

Social Media Guidelines for Athletes, Coaches and Employees

Revised 2015



1. Preamble

Nordiq Canada recognises the importance of online conversation and respects the rights of all athletes, coaches and employees to freedom of speech. However, there are some basic principles of behaviour that we ask all our athletes and employees to respect when conducting online activities.

2. Aim

These guidelines are designed to document those principles and guide your participation in both personal and professional usage and should be read in conjunction with the Nordiq Canada *Social Media & Social Networking Policy and the Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy*.

3. Guidelines

- **Social media is no different than a live microphone.** Media outlets report on athletes' posts regularly and some include a running stream of athlete posts on their sites. Athletes and Coaches should still be themselves and engage with fans through their social channels, but they should do so in a way that is appropriate and safe for media consumption / distribution. Posts should not contain vulgar or obscene words or images. Do not use profanity. Period.
- **Use your best grammar, spelling and capitalization.** Expect that a potential sponsor will be reading your posts. If unsure, ask for help.
- **'Inappropriate content' vs. 'inappropriate behaviour'.** Example: It would be acceptable for an athlete to have a shower but it would not be appropriate for an athlete to post nude pictures of themselves showering. The behaviour is appropriate, but the content is not appropriate for distribution.
- **Be mindful of promotion of potentially controversial behaviour that may cause damage to the image of the National Ski Team, Nordiq Canada or the sport of cross-country skiing.** While it may be appropriate for an athlete to consume alcohol at a bar, it would not be appropriate for athletes to promote their own inebriation via their public social media accounts.
- **Be aware of the Nordiq Canada's [Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy](#) and what behaviours and/or social media uses would constitute a breach of that agreement.** Education in regards to the permanency and non-privacy of social media content will be reviewed with athletes once per year in the summer or early fall. Athletes must be made aware that their

postings on social media platforms are public and subject to the organization's *Code of Conduct and Ethics policy* and *Social Media and Social Networking policy*.

- **Employees should use the headline test before posting.** Nordiq Canada employees are often in need of advice on what is appropriate to post about the team on social media channels. Only post something that you would feel comfortable seeing as a headline the next day in the local paper with your name attached to it as a Nordiq Canada employee. Please avoid any subjective comments and opinions in posts. The Manager of Communications and Media Relations will address if required via official press releases.
- **Be mindful of external stakeholders.** Nordiq Canada is associated with a number of external stakeholders including corporate partners, suppliers, media and local community organisations. Athletes, coaches and employees should be mindful of those relationships on their social channels, understanding that they should treat them with the same respect as the organisation itself.
- **Social media, blogs or websites are not appropriate forums to voice concerns about Nordiq Canada sponsors, suppliers, clothing, staff, volunteers or the like.** Remember that you may also not know exactly who the sponsors are so if in doubt, don't say anything. If you do have concerns, please contact your coach, athlete representative or a staff person within Nordiq Canada.
- **Do not escalate a potential damaging tweet or post.** If a tweet or post appears to be controversial or could potentially be damaging to a national ski team athlete, the National Ski Team, Nordiq Canada and/or the sport of cross-country skiing, do not pursue or attempt to reply for risk of escalation. Rather, contact Cathy Sturgeon immediately in order for Nordiq Canada to identify the most appropriate course of action.

4. Social Media Crisis Plan

Social media, in particular Facebook and Twitter, provides a valuable means of monitoring and tracking the external environment. As such it can be an effective early warning system for any issues that emerge.

Social media allows us to prioritise what is important based on what the cross-country skiing community at-large and our members are reacting to. In order to avoid rumours or misinformation it is important to know how to respond to an attack, complaint or deal with issues in the least amount of time as possible.

As with our regular communications work, it is important to be prepared in advance of any issues and have a social media crisis communication strategy (road map to responding to a crisis) in place.

- ❖ Detect a crisis as it's happening before it spirals out of control;

- ❖ Understand how to respond to negative criticism, in order to turn those unhappy members into happy Nordiq Canada advocates;
- ❖ Regain control of the situation, and the Nordiq Canada brand, with the right response strategy and techniques (refer to key messages)
- ❖ Comprehend exactly what our members expect of Nordiq Canada during a crisis.
- ❖ Optimize our official response to attain maximum reach and identify who needs to be informed
- ❖ Identify who needs to be alerted first and who is authorised to reply (chain-of-command)
- ❖ Leverage the powerful help of our happy members to come to our defense and help us regain control of the situation
- ❖ Turn the negativity of the issue into a positive PR opportunity for the Nordiq Canada brand

5. Steps to Activate Social Media Crisis Plan:

- a) Chain of command in the event of a crisis. Alert the following individuals to issues and establish a clear understanding of the situation:
 1. Communications and Marketing Manager (CMM) and/or Media Relations Consultant (MRC)
 2. CEO (if CMM or MRC are not available)
- b) Identify risks in consideration of Nordiq Canada's Risk Management Policy;
- c) Assemble the appropriate individuals required to assess the situation and implement the crisis response procedures (ED, CMM, DBD, DHP, MRC, Appropriate Director/Coach);
- d) Create messaging as a social media crisis response team and determine how the information will be disseminated to key parties (e.g.: media release, letter, e-mail, media conference, conference call, website, social media);
- e) Designate the appropriate spokesperson(s) for respective issue(s);
- f) Establish a prioritized list of individuals that need to be communicated with (e.g.: board; management team; staff; stakeholders, community at large including media) NOTE some situations will require complete confidentiality to protect information and not share with the public/community;
- g) Review prepared communications tools among Executors while keeping key Nordiq Canada Team Members in the loop on all advancements at all times;
- h) Communicate messages to appropriate parties.

6. Useful resources

- ❖ [Twitter for Athletes](#)ⁱ
- ❖ [London 2012 Olympic Games Social Media Guidelines](#)ⁱⁱ
- ❖ [The 100 Twitter rules to live by](#)ⁱⁱⁱ
- ❖ [Social Media rules for athletes](#)^{iv}
- ❖ [Guide to leagues' social media policies](#)^v
- ❖ [50 Twitter Tips for Division I Student-Athletes](#)^{vi}

ⁱ Twitter, Twitter for Athletes, <https://dev.twitter.com/media/twitter-for-athletes>, Accessed 25 November 2011.

ⁱⁱ International Olympic Committee, IOC Social Media, Blogging and Internet Guidelines for participants and other accredited persons at the London 2012 Olympic Games, http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Games_London_2012/IOC_Social_Media_Blogging_and_Internet_Guidelines-London.pdf, accessed 22 January 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ CNBC, “The 100 Twitter rules to live by”, http://www.cnbc.com/id/43759244/The_100_Twitter_Rules_To_Live_By/print/1/displaymode/1098/ accessed 25 November 2011

^{iv} Search Engine Watch, Kaila Strong, Social Media Rules for Athletes, <http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2083098/Social-Media-Rules-for-Athletes>, accessed 22 January 2012.

^v ESPN, Maria Burns Ortiz, Guide to leagues’ social media policies, http://espn.go.com/espn/page2/story/_/id/7026246/examining-sports-leagues-social-media-policies-offenders, accessed 22 January 2012.

^{vi} Conspicuous Ideas, Tom Satkowiak, Twitter tips for Division 1 Student-Athletes, <http://conspicuousideas.blogspot.com/2011/07/50-twitter-tips-for-division-i-student.html>, accessed 22 January 2012.