

## Biathlon Canada's Social Media Policy

September 18, 2012

### A. Preamble

Biathlon Canada recognizes the value of online social media tools for connecting with members, staff, stakeholders, and volunteers. Emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way individuals and organizations communicate, and this policy is designed to offer practical guidance for responsible, constructive communications via social media channels. We believe that our web presence should project a positive image that is reflective of our overall brand and is consistent with our mission and vision. This policy has been established to maintain the integrity of the organization with respect to communication frequency, strategy, message and appearance.

### B. Participation in Social Media & Liability

Participation in Biathlon Canada's social media activities (whether it is as an employee, consultant, volunteer, or member of Biathlon Canada) is optional and is the decision of the individual.

Biathlon Canada does not recommend that social media tools be used by minors, especially those under age 13. Minors whose use of social media falls within this policy must get prior permission from their parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).

Biathlon Canada's social media policy and strategy is not intended to infringe upon or control what an individual does in his or her own time, in his or her personal capacity outside of the workplace or outside of an individual's role with Biathlon Canada.

Views expressed belong to the individual. The individual is solely responsible and can be held personally liable.

### C. Social Media Definitions

The following definitions shall apply in the context of Biathlon Canada's social media policy:

Social Media Channels – This includes Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or any other existing or emerging communications platform.

Social Media Account – A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and other social networking channels allow users to sign-up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact and share content and status updates. When a user communicates through a social media account, their disclosures are attributed to their User Profile.

Social Media Disclosures - Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.

User Profile – Social Media Account holders customize their User Profile within a Social Media Channel with specific information about themselves which can be made available others users.

Copyrights – Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted material through social media channels without the permission of the copyright owner.

Hosted Content – Text, pictures, audio, video or other information in digital form that is uploaded and resides in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content off of the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. Generally, it is illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

Embed Codes – Unique codes that are provided to entice others to share online content without requiring the sharer to host that content. By means of an embed code, it is possible to display a YouTube user’s video in someone else’s social media account without requiring that person to host the source video file. Embed codes are often used by copyright owners to encourage others to share their content via social media channels.

Controversial Issues – Issues that form the basis of heated debate or provoke a strong emotional response. Examples include political views, religious views, abortion, etc.

Official Biathlon Canada Content – Publicly available online content created and made public by Biathlon Canada, verified by virtue of the fact that it is accessible through our official website ([www.biathloncanada.ca](http://www.biathloncanada.ca)).

Inbound Links – An inbound link is a hyperlink that transits from one domain to another. A hyperlink that transits from an external domain to your own domain is referred to as inbound link. Inbound links play a role in how search engines rank pages and domains in search results.

Link Bartering Exchanges – Trading or purchasing inbound links from other domains exclusively for the purposes of lifting your domain in search engine page results.

Tweets and Retweets – A tweet is a 140 character social media disclosure distributed on the Twitter micro-blogging service. Retweets are tweets from one Twitter user that are redistributed by another Twitter user. Retweets are how information propagates on Twitter.

#### **D. Policy Objectives**

Biathlon Canada aims to:

- Establish practical, reasonable and enforceable guidelines by which our employees, consultants and members can conduct responsible, constructive social media engagement in both official and unofficial capacities.
- Promote a safe environment for employees, consultants and members to share subject matter expertise that is not proprietary.

- Prepare our organization and our members, employees and consultants to utilize social media channels to help each other and the Biathlon Canada community, particularly in the event of a crisis, disaster or emergency.
- Protect our organization and employees, consultants and members from violating local, provincial or federal rules, regulations or laws through social media channels and to ensure that Biathlon Canada is in compliance with social media policies that have been developed by our external partners (i.e. IOC, COC, Sport Canada, etc.).

#### **E. Guiding Principles**

The following principles will guide us:

- Biathlon Canada trusts and expects employees, consultants and members to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media, which includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging.
- Biathlon Canada trusts and expects that when employees, consultants and members use social media to communicate on behalf of Biathlon Canada, they should clearly identify themselves as such.
- Only those who have been officially designated by Biathlon Canada can use social media to speak on behalf of our organization in an official capacity.
- When an employee, consultant or member of Biathlon Canada sees misrepresentations made by media, analyst, bloggers or other social media users, their blog or social networking account may be used to point that out, but they may only do so in an official capacity representing Biathlon Canada and if the terms of this policy are followed.
- Different social media channels have proper and improper business uses or etiquette. For example, members of social networks are expected to read, and when appropriate respond, to questions asked of them from another member of their social network. It is important for employees, consultants and members to understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss Biathlon-related topics.

