

GUIDE

Evaluation Guide

Social Media Education Programs



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Empower your Workforce

New digital tools have entered the workplace, initiating a transformation in the way we work, communicate, and manage relationships. To succeed in this rapidly changing environment, organisations need digitally enabled employees who can capitalise on emerging business opportunities and overcome complex challenges. However, merely deploying new technologies and creating guidelines for their use is not sufficient. Professional education is key to empowering workers with the technical knowledge, judgment, and strategic insight that they require in the digital era.

The need for digital education is especially apparent in the domain of social media skills. Recent data indicates there is a significant gap between what businesses expect their employees to know and what they actually know.

While 85% of companies have a corporate social media policy, only 18% of them report that employees have “good” or “very good” knowledge of the policy and of social media usage in general.

This shortfall in education now threatens to restrict business performance for many organisations. Emerging first in the consumer space, social media has invaded the enterprise as a vital mode of communication and customer engagement. Yet it also presents a unique set of challenges, both inside and outside the corporate firewall. Its transparency, immediacy, and reach have turned the business world upside down by giving individuals the power to communicate on a massive scale. Organisations must develop unified strategies to harness social media's potential and mitigate its risks, with employee training at the forefront of their efforts.

More Than Social Media Managers

Social media impacts all aspects of your business and is no longer the exclusive responsibility of a single team or department. Whether your business is prepared, individuals and teams throughout your organisation are already using social media to engage with customers, partners, and influencers. All of them are de facto representatives of your brand. With every message or photograph they share, they can either promote your company to a wide audience or drag it into a public relations crisis. Therefore, it is vital to impart an understanding of social media fundamentals among all employees.

This guide will help you determine what type of education program is best suited to your organisation. It describes three categories of education which can be deployed on their own or in combination: custom education, social media practitioner training, and social leadership development.

Key Benefits of Social Media Education

Accelerate Business Success

Social media education is about more than teaching dos and don'ts. It is the key to unlocking the productive potential of your workforce and driving business growth through increased social ROI. Therefore, your education program should give employees a strong understanding of how social media drives the business and how they can use it to support the organisation's strategic goals.

Align social media activity with your business strategy.

Your organisation's social media efforts should support clear, tangible goals, rather than vague aspirations that don't link back to actual business objectives. Employees empowered with strategic skills and knowledge are able to identify business goals at the outset and then plan accordingly. They can also use relevant metrics to track and optimise the business impact of their social media efforts. An effective education program is therefore vital to successfully integrating social media into core business functions.

Engage customers at scale.

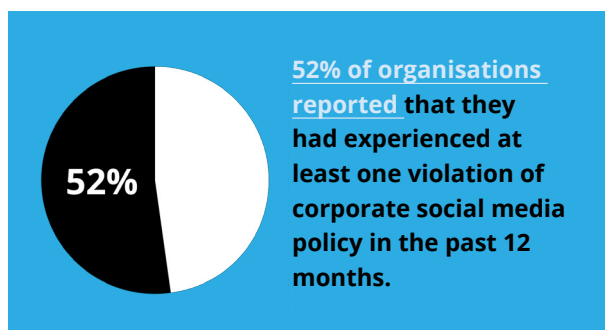
Even the most dedicated team that uses social media cannot handle the full volume of sales leads, customer service issues, engagement opportunities, and special requests that flood into a company through its social channels. The solution is to empower a broad cross-section of the workforce to engage in social media. By educating customer service reps, salespeople, and subject matter experts in social media skills, you can coordinate social engagement across departments to provide exceptional customer experience and ultimately drive more revenue.

Empower employees as brand advocates.

Your organisation's employees are invested in your brand's success, aligned with your core objectives, and willing to defend your company. They are perfect candidates for brand advocacy on social media, but they need fundamental skills and good judgment to be effective. If your organisation empowers them with social media education, they can greatly amplify your brand's social reach and improve its reputation through countless online interactions.

