Social Media Policy/Procedure

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Department:	Office of Communications		
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Purpose

To provide information to the public via social media about the city of Las Vegas to enhance open government and to establish policies and procedures for the utilization of social media and social networking sites by city employees and city officials to further enhance communications with the city of Las Vegas.

Scope

All employees and elected officials.

History

Social media has exploded as a new and popular means of communication in the 21st Century. It is defined as interactive online technology tools that allow individuals to exchange and share information and resources including pictures instantly via the Internet.

Social media sites include but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+)
- Internal social networking sites (Workplace, etc.)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g., Flickr, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Vine)
- Micro-blogging sites (e.g., Twitter, Tumblr)
- Forums and discussion boards (e.g., Reddit, Yahoo! Groups, Google groups)

Policy

The social media policy shall be to provide approved information to the public concerning city government. The overall intent is to provide information about the city of Las Vegas to enhance open government. Social media facilitates further discussions of the city of Las Vegas' (CLV) issues, operations and services by providing members of the public with the opportunity to interact with CLV officials, employees and departments. A key benefit is the opportunity to participate in existing discussions about CLV-related issues that may be occurring on social media sites. In addition, the city will encourage a dialogue with the public and respond to questions and concerns via social media. This fits well with the city's core purpose of building community to make life better.

City employees and city officials have the ability to publish articles, facilitate discussions and communicate information through various social media sites. The CLV has a substantial interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the CLV on social media sites. This document establishes social media use policies, protocols and procedures intended to mitigate

associated risks from use of this technology where possible by the CLV. Should the CLV change its direction on social media use, this policy will be revised.

Employees and city officials should follow this policy in relation to any social media that they use, whether professionally or personally, even if privacy settings are in place.

Administration

All official city social media accounts are considered an extension of the CLV's information networks and are governed by the Internet Policy (IT122.3), Internet Procedure (IT122a.4) and Use of IT Resources Procedure (IT136a). These are accounts created by an Office of Communications authorized representative. A city social media account can also include an account created or initiated by a city official on city-owned equipment or a personal device that perpetuates city business on that account. Such accounts are for city business or community outreach purposes only, and the domain name, confidential data sets, photographs and any other city copyrighted or authorized city approved social media content, posting, communication or expression is the exclusive property of the city of Las Vegas.

1. CLV's Office of Communications will ultimately determine who may serve as an administrator on behalf of the CLV on city social media accounts and establish what social media outlets may be suitable for use by the CLV and its departments.

2. All department requests for a city social media account will be reviewed by the Office of Communications. The Office of Communications will ultimately decide which, if any, city social media accounts are necessary and assist departments in developing city approved social media content and defining a strategy for engagement.

3. The Office of Communications will provide set-up assistance and training to designated employees only after a department's use of a city social media accounts is clearly defined and approved. If designated employees' job duties change or an employee leaves the CLV, the Office of Communications must be notified immediately to ensure that city social media accounts are protected.

4. Departments that use city social media accounts are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and information security policies established by the CLV.

5. Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to CLV official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the CLV.

6. Employees representing the CLV via city social media accounts must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the CLV.

7. The Office of Communications will monitor content on city social media accounts to ensure adherence to this policy for appropriate use, messaging and branding consistent with CLV goals.

8. All city social media accounts and entries shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the CLV and shall have city contact information prominently displayed.

9. The CLV reserves the right to restrict or remove any content on city social media accounts that is deemed in violation of this policy or applicable law; however any removed content must be retained pursuant to an agreed upon retention schedule for social media.

10. Violations of these standards may result in the removal of city social media accounts. The Office of Communications retains the authority to remove information, but must retain removed content consistent with number 9 above.

Procedure

Permitted Activities

1. Technical Assistance – The Office of Communications will support city employees and city officials in their promotion of city events, city services and city news and provide technical assistance on their personal social media channels including:
    a. Monitoring security of profile
    b. Getting pages verified
    c. Drafting commenting policy and help monitoring the page
    d. Helping open new accounts and merging old ones

2. Training – The Office of Communications will provide training on best practices and analytics for city employees and city officials.