#### **F. Authority and Posting Permissions**

The Biathlon Canada Executive Director will be appointed as the overall administrator of the Biathlon Canada social media accounts and mediums. He or she will have the authority to designate certain individuals who will be considered ‘authorized’ to distribute content through Biathlon Canada’s social media platforms. These designated individuals must sign and abide by the Social Media User Agreement and Terms of Use (Annex A)

#### **G. Biathlon Canada User Agreements**

Biathlon Canada will designate certain individuals who will be considered ‘authorized’ to distribute content through Biathlon Canada’s social media platforms and who will be required to sign a User Agreement (Annex A). Similarly, Biathlon Canada will have its staff and consultants who are engaging in social media activities sign a User Agreement (Annex A). Biathlon Canada will also have all National Team athletes who are engaging in the use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media Platform sign a User Agreement (Annex A). Appendix 1 to Annex A provides some tips and recommendations for use of social media.

## **H. Biathlon Canada Social Media**

At the present time, Biathlon Canada maintains a Facebook Page and Twitter account and a website ([www.biathloncanada.ca](http://www.biathloncanada.ca)) that shall collectively be known as the “Biathlon Canada Social Media”.

### **I. Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all persons involved in using Biathlon Canada Social Media and will be made publicly available to Biathlon Canada’s members at all times.

### **J. Monitoring**

Biathlon Canada will endeavour to regularly monitor its on-line content to ensure the integrity and credibility of the organization. Biathlon Canada encourages anyone who discovers biathlon-related content that is considered to be unauthorized, offensive, defamatory, unlawful, obscene, harassing, hateful or otherwise objectionable to report it to Biathlon Canada immediately.

### **Annexes:**

**Annex A** - Social Media User Agreement and Terms of Use for Biathlon Canada Employees, Consultants, Athletes and Members

**Appendix 1 to Annex A** - Tips on the use of Social Media

**Annex B** – Social Media Strategy Backgrounder

## ANNEX A

### Social Media User Agreement and Terms of Use for Biathlon Canada Employees, Consultants, Athletes & Members

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#### 1. Acceptance of Terms of this Agreement Through Use

Biathlon Canada maintains a Facebook page and a Twitter account and a website ([www.biathloncanada.ca](http://www.biathloncanada.ca)) that shall collectively be known as the “Biathlon Canada Social Media”. Together these tools provide articles, publications, information, data, registration, draws, contests and other materials (the “Content”). The Biathlon Canada Social Media is provided to Biathlon Canada employees, consultants, athletes and select members subject to your compliance with the terms and conditions of use defined in this Agreement. By accessing or using the Biathlon Canada Social Media you agree to be bound by this Agreement. If you do not agree to be bound by this Agreement, please do not access or use the Biathlon Canada Social Media.

#### 2. Children

The Biathlon Canada Social Media is not intended for use by minors, especially those under age 13 and no person under this age will be granted posting permission. To access, use or register with the Biathlon Canada Social Media, minors must get prior permission of their parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s). By your use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media, you represent and warrant that you are the age of majority or have sought permission from your parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).

#### 3. Conduct

- a. As a user of the Biathlon Canada Social Media you agree to:
  - i. Undertake to provide true, accurate, current and complete information and to communicate in a respectful, mature and intelligent fashion.
  - ii. Communicate in both official languages of Biathlon Canada, wherever possible to do so and within the means of your abilities to do so.
  - iii. Where applicable (i.e. in the case of coaches and team staff representing Canada at the Olympic Games), comply with the IOC’s guidelines\*, whereby the IOC actively encourages and supports athletes and other accredited persons at the Olympic Games to take part in ‘social media’ and to post, blog and tweet their experiences. Such activity must respect the Olympic Charter and must comply with the policy established. As a general rule, the IOC encourages all social media and blogging activity at the Olympic Games provided that it is not for commercial and/or advertising purposes and that it does not create or imply an unauthorised association of a third party with the IOC, the Olympic Games or the Olympic Movement.

