



H&P GROUP POLICY ON ENGAGING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the growing popularity of the social media, unlike UK based Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR), International Public Relations Association (IPRA) and Public Relations Association America (PRSA), PR associations in countries in which H&P Group companies operate have not yet addressed and prepared any specific guideline for PR practitioners on how to contribute to social media, especially when contributing on behalf of a client.

As PR professionals and a company we aspire to be recognized as a leading regional strategic communications consultancy in practicing corporate responsibility. By having in mind that our corporate responsibility is best reflected in our practices and constant commitment to address the issues that are part of our core business activities, we have developed this policy for engaging with social media.

With relation to social media we recognize that “it is impossible to sustain one image created through conventional media alongside a completely different one created through social media”¹. To us establishing and maintaining reputation is equally important in conventional media as in social media. This equally applies when it comes to our online activities in professional and private capacity - our personal reputation cannot be divided into different images – one created in our professional capacity being completely separated from another one created in our private capacity.

As this area is evolving constantly, the issues that are addressed in our policy today may be replaced by others in the near future. Therefore this policy should be taken as a living document which will be regularly reviewed and updated. Here we very much rely on feedback of our employees regarding pressing issues or dilemmas they face in daily work.

¹ CIPR, Social Media Guideline

2. WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

CIPR defines the social media as the term given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Blogs are probably the most well known example of social media. Other examples include podcasts, wikis (such as Wikipedia), message boards, social bookmarking websites (such as del.icio.us), social networking websites (such as bebo, MySpace) and content sharing websites (such as flickr, YouTube). Social software, social computing and Web 2.0 are also terms that are used in the similar context.

3. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

In dealing with social media the management and employees of Hauska & Partner Group are bound by the Code of Conduct and apply the following principles of engagement:

- We use social media for engaging with communities and collaboration
- We use social media in professional and fair manner² – we generally engage in social media in transparent and open manner by following the rules and guidelines for the engagement
- We use social media in a way to check intellectual property rights before we use copyrighted music, images and quoted materials
- We never use social media to knowingly mislead our clients, competitors, employees, business partners and fellow professionals
- We never use social media for defamation, discrimination (we also check carefully before quoting statements from other blogs or websites in order not to repeat libellous information) and dissemination of any content that may be illegal, immoral or offensive on the basis of skin color, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ideology or individual capabilities
- We never use social media for *astroturfing* or taking part in “front group” practices
- We never disclose privileged/confidential information about our company, a client or a competitor unless special permission has been granted by the parties concerned or unless we are required to do so by law

² Each particular case when, for any reason, we will not be in position/willing to conceal our identity will be discussed by Hauska & Partner MB and Ethical Committee and written explanation provided

- We use social media for personal use as long as it does not interfere with regular working routine
- We use social media for personal use by considering Hauska & Partner general principles of engagement in social media. Overall, we find unacceptable any misleading, defamatory or discriminatory practice.

4. DEFINITIONS

Privileged/confidential information

- posting information about new client before given permission to do so
- posting financial information or reports on our or client's company
- posting any confidential information about our clients or our company
- revealing information about our competitors or our client's competitors
- revealing information that is not in the public domain (which was not publicized in media, social media or discussed in any public forum)

Defamation

- Making (or publishing) a written or recorded statement about a person or a company with /malicious/ intent to harm their reputation

Astroturfing

- Practice of creating the impression of independent, popular support by means of an orchestrated public relations exercise. The word was coined from the word Astro Turf (artificial grass) in order to underline the idea of faking grass roots support
- *Astroturfing* techniques include creation of a dedicated blog³, posting comments on others' blogs or message boards, submitting supposedly amateur videos to YouTube – all of which is designed to give an impression of spontaneous support for an idea/product/company/service..
- Instead of the term Astroturf PRSA uses the term the Front Group. The Front Group are organizations and individuals using blogs, viral marketing and anonymous Internet posting without disclosing sponsorships and using deceptive and misleading description of goals, causes, tactics, sponsors and participants.

³ For future reference see in a separate document Edelman/Wal-Mart and Burston case