

When you give everyone a voice and give people power, the system usually ends up in a really good place.

Mark Zuckerberg

Module Five: Creating a Living Document

Social media is constantly changing and being updated, so your social media policy should keep up. Any policy or regulation should be periodically reviewed and revised to keep up with the changing faces of social media and to ensure it is up to date 'with the times'. Policies or guidelines that are outdated or are no longer relevant can cause confusion among employees, so it is important that they are reviewed and altered as needed.



What is a Living Document?

Static articles, or 'dead' articles, are articles that are usually posted somewhere and do not change, such as a single edition dictionary or encyclopedia. In contrast, a living document is defined as a document which may be continually edited, revised, or updated, either by one appointed person or by a selective group. As we've reviewed, we know that social media is constantly changing and growing, so a policy that does not change with it will become obsolete. If the policy were a static document, it would have to be discarded and rewritten every time an update or change needed to be added. But having a social media policy classified as a living document allows for the delegated person or group to review the policy and ensure that it is up to date and accurate at all times, without having to start from scratch.



How Often is it Revised?



Finding the exact moment to revise your living document can be difficult to pinpoint. Some companies use a set schedule to update and revise their living documents, while some only base any changes or revisions on an as needed basis and wait until something needs to be changed to update it. However, when maintaining a social media policy, many companies have found it beneficial to use a combined system that uses both techniques to help them stay up to date. The social media policy is updated or revised any time a new update or development arises, but they also schedule a set time to revise the policy to check for anything that may have been missed or recently added. With this method, the company can better maintain their policy and assure its accuracy.

A living document can be revised:

- Daily, weekly, monthly
- Annually or semi-annually
- On a scheduled basis
- On an as-needed basis

Who Will Be in Charge?



Often time the person in charge of changing or revising a social media policy is the information officer, but sometimes it can be another individual or even a team of employees. It is important to make sure the person, or persons, appointed to oversee the policy are someone the company can depend on to complete the task effectively and in a timely manner. They should have some sort of management experience and work well with others, since they will need numerous consultations when it comes to changes being made. Once someone has been chosen, make sure it is known to the department who they can contact with questions or concerns and ensure that they are aware of the proper procedure for submitting suggested changes or revisions.

Things to consider:

- Who will be responsible for the revisions and corrections needed?
- Who will perform these tasks in an effectively?
- Who will be able to stay on top of the changing social media aspects?
- Who is dependable to accomplish the job with little supervision?
- Who work well individually as well as on a team?

Change Management



One of the key factors in making sure your living document has an effective change management process. Change management is a term used for the process or steps needed to manage a living document and the revisions/updates/changes it will need periodically. While one person is normally appointed to make the selected changes or updates, there is normally a team that handles the information requests and the procedure itself for having the living document changed. This team ensures that all requests for updates are received properly and, if carried out, then they are documented in the proper places.

To have a successful form of change management, it is important for everyone to recognize their roles and how they help the teams run smoothly. Since the exact procedures for change management differ for every organization, it is important to recognize what your company will need and what it can do in order to benefit their living documents.

Case Study



Janet has some information about a popular social media site that she believes needs to be added to the company's social media policy. She spoke with an associate, Danny, who handled many of the company's policies and procedures. He told her to contact Jim, who was handling the social media policy at the time. Janet went to Jim's office and met with him and provided him with her suggestions. Jim thanked her for the information and told her they were scheduled to have a meeting about the policy the following week. Janet asked what would happen to her suggestion and if it would be brought up at the meeting.

Jim assured her that he would bring the information to the meeting and let the change management team verify and document it. From there they will discuss it with one of their information officers and decide what changes would need to be made to the current policy. Janet thanked him for his time and was glad to know her suggestions would not fall on deaf ears.