BRAMPTON

ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTIVE

Category: Communications

Official Use of Social Media

Policy Number: COM-110
Approved by: CAO/CLT – October 26, 2023
Administered by: Strategic Communications, Tourism and Events, Corporate Support Services
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1. Background

Social media is an important and valuable communications and engagement tool for the City of Brampton to inform, educate and connect with its audiences. Strategic Communications is the lead on the City's social media governance in order to protect, manage and enhance the City's brand and reputation.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Directive is to provide guidance and rules on corporate use of social media at City of Brampton. An official City of Brampton social media account is authorized by Strategic Communications to represent the City, a division or department, and its services or programs.

All official social media accounts are owned by the City of Brampton.

3. Application and Scope

This Administrative Directive applies to all City staff who are authorized by Strategic Communications to use official social media accounts.

It applies to the planning, creation, execution and management of City social media accounts. These include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

3.1 Exceptions

3.1.1 This Administrative Directive does not apply to Members of Council, Mayor's Office Staff or Council Office Staff. These individuals can refer to the Council Office Handbook.

3.1.2 Rules on personal use of social media by City employees can be found in the internal document Personal Use of Social Media by City of Brampton Employees SOP.

4. Outcomes

4.1 High-quality, reputable, reliable and engaging content on official social media accounts;

4.2 Audience and engagement growth on official social media accounts;

4.3 Safe and secure official social media accounts;

4.4 Excellent customer service on official social media accounts; and,

4.5 Protection and elevation of the City of Brampton brand and reputation through social media.

5. Mandatory Requirements

5.1 General Requirements

All official social media accounts must:

a) Be in line with the City's Strategic Plan or a part of a service delivery plan approved by Strategic Communications;

b) Be monitored and responsive during City Hall business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, excluding holidays) at a minimum. The hours of monitoring must be clearly indicated in the profile or bio of the social media account;

c) Have at least one employee dedicated to posting, monitoring and managing the social media account(s) during City Hall business hours;

d) Have a new password every six months, where applicable;

e) Have updated username and password information registered with Strategic Communications;

f) Be recorded in an internal database of active official social media accounts and an external list on Brampton.ca. Both will be maintained by Strategic Communications;

g) Provide Strategic Communications with a high-level content calendar overview for each social media account quarterly. This should include evidence of an audience growth strategy and original, high quality and engaging content;

h) Direct users to the Community Guidelines in the profile or bio, where applicable. These Community Guidelines are subject to change;

i) Use an official City, divisional or departmental logo as the avatar or profile picture, which must be authorized by the Director of Strategic Communications, Tourism and Events;

j) Post or remove content as and when directed by Strategic Communications;

k) Have a dedicated employee who sits on and participates in in the City-wide Social Media Operations Team;

l) Schedule, post and monitor on social media channels via the City of Brampton's enterprise Social Media Management platform;

m) Adhere to guidelines contained in Strategic Communications' City of Brampton Social Media Playbook or as directed related to organic and paid social media

5.2 Written Content Requirements

a) Content must be accurate and true;

b) Content must not disclose any classified, confidential, sensitive, third-party or personal information;

c) Content must be in-line with the City's Strategic Priorities and the City's overall narrative as outlined by Strategic Communications;

d) Content must not speak on behalf of a City service area that does not directly relate to the official social media account's subject matter;

e) Content must be posted regularly and in line with posting frequencies outlined in the City's social media playbook; and,

f) Wherever possible, content must contain URLs directing users to the City's official website (Brampton.ca) and other approved City website addresses for more information, forms, documents or online services, as necessary. If shortening, URLs must shortened using the URL shortener ow.ly via the City's Social Media Management Platform.

5.3 Image and Video Content Requirements

a) Images and videos must be high resolution, non-pixelated and with no watermarks;

b) Ensure that all designed content to be posted is approved by the Sr. Manager, Creative Services & Marketing or designate, and includes appropriate City logo and design specifications as outlined in the City's brand guidelines – departments should not be creating their own design content for social media without prior written approval;

c) Any images, videos and GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format) produced, purchased and owned by the City may be used on any official social media account;

d) Consent is required to post any images, videos and GIFs that are not produced, purchased or owned by the City, including user-generated content. Exception: a GIF on Giphy.com is fair use;

e) If an image or video features a member of the public, a signed waiver is mandatory. Exception: if a photo or video is recorded at a public event, where waiver signs are often in place, no reasonable expectation of privacy exists; and, a. Use an official City, divisional or departmental logo as the avatar or profile picture, which must be authorized by the Director of Strategic Communications.

