



Social Media Policy

Version 1.0

November 2012

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Introduction

1.1 Document Purpose

This policy is intended to provide employees, volunteers and supporters of Lifeline with clarity on the use of social media platforms.

1.2 Document Scope

Social media is online media that allows for interaction and/or participation. Examples include:

- Social networking and micro-blogging sites like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Bebo, Foursquare, Tumblr and Pinterest
- Video and photo sharing sites like Flickr and YouTube
- Online forums and discussion blogs, including comments on online news articles

1.3 Audience

This social media policy applies to all people who work, volunteer or represent Lifeline in Australia or overseas.

1.4 Related documents

Title
Lifeline People Policy
Lifeline Code of Conduct
Lifeline Social Media Best Practice Guide
Lifeline Social Media Cheat Sheet

2. Background

Lifeline has a well-established presence across a range of social media channels, both at the National Office and Centre level. These channels are used as additional communication and promotion tools to complement our existing communication and marketing avenues.

Predominantly social media is being used to provide Lifeline employees, volunteers, our supporters, and the general public with:

- help-seeking messages
- service updates and information
- community interaction, and
- an avenue for the public to support Lifeline, while also learning about the organisation, our services, resources and campaigns.

This document aims to establish a process by which Lifeline's official social media interactions can be managed with the best interests of Lifeline's brand and reputation in mind.

This policy also sets out expected behaviour for people who do not officially represent Lifeline on social media, but could, through their behaviour, impact on the reputation of Lifeline, our Brand and our services. While Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the predominant social media channels used by Lifeline's National Office and Centres, this protocol may be applied in a common sense way to other social media channels used by employees, volunteers and supporters, or by the organisation in the future.

3. Guiding principles

Lifeline employees, volunteers and supporters are encouraged to participate in social media. Whenever Lifeline employees, volunteers or supporters are interacting on social media, whether in an official or personal capacity (see section five (5) for definitions), the following guiding principles should be top of mind.

- I will not criticise clients, colleagues, Lifeline or related Government policy
- I will respond to others' opinions respectfully and professionally
- I will not do anything that breaches my terms of employment
- I will not harass, bully or intimidate
- I will acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- I will disclose conflicts of interest where I am able
- I will not knowingly post inaccurate information
- I will link to online references and original source materials directly
- I will be polite, considerate, kind and fair

- I will always ensure my activity does no harm
- I will champion Lifeline and its services

4. Definitions

4.1 Social Media

For the purpose of this policy, social media is defined as *'any conversation or activity that occurs online, where people can share information or data that might impact on Lifeline or the people who use our services'*.

4.2 Official use

Official use is when an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media as a representative of Lifeline with permission from their Centre Manager or the General Manager of Communications, Marketing and Government Relations (or a proxy). An alternative definition is when an employee or volunteer is posting from a social media account that is labelled as an official *'Lifeline'* account, i.e. not a distinct individual person. Posts from these *'Lifeline'* accounts must:

- Comply with Lifeline's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within section four (4) of this policy
- Do no harm
- Not promote individual staff and/or volunteer businesses or money making ventures, or individual political candidates, preferences or Parties

4.3 Personal use

Personal use is when an employee, volunteer or supporter is using social media as themselves, not officially representing the Lifeline organisation, but identifying themselves as affiliated with Lifeline in their online biographies, profiles or posts, or through other digital platforms.

People who are employees, volunteers or supporters who do not identify themselves as being affiliated to Lifeline are still counted as representing the organisation, as the nature of the online world means they could be traced back to the organisation through their online presence. Post from these accounts must:

- Comply with Lifeline's ethics and the guiding principles stipulated within section four (4) of this policy
- Do no harm
- Not suggest or imply that Lifeline endorses individual businesses, money making ventures or political candidates or Parties

5. Identification

Identification is defined, for the purpose of this policy, as *'how a social media bio, post, tweet, account, blog or page description identifies that particular social media channel as being affiliated with Lifeline/local Lifeline Centre'*.

5.1 Naming conventions

All uses of the Lifeline trademark online and in social media must be differentiated based on geographical location to ensure the public can find and obtain information most relevant to them.

For example:

Facebook:

- ForsterLifelineShop
- Lifeline Shop Newcastle and Hunter
- Lifeline Shop Ipswich
- Lifeline Treasures Gold Coast
- Lifeline Midcoast
- Lifeline Vintage South West Victoria

Twitter:

- @Lifeline_ACT
- @Lifeline_BrokenHill
- @Lifeline_TopEnd etc

Website domain names:

- www.lifelinealburywodonga.org.au/Lifeline_OpShop.php
- www.lifeline-h2h.org.au/bookfair.html

The Lifeline Trade Mark Licence Agreement (please refer to section 3.3 (b) below) also outlines that prior to any Centre or Retail Outlet registering a social media account or website domain name, prior written permission from National Office is required.

