

Chapter Guidelines and Policies for Social Media

Introduction:

The Ottawa-Gatineau Chapter of CSAE recognizes that today's communication and networking opportunities exist both in a face-to-face environment, as well as online. CSAE O-G encourages all committees, members and volunteers to use social media to responsibly communicate about topics within their expertise, as follows:

- To share experience(s) in the association sector through:
 - Creating and posting online discussions in our LinkedIn groups
 - Utilizing Twitter prior to professional development & event opportunities to share details with members and the public
 - Utilizing Twitter during professional development & event opportunities to share with members and the public the comments and experiences of the group for those who were unable to attend.
- To share information about the Chapter's professional development & events, as well as other professional development opportunities offered *outside* of the Chapter's responsibilities, such as:
 - Other face-to-face learning opportunities discovered
 - Webinars that may be of interest
 - Blogs that have been found useful/relevant
 - Industry articles that have been found useful/relevant
- To seek advice from industry peers regarding a specific topic, which could include, but is not limited to:
 - Board Governance
 - Advocacy
 - Membership Recruitment and Retention
 - Marketing and Communications
 - Financial Management
 - Demonstrating value
 - Strategic Planning
 - Increasing Delegate Attendance
 - Sharing of RFP's for outside help for your organization
 - Posting of job opportunities
 - Seeking referrals/recommendations on a particular topic

While managing the Chapter's communication vehicles is the primary responsibility of the Communications Committee, we encourage other committees and members to participate in order to further the goals of the Chapter through social media networks.

Who these guidelines are for:

If you are using either LinkedIn or Twitter, if you are blogging with respect to Chapter news or events, or if you are posting information in other social media networks on behalf of the Chapter, then these guidelines are for you.

Personal and Private are NOT the same:

Communication through social media networks are primarily considered “personal”, it does not mean they are private. Conversations can often be found in social media networks, providing they were public, through search engines. As a result, conversations started on behalf of the chapter should *always* be considered public.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines have been provided in two parts. The first is the Tips and Best Practices section of this document. The second is a brief summary of rules to ensure that the conversations taking place are professional and managed appropriately.

Tips & Best Practices:

1. **Always be transparent when posting.** While we recognize that it is a personal decision to use social media, when you are posting information on behalf of the chapter, it is recommended that you keep in mind that your information *can* reflect on the organization. As such, we respectfully ask that the following is considered before posts are made:
 - **Make posts Association relevant.** Whether about HR issues, Governance, Membership or Conferences, etc., please ensure that your posts are going to benefit someone in the community.
 - General examples can include posts such as: “I came across a great article relating to selecting the right board members for your organization. Check it out – I would love to hear your thoughts [Link]”, or “We are finding that many of our members are taking too long to renew, or are waiting until after the deadline. What have you done to help move the needle faster?”
 - **Ensure your posts are timely.** People like to discuss hot topics, and when they ask a question, they like to receive comments, thoughts and feedback quickly. If you start a discussion, you should expect a timely response; and it is recommended that if you are going to share comments on someone’s discussion that it is done in a timely fashion, in order to keep the conversation going.
 - General examples can include posts such as: “I just registered for this webinar about maximizing your value proposition next Thursday, and thought others may be interested – it’s free to sign up. [Link]”, or “We are looking into cloud technologies. What other organizations are utilizing these technologies for your member data? What are the pros and cons using this option?”
 - **Ensure that it is a non-sales approach.** CSAE members get bombarded daily with prospecting calls. The goal of communication through LinkedIn & Twitter is to communicate with members, non-members and other stakeholders about the knowledge available through

the Chapter. Promotions should be relevant to Association executives, and offer some sort of learning opportunity (such as webinars, article sharing, blogs, etc.). These are not forums to be posting special discounts on your products or services.

