What Does This Policy Mean to You?

By now, it’s become obvious that there are wonderful benefits to branding, networking, outreach, fundraising, and relationship-building through social media platforms, and CDS is already ahead of the curve in innovative usage of the tools. Whether you are someone handling official CDS accounts, an employee who could add value to CDS online presence, or a consultant working on a specific project with CDS, this policy is meant to highlight the goals CDS hopes to achieve through social media and guide you through the options you have to help promote CDS—as an organization as well as its specific programs.

CDS recognizes the added power of exposure to new audiences through its employees, and encourages them (in accordance with some of the information laid out in this policy) to use their personal accounts to improve CDS’ presence on social networks. This could be as simple as echoing CDS content (through shares or retweets, etc) or contributing original content that CDS can use on its official accounts. Therefore, this policy is aimed at anyone and everyone involved with the organization, not only people moderating the CDS accounts.

This policy is not meant to be a list of “do’s and don’ts” of social media. It is also not exhaustive, and at some point in time, you may have to make a judgment call you hadn’t anticipated. What it is intended to do is serve as guidelines for conduct when dealing with social media platforms in relation to CDS, so that you can make informed decisions about your online presence and CDS’ as well. It is a vision and strategy document, not a rules and regulations document.

Before we move on, as a rule of thumb, if you doubt whether something is appropriate for posting on a social media platform, ask someone. If possible, talk to Alicia Bonner Ness, Communications Manager, to get her thoughts about possible legal issues or appropriateness of content.
CDS Values, On- and Off-line

CDS’ mission and values don’t stop at its programming. We must remain cognizant of what we are out to achieve through the mission and use social media to help us in that pursuit. Also, the values of the organization extend to online presence. The key to creating a successful brand is proving that those values permeate the entire organization, including online content.

Mission:
CDC Development Solutions leverages public, private and volunteer resources to strengthen SMEs and the institutions, governments, and industries that drive economic growth in emerging markets.

Values:
♦ Ethical and social responsibility of individuals and business
♦ Innovation in ideas, problem solving, and technologies
♦ Quality in everything that we do
♦ Results and impact: achieving or exceeding the stated goals of every program and project
♦ Environmental stewardship across our programs and office operations
♦ Cultural awareness and diversity
♦ Good jobs with good pay
♦ The spirit of volunteerism

When acting on behalf of CDS or participating personally, take a look at the mission and values.

1. Does your online contribution reflect CDS’ values? We want to be ethical, responsible, and innovative in our online presence. We want quality in our content, and see deliberate impact as a result of our work on social media. But in turn, we must respect diversity and be culturally aware.

2. Can it contribute to driving growth in emerging markets either directly or indirectly? Does it: further our cause? Provide previously unknown knowledge to partners? Raise money for programs? Bring about awareness? Encourage an ICV program?

If so, then it is worth including on our social platforms. Now, we’ll look at how.
Roles of the Cast

Official CDS accounts have staff designated and entrusted to post material on CDS’ behalf. These platforms include but are not limited to:

**Facebook**
- CDC Development Solutions page
- U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy page
- MBAs Without Borders page

**Twitter**
- @CDCDevSolutions
- @USCCD
- @MBAsWB

**Youtube**
- CDCDevSolutions channel
- U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy channel
- MBAs Without Borders channel

**LinkedIn**
- CDC Development Solutions page
- MBAs Without Borders group

**Flickr**
- CDCDevelopmentSolutions photostream
- MBAsWithoutBorders photostream

**Google+**
- U.S. Center for Citizen Diplomacy page

Creation of a social media account to represent a CDS division, program, initiative, or any other official affiliation with CDS cannot be done without the approval of the President. If you would like to create such a platform, please submit a proposal detailing the need for such an account, and its worth to the organization.

Staff members are encouraged to use their personal social media accounts to broaden the reach of CDS information. If something is posted on one of the accounts seen above, it has been done so by the account’s designated and trusted staffer, therefore it is suitable for “sharing”, “retweeting”, or other means of passing on the information, so long as the content is attributed to CDS in some fashion.

If a staff member would like to post something related to CDS but not already on an official stream, i.e. “@staffer: so happy to be in Ghana working on an #ICV project with @CDCDevSolutions”, such a post is welcome as long as it is within the boundaries detailed on the next page.
What Should You Say Online?

