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## Five things HR directors need to know about social media

Technology often moves faster than legislation or human behavior, and the workplace is seeing the ramifications of this with the explosion of social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.). As a HR expert, I am getting an increasing number of requests to teach seminars on social media in the workplace.

Many employers frown on these new inventions and simply block employees from using them altogether. Business should instead embrace social media, because it is now an integral part of branding and marketing and also an important tool for breaking news.

New York Times technology writer David Pogue says that firms that block social media risk getting left behind. According to Pogue, YouTube can be a great research and educational tool. Many companies now have employees solely dedicated to social media marketing, and it has allowed sales teams to better do their job.

It has been left to HR professionals to set guidelines for social media. Here are some



### The Modern Workforce

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important things to remember:

- If you don't have a social media policy, create one, or call in a HR expert to help you design one. The social media policy should describe what sites employees are allowed to access, when they can access them and how much time they can spend on them. The social media policy should also warn employees about the security risks of social media.

- Talk to employees about the dangers of social media. Younger generations have grown up using digital technology and tend to share everything. Warn them about the dangers of sharing details about their life online. Telling people you are heading to

Europe could be an invitation to burglars. There are thousands of horror stories about people over sharing online. Plenty of teachers have been fired for posting pictures of themselves in bathing suits or drinking on Facebook.

- The social media policy should cover guidelines about what employees can and cannot say about the company on social media. Many employees have been fired for bad mouthing their current employer on Facebook. By having an official policy and putting it in writing, employees cannot be surprised when their social media posting comes back to bite them.

- HR directors and other senior-level

managers need to understand that only advertising jobs on social media can open them up to legal action. Disgruntled job seekers can argue that only posting jobs on LinkedIn limits the opening to people in the recruiter's social network.

- HR directors also need to include CEOs in their social media workshops. Most CEOs know that they should be utilizing social media but know little about its impact on a business's reputation, or that they should have someone dedicated to tracking the company's social media reputation.

The workforce is just waking up to the power and importance of social media. It will be up to HR professionals to set the guidelines that steer workers and managers through these often turbulent waters.

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