

SOCIETY OF BEER ADVOCATES COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Society of Beer Advocates (SOBA) communications enhance the vision, mission and good name of the organisation.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- prescribe who may communicate on behalf of SOBA
- provide guidance on when SOBA should be communicating
- provide guidance on using the various communication tools available
- set out the way SOBA communications should be developed and delivered.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all people who communicate on behalf of SOBA with the exception of the editor of the *Pursuit of Hoppiness*.

BACKGROUND

SOBA is growing and becoming more successful. More regional groups are being set up and more SOBA events are being run across New Zealand. It is inevitable that more people are going to be communicating on SOBA's behalf - posting Facebook updates and tweeting, emailing members and writing other content for SOBA communications. Further, the SOBA Committee wants to encourage increased communication at both a national and regional level.

POLICY STATEMENT

Who may communicate on behalf of SOBA

The following people can communicate formally on behalf of SOBA:

- Committee Press Secretary: can write and release media statements or articles, and is the formal "go to" person for any media interest in SOBA or its activities. The Committee Press Secretary can update the www.soba.org.nz website and SOBA Facebook page, and "tweet" on behalf of SOBA. The Committee Press Secretary can also email the entire SOBA membership, or parts of the membership using the membership database.
- The Committee: with the endorsement of a quorum of the Committee or the endorsement of the Press Secretary, individual Committee members may also represent SOBA in engagements with the media. They can update the www.soba.org.nz website and SOBA Facebook page, and "tweet" on behalf of SOBA. The Committee can also email the entire SOBA membership, or parts of the membership using the membership database.
- Regional Coordinators: with the endorsement of the Committee Press Secretary or a quorum of the Committee, Regional Coordinators may write and release media statements or articles and represent SOBA in engagements with the media *in their region*. They can update the SOBA Facebook page and "tweet" on behalf of SOBA. They can also "tweet" via the regional twitter accounts that have been set up. The Regional Coordinators can also email the SOBA membership in their region using the membership database.
- Brewery Relationship Officers (BROS): with the endorsement of the Committee Press Secretary or a quorum of the Committee, BROS may write and release media statements or

articles and can update the SOBA Facebook page and “tweet” on behalf of SOBA. They can also “tweet” via the regional twitter accounts that have been set up.

- the Membership Officer: can update the SOBA Facebook page and “tweet” on membership issues behalf of SOBA. They can also email the SOBA membership using the membership database.
- the Web Master: can update the www.soba.org.nz website with content that has been approved by the Committee.

Who may communicate on behalf of SOBA: Summary table

| | Press Secretary | Committee | Regional Coordinators | BROS | Membership Officer | Web Master |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Talk to media | Yes | Yes | Yes; limited | Yes; limited | | |
| Press releases | Yes | Yes | Yes; limited | Yes; limited | | |
| Update website | Yes | Yes | | | | Yes |
| Facebook | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| Twitter | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | |
| (regional) Twitter | Yes | Yes | Yes | | | |
| Email all members | Yes | Yes | | | Yes | |
| Email regional members | Yes | Yes | Yes | | Yes | |

When SOBA should be communicating

SOBA should communicate regularly, and in a way that will support the organisation’s vision, and mission:

“We are a consumer-based organisation with a mission to educate, promote, and advocate for the appreciation of, and access to, a diverse range of quality beer”.

The Committee should communicate monthly, at a national level, about its work to deliver the SOBA mission. It should also communicate to educate, promote or advocate about specific issues that may be of interest to the SOBA membership or wider community.

Communications should support all SOBA-endorsed activities at a national or regional level. The Committee Press Secretary should be contacted to advise on and approve media statements or articles that can be written by any SOBA member, and should be written by our Regional Coordinators and BROS.

Regional Coordinators and BROS are encouraged to develop media statements and articles on behalf of SOBA. And, to use the SOBA Facebook page and twitter to notify members of events, activities or issues of interest. Using social marketing tools at a national level should show all members that SOBA is a vibrant and active organisation with wide reach. It should also alert members and otherwise outside their home region to other SOBA-endorsed events and activities.

Types of Communication

Press releases and articles for the media

If you're writing press release or article for the media, and claiming to represent SOBA, **STOP!** Only the Press Secretary can engage independently with the media on behalf of SOBA.