Here are some guidelines for things you should and shouldn’t say online:

Add value

Saying you’re in South Africa with CDS is fine, but it adds little value. Saying you’re in South Africa working on a CDS project to help a women’s group improve product efficiency in order to make an income that will feed their families and including a picture is a much better depiction of what is going on. On many platforms, you may only have a few characters to do it, but it’ll amaze you how in-depth you can get in 140 characters with a little thought. Make every word count.

Also, speak about what you know. If you work with local content development, you are an authority on it. You become the representative to show the world what CDS is doing in that field. Use your expertise to say things that haven’t already been said. Be original.

Expand your networks

Part of the beauty of social media is the ease in which we can communicate with others, so take advantage of it. If partners, clients, grantees, news agencies, or researchers post something that is relevant, re-post it, give them credit, and talk about how it relates to CDS. There are people out there whose greatest allies they have never met in person, but respect is earned from following each other on social platforms. One never knows when such relationships might come in handy.

Have common sense

Many companies say things like “think of what your mother would say if she saw the post; if she would approve, it’s probably ok”. We won’t even ask you to go that far. Instead, we just want you to think about CDS. A few questions that might help:

1. Does this post align with the mission and values of CDS?
2. Can it in any way harm the reputation of CDS (or CDS by extension of myself)?
3. Do I have the legal right to post this information?

If you can answer “yes, no, yes” to the above three questions, you will probably be ok. But use common sense at all times. You are a representative of CDS, whether posting on an official account or not.

That said, if you are using a personal account, you are still representing CDS. Whether or not you state your affiliation with the organization (and if you are posting about CDS activities, we recommend you do), many people probably know you work for CDS. We cannot control your personal posts, but we ask that you handle your online presence carefully. An inappropriate comment or picture reflects poorly on both CDS and yourself. CDS reserves the right to take disciplinary action if the online actions of a staff member could harm the reputation of the organization.
Monitoring Policy

Each official account will be monitored by its responsible staff person (in the case there are two, a schedule will be devised so that no gaps in monitoring will occur) for comments, questions, or negativity directed at CDS. It is the policy to enact speedy and accurate responses as soon as possible. Dialogue with interested individuals is encouraged, argument is not.

The tone used for responses should be personal and informal but professional. Where is applies for credibility, one can self-identify. For example, if a person asks a question on Facebook regarding the MBAs Without Borders application process, a CDS moderator can say, “Hi, Jim. I’m Sally and I work as a Program Associate in the MWB program. That’s a great question, and the answer is...”. Maintaining an impersonal, robotic response is not inviting to the outside viewer, and we want people to be comfortable asking questions.

How to respond to negative comments

Negative comments are an inevitable part of having an online presence. You can’t always please everyone. But, offering the correct responses to negative comments shows credibility and transparency. A comment should only be deleted if it is completely off-topic or explicit. Any reasonably related issue should be addressed.

Always answer respectfully, openly, and honestly. Try to provide the best explanation possible to the accusation or remark. If it is completely untrue, say so, but in a professional manner.

Debate among the visitors, within reason, is a good practice. We want people to share ideas. But don’t let it get disparaging or reduce to name-calling. At that point, consider deleting the comments or blocking a user. Before you do so, take a screen shot for your records and give a copy to your supervisor.

How to respond to other comments

If a person asks a question and you don’t know the answer, ask someone who does know the answer as soon as possible. If the answer doesn’t seem like it’ll come in a quick fashion or needs research, tell the individual you are working on finding them the answer and ask if there is a way you can follow up with them when you have it. If possible, do it via private message. Do not ask for anyone’s personal information on a public area of any platform.

If you receive a compliment, make sure you thank the person who gave it in a friendly and genuine way. We appreciate compliments!
Legal Issues, Permissions & Confidentiality

**Photo, video or quote permissions**

Never take a photo, video, or get a quote from someone in order to post online without obtaining a written permission from him/her/them. When posting pictures, videos, or quotes taken by other CDS staff members, make sure you affirm with them that they obtained a permission form. Or, make sure you take the content from an area within the CDS system that is pre-cleared for online usage.

**Copyright and attribution**

Always properly cite ideas that are not yours and in the case of official accounts, that did not come from within CDS. Items used under a Creative Commons license have varying degrees of attribution required. For more information, visit the Creative Commons site [here](#).

Copyrighted materials can be used only by permission.

Since all official materials are approved by CDS, they should have the right to use the logo, photos, and other copyrighted material. Personal accounts do not have the right to use CDS copyrighted material without permission.