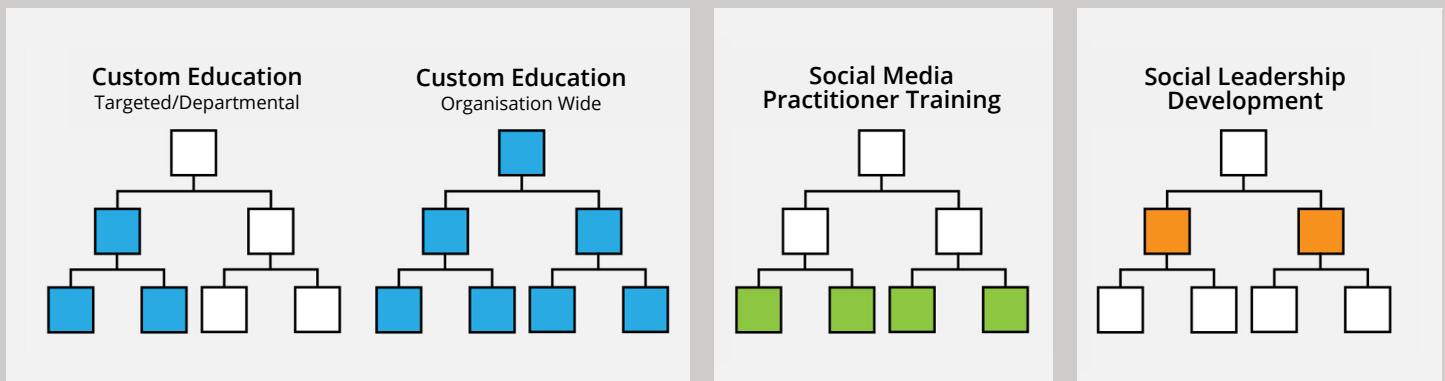
Mitigate Social Media Risk

In a recent survey by Altimeter Group, [52% of organizations reported](#) that they had experienced at least one violation of corporate social media policy in the past 12 months. The consequences of such mistakes range from minor embarrassments to full-blown brand crises to serious regulatory or legal fallout. Your organisation can significantly mitigate these risks by executing an employee education program across multiple departments and regions.



An effective education strategy can ensure that all employees understand social media policies and best practices for professional and personal use, and help them develop better judgment and tool-based skills that minimise human error. Without education, the growing number of employees who use social media become increasingly likely to damage your brand and jeopardise their own careers.

The 3 Pillars of Social Media Education



	Custom Education	Social Media Practitioner Training	Social Leadership Development
Reduce risk of employee error	✓	✓	
Avoid policy and compliance violations	✓	✓	
Product training/certification	✓	✓	
Integrate social media into business functions	✓	✓	✓
Increase effectiveness of branded social media channels	✓	✓	✓
Empower employees as brand advocates	✓		
Activate subject matter experts to engage customers and influencers	✓	✓	
Align social media with strategic business objectives	✓		✓
Prove social media ROI	✓		✓



Custom Education

Who:

Large-scale deployments or targeted groups

What:

Tailored curriculum based on organisational needs and challenges

Why:

- Mitigate social media risk with your company's specific policy education
- Develop general understanding of social media's impact on your business
- □Ensure baseline knowledge of social media best practices
- Empower your employees to become brand advocates
- Provide comprehensive training for specific roles, regions, and business functions

Custom education programs are tailored to support the unique mission of an organisation, department, or team. Such programs should reflect corporate values and provide highly relevant training to employees. Companies typically select custom education programs because they want training efforts to be fully aligned with their business strategies. When developing a custom education program with a vendor, your organisation can opt for a fully bespoke solution or choose to incorporate modified course material from existing programs.

Custom programs can either be crafted for targeted groups or created for general employees and implemented company-wide. Regardless of the scale of deployment, your organisation should be able to ensure that the program consistently delivers learning outcomes. The ability to track employee progress and verify completion is critical to achieving social ROI and maximising the value of the education program itself.

Example Use Cases for Custom Education:

Empower marketers with digital skills.

An organisation develops a custom program to bring its marketing department into the social era. Marketers learn how to express the company's unique voice and brand values through social media, and how to integrate social media into a cross-channel marketing mix.

Enable social customer service.

The organisation enables customer service representatives to provide effective and compliant service on social media. The program imparts an understanding of company guidelines and regulatory requirements, and helps the support staff develop good judgment by exploring industry-specific customer issues. It also delivers product certification, allowing the customer service department to use the company's social relationship platform with confidence and efficiency.

Activate a social selling strategy.

The marketing and sales departments collaborate to help sales representatives generate revenue through social media. Sellers learn how to integrate social media into the organisation's sales pipeline and how to represent themselves and the company appropriately on public channels.

Develop foundational social media skills across the organisation.

A company-wide program empowers the workforce to accelerate the company's social transformation. Employees learn how to amplify company messaging at scale across their personal social networks and develop an understanding of corporate social media policy. They are equipped with the baseline knowledge, etiquette, and skills they need to use social media effectively, both personally and professionally.

Mitigate compliance risk.

