

Advanced Tips: Managing Social Media Blowups

How big brands manage social media outrage (Wall Street Journal subscription required) 2/20/2019

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/acknowledge-apologize-investigate-how-big-brands-combat-online-outrage-11550579223>

Main points from the WSJ article

When an organization has done something “wrong” or offensive (usually without meaning to):

1. Acknowledge the mistake.
2. Apologize for the impacts or pain it caused.
3. Investigate how it happened to prevent it from happening again.

Generally, when something starts to blow up on social media, the article says conventional wisdom is organizations have ~30 minutes to decide how to manage it before it gets out of their control. A key **decision point** in the 3-step process above: making the decision about whether or not something merits an apology. This must be done quickly.

Best practices for sharing via social media.

1. Social media is for feel-good education. It’s not appropriate to more complex or nuanced issues that require a long explanation. More complex issues are best dealt with officially by an organization, when necessary, and explained via policy documents, news stories, or blogs - if appropriate.
2. Read the entire article/view the entire video before sharing.
3. If something causes offense, **make the decision**: does this merit apology and investigation or not?
 - If it **does**, acknowledge asap, apologize, and investigate.
 - If it **does not**, provide a brief explanation and offer to discuss further offline (send a private message and ask to talk via telephone, unless the person seems crazy, to avoid having something in print come back to haunt you).

- If someone continues with their negativity on social media, remove the opportunity for further interaction by:

FB Group

- Hide (or delete) the comments that are excessive.
- Mute the specific member's comments. When you mute a member, you'll have the option to do it for 12 or 24 hours or 3 to 7 days.
- Consider turning off commenting for the post (but sometimes other supportive members may weigh in as well).
- As a last resort hide or delete the entire post.

FB Page

- Hide or moderate comments in order to eliminate the offensive comments. However, it's probably best not to hide the original irritated comment (unless it's way out of line) and the organization's response because this could backfire. (In other words, strive to keep the interaction limited to: point A, negative response to point A, point B in explanation, END)
- Hide or delete the entire post.

Hiding vs. Deleting

Usually it's better to hide than to delete comments. Here's the difference: When you hide a comment from a post on your Page, the comment will *continue to be visible to the person who wrote it and their friends*. In addition, you may be able to unhide a post that has been hidden (by checking hidden posts on your "activity log"), but this does not always work in practice. When you delete a comment from a post on your Page, the comment will be permanently removed from the post. Deleting a comment could make someone who is angry even angrier.

Another resource: Should you hide comments on Facebook?

<https://www.agorapulse.com/blog/hide-comments-on-facebook>

Keep a record

When deleting or hiding a post or comment, always make a copy (take a screen shot) of everything that was posted before deleting or hiding. That way, you retain a record - good as a means of learning and in case of further problems.