**Distribution of unreleased CDS material**

Being a staffer at CDS, you may have access to documents or information that is not released to the public. As per your non-disclosure agreement, you cannot release any sensitive information. If a document or information has not already been released by CDS in its own social media platforms, on the website, or otherwise, you cannot post it to the public.

**Privacy settings**

CDS recommends you keep your Facebook privacy settings at a level where only your friends can view your content. You can also enable a feature on Twitter that allows your profile to become private and only visible to those you approve.

What happens if I make a mistake?

Mistakes happen.

If you make a spelling or grammatical error, go ahead and fix it as soon as you can. If you make a factual error, speak to your supervisor about ways to acknowledge the error and move on. Unless you do something egregious and very inappropriate, most of the time it can be fixed rather easily.
The personal vs. professional balance

As noted earlier, your actions on personal accounts reflect on CDS. If you are writing for a blog or stating opinions about things related to the work CDS does, make sure to include a disclaimer such as “The views in this blog are my own and do not necessarily represent the views of CDC Development Solutions”. On Twitter, you can include in your profile that “Tweets are my own”, or something of the like.

Even so, such disclaimers do not absolve you from culpability if inappropriate content is posted. Again, we ask for common sense. CDS will not be trying to police you, but if an inappropriate posting is brought to our attention, we will meet with you about it, and possible disciplinary action may be taken, depending on the severity of the case.

It is advisable to keep privacy settings high and avoid posting or even commenting on any inappropriate or potentially damaging material.
Social Media Agreement

I ______________________________ agree that I have read and understood the CDC Development Solutions Social Media Policy.

I agree to refrain from posting defamatory material or anything that could damage the reputation of CDC Development Solutions.

Furthermore, I agree to follow the guidelines set in the policy to my utmost power, and accept consequences that may come if I abuse CDC Development Solutions accounts or post inappropriate material.

__________________________________________
Staff Member Date

__________________________________________
Supervisor Date
Social Media Recommendations

Report for Alicia Bonner Ness, Communications Manager, CDC Development Solutions submitted by Tim Lowden

May 8, 2013

*It is obvious that CDS already does a great job with its main social media platforms. Not only are they updated frequently, but also competently. For the most part, many varying aspects of functionality are taken advantage of. I want to emphasize that it seems as if things are running well and smoothly, but I do offer a few thoughts and suggestions.*

**Twitter**

@CDCDevSolutions

Followers: 1,128

Obviously the favorite platform of CDS, Twitter is probably the most developed among all the platforms CDS uses. Basically, everything on this account is done well. The content is frequent but not too frequent, content is always applicable to CDS, pictures and videos are used often, there is a great balance between original content and retweets (of staff as well, which is great), proper use of hashtags, RTs/MTs, and the tone of the tweets is great, sometimes with questions, others with statements. All around, it is a well-oiled machine of a Twitter handle.

There isn’t much to suggest here. The only thing, really, is an aesthetic comment—the big (and cool) CDS logo in the background is too far to the right, so it gets covered up by the feed. I’d suggest moving it to the left, where there is more open space to see it.

Other than that, it’s fantastic. A great anchor platform. I think maybe it is leaned on a bit too much, though, as I’ll explain in the Facebook section.

@USCCD

Followers: 3,077

This account must be putting out good information based on its hefty chunk of followers.

The first thing one see is a plain white background. Even a slightly textured solid color might improve a little on plain white.
While the frequency and content of the tweets seem good, there are very few visual additions in the feed. I might recommend trying to accompany one or two posts a week with a pic or video.

@MBAsWB

Followers: 235

This is a promising start for the MWB Twitter feed. Content is frequently updated. The tweets here cover a wide range of topics, from development in general to international jobs and of course, MBA-related news. While the need for a regular presence is noted, the tweet content of this account might serve to be narrowed a bit. That said, I don’t know the MBA audience like CDS does, so maybe those are things they are interested in. I’d also include more info about the MWB program itself. I scrolled through quite a few tweets and didn’t see a lot of info about the program. I feel like at least a few times per week, there should be something directly related to MWB at CDS.

Also, I might add some visuals if possible and change the background. If MWB is independent enough to hold its own Twitter account, I think it should have its own background image.

Facebook

CDC Development Solutions page

Likes: 1,077

My main recommendation for this page would be to stop relying on the Twitter feed to populate the Facebook page. Facebook offers more space and options for content, especially with Facebook apps, than Twitter does. My suggestion is to use Hootsuite as a social media dashboard, disconnect the auto-posting from Twitter to Facebook, and really use the different features Facebook offers. You can ask instantly tabulated questions to the audience and offer more interactive posts with various apps.

