

Introduction

As more communications tools are added to the media landscape, PRSA recognizes that blogs, personal websites, vlogs and other new means of communication are a common part of today's culture and business environment. PRSA's Blogging Policy is intended to address the participation of PRSA, its members and employees in the blogosphere with respect to the various types of blogs that offer opportunities for communication.

1. Types of Blogs and Postings a. PRSA blogs

These blogs include those written under PRSA auspices and those that are PRSA-sponsored, affiliated or authorized, including those that may be established by PRSA's various communities. These blogs may require the use of PRSA resources, such as PRSA Web hosting facilities, the PRSA website, PRSA content and materials, staff time or other resources.

Examples of these types of blogs would include:

- [PRSA](#).
- [ComPREhension](#).
- PRSA Committee blogs, e.g., [PRSA Diversity Today](#).
- PRSA Professional Interest Section blogs.
- PRSA theme-based blogs, such as those built for a specific event or around a particular topic.

Blogs created by PRSA National must be approved by the PRSA president and COO prior to launch.

b. Non-PRSA Blogs (Official Participation)

PRSA-sponsored participation in blogs produced by organizations that are not affiliated with PRSA membership and employees.

c. Non-PRSA Blogs (Personal Participation)

Personal postings by PRSA staff, volunteers and members: PRSA members' and employees' personal participation in blogs that may or may not be associated with PRSA. 18

2. Blogs and Blog Postings — Policies

As a general rule of thumb, regardless of the venue, blog postings fall into one of two categories: (a) postings representing an official position of PRSA, and (b) postings by PRSA-related individuals that are not intended to represent an official position of PRSA. Care should be taken by all members of the PRSA community when posting to blogs to avoid any misperception as to whether the author is expressing an official PRSA position or a personal viewpoint.

a. PRSA blogs: Content and Postings

National PRSA blogs may only be created with the approval of the president and chief operating officer. Content created for PRSA blogs may be subject at any time to vetting by PRSA staff to ensure that they are in compliance with PRSA policy.

With respect to postings to PRSA blogs and the PRSA website, PRSA reserves the right to exclude any postings or material that it deems to be unsuitable, unlawful, or objectionable for any reason, such as (but not limited to) the content of the posting/material (for example, the usage of inappropriate language); the subject matter (including, but not limited to, material that is directed at an individual); the timeliness or relevance of the material/posting; or for reasons related to intellectual property contained in the postings, among others. PRSA may employ technical tools to identify postings that may contain objectionable material.

The following points of policy shall guide in decision-making about posting individual comments:

- PRSA does not discriminate based on the views expressed in comments, but may limit comments containing obvious factual inaccuracies, unattributed facts and quotes, insulting comments, or libelous, obscene or unlawful statements. Responses containing demeaning comments directed at individuals will not be printed. While vigorous debate is welcome, all remarks should generally be directed at issues, positions, events and statements, rather than at individuals.
- Comments responding to comments are acceptable. Comments responding to comments responding to comments will not be published.
- Comments deemed to be excessively lengthy may be rejected for posting; comments should be limited to 500 words.
- We encourage all users to post all comments, subject to end-user consent, along with the writer's full name and e-mail address or telephone number of the author for reference purposes. PRSA reserves the right not to post or publish anonymous or pseudonymous comments.
- Comments that cannot be verified will not be permitted or published.
- Form letters or mass mailings will not be permitted or published.
- The submission of a comment is no guarantee of publication. Once submitted, all comments become the property of PRSA, which reserves the right to exercise absolute discretion when selecting comments for publication.
- Graphs, photos, video or other illustrations that accompany a comment will not be published, and PRSA may decline to publish links embedded in comments.

