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# Social Media Guidelines

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# GfK's Social Media Guidelines and Binding Regulations

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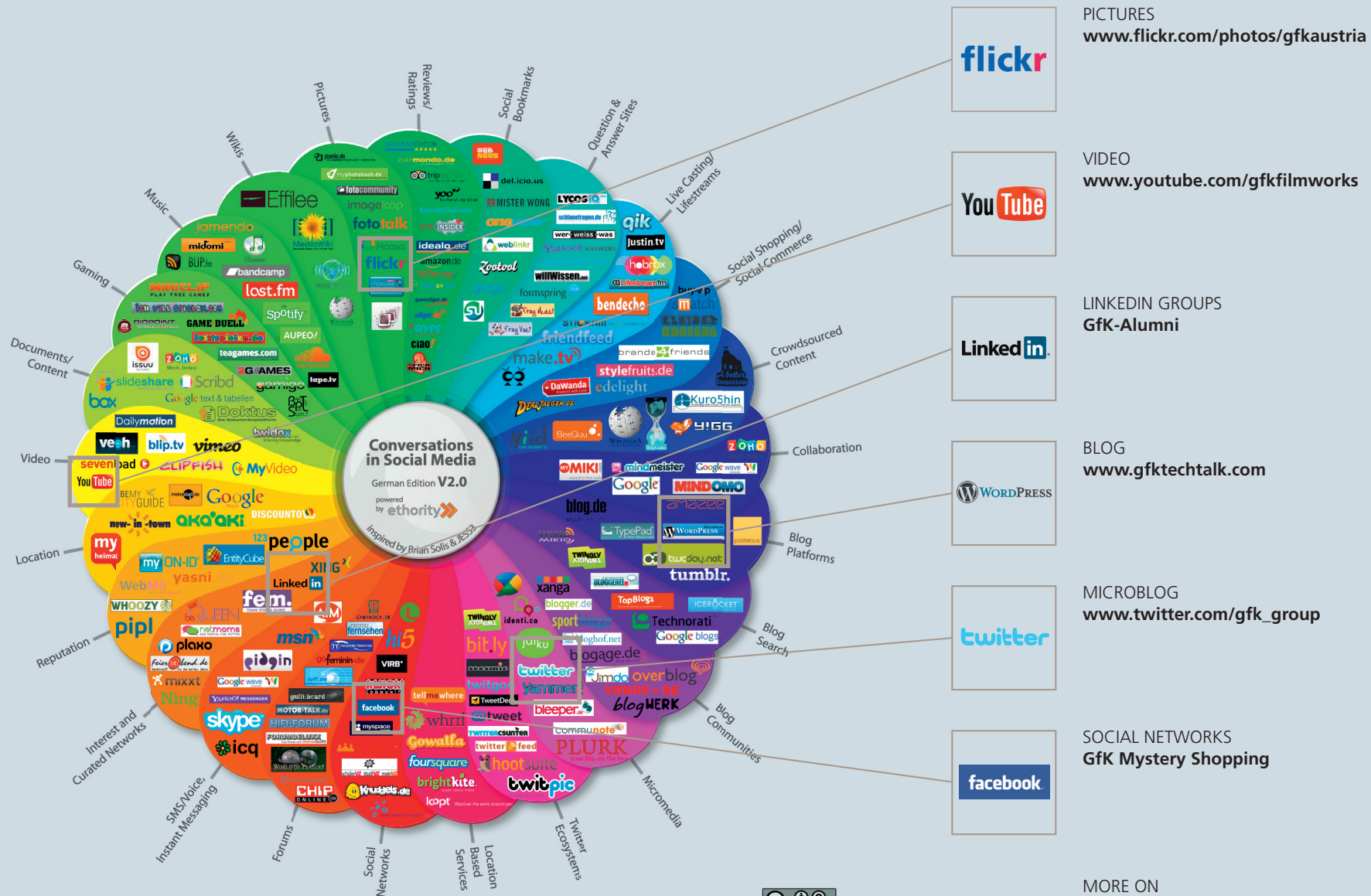
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When I, as an employee of GfK, publish contributions on the World Wide Web that refer to GfK, I am identifying myself as a GfK employee. I will not publish any contributions that could compromise GfK or that might harm my professional reputation.

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# Examples of GfK's social media activities



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# Participating in online commentary and publishing

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## Social Media Guidelines for GfK employees

Social media is now well established; the opportunity for exchanging content via the internet and making contact with other users has created many new spheres of communication. Increasingly, GfK employees will make written contributions on specialist forums, blogs and wikis, and they will use Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and the innumerable other social media tools for both private and business purposes.

