

SSIO Policy on Social Media



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Executive Summary

The Sathya Sai International Organisation (SSIO) recognises the importance of participating in online conversations. However, it is crucial to ensure that official social media accounts operate in an appropriate manner. Therefore, some thought must be given to the creation and operation of such accounts.

This document lists policies and best practices similar to those adopted by many organisations and corporations, applying some additional considerations and guidelines that are relevant to the SSIO and consistent with its objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **National Council President** (NCP) will form a Social Media team who have a keen interest, relevant skills and the time necessary to sustain the account for which they'll be accountable for. NCPs are responsible for post approvals or assigning a team advisor who can monitor and assist when necessary.

The Zonal or National **Media Coordinator** may be tasked with arranging the team in lieu of the NCP and may also be the advisor if the role cannot be assigned to someone with an experience in public relations and/or media strategy.

They should **clearly** advise the Social Media team on the approval process before posting content on social media platforms.

Essential makeup of a Social Media team

One person can hold multiple roles, and multiple people can fill one role.

Account Admin - The administrator handles the account's day-to-day activities, has a command of the language used on the account and seeks appropriate permissions when using third-party content. The ideal admin is someone who is well versed in the teachings of *Sathya Sai Baba*, has been an integral part of the SSIO for at least one year, and has a familiarity and history of following protocols.

Content Creator - Provides creative direction for the account and has an eye for design. Depending on the type of content generated, the person should have some working knowledge of both graphic design and video editing. The ideal content creator

is someone who has been a part of the SSIO for at least six months and is versed in the teachings of *Sathya Sai Baba* and nuances of the SSIO.

Community Manager - Monitors conversations on the social platform. The person should be calm and reasonable when dealing with negative comments. They are responsible for checking and monitoring comments and, if necessary, banning users who aggravate the conversation.

Analyst - Evaluates various insights / analytics and makes suggestions on maximising audience engagement and reach (e.g. posting times, frequency, language, content type) in order to make the best use of the team's efforts. This role does not require knowledge of SSIO policies

Advisor - Counsels the team on media approach and appropriateness of posts. Ideally this individual has some marketing or media background and is a long-standing member of the SSIO. This individual is responsible for guiding and ensuring consistency with other SSIO accounts. Persons holding this role will retain an admin-level access to each account along with other login credentials and will be accountable for all posts made by accounts within their purview. *The advisors should not make changes to the account without discussing the changes with the entire team.*

Teams looking to handle official SSIO accounts should seek approval from the supervising Media Coordinator or contact senior officer for direction.

Policy

This policy has been developed to help share the SSIO's positive message on Sai Social Media accounts.

Key Points

- Social media team should track conversations when officially representing the Organisation (refer to #2 in [Expectation](#))
- The Community Manager / Account Admin or SSIO media team should monitor the situation when someone is leaving inappropriate comments on a post
- Community manager should maintain equanimity when responding to negative or heated comments.

- Social Media admins should notify SSIO about local centre, Young Adult (YA) group, national or zonal accounts/channels at mediateam@sathyasai.org
- Do not make paid advertisements
- Everyone should be aware of the content being shared. #ShareSmart: <https://youtu.be/M1Ocyoz-WHY> (Refer to [Code of Conduct](#))

It is important to remember that we present *Sathya Sai Baba's teachings* and that our role in the community is to encourage spiritual growth and personal transformation.

The SSIO encourages all of its members to explore and engage in social media communities at a level at which they feel comfortable. *Be smart*. The best advice is to approach online worlds in the same way we do the physical one – by using sound judgment, common sense, and adhering to the Sai values. The SSIO does not advertise and should not pay for advertised media.

Code of Conduct

As representatives of the SSIO, account admins must adhere to a code of conduct in the online social media community. Deviation from these commitments may be subject to placing the account under review or other administrative action.