b. PRSA participation in non-PRSA blogs

When a non-PRSA blog carries content that requires response regarding PRSA business, policies or positions, it should be immediately referred to the PRSA Public Relations Department, which will determine the appropriate response, if any, to the blog posting. Only those individuals designated by PRSA have the authorization to speak on behalf of the Society. The PRSA members and staff authorized to participate in blogs must identify themselves as such. Employees, members and volunteers may not respond independently on behalf of PRSA to a blog under any circumstances. PRSA monitors blogs, as more fully described below in Section 4 of this policy.

c. Postings not representing an official position of PRSA

PRSA members, employees and volunteers may elect to participate as individuals in blogs to express personal viewpoints. As necessary, PRSA members, employees and volunteers should clearly identify that the viewpoint being expressed is personal and not intended to be interpreted as an official PRSA point of view. PRSA may request that a member/employee blog or website commentary clarify that the positions expressed are not official PRSA viewpoints, or that a blog and/or blog posting be confined to

topics unrelated to PRSA if it believes this is necessary or advisable to ensure compliance with other policies and procedures. Employees and volunteers may be bound by confidentiality commitments to PRSA, which would preclude them from blogging on certain matters.

3. Blog Postings — General Guidelines

In connection with any blogging, failure to abide by certain legal responsibilities and non-disclosure obligations can result in serious ramifications for individual bloggers and/or individuals who post on the blogs of others. As a result, we have established Terms of Use for PRSA Blogs.

In general, and pursuant to the terms of PRSA's Blog Terms of Use, bloggers are and shall be at all times legally responsible for their commentary. Individual bloggers need to understand that they can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be unlawful, defamatory, obscene (not swear words, but rather the legal definition of "obscene"), proprietary or libelous (whether pertaining to PRSA, individuals, or any other company for that matter). In essence, bloggers need to understand that one blogs at one's own risk. Outside parties may pursue legal action against bloggers for postings. Whenever publishing/participating in blogs as individuals, PRSA members, employees and volunteers should:

- Be encouraged to indicate to the readers that the views expressed are the writer's and do not necessarily reflect the views of PRSA. PRSA suggests that bloggers writing independent blogs that often touch upon PRSA or PRSA-related matters, post a disclaimer on the front page such as "The views expressed on this website/Web log are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of PRSA."
- Exercise caution, if not avoid, material that may be deemed to contain exaggeration, colorful language, guesswork, obscenity, copyrighted materials, legal conclusions, and derogatory remarks or characterizations.
- Not disclose without authorization any information that is confidential or proprietary to third parties.
- Maintain a respectful attitude and tone.
- Always obtain permission from rights holders to use any previously created materials not governed by fair use.
- Respect PRSA's ethical guidelines and the PRSA Member Code of Ethics.
- Comply at all times with the terms of legal notices that may be part of any blogging site.

4. Monitoring and Engaging Blogs

Blog postings may require responses, and may generate media coverage. PRSA members/employees/volunteers should refer any PRSA-related queries regarding blog postings, or coverage of those postings, to the Public Relations Department at PRSA Headquarters. To facilitate proactive blogger relations, the public relations department maintains internal procedures for monitoring blogs in its department procedures.

a. Responding to Blog Posts and Comments

In responding to blog posts and comments, the PRSA Public Relations Department will consider multiple criteria, including influence and importance of the blog/blogger and the relevance of the discussion, including factors such as:

- Rating by Technorati and/or other blog search engines.
- Currency of blog content/frequency of refreshing.
- Objectivity and integrity of blog content.

- Adherence of blog to PRSA ethical standards.
- Assessment of prior posture with regard to the public relations profession and PRSA.
- PRSA's experience gained from blog monitoring.

b. Blogger Relations

The public relations team will work to incorporate influential blogs into other ongoing efforts to build and develop relationships with bloggers and other social media outlets. In each instance of a blog posting, the Public Relations Department will identify possible respondents and facilitate posts. As with traditional media coverage, not all blog entries need to be addressed. The Public Relations Department engages in additional proactive blogger relations that include creating a more effective information distribution method to these and other social media outlets, posting regular responses to key blogs, and using PRSA blogs to engender community credibility and enable track backs.