



THINK Before Your Post.

*"Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have a right to do and what is right to do."
- Potter Stewart*

Is it **T** rue?

Is it **H** elpful?

Is it **I** llegal?

Is it **N** ecessary?

Is it **K** ind?

MODULE 2 **Social Media Boundaries**

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Module 2



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Introduction

At the heart of any brand online is doing what's right- not just legal, but right. Clearly defining the brand you are representing in social media involves a simple branding exercise. What would be the top 5 statements or conversations you would want to overhear being said about this brand? Once you've completed this exercise, written it down, you can define a "personality" and "character" for your brand. With this knowledge there is content that will be right to post and content that would detract from your brand.

Doing social media marketing will constantly expose yourself to popular trends and peer pressure that can push your content over social media boundaries and into risky areas. A social media marketer is expected to produce measurable results of views and engagement with their social media community. There may even be productivity expectations such as quotas for the number of posts on each social media platform. Creating vast amounts of content for a social media campaign WILL have uninspired moments with the temptation to cross the boundary to posting something risqué, off-brand, or inconsistent with the mission and values of the company or cause. In the worst of these scenarios, it's off-brand and infringing other's intellectual property rights like using an extremely popular song dubbed over some great graphics that could lead to a viral wildfire, but could bring legal disaster to the company as well as possibly offend some loyal customers.

For this reason, it is important to know both your legal, ethical, and brand/character boundaries. In some ways the legal boundaries are clearer because written laws exist. But social media is always raising new questions of what is and isn't considered allowable use. It is important to have a basic understanding of copyright and intellectual property laws so you know the boundaries. Are you plagiarizing? Is the content you are sharing copyrighted in any way? Does that image require attribution of the creator? How do you keep a whole team of content creators on the same legal page? Even if it is legal to use, is it ethical to use?

The "character boundaries" of your brand are vaguer in the sense that they are up to the discretion of the company you work for. And these may be different than your own personal boundaries. Will you swear, use slang, use expert level technical jargon when creating the social media content for the brand? Will your social media campaign include negative comments about competitors? Will your brand "like" or align with political causes? Will your brand actively engage in conversations with celebrities, pundits, and other's, or will your brand sit and wait to respond? If the answer is sometimes, then how will you represent the company in saying 'no' in the other situations?



Introduction (Cont.)

Crossing these legal and brand boundaries is a primary reason a social media marketing specialist can lose their job or a social media marketing company can lose a client. It's absolutely critical that social media content flows from and aligns with laws governing content use in addition to the Mission, Vision, and Values of the company. If those are unclear, outdated, or come from "dead" documents that aren't consistent with the company or causes culture, then it's much harder to craft content that produces results AND pleases the management, board, or owners.

Developing these corporate "boundaries" is integral to social media success. Ask, ask, ask, for guidance from your direct supervisor, company owner, or C level manager. Be clear on this subject before stepping into quicksand.