Respect copyrights, rights of publicity, and other third-party rights in the social media space, including user-generated content (UGC). It is that person's choice to share his or her material with the world, not yours. Under the principle of "fair use", you may share a small excerpt or quote. Before posting someone else's work, please check with the owner first and get their written permission and reference the source / original poster. Check with the SSIO media committee to make appropriate and informed decisions about copyrights.

Privacy of our followers. Be conscientious regarding the collection of any Personally Identifiable Information such as email addresses for mailing lists, phone numbers for WhatsApp, and other details. Lists such as these are valuable to businesses looking for customers, and there are others who would also like to gain access to lists of Sai members. Please familiarise yourself with additional privacy considerations mentioned in other sections of this document.

Responsibility in the use of technology. The Social Media team should understand that they are representing the SSIO and are personally responsible for the content published on any form of user-generated media. Failure to abide by these guidelines could put the

SSIO at risk, including legal consequences. If the team is about to publish something that makes them even the slightest bit uncomfortable, contact your SSIO officers (NCP, Central Coordinator, Zone Chairperson) and/or mediateam@sathyasai.org. Always follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites when engaging with them.

Team members may come across negative or disparaging posts about Sathya Sai Baba or the SSIO, or see third parties trying to spark negative conversations. Unless a member is an appointed online spokesperson, do not respond. Pass the post(s) along to an official spokesperson (community manager) trained to address such comments, at mediateam@sathyasai.org and let the subject matter experts respond to negative posts.

Expectation

Social Media team members have the opportunity and a responsibility to selectively engage and participate in the numerous online conversations. The following principles reflect how official SSIO account administrators conduct themselves in an official capacity when speaking on behalf of the Organisation.

1. Be mindful that the team is **representing the SSIO, Sathya Sai Baba, and Sai's teachings**. The online behaviour of social media accounts not only reflects on the team, but also the Organisation. The SSIO does not seek publicity for the work it does, but does seek to create awareness and to inspire. Remember the SSIO is a spiritual organisation and should be seen to be conducting itself in accordance with the highest standards. It is important that the social media content conveys this same positive, optimistic spirit. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures.
2. **Keep records**. It is critical to maintain records of all social media interactions and for the team to monitor the activities of those engaging with them. Online conversations are often fleeting and immediate, so it is important for the team to keep track of them when officially representing the Organisation. Keep records of any online dialogue pertaining to the SSIO and submit a copy to mediateam@sathyasai.org yearly.
3. **When in doubt, do not post**. The Social Media team is personally responsible for the content published. As online spokespeople, team members must ensure that posts are completely accurate and not misleading. Authenticity is critical. Exercise sound judgment and common sense, and if there is any doubt, do not publish. In circumstances where you are uncertain about how to respond to a post, consult with your senior leadership or send the link to mediateam@sathyasai.org.
4. The team should not commit the SSIO to any action unless they have approval to do so. Only publish announcements about approved activities, and be watchful about making statements that imply the SSIO will undertake specific actions such as supporting some cause or participating in some activity.
5. **Clear attribution**. Give credit where credit is due and don't violate others' rights. DO NOT claim implicit or explicit authorship of something that is not yours. If you are using another party's content, make certain that they are credited for it in your post and that they approve of you utilising their content in writing. Do not use the copyrights, publicity rights, or other rights of others without obtaining permissions from the rightsholder(s). (See [Appendix VII: Intellectual Property \(IP\) rights](#))

6. **Global Awareness.** The Internet has global reach. Remember that local posts can have global significance. The answer to a query might be accurate in your region, but inaccurate, improper or even illegal in others.
7. Everything written online is public, and the Internet is permanent. Once published online, the information is essentially part of a permanent record. Even if it is removed, deleted, edited, the original material may still exist via screenshots or other archiving, such as cached pages on search engines.
8. If your complete thought, along with its context, cannot be squeezed into a character restricted space (such as Twitter), provide a link to an online space where the message can be expressed **completely and accurately.**
9. Provide your Media Coordinator with any pertinent login information to the social media accounts that **SSIO owns.** This information may also need to be shared with other senior officers, and they may need to be given some privileges on the account.



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