



# Social Media Policy

July 2016

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## Context and overview

### Key details

Policy prepared by:	Sarah Williams, Promotions Consultant
Approved by board on:	20/07/2016
Policy became operational on:	20/07/2016
Next review date:	07/2017 or as needed.

### Why this policy exists

Social media can bring significant benefits to the Forest BIA, particularly for building relationships with current and potential patrons to the existing members, associate members and friends of the Forest BIA.

This social media policy describes the rules governing use of social media for the Forest BIA, as well as outlines its general purpose and goal for the Committee.

## General social media guidelines

### Platforms

The Forest BIA currently uses Facebook and Twitter as social media platforms, as a means of communicating with its target audience. These two platforms are currently believed to be the most appropriate and effective for the BIA's activities and uses.

New social media accounts in the BIA's name must not be created unless approved by both the Promotions Consultant and the Committee Board. The Forest BIA operates its social media presence in line with a strategy that focuses on the most appropriate social networks given available resources. If there is a case to be made for opening a new account, it should be brought to the Promotions Consultant and discussed at a Board meeting.

### Communicating as the BIA

Communication on the Forest BIA social media accounts will always be in an **informative, professional** and **friendly** manner.

Any communication through the identified social media platforms as the BIA should accomplish at least one of the following goals:

- Advertise and promote Forest as a town
- Advertise and promote members, associate members, and friends of the Forest BIA
- Increase visibility of the BIA as its own entity

Messages can include, but are not exclusive to:

- Highlighting key attractions in Forest
- Communicating details about upcoming events in Forest
- Information related to the Forest BIA, which includes:
  - Newsletter and email marketing distribution
  - Surveys
  - Website promotion

- Cross-promotion of BIA members, associated members, and friends of the BIA.

## Cross-promotional communication

The Forest BIA can cross-promote existing content from its members, associate members, and Friends of the BIA to the following extent:

- 1 Facebook post of an upcoming event or sale
- 3 Twitter posts of an upcoming event or sale
- Their content is specific to the Forest area
- They approach the BIA Promotions Consultant with details and link to the original post they wish to be cross-promoted

## Authorized users

The Promotions Consultant manages all activity on the Forest BIA social media accounts. They are the only one to post, share or like content as the Forest BIA on social media. This is to maintain voice and tone and to monitor all activity that occurs as the BIA online.

The Administrator has access to login information to the Forest BIA's social media accounts in case of emergency and for the general keeping of information.

All external posts must be approved by the administrator (Promotions Consultant) for all social media BIA and BIA event pages.

## Inappropriate content & uses

Forest BIA social media accounts must not be used to share or spread inappropriate content, or take part in any activities that could bring the BIA into disrepute.

When sharing information, the content in question should always be reviewed thoroughly, and should never be posted based solely on a headline.

## Potential sanctions

Knowingly breaching this social media policy is a serious matter. Users who do breach this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## Additional guidelines

### Basic advice

Following these simple rules helps to avoid common pitfalls:

- **Know the social network.** Understand what is and is not acceptable before posting messages or updates on a specific platform.
- **If unsure, don't post.** Err on the side of caution when posting to a platform. If the Promotions Consultant feels an update or message might cause complaints or offence – or be otherwise unsuitable – they should not post it.
- **Be thoughtful and polite.** Many social media users have gotten into trouble simply by failing to observe basic good manners online. The Promotions Consultant should adopt the same level of courtesy used when communicating via email.
- **Don't make promises without checking.** Some platforms are very public, so the Promotions Consultant should not make any commitments or promises on behalf of the Forest BIA without checking that the Committee can deliver on the promises.
- **Don't escalate things.** It's easy to post a quick response to a contentious status update and then regret it. The Promotions Consultant should always take the time to think before responding, and hold back if they are in any doubt at all.

Users must not:

- Create or transmit material that might be defamatory or incur liability for the Forest BIA.
- Post a message, status update or links to material or content that is inappropriate.

Inappropriate content includes: racial or religious slurs, gender-specific comments, information encouraging criminal skills or terrorism, or materials relating to cults or illegal drugs. This definition of inappropriate content also covers any text, images or other media that could reasonably offend someone

on the basis of race, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, or disability.

- Use of social media for any illegal or criminal activities.
- Send offensive or harassing material to others via social media.
- Broadcast unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-business related matters.
- Send or post messages or material that could damage the Forest BIA's image or reputation.
- Post, upload, forward or link to spam, junk email or chain emails and messages.

## Copyright

The Forest BIA respects and operates within copyright laws. The Promotions Consultant may not use social media to:

- Publish or share any copyrighted software, media or materials owned by third parties, unless permitted by that third party.
- Share links to illegal copies of music, films, games or other software.

## Security & data protection

The Promotions Consultant should be aware of the security and data protection issues that can arise from using social media platforms.

### *Maintain confidentiality*

Users must not:

- Share or link to any content or information owned by the Forest BIA that could be considered confidential.
- Share or link to any content or information owned by another company or personal that could be considered confidential or commercially sensitive.

*Protect social accounts*

- The Forest BIA social media accounts should be protected by strong passwords that are changed regularly and shared only with authorized users.
- Wherever possible, the Promotions Consultant should use two-factor authentication to safeguard the BIA's accounts.