3. Strategy – The Office of Communications will help provide direction and strategy on City Approved Social Media Content ideas, best practices and crisis/emergency responses.

4. Monitoring – The Office of Communications will set up regular page monitoring to help alert city employees and city officials when a response is needed from their office.

5. Special Events – The Office of Communications will provide a supportive role to promote city events, services and news including:
    a. Event coverage related to city events and services if requested
    b. Pre-recorded video coverage and/or interviews if requested
    c. Promoting key city events to increase attendance

6. Personal social media pages are considered personal property of the city employee or city official and will remain with them when they leave the city. An exception would be unless the page is designated as an official city of Las Vegas account, run by city of Las Vegas employees. Access to city employees and city officials' personal pages may be given to the Office of Communications so the page can be archived for posts related to city business. In addition, pages may be subject to public records requests.

Restricted Activities

The following forms of content shall not be allowed on any city social media accounts. Users and visitors to city social media accounts shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between CLV departments and members of the public. The removal of content deemed to be in violation is at the discretion of the Communications Director and/or the City Attorney. City social media accounts, articles and comments containing any of the below mentioned forms of content are in violation with this policy and shall not be allowed.

1. Comments unrelated to the particular article being commented upon;

2. Comments in support of or opposition to political candidates, campaigns or ballot measures, however, objective information about election procedures, ballot instructions, polling locations, candidate forums or scheduled debates is permissible;

3. Violations of federal, state, or local statue or law including those regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), data protection, libel, slander and information security policies established by the CLV.

4. Profane language or content;

5. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;

6. Any information concerning commercial lottery, gift enterprise or similar promotion offering prizes in whole or part upon lot or chance.

7. Sexual content or links to sexual content;

8. Solicitation of commerce;

9. Participation in or encouragement of illegal activity;

10. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of employees, the public or public systems;

11. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

City employees are prohibited from providing assistance during an active political campaign. Once a candidate has officially filed for office, the Office of Communications shall be precluded from assisting with social media posts. However, during this time, city events and information can still be promoted without the mention of the candidate. In addition, content that is not related to city events, city services and city news shall not be posted by the Office of Communications or any city of Las Vegas employee during an active political campaign.

Protocol for Coverage

Requests for social media assistance, City Approved Social Media Content and coverage can be made by emailing socialmedia@lasvegasnevada.gov at least 24 hours in advance during normal business hours. If assistance is requested outside of normal business hours, requests will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Further Guidance for Personal Accounts

City employees and city officials who have personal social media accounts should follow several suggestions when posting content. This is because while an account is personal, the employee or city official may still be associated with the CLV in the eyes of the public.

- Be Legal – Social media posts are subject to applicable laws, including slander, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and copyright.

- Be Transparent – If you associate yourself with the CLV in your personal profile, include a disclaimer such as "information/opinions are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of my employer" or "content displayed here is my own" in your profile.

- Be Judicious - Not everything should be shared. Avoid posting any confidential information.

- Be Knowledgeable - Review information before posting to ensure accuracy. If you are lawfully borrowing content from somewhere else, cite your sources.

- Be Responsible - When using social media, you alone are responsible for what you post.

- Be Considerate - Respect yourself and others. Avoid slurs, personal attacks, profanity and inflammatory topics.

- Be Thoughtful - It is easy for what you post to be taken out of context. Think about reactions to your post before sharing it. Even if you delete your post, the content lives forever on the Internet.

- Be Professional - Avoid posting information or pictures that may represent you in an unprofessional manner, particularly if you are friends, or regularly communicate, with coworkers on social media sites, as this may undermine your credibility or lead to disciplinary action if what you are sharing violates CLV policies.

- Be Safe - Cyber criminals have evolved along with the web, so be careful what you share and with whom you share it. Change your passwords regularly to prevent your accounts from being hacked.

- Be Genuine - To appear genuine, it's important that city employees' and city officials' personal accounts are run by the individual to maintain their voice.