5.4 <u>Sharing Standards</u>

Sharing content is an everyday part of the social media experience. The following provisions regarding sharing standards are in place to protect the reputation of the City.

a) **Members of Council:**
A social media post from a Member of Council's account may be shared if the following requirements are met. If not met, Strategic Communications may request the shared post to be removed.

i. The content is solely to promote a City-led event, project, initiative or message;
ii. The content shows no apparent, favouritism or endorsement of a candidate, organization or political party;
iii. The official social media account equitably shares content from all Members of Council over the course of the Term of Council. Exceptions: if a Member of Council does not regularly use social media or meet the two requirements above; and,
iv. It is not a municipal election year. Sharing of posts from Members of Council must stop on January 1 of the municipal election year.

Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Director of Strategic Communications or designate.

b) **Media, community organizations, businesses and public:**
Social media posts from these groups may be shared on official social media accounts if the following requirements are met:

i. The post complies with City Social Media Community Guidelines found online here: https://www.brampton.ca/EN/Online-Services/Pages/SocialMedia.aspx;
ii. The content shows no apparent endorsement or favouritism of a political candidate, organization or political party; and,
iii. The content does not portray the City in a derogatory light.

5.5 Tagging and Mention Standards

a) **Members of Council and Elected Officials**:

A Member of Council's or other level of government official's social media account may be tagged or mentioned in official social media posts if:

i. The Member of Council or elected official is featured in the content (text, image, video, link) of the post;
ii. Further tags or mentions may be made at discretion of the Director of Strategic Communications;
iii. The official social media account equitably tags content with all Members of Council over the course of the Term of Council.

Exceptions: if an elected official does not own a personal account or does not allow tagging on a social media platform; and, it is not a municipal election year. Members of Council may not be tagged in posts from January 1 of the election year.

b) **Businesses and community organizations**:

These accounts may be tagged if:

i. The brand is explicitly featured in the content (text, image, video, link) of the post; and,
ii. The content is solely to promote a City-led event, project, initiative or message.

Exception: this rule does not apply to sponsorships or City partners.

5.6 New Social Media Account Requirements

A new official social media account must be authorized by Strategic Communications prior to activation. A request for a new account must be submitted to the Manager of Media and Engagement and include the following information:

a) A minimum 12-month plan for each social media platform. This should include evidence of an audience growth strategy and original, high quality and engaging content for the first quarter;

b) A description of a clearly defined target audience, which includes:

- A rationale behind why each social media platform is the best method for reaching the targeted audience;
- A rationale on why respective goals cannot be met through the City's existing social media accounts;

c) Evidence that at least one employee is dedicated to posting, monitoring and managing the social media account(s);

d) Evidence that each social media account will be monitored during City Hall business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, excluding holidays) at a minimum; and,

e) Evidence that the social media account(s) proposal is in-line with the City's Strategic Plan, or a service delivery plan.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Strategic Communications

Strategic Communications is the lead on all City communications, including the City's social media. While every City employee authorized to work on official social media plays a role in upholding the City's standards, Strategic Communications will have access to and authority on all official social media accounts. The role of Strategic Communications consists of but is not limited to:

a) Maintaining and updating this Administrative Directive to ensure relevancy and accuracy in the changing digital landscape;

b) Monitoring official social media accounts for compliance with this Administrative Directive;

c) Creating and implementing a Citywide social media strategy;

d) Maintaining an internal database of active City accounts and an external list on Brampton.ca;

e) Securely storing updated username and password information for all official social media accounts;

f) Authorizing new and existing social media accounts;

g) Merging or terminating official social media accounts if they do not meet the requirements in this Administrative Directive and the City's social media strategy; and,

h) Providing City staff with the training and tools necessary to comply with this Administrative Directive.

6.2 Official Social Media Account Administrators

Official Social Media Account Administrators are City staff who are authorized to monitor and manage one or many official social media accounts. Their role is to:

a) Comply with all requirements in Section 4 in this Administrative Directive; and,

b) Complete social media training as provided and required by Strategic Communications.

6.3 Information Technology (IT)

IT is responsible for:

a) Ensuring the storage of official social media account username and password information is safe and secure; and,

b) Providing technical assistance to staff necessary to comply with this Administrative Directive.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

7.1 Monitoring

Strategic Communications will monitor official social media accounts quarterly through the City's Social Media Management platform for compliance with this Administrative Directive.

