



# Client Alert

October 19, 2010

## Protecting Your Business Information in the Age of Social Media

Once again, recent headlines revealed how the use of Social Media, which has become interwoven into many aspects of our lives in a relatively short period of time, is not without its risks. On October 18, a *Wall Street Journal* headline proclaimed: "Facebook in Privacy Breach, Top-Ranked Applications Transmit Personal IDs." The article described the vast disclosure of Facebook User IDs through a large number of third party applications. While this is troublesome on its face, it is also a reminder that businesses seeking to take advantage of the vast marketing potential offered by Social Media must consider what risks its use presents to them, their employees, and their clients and how best to control those risks. In the emerging age of Social Media, the answer to these questions may prove crucial to your company's continued success.

In today's world, your business, your employees, and your customers are all using some form of Social Media. Whether it is Facebook, Twitter, My Space, LinkedIn, or YouTube, the amount of data transmitted and commerce conducted via Social Media is staggering. *The Wall Street Journal* headline is just another example that, despite its widespread use, many do not fully understand the business and legal risks associated with Social Media. Exposure of sensitive company information, inadvertent transmittal of customer contacts and business leads, and the use and misuse of Social Media in the workplace are everyday risks arising from the use of Social Media. In addition, legal developments regarding Social Media's impact on personnel and labor issues occur on an almost daily basis.

While even the most experienced practitioner cannot prevent all risks inherent in the use of Social Media, it is important that your company have a Social Media policy and regularly provide training to your employees to help manage those risks and ensure that your company remains protected. Attorneys in Armstrong Teasdale LLP's Social Media group regularly advise clients with respect to the legal issues which arise from Social Media and have assisted clients in dealing with and developing policies and providing training to avoid mishaps which can harm clients. If your company does not have a Social Media policy or if your employees do not understand the implications of their Social Media actions, we can help.

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For further information, please contact one of the following members of Armstrong Teasdale's Social Media group:

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