Also, in terms of the developing world, as internet technology spreads, it seems that Facebook is the first wave of social media to catch on, and Twitter is lagging behind. For those you may be trying to reach outside of the US, the Twitter jargon could throw them off (with hashtags and @ symbols and the like).

Finally, the page lacks interaction. There is a lot of “push” of information out there, but very little call for discussion and dialogue. This is not an easy task, but I would suggest shifting gears a bit to draw more discussion and debate from the crown, and
make sure that the moderator takes part and has a presence in the comments section.

MBAs Without Borders page

Likes: 232

This page seems to be updated with the kind of content that is more directly related to the MWB program. It is less frequent, but always interesting. If only there were some more of this type of content to make updating a bit more frequent.

Facebook, as I’m sure you know, has been meddling with the algorithm that allows posts to be seen by those who “like” pages. Therefore, the longer someone goes without interacting with a post (i.e. liking, clicking to read, clicking a picture, etc.), the less of a chance they have of seeing a new post in the future. So, there is a fine line to walk between posting often but with information that is less appealing and only posting hard-hitting content but at an infrequent pace. It is a battle everyone is dealing with. But, I think there may be room to post a few more things here and there, as long as they are closely tied to the MWB program.

This page has the same problem as the CDC page in that it doesn’t encourage comments. Find ways to turn a regular news story into a question or discussion-starter. For example, rather than saying “Great talk by XXXX with a video”, you could write “XXX says the number one factor in development today is innovation, do you agree? We want to hear your thoughts!”.

USCCD page

Likes: 1,678

The USCCD Facebook page is the most well-run Facebook account of the three. It engages with commenters very often, uses Facebook’s longer format to its advantage, posts pictures and video, and has good content. I wish maybe it was a bit more frequent, but overall, I really like this page.

LinkedIn

CDC Development Solutions page

This page could be used more effectively. Firstly, LinkedIn is quickly becoming a go-to source for job hunters, so posting available jobs would get them out to a broader audience and possibly provide better candidates to hire.
Secondly, this would be a great way to promote MWB and ICV information, since it is a site for professionals in the first place. LinkedIn could be a great platform to try to reach those CSR or HR execs who may want to be involved in ICV. It could be as easy as taking content from New Global Citizen and cross-posting it onto LinkedIn. Personally, I admit that I am not as savvy with LinkedIn for businesses as other platforms, but I think there are possibilities out there that should be explored.

**Youtube**

All three (CDS, USCCD, and MWB) have Youtube channels, but both USCCD's and MWB's haven’t been updated in three years. It seems pretty clear that the content should all be merged into the CDC channel unless there are some sweeping plans to reinvigorate the other two.

**Flickr**

The CDC Flickr page is occasionally updated, and it seems there has been a big upload in early May, but it could serve as much more. Currently, as I was told by some in the interviews for the RFP, there are a lot of pictures existing in the various files at CDS, but they are scattered and therefore knows where they all are. Flickr can serve as a fantastic one-stop shop for all photos that CDS uses and takes. It is fairly simple to give someone a login and password, and then pictures can be loaded right on site after they are taken. The process is fast and easy, and accessible to anyone who needs the photos. It is my recommendation that CDS use its Flickr account for all photo storage.

**Other platforms**

**Foursquare**

It may be beneficial for CDS to become active on Foursquare, but I’m not sure how much value it could add. If CDS had multiple locations other than the HQ (like franchised restaurants do), people could check-in at the various spots. Since there aren’t, I could imagine CDS staffers being on Foursquare and checking-in at various program spots, to be followed be a retweet from CDS. That seems redundant in that a.) the staffer would have to link Foursquare to Twitter, and b.) why would CDS retweet a Foursquare tweet when the staffer could just tweet where they are? My recommendation is not to get involved in this realm.

**Google+**
USCCD has a presence on Google+, but the use of that platform as a social networking platform seems minimal. The hangout feature is used, but Facebook clearly dominates the space Google+ hoped to occupy in terms of the social media aspect. My suggestion is to close the USCCD account and focus on the other platforms.

Tumblr/other blogs

Being that CDS had New Global Citizen and the Borderless Blog to handle, I think tumblr might become a distraction. For the kind of organization that CDS is, I feel that the main platforms it should focus on are Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and LinkedIn. With the exception of LinkedIn, this is already in motion.