Committee members must seek the endorsement of a quorum of the Committee or the endorsement of the Press Secretary. Regional Coordinators and BROs must also seek the endorsement of the Press Secretary.

Limiting engagement with the media should not be a barrier to SOBA communicating successfully at a national or regional level. The Committee Press Secretary is committed to being available to engage with the media, and with Regional Coordinators and BROs who are contacted by the media.

If you have an idea for a article for the media, email the Press Secretary with details. It may be that your idea is picked up, and you are given approval to go ahead with your article. The Committee meets fortnightly, so can also engage and review and approve draft articles in a timely manner.

Managing communication with the media will ensure that all SOBA communications enhance the vision, mission and good name of the organisation as the organisation grows. It will also mean that all people who can communicate on behalf of SOBA do so in a considered way.

If you have been contacted by the media for a SOBA statement, direct them to media@soba.org.nz or +64 27 217 5169.

Website updates

SOBA is keen to update its website regularly. We are happy for all members to submit articles for the website to media@soba.org.nz. They will then be reviewed and approved by the Committee before they are posted online.

If you are writing an article for the website, take a look at the writing style guidelines in this document, and think carefully about your content. In some cases, content may be edited by the Press Secretary or the Committee before being posted online.

Facebook and Twitter updates

Our SOBA Facebook page is the best way to keep members up to date about what is going on in the organisation and the beer community. We want our Regional Coordinators and our BROs to make use of our social media tools. They should be used to notify members of:

- any whole-of-SOBA events
- regional SOBA events and get-togethers
- any (verified) beer or brewery news your hear about.

When posting on Facebook or Twitter:

- add your initials at the end of your comments, for example, [SC]. This will enable others who use these tools to identify who has posted comments.
- remember that you are posting as SOBA, not as yourself. So, any posted should be considered, well-written and profanity free.
- do not post personal comments or views on any matters, and do not say anything inflammatory, racist or sexist or that in any way denigrates others.

Emails to members

Email is a great way to keep members up to date about what is going on in the organisation and the beer community. Committee members, Regional Coordinators and BROs should use the membership database to sent emails. This is the most accurate record of our membership and it allows SOBA emails to be managed and recorded. It also allows members to “opt out” of receiving emails. If a member asks for this, email membership@soba.org.nz so it can be recorded.

We want our Regional Coordinators and our BROs to make use of emails to keep in contact with SOBA members in their region. As with Facebook and Twitter, these tools should be used to notify members of:

- any whole-of-SOBA events
- regional SOBA events and get-togethers
- any (verified) beer or brewery news your hear about.

Emails is a casual form of communication. So, it is important to be careful and check a few things:

- check you are emailing the correct people. You do not want to accidentally send emails to the wrong people
- use BCC or “blind carbon copy” for all email communications. This is important to protect our members’ privacy.

When emailing it is also important to remember that you are a representative of SOBA. Again, you should not say anything inflammatory, racist or sexist or that in any way denigrates others.

Writing style guidelines

Media releases, press articles, web content

When you are writing media releases, articles for the press or website, the title needs to be clear and unambiguous. It should grab attention, and not sound like someone whining!

If writing for the media, a journalist will be interested in a good story to fill column inches. It is important to SOBA that all articles stick to the facts and enhance the credibility of the organisation.

Any articles should follow the ‘pyramid’ principle, where the first paragraph summarises the issue or states the most interesting fact. The further down the article you go, you can get more detailed. You can include things like quotes, statistics and references. The reason for doing this is so that even those who only read part of the story get the salient facts. If you are writing a longer article, consider using sub-titles to guide the reader through the content.

If it is a web article, once you are done, you should read the article and consider crossing half the words out. People don’t read on the web, they scan the content. You should definitely add in sub-headings and quotes to break the content up.

APPROVAL DETAILS AND VERSION CONTROL

All substantive updates should be registered as a new version (i.e., V1, V2). Minor editorial amendments can be recorded as sub-versions (i.e., V1.1, V1.2).

All substantive updates should be approved by a quorum of the Committee. Minor editorial amendments can be approved by the Chair.

| Version | Date | Approved by |
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| 1.0 | 26/03/2012 | SOBA Committee |
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