensitive personal information is safe to share in a public forum. Also consider how any negative comments can reflect on you if they were to become widely seen. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm, clear headed and not emotionally attached.

2.3 Don't spam

This one is so important that it rates a mention twice!

Spam is more than unsolicited emails trying to encourage you to buy certain products. Spam is seen as any unwanted information, either the same message (or type of message) posted repeatedly, or a completely off topic post that has no relevance to that page or group.

Spam can include:

- inspirational messages or pictures – these are fine on your own profile, but are not necessarily appropriate in a Rotary forum
- promotion of non-Rotary causes or your business in a Rotary forum, unless it specifically allows business networking
- solicitation for funds for any project, even a Rotary or Rotaract club project (though sharing details of how to provide funds to a disaster relief effort is usually permissible if there has been discussion about that particular disaster and how clubs / individuals can help).

2.4 Be aware of liability

You are responsible for what you post, regardless of where it is posted. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to infringe copyright, be defamatory or obscene.

2.5 Protect your identity

While you should be authentic and honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that thieves or scam artists could use. How much information do you want strangers to know about you? What could they do with that information? It is a good idea not to disclose your full home address and private phone numbers, and do not publicly "check into" locations or discuss travel plans.

3. Guidelines for Club & District presences

3.1 Ensure you have authority to post officially

When you interact on social media sites, including your own club or district pages, please use your own profile and represent yourself unless you are an officer of your club or district who is authorized to speak publicly and officially for your club or district.

Do not create a social media account for your club or district without gaining the authority of the necessary board to do so. It is highly advisable for clubs and districts to develop a social media strategy, so that everyone is clear as to which networks will be adopted, what the purpose of each presence is including who the target audiences are in each case, and who is responsible for those accounts.

Clubs and individuals should never represent "Rotary International".

3.2 Use the appropriate tools for the job

Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ have different offerings for organisations than they do for people. These offerings provide fields specifically relevant to organisations rather than individual people and allow multiple administrators to manage the page without setting up a separate account for the club.

Make sure you set up the correct type of presence for your club and observe the terms of service for each site:

- For **Facebook**, your club's official public presence should be a **Page**, not a profile. Groups are designed for small, specific audiences, and can be beneficial in conjunction with a Page, but do not replace the need for an official page.
- For **Google+**, your club's official public presence should be a **Page**, not a profile. At this stage, there is no group equivalent inside Google+.

- For **LinkedIn**, it is possible to create a Company profile, but this is not equivalent to a Page in Facebook or Google+ and should not be used for a club profile.

3.3 Foster a positive, transparent arena for conversations

Social media is not about blasting your content out to the masses; it is about fostering relationships and engaging people in meaningful conversations.

To that end, set up your club or district Facebook page so that anyone can post comments to it and ensure that you monitor and respond to comments in a timely manner, as it builds credibility and community. Where appropriate, be open about who the admins are and who they are interacting with. Deal with any criticisms directly on the page rather than referring people to an email address unless it is a particularly sensitive issue that does need to be dealt with privately.

Your club or district should create, publish and adhere to posting guidelines. If a user flouts the posting guidelines, ensure that they are dealt with in the appropriate manner. Letting a user regularly conduct themselves in a manner that contravenes the posting guidelines will drive away the users that do conduct themselves appropriately. All administrators must understand and agree with the guidelines before taking on an administration role.

Please plan the transferring of these important Administration access roles on Facebook when positions change yearly within clubs? This could ensure there isn't any situations where old Facebook pages appear for clubs because they don't have administrative access to close it down etc and/or restriction to club for posting.

3.4 Be aware of implications of “Liking” and “Following”

If a club or district “Likes” or “Follows” another page or account, it implicitly endorses that other entity or cause.

Since Rotary is **non-political** and **non-religious**, it is generally not appropriate for a club to Like or Follow blatantly religious or political accounts. Such personal endorsements should be left to an individual's account.

3.5 Observe Rotary's Policies

Rotary International policies apply to social media too, including

RI's Circularization Policy: (from the RI Code of Policies)

11.030.1. Rotary Clubs – Approval to Solicit Cooperation, Financial Aid, or Participation in Commercial Ventures, including Telemarketing

A club desiring to request the cooperation of other clubs or members of other clubs, in connection with any matter whatsoever, by any means, including telemarketing, shall first submit its purpose and plans to the governor or governors of the involved area and secure his, her or their approval. This is applicable only in cases where a club desires to request the cooperation of more than one Rotary club or members of more than one club.

3.6 Observe Rotary's Branding Guidelines

In 2013, a new logo and brand image pack was developed, this was to ensure every club, in every district across the world could have the same high standard of brand recognition.

Having a consistent brand image is important to all organisations, Rotary is no exception.

A lot of old-style graphics being used in various publications, including newsletters, brochures, flyers, and hardware items, such as banners. Could all clubs please check all of their club's portfolio and make the correct changes.

When posting anything on social media, or submitting items to the District newsletter, please make sure they are updated with the correct branding. If you're still in doubt, download Rotary's official Voice and Visual Identity Guidelines:

<https://brandcenter.rotary.org/Asset/DownloadMaster/118>

3.7 Observe the Law

Over and above these guidelines there are National and State laws and regulations that apply to online activity. These include, but are not limited to:

Commonwealth of Australia

- Broadcasting Services Act 1992
- Copyright Act 1968
- Crimes Act 1914
- Privacy Act 1988
- Spam Act 2003

It is advisable to keep in mind that our online activities must remain above the law and to do your own research or consult a legal professional if you are in any doubt.

3.8 Application of the 4 Way Test

It is instructive to keep the 4 Way Test in mind when engaging in any social media or other online activity. The values inherent within this simple moral code, created by Rotarian Herbert J Taylor, in an era well before the advent of computers, stand the test of time. Below are some simple examples of how the 4 Way Test might apply.

The 4-way test of the things we think, say or do (online):

	YES	NO
Is it the truth?	Verifiable facts about Rotary & Rotary projects Reports on Club activities Shared press releases from Rotary International	Conflicting Personal opinions Exaggerated claims Unverifiable statistics
Is it fair to all concerned?	Sharing good news stories about other clubs' activities Promoting relevant causes	Self-promotion and bragging Putting other people down Multi-level marketing
Will it build goodwill and better friendships?	Sharing stories with others who may benefit Helping to connect people Compliments & encouraging words Liking, commenting on & reposting positive Rotary stories	Personal attacks Racist, Political, sexist & discriminatory remarks
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?	Online donations and sharing information on Rotary causes to friends and associates Participate in Rotary polls or requests feedback Support your club, district & RI online activities by engaging & interacting	Spamming Personal tirades Activities which involve conflicts of interest

Please feel free to consider your own examples and how you might apply the 4-Way Test to your online activities.

3.9 Summary

If you have any concerns or questions about the above information please contact the District Governor, the District Protection and Compliance Officer or the District Public Image Chair.

If you become aware of any social media interaction that is detrimental to Rotary, regardless of whether it is your club social media site or others, do not respond but make your President aware of the incident who may wish to seek District guidance to develop a plan to address the matter accordingly.

Social Media is a powerful tool for the promotion and development of Rotary goals and ideals. Rotary District 9510 encourages all Rotarians to become actively engaged and participate in this exciting and engaging communication medium.