\* A copy of the current IOC policy is available at [http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Games\\_London\\_2012/IOC\\_Social\\_Media\\_Blogging\\_and\\_Internet\\_Guidelines-London.pdf](http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Games_London_2012/IOC_Social_Media_Blogging_and_Internet_Guidelines-London.pdf)

- b. As a user of the Biathlon Canada Social Media, you agree not to:
- i. Engage for the purposes of fraud or for any activity that contravenes the laws of Canada or any other applicable jurisdiction.
  - ii. Engage in activities that cause or are likely to cause disruption or denial of service to any user of the Biathlon Canada Social Media.
  - iii. To impersonate any other person.
  - iv. To upload, post, e-mail or otherwise transmit:
    - Any content that is offensive, obscene, unlawful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, hateful, invasive of another's privacy or otherwise objectionable;
    - Material which is designed to cause annoyance, inconvenience, or needless anxiety to others;
    - Any unsolicited or unauthorized advertising or commercial material, "junk mail", "spam", "chain letter", "pyramid scheme" or any other form of solicitation;
    - Material that infringes the patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright or other proprietary right of any other party;
    - Any material that contains software viruses or any other computer code, file or program designed to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of any computer software or telecommunications equipment.

**Note:** Along with tracking Biathlon Canada in the news, Biathlon Canada monitors and promotes your social media channels and observes all references to the sport of biathlon and Biathlon Canada. See Appendix A to this agreement for tips on use of social media.

#### 4. Disclaimer of Warranties

- a. As a user of the Biathlon Canada Social Media, you expressly understand and agree that:
- i. Your use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media is at your sole risk.
  - ii. The Biathlon Canada Social Media and the materials provided on the Biathlon Canada Social Media are provided "as is" and "as available" without representations, warranties or conditions of any kind, either express or implied.
  - iii. Any material downloaded, printed or otherwise obtained through the use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media is done at your sole discretion and risk and you will be solely responsible for any damage to your computer system or loss of data that results from the downloading, printing or use of any such material.
  - iv. No advice or information whether oral or written, obtained by you from the Biathlon Canada Social Media will create a warranty, entitlement or right owed to you.
  - v. You will not use any automated device or process, such as a "bot" or a "spider," to copy or extract information or content from the Biathlon Canada Social Media.

b. Biathlon Canada has made reasonable efforts to ensure that the materials contained on the Biathlon Canada Social Media are accurate. Biathlon Canada does not warrant or guarantee:

- i. The accuracy, currency or completeness of the materials;
- ii. That the Biathlon Canada Social Media will be available without interruption, error or omission;
- iii. That defects will be corrected; or
- iv. That the Biathlon Canada Social Media and the server(s) that make it available are free from viruses or other harmful components.

5. Limitation of Liability and Indemnification

In no event will Biathlon Canada, its respective directors, agents or employees be liable for any loss, cost or damages whatsoever (including, without limitation, damages for harm to business, loss of profits, programs or data, interruption of activities or any other pecuniary or economic loss) whether direct, indirect, incidental, punitive, special, exemplary, consequential or otherwise arising out of any use or misuse of, or any defects, inaccuracies, errors or omissions in or on the Biathlon Canada Social Media without regard to the form of action.

You agree to indemnify and hold Biathlon Canada harmless from any and all losses, damages, liability and costs (including reasonable attorney's fees) resulting directly or indirectly from any claim or demand against Biathlon Canada arising out of or related to the accuracy or completeness of the Biathlon Canada Social Media, your use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media, your connection to the Biathlon Canada Social Media, your violation of these Terms of Use, or your violation of any rights of another.

6. Third Party Websites / Linking

Access by way of links to other websites is provided by the Biathlon Canada Social Media for convenience. Biathlon Canada does not control the content of such websites and your use of any linked websites is at your own risk.

7. International Use

By choosing to access the Biathlon Canada Social Media from any location other than Canada, you accept full responsibility for compliance with all local laws that are applicable. Biathlon Canada makes no representation that materials on the Biathlon Canada Social Media are appropriate or available for use in locations outside Canada, and accessing them from territories where their contents are illegal is prohibited. You may not use, export or re-export any materials from the Biathlon Canada Social Media in violation of any applicable laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, any Canadian export laws and regulations.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

The information, content, graphics, text, sounds, images, buttons, trademarks, service marks, trade names and logos contained on the Biathlon Canada Social Media are protected by copyright, trademark, database right and other intellectual property laws.