Individuals and teams in regulated functions learn the company's unique compliance requirements by exploring relevant scenarios they may face in their roles. Through tailored demonstrations, they learn how to safely navigate industry-specific compliance issues when dealing with customers, investors, analysts, and other external stakeholders.

Key considerations when developing a Custom Education program:

- Collaborate with experts in online instructional course design. This ensures that the program is not only attuned to relevant business needs, but educationally sound
- Combine proven, off-the-shelf courseware with bespoke content to create a comprehensive curriculum relevant to your organisational needs and challenges
- Use an e-learning platform with assessment capabilities to track employee progress and ensure a high level of knowledge retention
- Provide an accessible, easy-to-use e-learning experience so that you can confidently scale up adoption throughout your team or organisation



Social Media Practitioner Training

Who:

Social media coordinators, community coordinators, customer service representatives, sales representatives, recruiters, and subject matter experts.

What:

- Product training and certification
- Fundamentals of social media strategy and tactics
- Best practices for social media engagement

Why:

- Drive business results via increased social media usage
- Mitigate risk on official company channels
- Enhance effectiveness of core social media teams
- Activate more employees for engagement with customers
- Provide comprehensive training for specific roles, regions, and business functions

Social media practitioner training is intended for employees who engage audiences through social media on behalf of the organisation, including sales representatives, customer service staff, and recruiters. These individuals use social media to achieve specific business objectives and therefore require a strong grasp of social media tactics and tools.

Practitioner training is vital to an organisation's ability to engage customers broadly across multiple departments, as it enables employees to collaborate with their team and other groups on the company's social relationship platform. This technical competence also reduces the risk of self-inflicted social media crises by minimising tool-related human error. When administered beyond core social media teams, an effective program transforms part-time practitioners into highly effective assets for the company's engagement strategy.

Typical elements of Social Media Practitioner Training:

Tool-focused training and product certification.

Practitioners are trained to use the company's social relationship platform with proficiency and confidence. The business leverages greater value from its technology investment through wider employee adoption and more effective use of the platform.

Social media fundamentals.

Employees gain an understanding of social media etiquette and learn how to accelerate the business success of social media activities.

Channel-specific best practices.

Employees learn how to leverage the unique characteristics of various social networks for audience engagement, content dissemination, and more. This element also helps social media practitioners select the most effective social channels to achieve their objectives.

Key considerations when choosing a Social Media Practitioner Training program:

- Provide on-demand video content for easy access and program scalability
- Meet the needs of today's busy professionals with self-paced, self-assessed education
- Deliver product training and certification to ensure platform consistency and proficiency



Social Leadership Development

Who:

Social media managers, community managers, social strategists, digital teams, product marketing managers, communications professionals

What:

- Advanced social media strategy
- Social media measurement and ROI
- Content strategy

Why:

- Drive business growth with strategic use of social media
- Enhance professional development

A social leadership development program should prepare social media managers and other strategic members of the organisation to recognise business opportunities as well as systemic risks in the company's social media activities. While company-wide education generates bottom-up results across the workforce, social leadership development enables a core group of stakeholders to drive the organisation forward. It provides students with the skills and knowledge they need to integrate social media into business strategies, coordinate the activities of multiple departments, and deliver a measurable impact to the company's bottom line.

Focused advancement of key individuals can also accelerate the overall development of an organisation's human capital. Students who receive advanced certification share their knowledge with fellow colleagues and champion future social business initiatives. They help the entire organisation accelerate digital transformation and move to the forefront of social business.

An effective social leadership development program should include:

Situation and Environment Analysis.

Students are introduced to the social media ecosystem and the importance of social media monitoring.

Strategic Planning.

Students learn elements of advanced social media strategy, including listening and response tactics, the power of social influence, and measuring ROI.

Content Strategy.

Students receive instruction in content marketing topics, including paid social, engagement, curation, and realtime responsive marketing.

Information Management and Threats.

Students gain an understanding of privacy issues, crisis management, and information security.

Key considerations when choosing a social leadership development program:

- Look for a program that combines the hands-on perspective of industry experts with the credibility and instructional excellence of an academic partner
- Empower employees with industry-recognised credentials upon completion
- Provide self-paced online education so professionals can integrate the program into their personal career development

Learn more about custom social media education solutions for your organisation: hootsuite.com/custom-education

About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation



Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organisations to execute business strategies for the social media era. As the world's most widely used social relationship platform, Hootsuite Enterprise enables global businesses to scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and business units. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of technology integrations, allowing businesses to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

We help organisations create deeper relationships with customers and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help businesses pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through education and professional services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting enterprise.hootsuite.com

Trusted by 744 of the Fortune 1000

