



Social Media Policy

Verizon has worked to construct a customer-centric brand in order to connect people through wireless technologies. In order to bring the best service to its customers, the company has developed a social media policy that describes qualifications and duties of a social media coordinator, discusses general guidelines Verizon social media platforms must follow, details how employees should respond to customers, and finally notes how the social media coordinator will address brand-standard violations.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR

The social media coordinator should be an individual from the marketing department with no less than three to five years of experience in management. The social media coordinator will define and protect the company's brand, train other employees, coordinate posts, as well as measure and report social media data every four to six months.

Defining and protecting the brand

The social media coordinator must have extensive knowledge of Verizon's brand and brand standard and preserve that image as new social media platforms arise. She must set an example of brand excellence in her personal and private brand interactions. In addition to understanding the current brand standard, the social media coordinator will create training documents and sessions in order to educate other employees. Moreover, she will evaluate outbound content or train additional employees who are responsible enough to do the same. If at any time an employee posts content that significantly violates the brand standard or is otherwise inappropriate, the social media coordinator will be responsible to discipline that employee appropriately. The final section of this document discusses how the social media coordinator may discipline employees.

Training employees

Since the social media coordinator may need to balance several projects at once, she may train other marketing employees to help lighten her task load. Primarily, she should select these employees from the marketing department in particular. However, if a case arises, she may train individuals from other departments to help manage the company's needs.

Coordinating posts

Since social media often involves content that a number of departments may help create, the social media coordinator will serve as a liaison to those departments. Although the social media coordinator is directly responsible to coordinate projects between various groups within the company, she may train employees or interns to serve as liaisons. She may also create interdepartmental creative teams and train them to coordinate posts and campaigns as well.

Measuring and reporting data

As Verizon develops its social media presence, the social media coordinator will monitor how information changes around the brand, Verizon's competitors, and its industry to determine how,

where, and when to engage its community. Specifically, she should listen, measure, and engage on all social media platforms. She will summarize and report her data every four to six months or as her superiors deem necessary.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS AND CONTENT

The social media coordinator and her team will oversee three primary platforms—Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—and develop other platforms as needs arise. As new social media technologies develop, the social media coordinator will determine whether Verizon should create a presence in that environment and will report her findings to executives. Moreover, she will develop strategies and train employees to oversee these platforms as she needs.

Facebook

Facebook is Verizon’s largest social media platform. Consequently, the social media coordinator will concentrate most of her efforts toward handling its social media presence. Since Facebook allows users to post multiple kinds of content, the social media coordinator may find it appropriate to reuse posts or videos from its Facebook account on other platforms.

What to post. Since Facebook is a highly populated platform, the social media coordinator and her team members have freedom to post different kinds of content to the Verizon page. These posts should bring outsiders to the page and begin positive conversations on the page as well. The social media coordinator may gauge how effective a post is by considering how many likes, shares, or positive comments it receives. The following non-exhaustive list describes content the Facebook page may include:

- Promotional videos
- Advertisements
- Pictures
- Interactive discussion posts
- Giveaways or promotions
- Links to external articles
- Behind-the-scenes videos
- Software-update information

The social media coordinator is responsible for all outbound content although her team members may help her create and coordinate campaigns.

When to post. The social media coordinator will also determine the quantity of Facebook posts that are appropriate for individual campaigns. Generally, Verizon should post two to four times on its page, although it should actively participate in other conversations on the website. Most often, posts should begin after 11AM Eastern Standard Time to account for different time zones. Most posts should come during the evening when users are most likely to be on Facebook.

Twitter

The social media coordinator may link Verizon’s Twitter and Facebook accounts because Twitter constrains users’ posts. If necessary, the social media coordinator may use Twitter as a way to bring users to Verizon’s Facebook account specifically.

What to post. Although Twitter constrains users, Verizon can still use Twitter to improve its social media presence. Tweets should bring outsiders to Verizon’s account and should begin conversations as well. The social media coordinator may gauge how effective a post is by considering how many retweets, favorites, or positive-tweets it receives. The following non-exhaustive list describes content Verizon’s Twitter feed may include:

- Links to videos
- Advertisements
- Photos
- Brand-appropriate dialogue
- Promotional hashtags
- Giveaways or promotions
- Links to external articles
- Links to software-update information

The social media coordinator is responsible for all outbound content, although her team members may help her create and coordinate campaigns.

