

JSCC Strategic Forum Discussion Topic

September 2015

Social Media

Social media relates to websites and online applications that allow users to share information, interact, network and collaborate with followers. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn are a few examples of programs that are used for social media.

Many people use social media in their personal lives but it is becoming more work related and it can allow organisation market their products or services and engage with their audience in a way that was not previously possible.

Social Media at NHDC – Benefits

At North Hertfordshire District Council we utilise Twitter and Facebook with general NHDC accounts. Various departments, such as Museums have their own Facebook page, allowing interaction and information sharing with customers. From an employment perspective, this provides a picture of the Authority to potential candidates.

Human Resources utilise social media as part of the recruitment process. Every role that is advertised on the Authorities website is added to the Twitter and Facebook feed, meaning that every NHDC follower will see the advertisement, potentially increasing the number of applicants for the post. A recent decision has been made to expand this usage to LinkedIn, which should allow for a larger pool of professional candidates to view vacancies at NHDC.

Many people of various ages use social media. However, as it is a relatively new concept, the majority of young people have some form of social media account and use this as part of their job search. In using Twitter and Facebook to advertise posts, NHDC are not only increasing the number of people that view the advert, but potentially increasing the number of young people that could apply. This could prove to be beneficial in years to come, given NHDC age profile.

Social Media at NHDC – Risks

As employees increase their use of personal social media, there is a potential for employee relations issues relating to this. There are a number of cases in various organisations where employees have been deemed to have behaved inappropriately via social media. Whilst the employee often considers their social media accounts to be separate from the workplace, on many occasions, the employer has viewed the issue as bringing the organisation into disrepute.

Managers need to ensure they consider the implications of becoming 'friends' with employees on social media accounts. This can often blur the lines of what is appropriate at work and can make the task of management more difficult if they become too close to an employees personal life. This could create further employee relations issues in the future.

NHDC have an IT Security policy which covers social media and highlights the importance of individuals considering the information they share on their social media accounts. The Authorities Code of Conduct also covers use of social media and the potential link to the Managing Misconduct policy.

The Future of Social Media in the Workplace

Many organisations are turning to social media to contribute to their pre-employment screening process. This is not a method that NHDC currently use. An organisation may choose to review

a candidates social media accounts as well as seeking previous employment references in order to obtain a good picture of the candidate.

HR has begun to remind managers that they can help in increasing the use of social media for advertising posts. Advertising can be expensive and so, especially in professional posts, recruiting managers could consider their own social media accounts for sharing relevant job adverts to their contacts.

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