You are granted a limited license solely for your own personal, non-commercial use to refer to, bookmark, or point to any page within the Biathlon Canada Social Media, and to download the materials contained on the Biathlon Canada Social Media to a single personal computer and print a single hard copy of the materials contained on the Biathlon Canada Social Media for your own personal reference, provided however that all copyright, trade mark and other propriety notices are left intact. The grant of this limited license is conditional on your agreement to, and compliance with, all of the terms of this Agreement. Any other use of the materials on the Biathlon Canada Social Media, including any form of copying or reproduction, (for any purposes other than those noted above) modification, distribution, re-publication, extraction, re-utilization, incorporation, or integration with other materials or works or re-delivery without the prior written permission of Biathlon Canada, is strictly prohibited and is a violation of the proprietary rights of Biathlon Canada or its affiliates.

9. Modifications/Termination to this Agreement and Services

Biathlon Canada reserves the right to change this Agreement at any time and your continued access to or use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media after such changes indicates your acceptance of this Agreement as modified. It is your responsibility to review this Agreement regularly.

Biathlon Canada reserves the right to modify, suspend or discontinue the Biathlon Canada Social Media, or any portion thereof with or without notice to you. Biathlon Canada will not be liable to you or any third party should it exercise its right to modify, suspend or discontinue services.

Without limiting the foregoing, Biathlon Canada will have the right to immediately terminate your access to the Biathlon Social Media in the event of any conduct by you which Biathlon Canada, in its sole discretion, considers to be unacceptable, or in the event of any breach by you of this Agreement and Terms of Use.

10. Privacy and Protection of Personal Information

Biathlon Canada respects your right to privacy. By agreeing to the terms of this Agreement, you may be providing Biathlon Canada with your personal information. This information will be used by Biathlon Canada for the purpose for which it was provided by you, for verification purposes, draws, contents, transactions, communications, registration and statistical analysis. This information may also be useful to provide you with details of products, services, contests, draws, competitions, training camps or promotions being provided or run by Biathlon Canada or any other of its associated organizations or any third party which Biathlon Canada may select and which Biathlon Canada may think may be of interest to you, unless you have otherwise specifically opted not to receive this information.

Biathlon Canada acknowledges that they are governed by Canada's Personal Information and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA) and will comply with such legislation.

11. Jurisdiction

The Biathlon Canada Social Media is established and operated in accordance with the laws of Canada and this Agreement will be interpreted in accordance with the laws of the Province of Ontario. You hereby consent and submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of the Province of Ontario in any action or proceeding related

to the Biathlon Canada Social Media and agree not to commence any such action or proceeding except in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

12. General

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between you and Biathlon Canada and governs your use of the Biathlon Canada Social Media.

Your continued use of Biathlon Canada Social Media constitutes affirmative acknowledgement by you of the terms and conditions of the Agreement, including without limitation, any modifications or changes thereto.

If any portion of this Agreement is deemed by any court of competent jurisdiction to be illegal or unenforceable, then the remaining provisions of this Agreement will remain in full force and effect notwithstanding.

You agree that regardless of any statute or law to the contrary, any claim or cause of action arising out of or related to the Biathlon Canada Social Media or these Terms of Use must be filed within one (1) year after such claim or cause of action arose or be forever barred.

13. Agreement

I have read and understand this agreement and agree to the terms of use as outlined above.

AGREED to this \_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF \_\_\_\_\_, 201\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Social Media User

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Biathlon Canada Representative

## APPENDIX A: Tips for Biathlon Canada Employees, Consultants, Athletes & Members (where applicable) on Use of Social Media

### ◆ *You Should Consider Social Media to be a Live Microphone*

Social media is no different than a live microphone. For example, media outlets report on athletes' posts regularly, and some include a running stream of athlete posts on their sites. Local, national and international media are increasingly utilizing Twitter to connect directly to athletes – this means your Tweets could be used as direct quotes in news articles on behalf of Biathlon Canada whether you like it or not. If you are not comfortable seeing your content reported on by media or as a headline in a newspaper with your name and that of Biathlon Canada attached to it, don't say it.

