

Appendix 'B'
Protocols for Corporate Social Media Use
by a Designated Social Media Moderator
Town of Newmarket
Social Media Policy COMM.3-01

Introduction

These protocols are meant to guide the Town of Newmarket's corporate social media use.

Employees that serve as Designated Social Media Moderators will be entrusted with the responsibility of using social media to support objectives that may include, but may not be limited to:

- Disseminating information to the public quickly;
- Increasing access to information for targeted audiences;
- Sharing information and public notification during emergencies;
- Promoting Town events, programs and services;
- Driving traffic to the Town website (www.newmarket.ca);
- Encouraging discussion, civic engagement and comment;
- Extending the reach of communications campaigns;
- Humanizing our connections with constituents and enhancing transparency;
- Recruiting employees and volunteers; and,
- Monitoring trends, issues and reactions to Town news.

Purpose of Protocols

The Town recognizes that there is both value and public interest in its participation in social media. Furthermore, the Town should support staff by stating clear expectations about corporate use, standards and guiding principles.

Designated Social Media Moderators should refer to these protocols as a guide to:

- Protect the Town's reputation and ensure consistency and professionalism in how the corporation communicates via all online forums and social media platforms;
- Establish, monitor and maintain approved, corporate social media accounts;
- Provide timely, effective and accurate information and responses;
- Address controversial or sensitive matters relating to online content about the Town, its business, or its employees; and,
- Protect the privacy of municipal staff and the public who engage with the Town via social media platforms.

Protocols: Corporate Use of Social Media by Designated Social Media Moderators

New Accounts:

- The Town's corporate social media accounts will be approved, established and maintained by the Corporate Communications department.

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- Where possible, all corporate social media accounts will clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Town.
- Where possible, all corporate social media accounts will display:
 - The Town logo;
 - Applicable contact information;
 - A link to the official Town of Newmarket website; and,
 - Terms of use that clearly indicate what content is unacceptable and will be subject to removal without notification.

Account Management:

- The use of all social media accounts administered by the Town will adhere to:
 - All applicable provincial, federal laws, policies and regulations;
 - The terms of service of the applicable social media platform; and,
 - All existing Town policies, procedures and guidelines.
- The Town's corporate social media accounts will be administered and monitored by Designated Social Media Moderators.
- Designated Social Media Moderators will be appointed by the Corporate Communications department and will be trained regarding the terms of the Town's Social Media Policy.
- Designated Social Media Moderators are trusted to have access to login and password information that is owned by the Town. All user names and passwords will be set and/or changed with the permission of the Director of Communications. This information will be shared with both the Corporate Communications department and the Director of Human Resources.
- Updates to all corporate social media accounts will only be posted by a Designated Social Media Moderator and will adhere to this Social Media Policy, training that they have received and/or current best practice guidelines provided by the Corporate Communications department.
- Town generated content that requests feedback or input from the public will be reviewed and approved by the Corporate Communications department.
- Designated Social Media Moderators will review their assigned corporate social media accounts a minimum of three times daily (morning, mid-day and end of business day) to:
 - Ensure that all content is appropriate (See *Removal of Inappropriate Content* for further detail);
 - Review posted comments and inquiries to determine whether a response is appropriate; and,

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- Identify opportunities to engage in social media use that would benefit Town programs and/or service delivery.

Inquiries and Comments:

- Comments or inquiries directed to any corporate social media account should be reviewed by a Designated Social Media Moderator to determine whether a response is appropriate.
- If a Designated Social Media Moderator determines that a comment and/or inquiry require a response, it should be made within 48 hours, in accordance with the Town's Customer Service Policy.
- Negative, sensitive or controversial comments or feedback directed to any of the Town's corporate social media accounts will be reviewed by the Director of Corporate Communications to determine the best course of action.
- Responses to comments or inquiries must be approved by either a Designated Social Media Moderator, or if the matter is potentially contentious, the Director of Communications. Consultation with appropriate program staff is expected. For further clarification, see *Town of Newmarket Approval Guidelines for Designated Social Media Moderators*.

