

Social Media Networking 101: Tips for Legal Marketers

May 19th, 2009 by Kara



As human-resource departments are scrambling to add social-media rules to company policy, I wanted to review some seemingly basic protocol, that obviously is not common sense to many people, or we wouldn't be needing take these precautionary measures.

Many people are confused about how to blend their personal and professional lives online. Who wants to offend a boss who asks to be your Facebook friend? What projects can employees Tweet about? Is it legal to blog about an unsafe workplace?

I have a really basic guideline for my clients and colleagues: If you wouldn't want your parents or boss to see it, don't put it out there.

The simplicity of this rule provides a very clean and clear platform of integrity for you, free from guilt and concern. It also addresses some of the issues I see as potentially problematic within an article [Arizona Republics'](#) site. The advice given by Chad Graham is sourced by: Etiquette expert Barbara Pachter, labor lawyer Joseph Clees and Republic research.

While I agree with most of Graham's advice, I did want to address a couple of loopholes:

1. How do I keep my boss from viewing my Facebook page?

AP: Don't accept his or her "friend" request. Even if you take the step, there is a chance that managers or human-resources managers can see your profile, particularly if they are "friends" of your "friends." In that case, you can block groups from seeing your personal information. Twitter also allows people the option to approve who can follow their updates.

My question to is: What's to keep a co-worker (or anyone else for that matter), from taking a screen-shot of your page and sending it to your boss? Stranger things have happened...

2. I want my clients to know as much as possible about my pets and kids via social networks.

AP: Sorry, but they probably don't care. Stop inundating them with information that's not relevant to your job. The more they see photos of your cat in wacky poses, the more they'll question if they want to do business with you.

This is not necessarily the case. People love to be able to the people they do business with as people they can connect with on a personal level.

Quite often, I've had personal areas of interest are the catalyst of conversations that lead to business.

Again, I believe in keeping things simple: If you know your parents or boss would be uncomfortable with what you're putting out on a social media platform – *Don't!*

Other related articles:

[Social Media PR For Lawyers is More About "Staying Conscious" Than "Being Cautious"](#)

[Handling Negative Comments On Your Legal Marketing Blog](#)

[Legal Marketers and Our Responsibility](#)

[Not Every Legal Firm Should have a Blog](#)

[Legal firms don't have to run into trouble using social media](#)

[Photo by Chiphead](#)

Kara works with legal marketers to create a more clearly defined focus and distinctive business strategy that will provide them with a competitive advantage for new business, higher reputation recognition, and enhance their ability to attract, win, and retain the clients they really want.