Postings, blogs or tweets should always be in a first person, diary-type format so that it is clear you are not acting in the role of a journalist.

### ◆ *Be Mindful of External Stakeholders*

Sports teams (both amateur and professional) are associated with a number of external stakeholders including corporate partners, media and local community organizations. You should be mindful of those relationships– in other words treat them with respect. Tweeting your frustration about the poor warranty offered by the manufacturer of a piece of biathlon equipment that was supplied to the team by a sponsor can (and will) damage the sponsorship relationship for Biathlon Canada.

### ◆ *Full Disclose & Transparency*

Nothing short of 100% transparency is acceptable in today's digital world. Posing as a fan (i.e. using a pseudonym) and trying to sway the tone of the conversation to be more positive is not a good idea. This type of attempt to do something good can turn negative and public in a hurry. Posting a comment on-line as 'anonymous' is not recommended either. Do not lie or omit the truth. Always disclose who you are and whom you work for or represent. There is no such thing as 'anonymous' on the web.

### ◆ *Respect the Privacy of Others/Confidentiality*

Respect the privacy of others. Do not disclose confidential information about someone else who is affiliated with Biathlon Canada or discuss athlete injuries or illnesses (similarly, refrain from revealing the new technologies we are using utilizing to improve performance). Our opponents will love it, but you are not doing anyone any favours on our team.

Never engage in social media on behalf of someone else (i.e. never push out a tweet on behalf of a colleague, an athlete or a teammate). You are personally responsible for the content you distribute and you can be held personally liable for any content deemed to be defamatory, obscene or offensive, proprietary or libelous. All organization-related information, events or situations (i.e. team announcements) are confidential and internal only until formally announced to the public by a representative of Biathlon Canada who has been designated as the spokesperson. All discussions or communications about such events should be conducted through the authorized spokesperson. Even when the information is already public, you must consider whether any comment you make is appropriate.

- ◆ *Cultural Sensitivities*

Avoid comments that could be considered disrespectful or offensive to other nationalities and/ or cultures. Always keep in mind that social media is not contained to geographic boundaries (it's called the WORLD-WIDE web for a reason). Therefore content that may be acceptable in some regions may be offensive in others. If you are travelling internationally on behalf of Biathlon Canada you must respect other cultures and laws in other countries!

- ◆ *Alcohol & Party Pics or Vids*

No one representing Biathlon Canada should ever post photos or videos of anyone from the biathlon community drinking alcohol or consuming drugs, partying at an event or wearing an insufficient amount of clothing.

- ◆ *Foul Language & Privacy*

Be professional, mature and responsible in terms of the words, characters, punctuation, etc. you use. Exercise self-control at all times and show respect for peers, opponents, officials, spectators and volunteers. Be professional, mature and responsible. Apply this philosophy in everything you do - including every tweet you share, status you update, and photo you post. Nothing you post is private – regardless of privacy settings.

You could consider using a disclaimer such as: “This is my personal opinion, and does not necessarily represent the views of Biathlon Canada.” Although this is a good practice, this does not exempt you from being held accountable for what you write/post. AND if you are the designated spokesperson, it is assumed that whatever you write or post is representing Biathlon Canada.

- ◆ *Crisis Management & Response*

There are certain rules of engagement during crisis response situations that need to be taken into consideration. For example, deleting a post or blocking a user can often escalate the issue rather than solve it. It is important to assess the situation and defer to the designated spokesperson for Biathlon Canada to determine the best way to act.

- ◆ *Accuracy*

If you publish information about Biathlon Canada or the sport of biathlon, ensure the information is accurate and the source is clearly indicated. Be the first to correct your own mistakes, and do not alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.

## ANNEX B

### Social Media Strategy Backgrounder

#### Overview

Social media represents an opportunity for Biathlon Canada to grow their audience in a cost-effective and quick means. At the same time, this opportunity comes with challenges and therefore needs to be framed and guided by an effective policy to ensure best use and maximum effectiveness. Without clear guidelines and parameters AND a strategy, the scope of the possibilities associated with social media can become too large rendering this tool essentially ineffective (which detracts from organizational communications objectives).

For this reason it is essential that Biathlon Canada have an effective strategy associated with its e-communications in the social media forum. Biathlon Canada also needs a clear policy that outlines how the organization will use social media.

