Policy CI-POLICY-2017-002 – Social Media

Background and Scope

The term social media is usually used in relation to social networking sites that allow users to create personal profiles, share photos and videos, and communicate with others. Most social media networking sites are free to use and from a company point of view allow interaction with existing and potential Cycling Ireland members, as well as increasing the company's communication reach and engagement. Used correctly social media enriches the value and perception of Cycling Ireland in the cycling community.

The Purpose of a Social Media Policy

Social media is an exciting and important area that Cycling Ireland fully embraces. Most Cycling Ireland social media activity takes place on digital platforms like Twitter and Facebook on a daily basis, and YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, Sound Cloud and Snap Chat on a more adhoc basis. This Social Media Policy Document provides an outline for allowing staff and team members to enjoy and develop an active, positive, responsible and prominent presence online, thus contributing to the growing online cycling community. This policy does not cover other communication channels such as the Cycling Ireland website and the member newsletters.

Cycling Ireland recognise key challenges with the use of social media amongst the cycling community:

)   When members share opinions online they may reflect positively or negatively on our organisation.
)   Individuals or organisations outside of Cycling Ireland may use digital and social media to challenge our actions, rules and regulations and if necessary Cycling Ireland will defend its position in such circumstances. This defense should come in consultation with the Cycling Ireland Communications Officer.
)   Cycling topics are widely discussed throughout all social media platforms. It is important that we can use these same, or similar, platforms to promote and outline official Cycling Ireland policies.

This Social Media Policy is for:

This policy has been divided into two target groups.

1. Cycling Ireland Staff
2. National Team Members

Cycling Ireland Staff Members

Cycling Ireland staff members must be conscious of their online activity, as there can be a blurred line between personal and professional online profiles. At all times Cycling Ireland staff members must be aware that their posts can be deemed to reflect the opinion and views of Cycling Ireland.

Staff Members using Personal Social Media Accounts

∫ Staff should aim to avoid posting activities during their core working hours, unless they are in relation to Cycling Ireland activities.

∫ Staff should avoid commenting on work related issues via social media, as their opinions can be interpreted as the views of Cycling Ireland.

∫ Staff should be conscious of any personal content or activities that could be seen to be damaging to the reputation of Cycling Ireland.

∫ Staff may be privy to confidential information that is not intended for the general public. They should be careful to not disclose information to others or online if it is not already available in the public.

∫ Data Protection Rules, Laws of Defamation and Libel Laws should be considered at all times. Recent court awards have confirmed that the Irish Libel Law extends to Social Media and what is posted online may render the individual liable to pay compensation if a case is lost.

∫ At all times online posts should be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures. Disrespectful posts and comment on personal social media outlets not only reflect badly on the individual, but also reflects negatively on Cycling Ireland.

∫ Staff members should at all times respect brand, trademark, and copyrighted information and imagery of Cycling Ireland.

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Staff Members using Cycling Ireland Social Media Accounts

⟩ When Cycling Ireland members contact Cycling Ireland through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter their queries should be addressed publicly if they are deemed serious; the response should be carefully worded, directing the query offline via direct messaging or to an email address. Discourage the public posting of personal information such as their contact details.

⟩ If a staff member becomes aware of posts on social media that include false allegations, a link to the correct information can be provided, or it can be raised with the Communications, Officer or CEO.

⟩ If a staff member suspects that a Cycling Ireland social media channel has been hacked notify the Communications Officer or CEO immediately.

⟩ If staff members are representing Cycling Ireland in an official capacity, it is important that the posts convey the same positive, volunteer-led spirit that the organisation uses in all of its communications.

⟩ Internet postings must respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws.

⟩ At all times online posts should be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures. How the Social Media Page is managed online reflects directly on the organisation.

⟩ Data Protection Rules, Laws of Defamation and Libel Laws should be considered at all times. Recent court awards have confirmed that the Irish Libel Law extends to Social Media and what is posted online may render the individual liable to pay compensation if a case is lost.

⟩ When posting from a Cycling Ireland social media account the first person should not be used. Use "we" rather than "I" as at all times your post is reflecting on the view of the organisation.

⟩ Where possible use the relevant hashtag and tag the relevant people. Ensure that you are not over-tagging people or individuals as it is important to not become irritating.

⟩ Twitter is an ideal platform for interacting in conversation with other organisations, thus increasing engagement, presence and relevance.

⟩ Facebook is an ideal platform for less items but more information as this is where people are more likely to read the content of the shared items.

∫ Instagram and Snapchat are the best platforms for engaging with a younger audience.

Cycling Ireland National Team Members (Riders and Officials)

Having an active presence on social media is an everyday reality for most athletes, and sportspeople, and indeed it presents great opportunity; the chance to tell your own story, in your own words, but common sense and sound judgement must always be to the forefront when telling that story. National Team Members must obey the Code of Conduct, and adhere to the Social Media Policy.

∫ While representing Cycling Ireland be conscious that there is a division between personal comment and official duty. When in doubt of whether a post is personal or official – don't post.

∫ Riders should not announce selection or non-selection until this information has been officially released by Cycling Ireland.

∫ Riders should be conscious of a general confidentiality clause, and be careful to not disclose information to others or online if it is not already available in the public.

∫ Data Protection Rules, Laws of Defamation and Libel Laws should be considered at all times. Recent court awards have confirmed that the Irish Libel Law extends to Social Media and what is posted online may render the individual liable to pay compensation if a case is lost.

∫ For the duration of events team members should not post information pertaining directly to team activities, team plans, or post contentious photos of other team members.

∫ Team Members should not post on-line any negative comments about
    o Fellow squad members
    o Competitors
    o   Event organisers
    o   Support staff

∫ Team Members should not use bad language in postings and note that journalists may quote anything controversial that is posted and use it as a news story.

∫ Team Members should be appreciative of those who support them e.g. family, coaches, support staff.

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) Team Members should always remember that a positive spin can be put on every story, so even if riders are disappointed with their result, they should think of at least one plus to be gained and focus on that.

) If in any doubt Team Members should check with their Team Manager before posting online, or responding to a post. If a conversation turns nasty report it immediately and block the offender.

) At all times Team Members should respect brand, trademark, and copyrighted information and imagery of Cycling Ireland.

) Team Members should never post embarrassing pictures or pictures of others without their permission.

) Team Members should never post photos of themselves or others in official clothing, or with sponsor's product, in compromising or derogatory contexts. Team riders should never be photographed in official clothing when behaving in an unprofessional or unsporting manner.