What to post. The social media coordinator will also determine the quantity of Tweets that are appropriate for individual campaigns. Generally, Verizon may not tweet more than once per hour unless it is responding to another users' tweet. Most often, tweets should begin after 11AM Eastern Standard Time to account for different time zones. Moreover, the majority of tweets should come during the evening when users are most likely to be on Twitter.

Instagram

Since Instagram is a less interactive environment than either Twitter or Facebook, the social media coordinator may wish to create independent content for Verizon's Instagram account. However, she may also use Instagram to link users to other social media platforms as well.

What to post. Instagram posts will be either photos or videos. However, the social media coordinator may use links in the descriptions of posts to generate conversations in the comment section or to provide links to outside pages. The social media coordinator may gauge how effective a post is by considering how many likes or positive comments its receives. The social media coordinator is responsible for all outbound content although her team members may help her create and coordinate campaigns.

What to post. The social media coordinator will also determine the quantity of Instagram posts that is appropriate for individual campaigns. Generally, Verizon may not post more than once per day on Instagram. Most often, this post should come around 8PM Eastern Standard Time, in order to account for users in other time zones.

RESPONDING TO CUSTOMERS

As the social media coordinator trains employees, she will educate them on some basic elements of Verizon's brand identity. Verizon strives to cultivate a customer-centric brand above all else. As Verizon strives to help its customers, it interacts with them on social media in both positive and negative settings. Consequently, Verizon has committed to responding to every customer on all social media platforms when possible. When appropriate, employees should direct customers to customer service representatives. However, the social media coordinator must equip employees to respond to customers who post both positive and negative comments that do not fall under customer service representatives' governance.

Responding to positive comments

Verizon pushes its employees to acknowledge customer interactions on social media platforms. Consequently, employees who oversee social media interactions must respond in some way to positive comments especially. Of course, each customer interaction and each platform is unique; however, employees should acknowledge customers' positive comments in some way. Employees may also include in their responses any of the following stock phrases in order to maintain a tone consistent with Verizon's brand standard:

- Thank you for your compliment.
- Hey, thanks for thinking of us!
- It's nice to know you're on our side.
- Thanks for the kind words.

Moreover, the social media coordinator may oversee reward campaigns by randomly selecting customers who leave positive comments and rewarding them an appropriate prize. She may choose customers herself or elect other qualified employees to do so as well. For example, if a customer tweets a photo of his new cellphone upgrade, the social media coordinator may reward him with a voucher for a free phone case in order to acknowledge the customer's loyalty. In cases of reward, the employee that responds to the customer must clearly articulate why the customer is receiving an award. The employee must always tie the reward directly to a behavior the company wishes to praise, behaviors such as customer loyalty or satisfaction.

Responding to negative comments

Since many of the comments customers leave on social media are negative, Verizon has also decided to respond to negative comments in order to strengthen its image as a customer-centric company. Overall, when employees respond to customers' comments, they must maintain a personable, helpful tone. Whenever possible, the employee should use a first-person pronoun to assure the customer that Verizon provides personalized service. Employees may also include in their responses any of the following stock phrases in order to maintain a tone consistent with Verizon's brand standard:

- How can I help you?
- How can I turn this situation around?
- Can you talk more about this issue?
- Can I work with you to fix this?
- Your problem is our problem.
- I'm sorry. I'm here to help you.
- I'm certain we can resolve this issue.
- I'll keep working until we fix this.

Verizon has also created a four-step method for employees to follow so that they can handle negative social media traffic. Employees must follow this general method no matter the social media platform, although they do have some freedom to vary their responses. If they are not sure how to respond to a certain customer, they should immediately seek out the social media coordinator who can then guide the employee's interaction with the customer. The four-step method reads as follows:

1. Address both the customer and the situation.

When customers post, reiterate their name if possible, or else use their username. Do not shy away from their complaints; instead, restate them to the customer.

Example: "Hello, Hal, I'm sorry to hear that your upgrade arrived with a cracked screen."

