

## **ODHA SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

Blogs, social networks and Web sites such as Wikipedia, Facebook, Flickr, Second Life and YouTube are exciting channels for you to share knowledge, express your creativity and connect with others who share your interests. The ODHA supports your participation in these online communities.

Since social media channels are fairly new, we've assembled "best practice" guidelines from respected online and industry sources to help you use these forums effectively, protect your personal and professional reputation, and follow ODHA Policies. The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting.

**Be transparent.** Be honest about your identity. State who you are, and the association/league you are representing along with your role and goals.

**Be accurate.** Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. You should respect copyright laws, and never plagiarize. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.

**Be respectful.** You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person. As a member of the ODHA, you understand our organization's commitment to respect for the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas. Some online communities can be volatile, tempting users to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Your reputation, and that of the ODHA, is best served when you remain above the fray.

**Think before you post.** There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the ODHA, its partners, or your fellow employees/volunteers. Use good ethical judgment. As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not say in front of all of your co-workers. Apply a "good judgment" test for every activity related to the ODHA: Could you be guilty of leaking information, trade secrets, customer data, or upcoming announcements? Is it negative commentary regarding the ODHA? Activity showing good judgment would include statements of fact about the ODHA and its products and services, facts about already-public information, or information on the ODHA Web site.

**Be aware of liability.** You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be proprietary, copyrighted, defamatory, libelous or obscene (as defined by the courts). Businesses are increasingly conducting regular Web searches to ensure that their confidential information is not being breached and that their organization is not being unfairly attacked or criticized. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

**Protect your identity.** While you want to be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use against you. Don't list your home address or telephone number or your work telephone or e-mail address. It is a good idea to create a separate e-mail address that is used only with your social media site.

**Follow a code of ethics.** There are numerous codes of ethics for bloggers and other active participants in social media, all of which will help you participate responsibly in online communities. If you have your own social media site, you may wish to post your own code of ethics.

**Monitor comments.** Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments—it builds credibility and community. However, you can set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

**Disciplinary action.** Associates who participate in online communication deemed not to be in the best interest of the ODHA will be subject to disciplinary action, which may include termination or other intervention deemed appropriate.

**Clients, Customers and Partners.** The ODHA's relationships with clients, customers and partners are valuable assets that can be damaged through a thoughtless comment. Even a positive reference could be picked up by a competitor and used in a manner that may be detrimental or embarrassing to this Branch. Members are not to reference any clients, customers, or partners without obtaining their express permission and only after getting approval from the Director of Marketing.

**Intellectual property, trade secrets, or customer data.** The ODHA's intellectual property, trade secrets, and customer data are strictly forbidden from any online discourse except through mechanisms managed internally by the Branch Finance and Marketing Committees.

**Company-sensitive matters.** Any online communication regarding proprietary information such as layoffs, strategic decisions, or other announcements deemed inappropriate for uncoordinated public exchange is forbidden. Inaccurate, distasteful or defamatory comments about the ODHA are strictly prohibited.

**Reporting Breaches.** If any ODHA Member becomes aware of social networking activity that they believe may violate the provisions of this policy, they should advise the ODHA Office immediately.