

Social Media or Social Suicide?

April 2010



Introduction

How many of you use Facebook, Twitter, Linked-in, Bebo or My Space?

Social networking is a relatively new tool that opens up new and unique opportunities for individuals and businesses to network, market and share information. Organisations are increasingly making use of these, especially Linked In and Twitter.

It also however presents opportunities for employees to misuse their time and to communicate messages that work against your organisation.

Most businesses have not yet included the proper use of social networking websites in their HR policies and it may now be time for this to be corrected.

The Issues

Content submitted by an employee on any of the social media platforms may have serious consequences for the organisation in which they work. Employers have become increasingly alert to this and are willing to act.

Most recently, an international law firm summarily dismissed one of its senior associates who published an erotic novel online. The employee has stated that she will pursue a claim against her employer for this.

So, with this in mind, what effect could an employee's use of social networking sites have on your business? The possibilities for whistle blowing, attracting unwanted media attention and false advertising etc. are endless.

Contact Us

Telephone HR Insight – 01708 758958
20 Eastern Rd, Romford, Essex RM1 3PJ

Offices in Romford, London (City & West End), St Albans, Hayes and Redhill.



Why Not Just Restrict Use?

A balanced view needs to be taken. Social media is not going to go away and, unless we want to miss out on interacting with the new generation of business people familiar with this form of communication, we must start thinking about how best to use it.

The way you are perceived on the Internet shapes public thinking about your organisation, products, employees, partners and customers. Your employees can also help shape industry through interacting in social media. The benefits and the dangers however both need to be acknowledged.

Just restricting usage, in a blanket policy, may not be the answer. To use social media effectively however, decisions need to be made on who can use it as part of their job role, what you want communicated and what your objectives for this are. Just like any other marketing tool.

A Social Media Policy

A Social Media Policy, as part of your IT Policy, is now essential. Clear guidelines about how it should be used, what communications are and aren't acceptable, is essential in managing this positively and being able to take action against an employee if it is abused.

You may also need to consider monitoring social media to learn what your employees are sharing and saying about your organisation. Your internal HR policies remain in effect in both the physical and the web based workplace.



STOP PRESS

PAYE Tax Codes

The HMRC have fallen behind in issuing tax codes ready for April 2010. In some cases, employees will have received their new codes but you, their employer, will not have had this confirmed. As a result, employees may over or under pay tax in the early part of this tax year. This is most likely to affect those with a company vehicle or fuel benefit and those earning more than £100k. You may want to warn these people.

Rates from April 2010

No change to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP). This continues at £79.15 per week.

Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), Paternity and Adoption Pay all increase from £123.06 to £124.88 per week.

No change to the National Minimum Wage (NMW). These remain as:

- Workers aged 22 and over: £5.80
- Workers aged 18 to 21: £4.83
- Workers aged 16 and 17: £3.57

Can We Help?

If you would like help considering the scope and content of your Social Media Policy or you would like your current IT Policy updated to include social media, please contact us on 01708 758958.

We are here to help on any issue associated with the employment, performance or conduct of your employees. Please call us or visit us at www.hrinsight.co.uk.

General Enquiries
enquiries@hrinsight.co.uk

Legal Department
legal@hrinsight.co.uk

Heather Matheson, Managing Director
HMatheson@hrinsight.co.uk

Telephone
01708 758958