Performance metrics that will be considered include, but are not limited to: number of posts, number of followers, engagement and reach.

7.2 Consequences of non-compliance

Failure to comply with this Administrative Directive may result in:

a) Warnings from the Director of Strategic Communications, Tourism and Events to the Official Social Media Account Administrator and their reporting manager;

b) Training on how to comply with this Administrative Directive; and,

c) The merging or termination of an official social media account. This decision is at the discretion of the Director, Strategic Communications, Tourism and Events.

8. Definitions

8.1 ‘Account’ means a public page or profile on a social media platform.

8.2 ‘Avatar’ means an account’s visual representation of themselves.

8.3 ‘Bio’ means the small portion of a social media account page that tells users who you are. All social media platforms offer space to write a bio or profile.

8.4 ‘City’ / ‘The City’ means The City of Brampton.

8.5 ‘GIF’ (Graphics Interchange Format) means a visual digital file where a collection of images play in a sequence to create the impression of animation.

8.6 ‘Official Social Media Account’ means a City-owned social media account that has been authorized by Strategic Communications to represent the City, a division or department.

8.7 ‘Official Social Media Account Administrator(s)’ means City staff who are authorized to monitor and manage one or many official social media accounts.

8.8 ‘Post’ means a social media status update or an item published that is generally viewable by the public.

8.9 ‘Profile’ means the small portion of a social media account page that tells users who you are. All social media platforms offer space to write a profile or bio.

8.10 ‘Social Media Account’ means a public page or profile on a social media platform.

8.11 ‘URL shortnener’ means a tool that condenses a URL into a shorter (and more social media friendly) format. Users who click on a short link are redirected to the original web address.

8.12 ‘User generated content’ means media that has been created and published online by the users of a social or collaboration platform, typically for non-commercial purposes.

9. References and Resources

This Administrative Directive should be read and applied in conjunction with the following references and resources as updated from time to time. Please note that some of the following documents may not be publicly available.

9.1 External references

- Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

9.2 References to related bylaws, Council policies, and administrative directives

- GOV-120 Use of Corporate Resources Policy

9.3 References to related corporate-wide procedures, forms, and resources

- City Social Media Community Guidelines
- Personal Use of Social Media By City of Brampton Employees SOP
- Access & Privacy Manual

10. Revision History

Date	Description
2019/08/22	New. Approved by SLT. Replaces Use of Social Media for Business Purposes SOP.
2023/10/26	Approved by CAO/CLT on October 26, 2023. A summary of key updates and additions to the Social Media Administrative Directive in 2023 to support good governance related to the quality and security of social media. <u>Mandatory Requirements</u> *General Requirements:* All official social media accounts must: • Have a dedicated employee who sits on and participates in in the City-wide Social Media Operations Team; (For CSS to note: the Social Media Operations Team has launched and more than 20 employees who contribute to or manage corporate social media accounts met for the first time Wednesday, September 27, with two professional development social media training workshops following the week after). • Schedule, post and monitor on social media channels via the City of Brampton's enterprise Social Media Management platform (Hootsuite); • Adhere to guidelines contained in Strategic Communications' City of Brampton Social Media Playbook or as directed related to organic and paid social media *Written Content Requirements* • Content must be posted regularly and in line with posting frequencies outlined the City's social media playbook; and, • Wherever possible, content must contain URLs directing users to the City's official website (Brampton.ca) and other approved City website addresses for more information, forms, documents or

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	online services, as necessary. If shortening, URLs must shortened using the URL shortener ow.ly via the City's Social Media Management Platform.(For CSS/IT to note: This is required as the City's email blocks bit.ly shortened links due to previous experiences with malicious content) *Image and Video Content Requirements* • Ensure that all designed content to be posted is approved by the Sr. Manager, Creative Services & Marketing or designate, and includes appropriate City logo and design specifications as outlined in the City's brand guidelines – departments should not be creating their own design content for social media without prior written approval; *New Social Media Account Requirements* • A new official social media account must be authorized by Strategic Communications prior to activation. A request for a new account must be submitted to the Manager of Media and Engagement and include the following information: ○ A minimum 12-month plan for each social media platform. This should include evidence of an audience growth and engagement strategy and original, high quality and engaging content for the first quarter.
2027/10/26	Next Scheduled Review *(typically, four years after approval)*