The section reads:

The Licensee must not:

(b) except with LA's prior written consent, apply for registration...of any trade mark, domain name, business name or company name that incorporates signs, logos or words the same as, substantially identical or deceptively similar to the Trade Marks.

Written permission is required to ensure:

- Consistency across naming conventions to differentiate Centres/services based on geographical locations (if a generalised name is used by a particular Centre i.e Lifeline Shop this does not help the public find their local retail store)
- Centres are not disadvantaged by another Centre securing a generalised domain or social media account name like Lifeline Shop, Lifeline Vintage etc that does not distinguish them locally from other Centres who may be offering a similar/identical service and indirectly competing with each other.
- Using localised identifiers like a Centre name also ensures members of the public utilising search engines like Google will find their most relevant local Centre/service.

Generalised products or services, social media accounts/domain names like Lifeline Shop, Lifeline Vintage, Lifeline Retail, Lifeline Op Shop, and Lifeline etc are to be used to represent these services/products/brands on a national scale only and the relevant registrations of these accounts established by National Office only.

5.2 Official accounts

An official account (being it a blog, webpage, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that represents Lifeline should stipulate this within its bio, page or account description. An official social media page must be sanctioned by the General Manager of Communications, Marketing and Government Relations (in the case of National Office), the Centre Manager (in the case of a Centre) or their designated delegate. The account must carry the following, or a version of the following, words.

“This is the official account/page/etc for Lifeline WA/Melbourne/etc” followed by a brief description of Lifeline and the purpose of the account relating to the particular social media platform. For example, on twitter, it might say “Lifeline/Lifeline Canberra is a crisis support organisation and uses this account to promote help-seeking messages with the community”.

5.3 Personal accounts

Accounts (being it a blog, webpage, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that are not official, but are set up by employees, volunteers or supporters of Lifeline for personal reasons can have an affiliation to the organisation, so long as the following is undertaken:

1. It should not have the affiliation with Lifeline as the primary identifier
2. It should stipulate that the opinions expressed are the persons' own, and not that of Lifeline
3. It should state a disclaimer that reposting, 'likes', retweeting, etc do not represents the views of Lifeline

For example, on twitter a staff member might have this for their bio “Likes apples and fishing, interested in politics and the news, works for Lifeline, opinions my own, RTs not endorsement”.

6. Permissions

6.1 National Office

At Lifeline's National Office, the Communications, Marketing and Government Relations Unit is responsible for all official use of social media as defined in 3.1.

Personal use as defined in 3.2 is up to the individual employee, volunteer or supporter, however, individuals are accountable for the consequences of their actions on social media, and will be disciplined according to the people policies and codes of conduct of the various Lifeline entities and their individual employment agreements.

6.2 Centres

Lifeline Centres have jurisdiction over their operations regarding social media delivered in their name. However, Centres have an obligation to the network to ensure they comply with this policy and ensure they keep National Office abreast of the social media platforms they are active in. Centres have a responsibility to ensure that social media is maintained, that best practice is used and that staff are adequately trained to use the medium.

6.3 Personal use

Individuals who are employees, volunteers or supporters of Lifeline do not have permission to post official Lifeline content. They can, however, repost, retweet etc Lifeline posts, material or comment without substantial or meaningful change as part of showing their affiliation or support for the organisation.

7. Inappropriate use

Inappropriate use of social media includes, (but not limited to):

- Conducting a private business on Lifeline's social media presence
- Using discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language
- Stalking, bullying, trolling or marginalising any individual or group
- Accessing or uploading pornographic, gambling or illegal content, including extreme images of graphic content (blood and gore etc) or information regarding activity relating to firearms, bombs, terrorism etc
- Accessing sites that promote hatred or extreme/fundamental beliefs and values
- Direct political affiliation, unless an individual is running for election (but only on a personal account)
- Excessive debate on public policy, in particular surrounding the mental health and suicide prevention arena (unless in an official capacity)
- Uploading information of a confidential nature, especially in regards to Lifelines services or clients
- Hacking or attempting to infiltrate the systems of Lifeline or another organisation
- Criticising or denigrating Lifeline, or other organisations, and our/their employees, volunteers or supporters
- Activity that interferes with work commitments
- Activity that uses excessive bandwidth, either uploading or downloading, within the Lifeline ICT network
- Paid endorsement of any kind, including in kind services or gifts

- Activity that brings Lifeline or the person's professionalism or ability to act in a professional manner into disrepute

It is the duty of everyone who is affiliated with Lifeline to alert either the Communications, Marketing and Government Relations Unit, or a Centre Manager, to any inappropriate content they may come across.

