Finding Solutions: Personal Tech & Social Media Policies for the Workplace

Samantha Sheehan • VBSR Communications Manager • Founder Valley.Works Coworking

Joshua Levy • President • The Phantom Laboratory Incorporated

Sas Stewart • Co-founder • Stonecutter Spirits, Highball Social
What are we doing today?

- Look at current policies
- Open discussion about problems, advantages and challenges
  - Outline a sample policy together
Joshua Levy
President, Phantom Laboratory Incorporated
VBSR member for over 20 years
levy@phantomlab.com
Sas Stewart
Co-Founder, Stonecutter Spirits, Highball Social
VBSR Board Member

sas@stonecutterspirits.com
(802) 388-3000 (w) | (248) 224-7539 (m)
Technology @ Stonecutter Spirits

As a small company in Vermont with business relationships and customers all around the country, we rely heavily on the use of technology and social media. Being mindful of technology policy is extremely important whether you’re working in the office or remotely.

Email, Do:
- Use Stonecutter Spirits equipment (computers, phones, etc.) for company purposes
- Keep in mind that communication over Stonecutter Spirits email is owned by Stonecutter Spirits and may be monitored.

Don’t:
- Download new software on company-owned devices without asking
- Send confidential or copyrighted information without permission
- Read other people’s email
- Send email that is offensive or discriminatory

If an employee uses personally-owned technology to connect to company email, or to store company information from time to time, it is important that such communications and information are kept confidential and secure. Remember that such communications and information remain company property and cannot be used in violation of company policy. In addition, please avoid using company email accounts for personal communications.
Technology @ Stonecutter Spirits

Social Media: Stonecutter Spirits maintains, updates and promotes a variety of social media. All content created for this purpose should (a) engage consumers positively, (b) educate consumers about company products or other industry information or (c) be of lighthearted quality related to Stonecutter Spirits or our industry. Stonecutter Spirits does not take a position on religious, political or advocacy matters.

A more detailed outline of our social media strategy, including a handy sheet of “dos and don’ts,” can be found on our shared network.

Individual employees are not required to maintain a personal social media presence, but we understand that many employees do so. We like our employees to engage with our social media channels to help Stonecutter Spirits spread the word about events, news and new company activity, and to do so without violating the trust of those whom you engage. Please remember that even in an employee’s personal social media presence, you still represent Stonecutter Spirits and may be considered by others to be communicating on the company’s behalf. Please maintain any personal social media presence responsibly.

Phones: We understand life operates during business hours, too. If you have a personal call to attend to, please step to a private area to do so.
We also acknowledge that an employee may choose to participate in a blog or online social network on their own time. However, activities in or outside of work that violate any of our policies, or affect job performance, the job performance of others, or the company’s business interests are a proper focus for company policy.

Therefore, it is important that employees—

• maintain courteous, professional, respectful, knowledgeable interactions with people
• protect the privacy, confidentiality, and interest of (the company)
• recognize that the company might be held responsible for their behavior

With this in mind, all employees should have an expectation that the internet and social media sites will be monitored for our name. For the purposes of this policy, the internet is considered a public realm. Harassment, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, racial or religious intolerance or other form of behavior, photos, and/or postings prohibited in the workplace may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
The following guidance refers to those personal or unofficial online activities where you might refer to the company by name:

- Adhere to our Code of Conduct, HR, Privacy and Security policies.
- Prior approval must be obtained before using the company name as a personal identifier on social media sites.
- Seek permission prior to representing the company on any social media websites or apps. Write knowledgeably, accurately, and professionally. (Refer to company’s Standards.) Written permission must be obtained from the CEO prior to using the company’s logo, images or branding.
- Never disclose non-public information about the company, co-workers or customers including the fact that they are our customers or co-workers. Discussion of internal issues is prohibited.
- Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and NOT on behalf of the company.

We encourage employees to participate in online social media space properly, exercising sound judgment and common sense. Online, personal and business personas may intersect. Customers and colleagues often have access to the on-line content.
The Phantom Laboratory Incorporated

VBSR members for over 20 years

High efficiency building designed by Maclay Architects
The Phantom Laboratory’s Personal Tech and Social Media Policy is under consideration

- Two minute rule
- When are these appropriate:
  - Music
  - Podcasts
  - Isolating or giving people ability to focus?
- Safety concern:
  - No hands on use in mixing areas to prevent chemical cross contamination
  - No hands on use when operating equipment
“Technology in an organization today must enable people to be more productive, efficient and innovative; stay connected internally and externally; and feel safe and cared for. It should facilitate the comfortable and expeditious flow of people, ideas and emotions.”

- Louis Efron, Forbes 2017
Sample Policies from VBSR Member Employee Handbooks range in specificity from pages of legalese to a single sentence, some themes emerged:
- **Expressly prohibit unacceptable behavior:** using company owned devices, email or internet services to engage in harassment, violate copyright, or share privileged information.
- **Reflect the social expectations of colleagues in a shared workplace:** keep phones on vibrate, don’t use speaker phones, listen to music with headphones.
- Guidelines discouraging contacting a coworker remotely outside of regular business hours.
- Guidelines encouraging the use of company resources for volunteer work.
- Clarifying “ownership” of software, hardware & digital work materials, Prohibiting work materials to be saved to personal devices.
Codifying Flexible Policies

- Creates clarity
- Avoids conflict
- Encourages innovation & learning
- Can safeguard job creep

“did you google it?”
PEW Research reports:

78% of people use personal social media for work-related activities such as solving problems or fostering relationships with coworkers.

34% use social media to take a mental break from work.

77% of people are using personal social media at work regardless of their company’s policy.
Social Media Policy Primer

• Protect brand reputation, Encourage brand advocacy
• Be clear, very clear
• Who can post content on company properties, and to what end?
• Disclaimer for employees who indicate employment on personal social media accounts
• What type of content should be expressly prohibited on company properties?
• Who should be contacted with questions and concerns?
What company values should be reflected? • What are your goals? • Who can/should represent your brand online? • In what areas of your workplace, or job roles, would it be unsafe to use mobile tech? • What do your employees need to know to be best set up for success?