Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide direction for the use of social media.

Austrade recognises the opportunity social media can bring in reaching new audiences and interacting effectively with our clients, customers, stakeholders and staff. However, social media brings with it a range of legal and regulatory challenges, along with reputational, security and privacy risks.

These require careful management if Austrade is to maintain its reputation as a trusted authority.

Social Media Usage

Before engaging in social media or commenting in any online communication, staff should read [Section 6.2 of the APS Values and Code of Conduct](#), "Employees as Citizens - Making public comment, including online".

Commenting publicly online is becoming increasingly common for APS employees. When doing so, they must ensure that their behaviour at all times upholds the APS Values, Employment Principles and the Code.

Austrade's social media policy outlines three tiers of social media usage: Official, Professional and Personal.

It is essential that Austrade staff understand these three tiers of usage, as inappropriate use of social media may be in breach of the Australian Public Service values and code of conduct and may result in sanctions under the Public Service Act 1999.

Official use:
Official use is when an Austrade employee participates/comments in social media as an official Austrade representative. Official use constitutes comment about a market, industry, and any Austrade policy or program.

If participating in a third-party blog, forum, page or group the spokesperson must identify themselves as an Austrade employee, stating their name and position. Furthermore, any official use should be done using a profile that is identified as an official Austrade account.

For example: A Senior Trade Commissioner should not make official comment from his/her personal twitter profile/account but rather via a sanctioned Austrade twitter profile/account (eg @AustradeJakarta)

Professional use:
Professional use is when an Austrade employee participates/comments in social media personally but as an experienced person in a particular field. This must be done using a profile that is not identified as an official Austrade account.

When commenting in a professional capacity an Austrader may or may not choose to identify as an Austrade employee. If they do identify as an Austrade employee they must provide a disclaimer

making it clear that their views do not represent those of Austrade.This is an example of the kind of statement Austraders should use when participating in social media for professional purposes.

"This site, post, or comment is for discussion purposes only and does not represent the official views of Austrade. Any views expressed are those of the individual author only."

For example: Austrade staff using LinkedIn with the aim of expressing an opinion about a subject that could be perceived as being within the scope of their expertise (for example, "the benefits of free trade agreements") is classified as "Professional Use". In these instances, staff are not expressly looking to connect with an investor, client or customer on behalf of Austrade. Rather, they may be commenting in a business forum or a professional members group (such as a Chartered Accountant Group). In these instances, staff should always use the disclaimer to state that their views are not necessarily the views of Austrade.

Personal use:
Personal use is when an Austrade employee participates/comments in social media as an individual and not in an official capacity as an Austrade staff member. This should be done using a profile that is not identified as an official Austrade account. In addition, Austrade staff should not identify their employer in their personal social media profile.

For example: Austrade staff should not list Austrade as their place of work within their personal social media profiles such as Facebook or Twitter.

It is important to be aware that comments and conduct engaged in outside of work can nevertheless have a connection with, or reflect on, Austrade, the Commonwealth or the employee's role as an APS employee. This may be the case even where the employee is not named or where privacy settings are used on the social media site. Once posted, the comments may be forwarded and viewed elsewhere.

Comments made in a personal capacity on social media sites must not give rise to concerns that the employee cannot perform their duties in an impartial and professional manner.

Social Media Participation

Within Austrade there are two tiers of social media participation:

Social Media Publishers:
Social Media Publishers are Austrade staff who create, curate, schedule, and publish social media content on Austrade social media channels for Official Use.

Social Media Publishers have successfully completed Social Media Modules 1 and 2 on Austrade Institute and their participation has been approved by their relevant manager or Senior Trade Commissioner and the Social Media Adviser. Off-shore, Social Media Publishers are typically the in-market marketing specialist.

Social Media Monitors:
Social Media Monitors are Austrade staff who have access to Austrade social media accounts for administrative purposes, such as monitoring discussions or scheduling approved content on behalf of Social Media Publishers.

Social Media Monitors have successfully completed Social Media Modules 1 and 2 on Austrade Institute and their participation has been approved by their relevant manager.

Becoming an Austrade Social Media Publisher and Monitor

To become an Austrade Social Media Publisher or Social Media Monitor it is necessary to complete Social Media Modules 1 and 2 on Austrade Institute.

Upon completion of the relevant modules, staff are to complete the Social Media Participation Form (with endorsement from the applicant's Line manager) and return it to: socialmedia@austrade.gov.au

Information Management Policy

Social media communications such as online discussion forums, blogs, Wikis, Twitter, etc. in relation to official Austrade business activities are to be regarded in the same manner as any other form of Austrade's business information and are subject to the same business and legislative requirements set out in Austrade's Information Management Policy.

Information Security Policy

Public web-based services:

- Include internet services that provide web email, social media, chat sites, instant messaging, video conferencing and file sharing sites.
- Allow employees to bypass approval and security measures Austrade has put in place to protect against the unauthorised release of official agency information.
- Provide channels that can be exploited by phishing emails, computer viruses and other malicious attacks on Austrade systems.

With the exception of Austrade's official internet and social media services, the use of public web based services for business use is prohibited. Austrade staff must not use public web based accounts to send or post business related information.

As defined in the Austrade Information Management Policy, information assets include paper records, electronic documents, emails, database records, web-based information, social media communication, audio visual recordings and images, scanned (imaged) documents, and other content as it relates to Austrade's business. Information generated in the course of Austrade's business is the property of the Australian Government.