- General examples of what not to post can include “I just wrote a book about Member Value Propositions, buy the book at XYZ.com for only \$29.99”, or “Hold your meeting at XYZ hotel and receive a 15% discount on your meeting rooms”.
2. **Be Yourself.** Followers will recognize when you are showing your personality, and when you are marketing to them. Let people see you and your discussions as being human, not just a marketing tool.
 - Example: If someone posts a question relating to increasing delegate attendance, answer with a suggestion like, “I have found success when adding X to the marketing strategy. I blogged about this very topic – if you want to read it in greater detail, check out the blog [Link]”.
 3. **Post regularly.** Readers won’t have a reason to continue to follow the discussions on LinkedIn and Twitter if there are not regular posts.
 4. **Add Value.** Share tips, best practices, insights, etc. Make following worth their time.
 5. **Respond.** If you think you might be able to help answer a question, even if it is short and sweet, answer. LinkedIn Groups & Twitter are to be used for two-way conversations, not just single posts.
 6. **Listen.** Appreciate suggestions, best practices, referrals, etc. It will make posts and members continue to be engaging.
 - We would like to see posts with comments, more than just single posts. If someone likes your post, shares your tweet, or comments with tips and/or best practices, acknowledge it within 24 hours.
 7. Made a mistake? That’s OK. **Don’t be afraid to say you were wrong** – just be quick to recognize and make the changes required.
 8. **Share other information.** We all follow other blogs, industry publications, etc. If you think that what they are saying is worth sharing, then do so. This will increase followers, and start conversations that may not have happened otherwise.

Policies:

1. **Protect confidential information:** Online conversations are not private. Posts online can, and will, be shared by others. Please recognize this and do not post anything that may be considered defamatory.
 - a. We encourage honesty. However, in some cases, it is better to air on the side of caution. If you are having an issue with someone, say so, but refrain from identifying exactly who you are referring to.
 - An example of what is considered an acceptable post: “Does anyone have recommendations on handling a board member who is dis-engaged or who’s vision/values no longer match the organization?”
 - An example of what is not considered acceptable: “Can someone offer tips on how to encourage a president to step down prior to the end of the term?”

In this case, being slightly vaguer can save your online reputation, as well as that of your organization.

2. **Avoid creating arguments:** Social media is about creating a dialogue - a conversation. People are not always going to agree with you. That’s OK, they are entitled to share their opinion, and you are entitled to respond. We ask that all members are expressing themselves in a clear, professional and logical way.
 - An example of what is considered an acceptable response: “[First name], I appreciate your comments. Every organization is different, and I am glad to hear that your suggestions seem to work within your association. It is not something we can use now, but I will keep it in mind for future strategic plans.
 - An example of what is not considered acceptable: “[First name], I do not think that anyone should work that way. Perhaps you should think about strategic planning for your own organization.
3. **Remain timely:** Conversations in social media occur in real time. Take the time to respond to questions, comment on other discussions, and share relevant content.
4. **Reference content:** There will be times that you find someone else’s material worthy of sharing. If content does not belong to you, try to attribute the source.
 - Example: “This is a great photo, taken by _____ at the Luncheon.”
5. **Report spam:** At times, you will come across people who are not sharing information that is relevant, or are only commenting on discussions to create trackbacks to their website, offering no educational insight or tips in the actual comment. If you see this, please report it to a group manager. It will be investigated further, and a follow up with the spammer will take place. The recommended procedure is as follows:
 - a. Send a private message to a group manager, outlining what you have uncovered, and why you have deemed it spam.
 - b. The group managers will then go and review the post for further clarification/investigation.



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- c. If needed, the group manager will consult the other managers and/or communications committee for other input.
- d. Should it be deemed as spam, the person who has posted it will be notified (by private message), that the post was deleted and why. They will be asked not to post discussions and/or tweets like that in the future.
 - Should there be multiple occurrences, the person may be removed from the group, and/or blocked from Twitter
- e. Should it not be deemed as spam, the person who submitted the report will be notified (by private message), advising that it will not be deleted and why.