



P R O C U R E M E N T

Report to: STAR Joint Committee
Date: 2nd May 2017
Report for: Decision
Report of: Business Improvement Manager

Report Title

Social Media Strategy 2017-18

Summary

The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the STAR Joint Committee for STAR Procurement to implement its proposed Social Media Strategy 2017-18

Recommendations

The recommendation of this report is that the Joint Committee approves the Social Media Strategy 2017-18 for implementation

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background

Financial Impact:	None
Legal Impact:	None
Human Resources Impact:	None
Asset Management Impact:	None
E-Government Impact:	Aspects of the Social Media Strategy support e-Government principles
Risk Management Impact:	None
Health and Safety Impact:	None

Consultation

No public consultation required

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

STAR Procurement wishes to formalise its approach to using its website and social media accounts, including Twitter and LinkedIn. The Joint Committee are asked to approve the attached Strategy which sets out the manner in which this will be achieved

1. Summary of Key Matters

- 1.1 STAR Procurement is increasingly interacting online with the wider procurement community, via its website and Twitter accounts. In addition, it proposed to develop a LinkedIn account. The Social Media Strategy sets a baseline approach to such interactions to ensure acceptability and appropriateness of content
- 1.2 STAR Procurement wants to engage the wider team in creating content, to increase the variety of content. It also wants to develop and understand its audience to ensure appropriateness of content and to showcase STAR within the wider procurement community
- 1.3 The Social Media Strategy is initially a 12 month plan for 2017-18 to address the issues highlighted and embed social media interaction into the wider communication and marketing strategy that will be developed from the new 2017-20 Business Plan
- 1.4 The Social Media Strategy sets out acceptability and unacceptability of content as a benchmark when developing our website and social media platforms

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Joint Committee approves the Social Media Strategy 2017-18 for implementation

Report Appendices

1. Social Media Strategy 2017-18

Introduction / Background

STAR Procurement is an innovative shared procurement service for Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale Councils. STAR wants to ensure that it leads the way in public sector procurement, and as such has developed its own website and uses twitter to interact with peers and suppliers; targeting local and SME companies. This strategy aims to:

1. Raise awareness of benefits and risks of publishing on social media or online;
2. Identify who our main online customers are; and
3. Outline what STAR intends to achieve in respect of social media and online platforms in 2017-18

Social Media & Online Publishing: Risks and Benefits

There are many risks associated with publishing content online; once something is published the author cannot control its further electronic distribution. Additionally, anyone can potentially see what you have posted - privacy settings are not a guarantee of privacy

Users must be careful that what they are publishing does not compromise Data Protection. There is also a risk of damage to business or reputation through a comment or a criticism of a company. Even a passing comment about a logistical problem could highlight a company's weaknesses to competitors / potential customers. Equally, when posting images online, those posting must be careful that the image does not reveal personal information, or information about buildings, facilities, security or equipment

However, social media continues to be a fantastic resource for promoting a service and developing professional relationships. Social media is now very widely used and it is easier to reach much wider audiences; for example, Facebook has the most web traffic in the world after the Google search engine. The use of hashtags and retweets on Twitter has enabled STAR to reach a far wider audience than just their immediate followers

Users are more likely to engage over an informal platform, such as Twitter or LinkedIn

Our customers & target online audiences

To help develop our strategy, STAR has identified its customers/ audience. This is set out below, noting the types of people who would fall into that audience:

Council / Partner Stakeholders

Employees of Stockport, Trafford and Rochdale Councils and partner organisations for which STAR provides procurement support & services. Commissioners, who need to rely on STAR for procurement support

Bidders

Companies or organisations needing information about STAR, the three STAR Councils and partner organisations in order to identify current tender / request for quote opportunities. Prospective bidders needing to determine alignment between their products/services and our procurement needs. STAR

particularly wishes to target SMEs, Micro-businesses, VCSEs and suppliers local to the three STAR Council boroughs

Residents

Those seeking information on what their Council is spending money on

Clients

Current / potential clients of STAR Procurement and procurement professionals who may be interested in working for STAR Procurement all of whom may be seeking guidance, information sharing and professional best practice

Peers

Other Councils / public procurement groups who may be interested in the STAR shared service model and other procurement professionals with an interest in procurement policy and processes

Our diverse audience leads to the conclusion that STAR should be using a wide range of the electronic platforms currently available, to further its social media / online strategy; including:

1. STAR Procurement website (www.star-procurement.gov.uk)
2. STAR Twitter account (@STARProcurement)
3. LinkedIn (yet to be established)

Social Media & Online Strategy 2017-18

1. Develop our audience / expand our social media networks
 - Create a STAR Procurement LinkedIn account to target peers & clients. This will assist in promoting STAR as a professional organisation and will showcase the procurement professionals working for STAR (who currently list themselves as working for Trafford Council, the establishment provider for STAR Procurement)
2. Understand our audience
 - Undertake surveys and obtain feedback across the various platforms used, to enable STAR to better understand its wider audience
3. Standardise content
 - Provide guidance for those team members using the STAR social media platforms, setting out what STAR deems to be acceptable / unacceptable for sharing. This is set out in Appendix A
 - Create a content calendar; each month to have a theme/ focus on a particular area of STAR, helping to ensure that STAR does not miss an opportunity to share positive news
 - Create standard targets of online / social media interaction, based on recommendation from social media / online experts
4. Engage the wider STAR Procurement team in social media / online interaction
 - Encourage the wider STAR team to create content for the website and social media articles. This will lead to more varied content and whole-team engagement

Appendix A**Recommendations for acceptable and unacceptable social media and online content**

Endeavour to share an equal mix of:

- Internal good news stories; what's going on in the team; giving STAR a human face
- Self-promotion – e.g. opportunities on The Chest, our policies / procedures etc.
- Share topical stories / articles relating to procurement, local government spend etc.

A pre-requisite that all STAR staff have undertaken Trafford Council Data Protection training before curating and sharing online content

Acceptable Content

- Details of current opportunities on The Chest
- Good news stories about STAR Procurement
- Good news stories about any of the STAR Councils and partner organisations
- Good news stories arising from contract award (e.g. Social Value capture, etc.)
- Personal expertise within the STAR team
- Signposting to acceptable material already in the public domain
- Highlighting / signposting to positive media coverage about STAR Procurement
- Professional experience within the team
- What team members are up to that day / upcoming team or category meetings
- Details of upcoming events, e.g. meet the buyer, participation in business forum meetings, etc.
- Share content that might be relevant / useful to our identified audiences
- Use plain English wherever possible

Unacceptable Content

- Details of upcoming bidder meetings
- Details of a tender that might compromise that tender, or participating bidders
- Appearing to favour a bidder over other bidders, especially prior to contract award
- Commentary that would suggest favouritism of one STAR Council over the others
- Comment on, or share 'breaking news' stories
- Appearing to favour a particular political party; posting overtly Political content
- Criticising competition; other organisations
- Comment on shortcomings / errors in processes within STAR
- Sharing personal opinions that might impact negatively upon STAR or its Councils / clients
- Revealing any form of confidential information or personal information in breach of the Data Protection Act
- Swearing, defamatory or derogatory comments
- Use of jargon / acronyms that might confuse or alienate the intended audience