2. Define a goal or an ideal state for the customer to reach.

After addressing the problem, show customers how you would like them to feel. Contrast their current situation with an ideal one that matches the company's goals.

Example: "I want you to receive the customer care you deserve, and the phone you ordered in the condition you expected."

3. Create a conversation.

To move customers toward their ideal state, begin a conversation with them. When possible, direct them to a private message service or to customer service directly.

Example: "Let's talk more about logistics. I'm going to have a customer service representative private message you so that you can continue this conversation and receive your new phone."

4. Identify yourself.

In order to maintain a personable, customer-centric identity, leave your first name at the end of each post. Customers will know who they are speaking with and will feel less overwhelmed talking to a person rather than a customer.

Example: "Thanks for your patience, Kayla G."

Below is an example of a negative comment and an employee's four-step response.

Cheyenne Padgett, customer:

So Verizon customers...be very wary if you follow any of Verizon's emails or prompts to change your plan to a "better" plan that will give you savings per line. We did this, and Verizon ended our equipment purchase credits issued by Costco, resulting in a monthly bill that actually went up \$25! My advice, go to AT&T or T-Mobile. Maybe they'll be slightly less likely to lie to their customers!

Verizon:

Let us restore the love, Cheyenne. I always want to make sure our customers are set up for wireless success. Allow us a chance to ensure you are set up with the right plan for your usage needs. Send us a private message to help. –Lindsey C.

BRAND-STANDARD VIOLATIONS

The social media coordinator must protect Verizon's brand. If she fails to do so, her manager will determine how to discipline her using the guide included below. In any cases where the definitions of the brand standards are unclear, the social media coordinator will be responsible interpret the standards and respond appropriately. Moreover, the social media coordinator will clearly explain to employees that they represent the brand as long as Verizon employs them and are subject to discipline if they violate the brand standard.

Public violations

Public violations of the brand standard include any posts through Verizon accounts. The social media coordinator is responsible for all outbound social media content. She must understand the brand and train her employees so that they understand it as well before they begin to post.

Level 1

An employee posts content that violates guidelines such as tone or quantity of posts that the social media policy or brand standard specifically addresses.

Response

First offense: The social media coordinator will address the issue and make a written record of it. The employee will receive five hours of brand training.

Second offense: The social media coordinator will address the issue and make a written record of it. The employee will submit to a probationary period of two weeks. During the probationary period, the employee will shadow a veteran employee and receive ten hours of brand training.

Third offence: The social media coordinator will contact her manager, citing the two previous offences, and will remove the employee from his respective team. The social media coordinator's manager will reserve the right to discipline the employee further.

Level 2

An employee posts inappropriate content.

Response

The social media coordinator will document the event and dismiss the employee. The social media coordinator will take whatever steps necessary to remedy the negative conversations the inappropriate content the employee generated.

Level 3

The social media coordinator posts content egregiously and irreverently violates the brand standard or posts content that is inappropriate.

Response

If the social media coordinator cannot prove to her manager that she had a sound reason to violate the brand standard, he will dismiss her and take further action as he sees fit. He will also take whatever steps necessary to remedy the negative conversations the inappropriate content the employee generated.

Private violations

Private violations of the brand standard include any content that either employees or the social media coordinator posts through their personal accounts. Verizon reserves the right to dismiss any employee that uses social media to generate negative conversations surrounding its brand.

Level 1

An employee posts negative content discussing his work environment.

Response

First offense: The social media coordinator will address the issue and make a written record of it. The employee will speak with a human resources representative who will take action as he needs.

Second offense: The social media coordinator will contact her manager, citing the previous offense and will remove the employee from his respective team. The social media coordinator's manager will reserve the right to discipline the employee further.

Level 2

An employee posts inappropriate or obviously slanderous content.

Response

The social media coordinator will document the event and dismiss the employee. The social media coordinator will take whatever steps necessary to remedy the negative conversations the inappropriate content the employee generated.

Level 3

The social media coordinator posts content that negatively portrays the company or the brand.

Response

The social media coordinator's manager will dismiss her and take further action as he sees fit. He will also take whatever steps necessary to remedy the negative conversations the inappropriate content the employee generated.