If done effectively, Biathlon Canada can use social media to:

- Promote organizational goals
- Build athlete and coach visibility
- Build the profile of the sport and the organization as a whole
- Increase membership and improve services to existing members
- Expand reach (i.e. communicate with fans and build fan base)
- Spread the message (in its own words and according to Biathlon Canada's schedule)
- Highlight Biathlon Canada events
- Expand visibility when traditional media is not as effective
- Support marketing and promotional efforts
- Provide new added value opportunities for sponsors
- Give the Biathlon Canada membership opportunities to network amongst themselves (and share ideas and best practices)

Biathlon Canada can only support the aforementioned goals if it is an effective administrator or gate keeper of its e-communications and social media activities. In fact, most sport organizations (and many corporations) have dived into social media and figured they would worry about the credibility of their organization later which has proved to be a big mistake.

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Note: At the 2014 Olympic Games, there will be a strict and clear policy in place that regulates the use of social media in conjunction with the Games. Therefore it is important for Biathlon Canada to immediately develop a comprehensive policy that is consistent with the regulations developed by the IOC. See IOC policy attached.



### **Types of Social Media Tools**

Social media is basically web-based and mobile technologies that are used to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Content is user-generated.

There are various different forms and types of social media platforms. The four most popular and most commonly used social media tools that are the best fit for Biathlon Canada at the present time are: Twitter, FaceBook, LinkedIn and YouTube. Pinterest (similar to an online bulletin board where you organize and

share things you love) is also gathering steam and should be monitored for potential implementation by Biathlon Canada in the future. Currently Biathlon Canada is using Twitter and FaceBook in a limited fashion.

Opportunities for Biathlon Canada to use social media include:

- Linking to news articles
- Promoting sponsors
- Distribution of press releases
- Dissemination of competition results
- Celebrating successes, volunteers, and spotlighting good news or awards
- Support of marketing and other promotional efforts (including campaigns)

Social Media can also help Biathlon Canada better define its target audiences which include: athletes, coaches and officials, clubs and communities, sponsors and potential sponsors, schools, youth, cadets, media, funding partners, etc.

### **The Development of a Social Media Policy**

Social media policies are not one size fits all. The right policy will reinforce the organization's existing corporate culture and provide practical guidance to those who will be governed by the social media policy that is developed.

### **Important Considerations/Cautions in the Development of a Social Media Policy & Strategy**

Social media, overall, has its pros and cons. Some important things to consider include:

- Selection of the Administrators (gate keepers) – keep it a tight circle, not too large
- What will Biathlon Canada do if there are others using social media and referencing biathlon but the content does not reflect those values or views of Biathlon Canada?
- Respect for Biathlon Canada's mission and vision
- Use of social media for personal attacks and the use of rude or unacceptable language
- Personal use or personal issues of an organization's social media tools
- The definition or parameters of what can be discussed
- Will photos/videos reflect the sport in the way that Biathlon Canada wishes it to be portrayed?
- Not every audience will be reached through social media – it is only one communication tool
- Staff /consultant/volunteer capacity for daily management of social media tools and monitoring of social media content and evaluation of effectiveness of social media campaigns.

## A Social Media Strategy for Biathlon Canada

Some quick and general tips and tricks that Biathlon Canada should do on an ongoing basis starting immediately are to:

- Highlight Biathlon Canada’s social media tools on its website and cross-promote (use social media to post teasers and then link to the website for the full story and to drive traffic to the web)
- Use social media in conjunction with press releases and announcements
- Use social media to track, monitor and understand issues that are being raised and discussed online by the public or within the sport community that affect the organization. These real-time insights will provide Biathlon Canada with the opportunity to react and be proactive.
- Update its current Twitter account and Facebook Account (see tips and tricks below) and develop “canned” key messages to be pushed out by other social media users on behalf of Biathlon Canada.

