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## **Social Networking – A friend or enemy for businesses?**

By [Stefan J. Glynias](#), Attorney at Law

Social media is not a fad. It serves as a driver of the shift in our society to a life lived online. Companies are no longer questioning whether they should have a social media presence, but rather what type of presence would work best for their business.

There's an interesting dichotomy between the advantages of social media for driving a business, and the use of social media by employees and its detriment to a business and its reputation.

So how can employers protect themselves and their business while utilizing social media for the myriad of advantages that it can offer?

Having a written policy in place that realistically outlines the rules for social media in the workplace is critical. Because technology is evolving at an incredible rate, the policy must be consistent with changes in the marketplace and thus, reviewed regularly by a business' legal counsel and updated on a frequent basis. As technology continues to race forward, the way in which people use technology will also change, compelling business to monitor their employees' business use of social networks.

It's also worth noting that employees are only human, and in general, humans tend to do foolish things from time to time. For example, we've seen significant cases where school districts are facing difficulties with their staff members and inappropriate use of social media to interact with students. This is especially troubling for parents, as some instances have resulted in verdicts for claims on sexual impropriety. School districts have a difficult task on their hands as they determine how to write and manage school policies dealing with social networks.

The benefits of social media for a business can be plenty, but employers should use caution and common sense to ensure that its purposes are clearly defined and focused.