

An advisor’s guide to social media

How to stay on the right side of the road

“Oops I did it again...” is not the way you want to start your social media strategy.

Social media is an extremely powerful tool, and with power comes responsibility. With its endless reach, there is opportunity to generate new leads, build credibility and strengthen relationships all at the same time. With the proper awareness and education on how to stay compliant using social media, you will feel confident using it.

As an advisor, you should consider using social media to:

- Look for new prospects
- Build your social media presence
- Stay in touch or get to know your clients better

Whatever the reason may be, it is clear that the usage of social media is growing in the industry. To keep yourself on the right side of the road, here is a summary of some key points to help you monitor and track your social media footprint.

Please note: Before proceeding with any social media strategy, always check in with your compliance department for review of rules and regulations and approval for any external communication with third parties.

Approved and non-approved social media platforms						
						
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

Regulators such as the Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada (IIROC) and Canadian Securities Association (CSA) deem social media content can be considered marketing or advertising that may be subject to specific regulations governing its use. Therefore, any social media postings will have to abide by existing industry rules and regulations in accordance.

Social media platforms such as Snapchat and TikTok may not meet these requirements as:

- The image or video remains online temporarily, with no ability to retrieve or retain it
- No ability to supervise the content being posted
- The short time given for a video to be visible is not long enough to support a disclaimer and content

All in all, any social media postings of business communication must adhere to existing rules and regulations on advertisements, sales literature and correspondence regardless of the method used to disperse it.

Key points	
Social Media Etiquette	Recordkeeping Responsibilities
<p>As an advisor, people listen to you. Your opinion matters. Therefore, it is extremely important to keep your personal vs business social media accounts very separate. Do not post any content, opinion or forecast that would impact your business or dealer's brand.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create two separate social media accounts for personal and business. ✓ Remove any affiliation to your business or dealer on your personal social media account (i.e. I work for this dealer ABC). ✓ Create a complex password (i.e. letters, numbers, symbols) and select a two-step authentication for your business social media account. 	<p>As an advisor, it is your responsibility to keep records of all social media activity.</p> <p>The content posted is subject to any applicable regulatory requirements and may be requested to be retrieved at any time.</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Capture and archive social media activity at regular intervals (i.e. weekly) as part of your business process. ✓ Keep the date (created, received or deleted), content and sender of all records. ✓ Take screenshots of relevant interactions if download option is not possible (i.e. LinkedIn Direct Messaging).
Supervisory Responsibilities	Third-Party Communications
<p>As an advisor, it is your responsibility to monitor and protect clients from any misleading information or false statements on social media. All social media activity requires supervision regardless of its type of communication (i.e. static vs interactive or dynamic).</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Friend' or connect with your supervisor to provide another effective level of supervision for your social media account. ✓ Static content (i.e. information that does not change often) such as profile, background or wall information often require pre-approval before posting. ✓ Interactive content (i.e. real-time discussions) such as an interactive blog does not require pre-approval but requires supervision. 	<p>As an advisor and representative of your dealer, any reference or related activity to a third-party through communication can be deemed as an endorsement or recommendation (i.e. likes, sharing, re-tweeting).</p> <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prohibit any "likes", "sharing" and "re-tweeting" capabilities on your social media account until you are comfortable and well-informed of all compliance requirements and regulations. ✓ Third-party supervisory systems (i.e. Hootsuite) can provide this functionality if necessary. ✓ Fully train all team members on the compliance social media rules and regulations to avoid unintended consequences.



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Final words:

Do what you have to do, to do what you want to do.

Denzel Washington, actor

In the right hands - your hands, your social media strategy can be an extremely powerful tool. The positive impact it can have on your business is endless. While there is no limit in terms of creativity, there are boundaries in terms of compliance. Remember, your social media strategy and account is an extension of yourself so keep it clean! As Denzel Washington once said, "do what you have to do, to do what you want to do" and that is: **be the best advisor you can be to your clients.**

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