GfK's culture is based on exchanging knowledge and communicating with each other openly and fairly. In theory, social media should also be used in this way. However, because social media is an environment wherein an employee's professional and personal lives often intersect, it is vital that we not only investigate the benefits of these communication tools, but also understand what the potential consequences may be for both the individual and the Company as a result of their use.

## Purpose of Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines are intended to assist GfK employees who actively participate on the World Wide Web, particularly on social media sites, both professionally and privately. However, they also set forth binding regulations for the use of social media during work hours. Any breach of these binding regulations may result in disciplinary measures and/or legal action.

These Social Media Guidelines are also binding in cases where GfK, or information relating to GfK, is mentioned by GfK employees on social media websites; particularly if such statements seek to disparage the Company's professional or business activities.

For employees who are active on social media in the private sphere, these Social Media Guidelines contain information on the use of GfK brands as well.

Some GfK companies supply their employees with social media guidelines that reflect the local environment, and these local guidelines are therefore binding for the corresponding companies in areas that differ from the global guidelines. These can be found on the intranet under *GfK Group -> Guidelines -> Social Media Guidelines*.

## The GfK Social Media Guidelines

All GfK employees are encouraged to participate in social media; however, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines.

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# I. What these Guidelines cover

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These Guidelines cover all social media platforms, including but not limited to:

- > Social Networking Sites, e.g. Facebook, MySpace, Foursquare, LinkedIn, XING
- > Micro-blogging sites, e.g. Twitter, Google Buzz
- > Blogs, including company and personal blogs as well as comments
- > Video and Photo Sharing Websites, e.g. Flickr, YouTube
- > Forums and Discussion Boards, e.g. Google Groups, Yahoo! Groups
- > Online Encyclopedias, e.g. Wikipedia, Sidewiki



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## II. Guidelines for usage

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> Always adhere to the GfK Code of Conduct.

> Make valuable contributions.

> Adopt a professional approach.

> Be respectful.

> Mark your changes.

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## II. Guidelines for usage

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> Use social media during work hours according to your best judgment.

> Identify yourself as a GfK employee.

> Make appropriate statements regarding GfK.

> Follow GfK's Brand Guidelines.

> Get authorization to use the GfK logo privately.

> Observe applicable laws.

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# III. Social Media Guidelines Discussion

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## **Always adhere to the GfK Code of Conduct**

Social media is now an established part of society. As an employee of a company that deals with knowledge gathering, you may at any time be confronted with social media as a working tool in your job at GfK. These alternative forms of communication may assist you in: supporting existing clients' relationships through knowledge exchange; alerting new clients to GfK's capabilities; exchanging information with colleagues; and helping GfK distinguish itself from competitors.

Your use of Social Media may affect the reputation of GfK as a brand and as a company; it also affects you as an individual. To ensure that you do not discredit yourself, GfK or third parties associated with the Company, you must act in accordance with the rules contained in the GfK Code of Conduct and follow the instructions and tips that are set out in these Social Media Guidelines.

## **Make valuable contributions**

GfK's brand is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on GfK. So, to successfully exploit the opportunities presented by social media, the content you publish should be of value to your target group, in such a way that has a positive effect on both GfK and you. Otherwise, your use of these media is not beneficial in the professional environment.



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# III. Social Media Guidelines Discussion

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## **Be respectful**

Do not use remarks that are off-topic or offensive. You are responsible for any opinions you express on the Internet. Any published material may be read by your superiors, current or former colleagues, existing or potential clients, and by partners, bloggers and journalists. It is rarely possible to retract this material at a later date.

Always demonstrate respect for others' points of view, even when they're not offering the same in return. Never pick fights and always take the high road. If you are sharing a negative experience or commenting on a client or individual, please try to do so in a constructive way.

Don't post about clients or potential clients without explicit permission from your client and manager. Our client relationships matter more than anything, and we must protect their business.

## **Adopt a professional approach**

As a GfK employee, before you use social media in my work at GfK, you should answer the following questions together with your supervisor:

- > Why do I want to use social media?
- > How can social media improve my business?
- > How will I find the time to provide the content and maintain the entry?
- > How will I combine my social media activities with my other communication activities and contact with clients?
- > Have I obtained information about the opportunities that GfK offers for the use of social media? Help is available from the communications specialists responsible for the relevant GfK company or from the Digital Communications Team ([dct@gfk.com](mailto:dct@gfk.com)).
- > Have I informed the communications specialists responsible for my company about my use of social media to apprise them of my activities and to offer support, if necessary?
- > Have I obtained information about the dangers inherent in the use of social media, particularly in regard to my privacy rights?