8. Policy Breach

Misuse of social media can have serious consequences for Lifeline, and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences in terms of disciplinary action for staff and volunteers. Centres and National Office are responsible for ensuring adherence to the Social Media Policy by their staff and volunteers. This includes undertaking appropriate risk assessment and performance management or disciplinary action, of any suspected or identified breach.

In the event of serious misconduct, disciplinary action up to and including summary dismissal may occur.

9. Delegations

9.1 National Office

The General Manager of Communications, Marketing and Government Relations has delegation for all official social media activity undertaken by National Office. The secondary delegation is the National Marketing Manager for matters relating to Facebook and YouTube and the National Media Manager for matters relating to Twitter. The CEO has veto rights on the primary and secondary delegations.

9.2 Centre

The Centre Manager has delegation for all official Social Media activity undertaken by the Centre, with a secondary delegation falling to either their official communications person or their Board Chair.

9.3 Others

Individuals who undertake personal activity in the social media space can self-moderate. They should use common sense and be sensible about their use, always ensuring they are in line with the requirements of this social media policy. Advice can be sought from the Communications and Government Relations unit at National Office.

9.4 Parent Brands

Parent brands that run Lifeline services are able to have official Lifeline accounts. These accounts are not to be used for the direct promotion of parent

brand business or parent brand activity. Endorsement is acceptable, so long as the association between the two parties is clear and articulated. Lifeline's National Office maintains the right to request a suspension of the official Lifeline account run by the parent brand if these requirements are not adhered to. Lifeline's National Office also maintains the right to request that material is removed from social media channels if these requirements are not adhered to.

10. Crisis support through social media

It is not appropriate, for a number of reasons, for Lifeline to undertake any crisis support through social media channels. Mainly, the organisation's inability to resource 24 hour monitoring of social media platforms means that we are not able to provide crisis support within a guaranteed time frame. For this reason, official social media accounts, blogs or pages should all carry the following, or a similar, message.

"Lifeline does not monitor this account/page/blog 24/7 and we are unable to provide crisis support through this medium/blog/platform/account/etc. Crisis support is available through 13 11 14 or our online Crisis Support Chat service."

In the case where crisis outreach occurs through a social media platform, the following message, or something similar tailored for the particular posting, should be posted as quickly as possible.

"We're concerned about the content you have posted. This account/page/blog cannot provide you with the crisis support you need, and we encourage you to use our 24 hour telephone crisis line 13 11 14."

People with personal pages, accounts or blogs etc are discouraged from providing crisis support through their social media channels. This includes those who have crisis support training. In a situation where crisis outreach has occurred, the following, or a similar tailored message should be posted as quickly as possible.

"I'm really concerned about what you have posted, but I'm not qualified to help you through this blog/page/account/etc. Please call Lifeline on 13 11 14."

10.1 Clinical advice

It is up to the discretion of the delegate as to whether a clinical person should be involved in the creation of a tailored message in response to a crisis outreach through social media.

10.2 Life threatening emergency

If a crisis outreach indicates a life threatening emergency, the following message, or a version tailored to suit the outreach, should be posted.

"We/I'm seriously concerned about your wellbeing, please call triple zero immediately."

In the case of this message being posted, a General Manager or Centre Manager should be alerted immediately, regardless of whether it is from an official or personal account.

11. Complaints through social media

Complaints or negative comments regarding Lifeline will be made through social media channels. Both official and personal users of social media are discouraged from arguing or refuting complaints or negative feedback through social media channels. This behaviour can antagonise or fuel further attacks on Lifeline's services, brand and/or reputation.

In the event of a complaint or negative comment about Lifeline it is important to address the comment as soon as possible by responding with the following, or a tailored version.

“Sounds like you have not had the experience you expected when using Lifeline's services. Your feedback is important to help us improve the way we help people in crisis. Consider providing your feedback through our website at lifeline.org.au.”

12. Deleting posts

Social media is fluid, two-way, busy and often self-regulating. Social media can be used to disseminate information, but should be considered a form of two-way communication and a vehicle to listen to the 'wider' community views.

Organisations that heavily control content on their social media pages, blogs and accounts, mostly through the deletion of questionable or disapproving content, significantly reduce the impact, and usefulness, of social media as a channel for information distribution.

Lifeline will not delete posts that are complaints, or negative, except when they breach any of the conditions outlined for employees, volunteer and supporters in the 'inappropriate use' section eight (8) above. Where possible, the administrator will contact the user whose post has been removed, providing them with an explanation why it has been removed and the necessary action(s) for it to be reposted.