### Social Media Messages Driven by Biathlon Canada

From time to time, Biathlon Canada may consider providing specific directives regarding specific social media messages to be pushed out according to specific dates and times. For, example:



#### COMMUNICATION #1A (Facebook Message)

TITLE: INVITATION TO BE PART OF SPORTS DAY IN CANADA

WHEN TO SEND: Monday, September 12, after 12:00 noon

MESSAGE: GAME ON CANADA! Saturday, September 17 is Sports Day in Canada – so get active and show everyone what a great sporting nation we are by participating in the thousands of events taking place this week. Change your profile picture to show you in action or post your favourite Canadian sports hero. Go to <http://cbc.sportsday.ca> to see how you can get involved, and spread the word by REPOSTING this message!



#### COMMUNICATION #1B (Twitter Message)

WHEN TO SEND: Monday, September 12, after 12:00 noon

MESSAGE: GET YOUR SPORT ON! September 17 is #SPORTSDAY IN #CANADA. Go to <http://cbc.sportsday.ca> to get involved, and spread the spirit – RT!



### How Biathlon Canada Can Get Noticed on Twitter!

Twitter is a low-attention span medium. It’s ‘click and run’, hence the 140 character limit that users have to convey their message (aka ‘tweet’). Biathlon Canada currently has a Twitter account and a handle (@biathloncanada). Here’s what Biathlon Canada can do to instantly boost its success with Twitter:

#### 1. Branding

Get a branded background and embed important info in the background (i.e. key messages, website

address, etc). Update all the bio info to make sure that Biathlon Canada is creating a professional image on Twitter. See examples at:

- <https://twitter.com/#!/Olympics> or <https://twitter.com/#!/CanadaGames>

## 2. *The Secret to Following*

As a general rule, Biathlon Canada should follow everyone who asks to follow them AND biathlon Canada should invest ½ hr in searching for the twitter accounts of other NSOs and MSOs, national team athletes, sport media outlets, etc. and start following them.

*Note: Biathlon Canada will need to monitor its follower/following ratio. Once you start to accumulate a few hundred followers, it's time to cut back your list of who you're following. The ratio of followers to people you're following is important. When you have substantially more followers than you do people you follow, it tells people you're interesting. You don't have to follow people to get them to follow you anymore and that attracts more followers.*

## 3. *The "Shout Out"*

Ask high profile people to tweet about you and ask for the "shout out". B-lister celebrities have soared in popularity when an A-lister tweets about them. Example, Ryan Seacrest asked Justin Bieber to tweet out that Ryan is a great guy and you should all follow him on Twitter and Ryan Seacrests's Twitter account was overheated with people clicking yes to follow him. Asking a high profile athlete like Clara Hughes to tweet about Biathlon Canada would generate more followers.

## 4. *Promote Others*

Complimenting others via Twitter is the most powerful technique Biathlon Canada can leverage to increase its Twitter visibility. Be sincere and genuine in the compliments that are offered though.

## 5. *Retweet(RT)*

Retweeting (RT) is taking a twitter message that someone else has posted and rebroadcasting that same message to your followers. Retweets are how information propagates on Twitter. The goal of retweeting is to provide your followers with valuable and/or entertaining content (not necessarily original – you are giving credit where credit is due). Whenever possible you should add in the reason why it is "retweet-worthy" at the end of the tweet. Retweeting is a true win-win. Also, Twitter etiquette dictates that is important to thank someone who has retweeted a Biathlon Canada tweet.

## 6. *Twitter Chats*

Biathlon Canada can expand its Twitter network by participating in Twitter Chats. Biathlon Canada will get to know a lot of other people interested in that same topic, which allows Biathlon Canada to kick-off more engaged relationships way beyond the chat.

## 7. *Tweet ONLY Quality and Creative Content*

Everyone is tweeting something all the time, so if Biathlon Canada really wants to provide content that gets

noticed by Biathlon Canada’s target audience, it has to be unique and catchy. Clicking the tweet button to just push any old thing out there is counter-productive. Biathlon Canada recently tweeted the following:

Biathlon Canada#@biathloncanada  
Sponsorship Opportunities: <http://bit.ly/zLq9th>

What does this tweet mean? Does it do anything to engage anyone? Plus, it turns out that the link that was part of the tweet sends you to a page on the Biathlon Canada website that contains no content.

Biathlon Canada needs to interact with its followers by asking questions, commenting on articles, pictures and videos, retweeting, shout-outs, etc. Note that heavy self-promotion is considered poor Twitter etiquette. Self-marketing is considered bad form.

