
Media Policy Purpose & Summary

This Media Policy document applies to the Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS (*referred to as 'RRAR' hereafter*) and all of its councils and committees therein. The official RRAR media channels are for the dissemination of information benefitting RRAR Members and the buyers and sellers of the Raleigh area pertaining to the real estate industry and other industry news that would impact the future of RRAR members, their businesses and the businesses which depend on the real estate industry.

RRAR social media channels are defined as all Association/Council/Committee websites, Facebook pages, Facebook groups, Twitter accounts, YouTube Channels, LinkedIn Groups, Pinterest Boards or any other vehicles falling under the umbrella that RRAR uses to communicate with members or the public via online mediums.

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Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® Employee Policy Guidelines

Guidelines are for the intended purpose of RRAR Employees, but not limited to employees as many policy guidelines and principles will be applicable to RRAR leadership which may act as administrators of council and/or committee social media outlets.

- RRAR is responsible for the content you publish on Facebook, Twitter, blogs or any other user generated media. Commonsense is the biggest factor in all policy guidelines. The internet never forgets, and even if you catch your post after it is published, individuals can keep screenshots forever. If you are about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, please review and make the appropriate changes. If you are still unsure and it is related to RRAR, talk to one of our communications professionals (*contacts on page four*).
- Do not comment on work-related legal matters unless you are an official spokesperson, and have legal council approval to do so. In addition, talking about revenues, future products, pricing decisions, unannounced financial results, member relations, future education classes, unannounced events or similar matters are topics to stay away from in the public forum.
- Do not make public any communications or other items that are expressed (or implied) to be for internal use only. Each RRAR employee has access to internal records, sensitive information, and other vital knowledge for the use of benefitting our members and those which work with the real estate community. Assume internal documents / information are confidential unless otherwise instructed.
- Do not reference individual members, brokerages or firms without their permission and without reason. Firms and brokerages that are named in social media communications must be there for a reason, whether they are participating in an event, sponsoring an outing, or have an influential member of their team involved.
- Help curate the online presence of RRAR by scouting for compliments and criticism. RRAR employees are by far the most important resource in Social Media. You may come across positive or negative posts about the Association, and unless you are a certified part of the Communications Team, do not react yourself. Pass the posts and specific URL to our communications personnel via email at *Communications@RRAR.com*.

Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® Leadership Guidelines

Guidelines are for the intended purpose of RRAR Directors & Leadership (*volunteer members*), but not limited to those RRAR volunteer members as many policy guidelines and principles will be applicable to RRAR employees involved in social media through personal accounts.

- Respect your audience and the scope of social media. Do not use inflammatory language, insults or engage in conversations that are generally considered objectionable or controversial to individuals in the public (religion, politics, business practices or competing firms, etc.).
- Please respect copyrights and copyright laws. Please do not use an individual's own words for your work (unless they are a member of the media and are broadcasting something relevant to the RRAR channel of your oversight). When sharing information published by another source, please include that source and give proper credit to the original writer/author.
- Do not reference individual members, brokerages or firms without their permission and without reason. Firms and brokerages that are named in social media communications must be there for a reason, whether they are participating in an event, sponsoring an outing, or have an influential member of their team involved.
- All RRAR Council and Committee social media pages and groups MUST have a RRAR staff co-administrator involved for oversight.
- All RRAR Council and Committee social media pages and groups may have up to two (2) volunteer members with access to administration privileges; however, those volunteer members must hold a leadership position within that council or committee (Chair, Vice-Chair, President, etc.) during that calendar year or be appointed by the council or committee as their designated social media administrator and will relinquish administrative privileges when their term is complete.
- RRAR volunteer members and leadership are requested to not respond to negative posts about the Association, whether on RRAR social media channels or in general social media conversations. Pass the posts and specific URL to our communications personnel via email at Communications@RRAR.com.

National Association of REALTORS® Risk Management Policy Suggestions

In May 2015, the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Risk Management Committee approved a versatile policy template that can be molded to reflect individual business practices and brokerage philosophies. While the template is intended for brokers, the guidelines can also be helpful to sales associates who use social media. It sets out general principles and also identifies areas where brokers may want to establish their own policies to protect against avoidable risk. These are some of the key issues your policy should address:

1. How you'll identify yourself.

Most state license laws and regulations require that brokers and licensees identify themselves in their advertising. This extends to marketing on social media, even on Facebook and Twitter. Rules vary by state, so you must find out what your specific duties are. Among the identification you may have to include: your name, your broker's name, the brokerage logo, your state of licensure, and the name of the agent who's responsible for the Web site. Create a comprehensive list of everything that must be identified, and then explain how and where this information will be displayed.

2. Your terms of use.

Every blog should have a clear "terms of use" statement. NAR's policy template sets out a dozen possible rules that you may want to include. For example, the terms of use should establish that you have authority to use any content that visitors post on the blog. It also should prohibit unlawful or objectionable materials, provide a take-down policy in the event that such materials are posted to the site, and disclaim responsibility for third-party sites that are linked through the blog. Your blog also should have a privacy policy consistent with what's already being used by the brokerage.

3. A plan for keeping blogs and pages maintained.

Set forth your responsibility for keeping sites accurate and up to date. In practice, that means monitoring sites regularly for false, defamatory, demeaning, or degrading comments, and removing any comments that you know are false or misleading. Your policy should say who's responsible for doing this and how often it should be done.

4. Being legal, truthful, ethical.

On a blog or social networking site, you must be sure to comply with all real estate laws—including fair housing, antitrust, and license laws. There’s also copyright law to consider, especially when posting photos and other content. Also, never exaggerate credentials or training or falsely claim association with any group or person. Finally, ensure that the content and operation of your blogs and pages conform to the standards of the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. As you create your policy, become familiar with the rules and requirements of every social networking site you use. Brokers should require all sales associates to do this. Know what the privacy practices are on each site and be aware that anything you post can be forwarded and used for purposes other than you originally intended.

It is possible to excel in the social media sphere while also preserving your reputation and good will within your community.

Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® Spokesperson Policy

As Wake County's largest trade association, RRAR, its plans, programs and activities are of interest to the public and our members. It is important to present RRAR in a manner that is both accurate and consistent with our mission and vision statements. In the interest of consistent messaging and proactive management of media relations, the following policy will be followed by RRAR employees and volunteer members.

- General Association inquiries will be responded to by the **Director of Communications**; for matters requiring further detail, the Association's **President**, and **CEO**, will be notified and will respond accordingly.
- RRAR employees and leadership members will not respond to inquiries concerning matters such as policies, fiscal operations, member relations, housing market statistics or other issues impacting RRAR or the real estate industry. Instead, these inquiries should be immediately directed to the **Director of Communications** who will respond accordingly.
- In the event of an emergency or disaster (*man-made or natural*), the **RRAR President**, **RRAR CEO** and **Director of Communications** will work to gather and coordinate distribution of relevant information to RRAR staff, REALTOR® members and the public at large.

Raleigh Regional Association of REALTORS® Communications Contacts

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