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Removal of Inappropriate Content:

- Inappropriate content will be removed. Examples include material that:
 - Provides the personal information of individuals;
 - Promotes, perpetuates or fosters discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, nationality, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
 - Is a personal attack on an individual or specific group;
 - Is profane or abusive;
 - Is sexually explicit or links to content that is sexually explicit;
 - Conducts or encourages illegal activity;
 - Is commercial in nature and is attempting to advertise, promote or sell products or services of an individual or an individual business;
 - Is for the purposes of promoting a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
 - May tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - Violates a legal ownership interest of another party;
 - Does not comply with municipal, provincial or federal legislation;
 - Promotes an individual religion or religious service; or
 - Is deemed inappropriate in the opinion of the Town of Newmarket's Director of Communications.

- Inappropriate content identified by a Designated Social Media Moderator will be brought to the attention of the Director of Corporate Communications immediately to determine the best course of action.

Criteria for Promoting Community Events:

Social media moderators may choose to share information about community events through the Town's corporate social media accounts, provided that the event is open to the general public, occurs within the boundaries of the Town and meets one of the following criteria:

- Organized or funded by another order of government;
- Organized by a government-funded agency or board; or is,
- Organized by a group that is:
 - affiliated with the Town ;
 - organized by a charitable organization that has a registered charitable number and operates within the Town ;
 - organized by a service club that operates within the Town and performs work that benefits the Town's residents;

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- Organized by a local business improvement area for general promotional purposes; or is,
- Located in a facility owned or leased by the Town.

Notwithstanding the criteria listed above, the Town reserves the right to refuse or remove any event related information at any time, without notice.

Accessibility:

The Town is committed to the principle of accessibility and is required to comply with communications and information provisions within the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). As such, Designated Social Media Moderators must be able to facilitate delivery of material that the Town communicates through social media.

Privacy and Records Management:

Social media platforms are third-party service providers and they are not private. The Town of Newmarket cannot guarantee that information will be recorded and we cannot assure confidentiality.

These facts should be clearly stated on all Town corporate social media accounts.

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Approval Guidelines for Designated Social Media Moderators

All social media content must be approved in advance of posting to ensure accuracy and professionalism. To promote responsive and effective two-way communication, a three-tiered approach to approvals is used, following a simple traffic light model to guide decision-making.

Green Light – Social media content or activity that meets the following criteria can be posted without hesitation:

- ✓ Sharing previously published information about Town events, programs and services.
- ✓ Emergency related announcements or information.
- ✓ Providing links to the Town's published and approved communications materials, such as web pages, news releases, newsletters etc.
- ✓ Links to positive media coverage about the Town.
- ✓ Responses to complimentary posts about the Town.
- ✓ Thanking people for following or connecting with the Town.

Yellow Light – Social media content or activity that meets any of the following criteria should be considered carefully before posting. The approval process should include discussions with related program staff and managers. Final approval from the Director of Corporate Communications is required. Examples would include:

- Responses to negative comments or inquiries directed to any of the Town's corporate social media accounts.
- Content that requests feedback or input from the public.
- Links to potentially controversial issues.
- Anything that makes reference to other governments or jurisdictions.
- References to any elected officials, political parties or political movements.
- References to religious events, holidays or beliefs.

Red Light – Designated Social Media Moderators should refrain from creating or sharing content that:

- Promotes a candidate for municipal, provincial or federal election;
- Makes negative references about any elected officials, political parties or members of political parties;
- Promotes a business, campaign, product or service that is not connected to or endorsed by the Town;
- Criticizes a business, campaign, product or service;
- Promotes an individual religion or religious service;
- Is a personal attack on an individual or specific group;
- Promotes, perpetuates or fosters discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, nationality, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;

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- Is profane or abusive;
- Is sexually explicit or link to content that is sexually explicit;
- Conducts or encourages illegal activity;
- May tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
- Provides the personal information of individuals;
- Violates a legal ownership interest of another party; or
- Does not comply with municipal, provincial or federal legislation.