

- Social networking

# Dealing with social media negativity

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Nearly all brands are now present on social media, and while this could provide many benefits, let's face it—there will be negative feedback, and worse, trolls. Some of the comments should be taken as constructive criticism, which is welcome, but what could we do about those who seek to damage or malign our brand?



We asked Connie Kalagayan, our resource person on issues and crisis management, to shed some light on how best to deal with this very modern dilemma.

How should we deal with trolls on social media?

Whatever engagement a brand's social media account generates should always be viewed as a feedback mechanism. It is a cause for concern only if it is pestered by trolls because it means that a certain group of people has an agenda regarding or towards the brand. Only react to credible influencers and respond to them through a pm or private message. Drown the negative comments of trolls with positive messages. Trolls should be ignored. They have their own vacuum and their negative comments just bounce off among themselves. Remember that a virus or a viral message is only viral to those infected.

If our customer posts a negative comment and it goes viral, do we keep silent?

The best strategy is to always reach out to the aggrieved customer. Find out details of his/her complaint and resolve the issue. It is also best to correct any misconceptions that are written about the product. Present the facts, show concern and reiterate your brand values. Keeping silent is tantamount to admitting guilt.

However, weigh the issue because there are some cases when you need to let go and just ignore it especially if it has not gained traction, or there is no truth to the accusation and the customer is just trying to attract attention. Always analyze the issue, take a step back and look at it from the outside looking in, rather than from the inside looking out.

How do we prevent an employee whose video goes viral, which could then negatively affect or destroy our brand image?

If your employee is involved in a viral video and after your internal investigation proves that he/she is in the right and/or is not at fault, stand by your employee and defend him or her. If however proven that he/she is at fault, the company should condemn the act and say that this behavior is not tolerated and does not represent the values of the company. Ask the employee to apologize and settle with the victim or offended party.

Should we screen our employees' social media accounts from time to time? If they are ranting about the company, what should we do?

First, it is important that a company should have a Social Media Guideline that every employee should know and follow. Second, a company should have a social media manager who is always "on." Part of the task of the social media manager is to monitor closely all public social media activities and do "listening" and "analytics."

It is unethical for an employee to rant against his/her own company. By using the company's Social Media Guideline, a company can dismiss an employee for violating this rule or policy. Kalagayan will be facilitating another run of "Issues and Crisis Management: Responding to Media in Times of Crisis" on Aug. 1-2, 2018.

This interactive program is designed to help professionals gain a valuable skill: the ability to respond to traditional and social media in times of crisis.

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The Inquirer Academy is at 4168 Don Chino Roces Ave. corner Ponte St., Makati City. For more information about the workshops or if you would like to add your input on the article, you may email [ask@inquireracademy.com](mailto:ask@inquireracademy.com), call (632) 834-1557 or 7712715 and look for Jerald Miguel or Judy Bondoc, or visit the website at [www.inquireracademy.com](http://www.inquireracademy.com).