

Namakwa District Municipality Social Media Policy

Purpose

This policy outlines the rules and guidelines for using Namakwa District Municipality's social media platforms, specifically Facebook and the official website, to ensure consistent, professional, and effective communication with the public. This policy also sets procedures for handling comments, complaints, and crises, as well as monitoring and analyzing social media performance.

1. Approved Social Media Channels

Namakwa District Municipality maintains an official presence on the following platforms:

- **Facebook:** The primary social media platform for public engagement, announcements, and updates.
- **Website:** The municipality's official platform for comprehensive information, documents, and in-depth updates.

No other social media accounts should represent the Municipality unless officially approved by the Communications Department.

2. Posting Guidelines

Tone and Style

- **Professional and Accessible:** All content must be clear, professional, and easily understood by the public. Avoid jargon and overly formal language.
- **Friendly and Community-Oriented:** Use a warm, approachable tone to foster positive engagement with the community.
- **Neutral and Non-Political:** Posts must remain non-partisan and focused on the needs of the community. Avoid political bias, and refrain from personal opinions.
- **Inclusive:** Language and content should be inclusive, free of discrimination, and reflective of the diverse community served by the municipality.

Content Types

Content should be aligned with the Municipality's goals and focus on:

- **Municipal Updates:** Announcements about new policies, projects, or initiatives.
- **Service Alerts:** Notifications regarding interruptions or changes in public services (e.g., water outages, roadworks).
- **Event Promotion:** Information about upcoming events, meetings, or community activities.

- **Public Safety Announcements:** Information about emergency services, disaster management, and public safety measures.
- **Community Engagement:** Encouraging public participation in decision-making processes, sharing success stories, and promoting public services.

Visuals: Posts should include relevant images or graphics to increase engagement. Use official branding guidelines for all posts (logo, colors, etc.).

Frequency of Posting

- **Regular Updates:** Post at least 3-4 times a week to maintain consistent engagement with the public.
 - **Urgent Updates:** During crises or emergencies, post as often as necessary to keep the public informed (e.g., hourly updates for major incidents).
 - **Event-Related Posts:** Share event promotion content at least 2-3 weeks before the event and remind the audience as the event approaches.
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3. Handling Comments, Complaints, and Misinformation

Monitoring and Response Protocol

- **Daily Monitoring:** The Communications Department will monitor the Facebook page daily, checking for comments, questions, and engagement.
- **Response Time:** Aim to respond to questions or concerns within 24-48 hours. Ensure responses are clear, respectful, and provide helpful information.

Handling Complaints

- **Public Complaints:** If a complaint is made on Facebook, acknowledge the complaint publicly, then direct the user to a private channel for further resolution (e.g., phone or email). Example response:
"Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Please send us a direct message or contact our office at [phone/email] so we can assist you further."
- **Escalation:** Serious complaints or issues that require immediate action should be escalated to the relevant department (e.g., service delivery issues, emergencies).

Handling Misinformation

- **Immediate Correction:** If misinformation or incorrect information is shared by users, respond promptly with accurate facts. Example response:
"We would like to clarify that [correct information]. Please refer to our official statement on the matter here [link]."
- **Polite Tone:** Always maintain a respectful and neutral tone when correcting false information.

Negative Comments

- **Constructive Criticism:** Acknowledge criticism respectfully and provide clarifications where necessary. Do not delete comments unless they violate the policy (see below).
 - **Inappropriate Comments:** Delete or hide comments that include offensive language, hate speech, spam, or personal attacks. A standard warning should be issued if a user repeatedly violates these rules.
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4. Crisis Response Procedures for Social Media

In the event of a crisis (natural disaster, service disruption, political unrest, etc.), social media becomes a key platform for providing real-time updates.

Crisis Communication Guidelines:

- **Timely Updates:** Share updates as soon as new information is available. Avoid speculation—only post verified details.
- **Coordination:** The Communications Department will coordinate with relevant municipal departments to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.
- **Clear Instructions:** Provide clear, concise instructions for the public (e.g., evacuation routes, emergency contact numbers).
- **Dedicated Posts:** Use dedicated crisis posts pinned to the top of the Facebook page for quick access to critical information.
- **Frequency:** Post updates frequently (e.g., every hour if needed) to ensure the public is well-informed.

Example Crisis Post:

"URGENT: Due to [description of the situation], the Namakwa District Municipality advises residents in the [affected area] to evacuate immediately. Please follow these safety instructions: [clear instructions]. Emergency services are on the scene and will provide further updates. For assistance, contact [emergency contact number]."

5. Social Media Monitoring and Analytics

To measure the effectiveness of the Municipality's social media presence and engagement, the following processes should be in place:

Monitoring Tools:

- **Facebook Insights:** Utilize the built-in Facebook analytics to track:
 - Page likes and follows
 - Post reach and engagement (likes, comments, shares)
 - Audience demographics
 - Popular post types (text, images, videos)
- **Website Analytics:** Use website traffic data (e.g., Google Analytics) to monitor visits, bounce rates, and page performance.

Monthly Reporting:

A monthly report will be generated to evaluate the effectiveness of social media efforts. Key performance indicators (KPIs) to be included:

- **Engagement Rate:** Number of comments, shares, and likes per post
- **Reach:** The total number of people who viewed the content
- **Response Time:** Average time taken to respond to public inquiries or comments
- **Top Performing Posts:** Identify posts that garnered the most attention and interaction

Adjusting Strategy:

Based on the monthly report, the Communications Department will adjust the posting frequency, content types, and engagement strategies to improve the municipality's online presence.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Communications Department:** Responsible for content creation, monitoring, responding to public inquiries, and reporting.
 - **Municipal Departments:** Provide relevant information to the Communications Department for posts related to their areas of expertise (e.g., water services, infrastructure).
 - **Authorized Spokesperson:** Only designated municipal spokespersons are permitted to speak on behalf of the Municipality on social media during crises or high-level situations.
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7. Policy Violations

Any violations of this social media policy by employees, representatives, or the public (such as unauthorized posting, inappropriate behavior online, or failure to follow guidelines) will be addressed accordingly. Disciplinary measures may be taken where necessary.

Conclusion

This Social Media Policy ensures that Namakwa District Municipality maintains a professional, transparent, and effective social media presence, fostering community trust and engagement. All posts should align with the Municipality's values, objectives, and commitment to serving its residents.

Drafted by: Public Relations Officer

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