And last but not least: don't forget to use privacy settings to safeguard proprietary business data and personal information, and take a few minutes to understand a site's terms of service.

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# III. Social Media Guidelines Discussion

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## **Mark your changes**

To err is human, and this applies both to the use of social media and to the writing of content. If mistakes slip in when you are posting a contribution, you should correct and take responsibility for them. It is better to admit to mistakes than to attempt to justify or delete them.

You should not change blog entries, commentaries or Tweets without making a comment, nor should you remove them covertly. Instead, you should actively and constructively comment on the changes, and mark them in such a way that they can be easily tracked.

## **Use Social Media during work hours according to your best judgment**

Social media can increase the productivity of employees and benefit GfK. However, it is also clear that the use of online communities, blogs or microblogs (Twitter) can take up a great deal of time. The extent to which social media is used during work hours must therefore be appropriate and must not interfere with your ability to complete your duties, as agreed in your employment contract, in a timely and professional manner. Be aware that your employer reserves the right to withdraw authorization for the use of social media during work hours at any time.

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# III. Social Media Guidelines Discussion

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## **Identify yourself as a GfK employee**

Always identify yourself – name, and when relevant, role at GfK – when you discuss GfK or GfK-related matters, such as GfK products or services, because everything you publish has an impact on GfK. Consequently, for your own protection and that of GfK, you must make it clear when you are expressing your opinion as a private individual. You can achieve this by indicating that the relevant content reflects your own personal view only and not that of your employer.

## **Make appropriate statements regarding GfK**

Be aware that you represent GfK at all times, so you should assume that your social media usage is visible to clients, managers and prospects. Be sure to manage what and with whom you are sharing. Of course, GfK's existing communications guidelines and rules of conduct also apply to the publishing of content on the internet. Therefore, you must adhere to the stipulations given in your employment contract and the GfK Code of Conduct.

Business and trade secrets, information on projects, acquisitions, clients and colleagues and financial data may only be published with the express permission of GfK. You may independently distribute official information from a GfK company that has already been published by the communications departments or by the management, provided that you indicate the source.

Press enquiries that arise as a result of your role as a GfK employee are dealt with exclusively by the responsible bodies within GfK, to whom you should forward the enquiry. Official company communications are released exclusively by the communications departments or the management.

Should legal questions or problems arise, contact the legal department at GfK.

## **Follow GfK's Brand Guidelines**

As a GfK employee, if you set up a blog or an entry in a social medium for business purposes, you should respect GfK's corporate design specifications, which can be accessed on the intranet. *GfK Group → Guidelines → Social Media Guidelines.*

If you join a business network such as LinkedIn or XING for private purposes, you may use the GfK logo provided on the intranet, so long as you make it clear that you are a GfK employee.

If you wish to use the GfK logo in a different context, contact the body that is responsible for your company, or Corporate Communications ([corporate.identity@gfk.com](mailto:corporate.identity@gfk.com)).

For each entry, you should use the full version of GfK names at least once. If a shortened version is used in an entry, it should be directly indicative of the full name.

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# III. Social Media Guidelines Discussion

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## **Get authorization to use the GfK logo privately**

If you wish to use the GfK logo on a website or in social media as a private individual, you should first obtain authorization from the department responsible for communication within your GfK company. If there is no opportunity to contact this department in advance, you should do so within one week. Do not pass any GfK logos on to third parties. If there is an opportunity to create a link from a GfK logo, you should create a link to your GfK company.

## **Observe applicable laws**

All copyright, privacy, fair use, intellectual property and financial disclosure laws that apply offline apply online as well. It's OK to quote or re-Tweet others, but never attempt to pass off someone else's language, photography, or other information as your own. Be sure to credit your sources when posting a link or information gathered from another source.

Bear in mind that you are personally responsible for your own content, but not content on any other external site

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If you require any further support in using social media, or wish to share your experiences with us so that we can continue to learn and improve our understanding and knowledge in this arena, then please contact:

**Corporate Communications**  
**[social.media@gfk.com](mailto:social.media@gfk.com)**  
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**Tel. +49 911 395 4141**

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