



**Social Media  
Governance Guide:**  
Protecting reputation  
in a high-risk digital world

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# Foreword

The speed and scale of modern brand communication have fundamentally reshaped the risk and control landscape. The advancement of technologies, especially artificial intelligence, has enabled innovation and reach. However, it also increases the ease with which false, misleading, or harmful content can be created and disseminated at scale.



According to a 2026 report by the World Economic Forum, misinformation and disinformation are two of the most significant risks that society will face in the short to medium term. Misinformation, whether originating from official corporate channels or amplified by third parties, can undermine credibility and provoke adverse public and regulatory attention.

For Indian organisations, social media activity now introduces **significant operational, reputational, and regulatory risks**. Misleading, inadequately substantiated, or poorly governed content can trigger regulatory scrutiny, corrective directives, financial penalties, and restrictions on endorsements by authorities that include the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), and other sectoral bodies.



# Foreword

This moves social media oversight beyond a marketing or communications function to an **enterprise risk issue**, cutting across legal, regulatory, reputational, and conduct risk domains. In an increasingly stringent regulatory environment, social media now warrants **board-level visibility, governance, and accountability**. A few examples of regulatory requirements and their penalties are listed below:

	 Requirement	 Penalty
<b>Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI): Regulation 30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disclose material events / price-sensitive information promptly</li> <li>Unverified online rumors can cause stock price volatility and regulatory scrutiny.</li> <li>Mandatory Disclosure of Registration Details</li> <li>No Misleading Financial Promotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monetary Penalty ₹10 lakh penalty imposed for delayed disclosure</li> <li>Regulatory penalties under SEBI Act for misleading financial promotion</li> <li>Suspension or cancellation of registration for intermediaries</li> <li>Exchange action including removal of advertisements or marketing approvals</li> <li>High reputational risk and investor trust loss due to regulatory violation</li> </ul>
<b>Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear Disclosure of Sponsored Content</li> <li>Prominent and Understandable Disclosure Placement</li> <li>Brand Accountability for Influencer Content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public complaints can trigger ASCI investigations and content removal</li> <li>Mandatory modification or withdrawal of advertisements</li> <li>Brand listing in ASCI violation reports leading to reputational damage</li> </ul>
<b>Central Consumer Protection Authority under the Consumer Protection Act 2019 (CPA / CCPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ban on Misleading Advertisements</li> <li>Mandatory Disclosure of Material Connections</li> <li>Due Diligence Before Endorsements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Penalty up to ₹10 lakh for first offence and ₹50 lakh for repeat violations</li> <li>Orders to remove, modify, or discontinue advertisements</li> <li>Influencers or endorsers can be banned from endorsements for up to 1 year (3 years for repeat offences)</li> </ul>
<b>Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ban on Advertising for Certain Diseases</li> <li>No Magical or Guaranteed Cure Claims</li> <li>Restriction on Misleading Health Claims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Imprisonment up to 6 months and/or fine for first offence</li> <li>Repeat offences may lead to imprisonment up to 1 year and higher fines.</li> <li>Significant regulatory scrutiny and reputational damage, especially for healthcare and wellness brands.</li> </ul>
<b>Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices (UCPMP)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical Promotion of Pharmaceutical Products</li> <li>No Misleading or Exaggerated Drug Claims</li> <li>Responsible Influencer / Doctor Engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 which can include monetary penalties and product promotion bans</li> <li>Suspension of marketing privileges or corrective actions</li> <li>Severe reputational damage and loss of trust</li> </ul>

In this environment, effective risk management demands clearly articulated social media policies, structured approval workflows, role based access controls, continuous monitoring of brand mentions, and well tested crisis response and escalation protocols.

# Social Media Governance Guide

Global organisations can no longer rely on responses that are reactive or fragmented monitoring. As individuals' and organisations' digital footprints continue to multiply with the help of social media, digital interactions, AI-driven content and pervasive connectivity, the vulnerabilities continue to grow without any structured oversight. As a result, the cost of complacency rises; brand trust risks being shattered, institutional credibility is at risk of being ruined and relationships with customers or stakeholders become compromised. Therefore, a robust social media governance guide becomes a strategic imperative for organisations, enabling them to do the following:



Use real-time social listening and AI-driven to spot misinformation at the exact moment it surfaces.



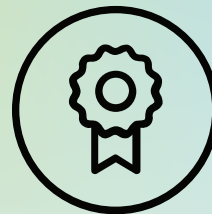
Detect emerging narratives pre-emptively, through continuous conversation and public sentiment analysis.



Deploy response playbooks that are clear and pre-approved to help guide crisis management as well as routine engagement.



Institutionalise learning cycles that adapt to new platforms, audience shifts and emerging threats.



Preserve authenticity of brands through brand safety protocols, responsible partnerships and being defensive to impersonation.

Proactive governance is key when it comes to transforming potential threats to reputation into opportunities for resilience and trust building.

# Components of a strong Social Media Governance Guide



## **Policies and procedures assessment:**

Comprehensive assessment of policy frameworks across branding, communication, content governance, crisis management, and third-party ecosystems, with targeted enhancements and development of robust governance structures where gaps exist



## **Organisational structure :**

Evaluation of governance architecture, roles, and escalation mechanisms, with recommendations to strengthen accountability, decision-making discipline, and cross-functional alignment



## **Tools and technology:**

Strategic review of the technology stack spanning social listening, monitoring, management, and analytics, with optimisation and implementation guidance aligned to governance and risk objectives



## **Social media command centre :**

Design and enablement of a centralised command centre to drive real-time monitoring, governance enforcement, content oversight, and structured regulatory and management reporting.

# Why social media governance should matter for brands



Currently, reputation is one of the most vulnerable assets held by any organisation. Additionally, the speed at which misinformation spreads is evidence that false narratives can spread far and wide, and at lightning speed, before facts can catch up. Fragmented visibility across platforms and limited control over the evolution of conversations make the risk of misinterpretation, false narratives or rapid escalation higher than ever before in history.



A strong social media governance guide enables organisations to stay ahead of emerging issues by protecting trust through accurate and consistent communication. It also helps strengthen brand equity by ensuring transparency and responsible engagement. Moreover, it builds long-term resilience by enabling teams to respond with confidence, learn from each incident and continuously refine their approach.



Most importantly, it safeguards digital identity against impersonation, fraud and misuse. This is critical in an environment where a single post on any social media platform can shape public perception within minutes, if not seconds. In today's landscape, governance is a strategic lever for trust, credibility and sustained growth in every organisation.



# Connect with us

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