#### 8. *Schedule Tweets*

Auto-scheduling tweets that correspond to Biathlon Canada’s calendar of events and activities can help ensure that tweets are being pushed out on a regular basis, but do not over-automate. It is important to maintain the human element of Twitter.

#### 9. *Twitter Grammar and Lingo*

Twitter requires an informal style of communication. It’s okay to use commonly used short forms (i.e. b4 = before and chk = check), but Biathlon Canada needs to use the latest Twitter lingo in moderation. Do not overuse exclamation or question marks or write in ALL CAPS. Frequent typos are a sign of negligence and since Biathlon Canada wants to maintain a professional image users should proofread all tweets before hitting ‘send’.

#### 10. *Hashtags(#)*

Hashtags are words or phrases prefixed with the symbol #. They are used to identify groups and topics. A hashtag is a way to unite global Tweets around some particular topic. Basically, these are tags that help those who seek similar content discover your Tweets. It’s also a way for Twitter users to organize themselves (if everyone agrees to append a certain hashtag to tweets about a topic, it becomes easier to find that topic in search, and more likely the topic will appear in Twitter’s Trending Topics). Biathlon Canada could use hashtags for events, for example.



#### **How Biathlon Canada Can Get Noticed on Facebook!**

Facebook is a social networking service that lets you connect with friends, co-workers, and others who share similar interests or who have common backgrounds. Many individuals use it as a way to stay in touch after finishing school, or as a way to share

their life publicly. Biathlon Canada currently has a Facebook account and can use it to connect with people who have an interest in the sport. Here's what Biathlon Canada can do to instantly boost its success with Facebook:

1. *Branding & Domain*

Register a Facebook.com/biathloncanada (or another variation) domain. See the registration process at <https://www.facebook.com/video/video.php?v=1401135911437>

Use a dynamic background image for the main page photo (e.g. an action shot of biathlon). The new timeline format allows for a panoramic image and a smaller profile pic (could be the Biathlon Canada logo).

It is also possible to include your company name below every update you send to Facebook. So, instead of seeing "via mobile" or "via Sendible", posts could display "via Biathlon Canada" with a little square icon alongside. This is a great way to build up brand awareness and have Facebook users click on the company name and go directly to [www.biathloncanada.ca](http://www.biathloncanada.ca). The option for branded Facebook posts is currently a feature offered by Sendible.

2. *Use Photo Albums*

Facebook Photo Albums demonstrate the vibrancy of the organization and are known to generate more click-throughs on a news feed and therefore generate higher levels of engagement.

3. *Start Discussions*

Facebook offers a unique opportunity to dialogue with their audience so take advantage of it. Discussions engage your audience and insight people to join in if they're not "Fans" already.

4. *Updates & Questions or Polls*

These days, it's harder than ever to get your updates noticed on Facebook. Due to the sheer volume of posts hitting the news feed, there's a good chance that updates will be missed or simply overlooked due to all the other noise. So, ask questions, poll people, be creative. According to the stats, the placement of questions affects the engagement of the reader (placing questions at the end of the content yields 15% more engagement).

5. *Repost/Share Content*

Other Canadian sport orgs. (i.e. COC, Canada Games, other NSOs, etc.) post and repost a lot of content from each other's walls to extend the reach of the message. This demonstrates a collaborative Canadian sports community and increases the possibility of Biathlon Canada's Facebook page becoming part of the discussions.

6. *Scheduling*

To ensure the best possible chance of having your Facebook posts noticed, you should schedule your posts to be published at the time your fans are most likely to be looking at their Facebook news feed. There are various tools out there that make it easy to schedule Facebook updates.

Content shared in non-working hours gets 20% more engagement than the content shared in working hours. Content shared on Thursdays and Fridays get 18% more likes and comments. Other weekdays (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) and Saturdays are strict No's-No's. If your content is in any way related to finance then Sundays are the best. So, plan accordingly!

7. *Keep Content Short*

Nobody wants to read epics on Facebook, so keep content as short as possible. Ideally, keep content below 80 characters because according to the stats, content below 80 characters has a staggering 70% higher engagement rate than content with more characters. This is a big part of why Twitter is so popular.

8. *Cross-Promote*

Ask FaceBook users to sign-up for Biathlon Canada's newsletter to receive monthly e-communications. ContactContact has a feature that can provide for automatic sign-ups.