

## Creating a Social Media Policy

### for your Agency

- 1) Talk with your communications director about strategy. Will you take a federated or centralized approach (meaning will all of the social media accounts be controlled through the communications group, or will the individual programs control their own social media accounts)?
  - a. A centralized approach offers more consistency in messaging, voice/style, and branding.
  - b. A federated approach allows for more use of technical terms between subject matter experts.
  - c. Regardless of which route you choose and who is the account administrator, be sure to emphasize to your work groups or programs that this is a very public tool. A partnership between the subject matter experts and the communications group will go a long way toward making your efforts more successful and avoiding missteps.
- 2) Determine the agency's process for creating policy.
  - a. What is the scope of the policy? Does it address employee use of social media for research work purposes, or *de minimis* use? Or does it simply spell out what is/isn't allowed for programs?
  - b. Who creates it?
  - c. Who edits it?
  - d. Who reviews it?
  - e. Who signs it?
  - f. What does "done" look like?
    - i. The same processes need to be determined for the launch of your accounts.
  - g. Determine a review schedule for your policy to allow for changes based on technology innovations.
  - h. Remember - Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery. Plenty of other agencies have already developed social media use and comment policies that have been approved. Don't reinvent the wheel if you don't have to.
- 3) Develop a communications plan or schedule for your social media efforts based on how you are going to structure your approach (centralized or federated).
  - a. You can always supplement the plan with special messages, but a plan will ensure that your accounts don't sit dormant for extended periods of time.
  - b. Photos are essential, but how will you get them? Who will take them and what device will be used or needed? Obviously today's cell phones will work for most situations, but what will you do if you need a high-powered zoom?
  - c. Do you have a likeness/image release ready for your photo subjects? Including language in your policy about observance of copyright, trademark, and personality rights will help gain faster approval.