Best Practice Guidelines on the use of Social Media by MSA Members

Note: throughout this document, the term 'MSA Members' shall refer to all MSA Competition Licence holders, MSA Licensed Officials, MSA Volunteer Marshals, and MSA-registered Clubs.

Background

This document is intended to provide best practice guidelines for all MSA Members who use social media websites, which include (but are not limited to) Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, and MySpace, as well as internet forums and chat rooms.

All new forms of communication provide increased opportunities to share information. They come, however, with new values. Whereas the printed word has a certain finality of declaration about it, social media is interactive, conversational and open-ended. Moreover, it exists in the public, not private, domain.

It is clearly futile simply to try to discourage the use of social media; as a means of interactive conversation it can be extremely effective and its power within modern society is undeniable.

These guidelines are intended to assist users in avoiding some of the common pitfalls that can arise and to help social media to be used in a responsible way.

Purpose

Traditional media is consumed by people through a third party channel, ie watching TV, reading the newspaper, listening to the radio. In contrast, social media allows you to create your own channel to get your message directly to those people that want to receive it.

An important difference, though, is that while traditional media is largely consumed passively (ie we read/hear what someone else has determined is of merit), the user of social media makes a specific decision to engage with your content. As a result, social media consists of building communities of like-minded individuals and the challenge is to offer content with which your target audience will want to engage.

Furthermore, social media offers an opportunity to utilise the power of other people's networks. For example, the most powerful benefit comes when something goes 'viral'; that is when people forward the message to their own friends and contacts. In this way, information can cross the world in seconds and take on a life of its own.

General Guidance

- Don't write something that you wouldn't be prepared to say to someone.

- When posting on a social media website, assume that anybody can access that post.

- Check the privacy settings of your social media accounts. These settings determine the extent to which the information you share is publicly accessible.

THE ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB
MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION
LIMITED

MOTOR SPORTS HOUSE,
RIVERSIDE PARK,
COLNBROOK,
SL3 0HG, UK

TEL: +44 (0) 1753 765 000
FAX: +44 (0) 1753 682 938
WEB: WWW.MSAUK.ORG

REGISTERED OFFICE:
SEE MAIN ADDRESS
REGISTERED NUMBER:
1344829 ENGLAND
VAT NO: 242304895

- Determine whether you are participating in a personal or official capacity and consider whether your opinions and activity are appropriate in that context.

- Never share personal details such as home addresses and telephone numbers except with people that you know and trust, in which case it is advisable only to share such details via private messages.

- Remember that participating in social media results in your comments being permanently available and open to being re-published by other media outlets. It should be assumed that anything published in social media will remain available indefinitely, even if it is deleted from the original site.

- Respect confidentiality, stay within the legal framework and be aware that safeguarding, libel, slander, copyright and data protection laws apply.

- Be aware that your interaction with social media may attract interest from the wider media, so proceed with caution whether you are participating in an official or personal capacity.

- Never use social media to insult anyone directly or indirectly.

- MSA Members who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility over young people (ie those under 18 years of age) in the course of their duties should be very careful when interacting with those young people via social media.

- Beware the temptation to use the 'perceived' anonymity offered by some online portals to post unacceptable comments about events or individuals.

- You should be mindful at all times that MSA regulations and UK law continue to be applicable in the online environment.

March 2012

THE ROYAL AUTOMOBILE CLUB
MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION
LIMITED

MOTOR SPORTS HOUSE,
RIVERSIDE PARK,
COLNBROOK,
SL3 0HG, UK

TEL: +44 (0) 1753 765 000
FAX: +44 (0) 1753 682 938
WEB: WWW.MSAUK.ORG

REGISTERED OFFICE:
SEE MAIN ADDRESS
REGISTERED NUMBER:
1344829 ENGLAND
VAT NO: 242304895

A MEMBER OF THE
FIA