



It's important for you and your colleagues to have a shared understanding of your Social Media Community Management protocols so that you're able to respond in social media time (aka real time) to comments, questions and complaints within your social media community.

We hope this guide is useful to you!

Cheat Sheet

WHEN TO RESPOND: You should prioritize negative comments, then questions, then set a minimum number of positive comments that you're able to respond to, within your capacity.

WHEN TO HIDE A COMMENT:

- It's spam or a troll
- It violates your community guidelines

Otherwise... here's how we recommend you respond to comments on your social media pages!

Is it negative?

Is it a troll?

(i.e., are they being inflammatory and trying to spark an argument for the sake of arguing, using bogus or erroneous information, hoax stories, etc in comments that are just posted over and over?)

It's not worth engaging a troll directly...

unless your followers are engaging with the troll's content. We recommend you make a list of common trolls who pop up on your pages, and hide their comments when they arise. You can also use Facebook's automatic filtering to filter out certain keywords to prevent those posts from appearing in the future.

Is it an astroturf comment?

(i.e., a cut + pasted comment you're seeing over and over again
from different people)

Is it spam?

(i.e., are they posting the same thing on all of your posts?
Are they stuck on all caps?)

Don't respond, just hide it right away.

Don't respond, just hide it right away. Use Facebook's automatic filtering to filter out certain keywords to prevent those posts from appearing in the future.

Is it random & off-topic, but
not offensive or potentially
damaging?

Ignore off-topic & random comments

OR point the commenter to a more relevant post or article.

Does it violate your community guidelines?

(You should totally have these!)

Delete, Hide and/or Filter.

If you see the same types of offensive posts again and again, you can use Facebook's automatic filtering to prevent posts that use certain keywords from appearing in the future.

Is it negative — but constructive?

(i.e., something didn't work for them & you can potentially fix or improve it — such as a complaint about an event, program, sign-up process, website glitch, or something else)

Say thank you,

and let them know how you're going to follow up with the right team or person at your organization to fix or address their feedback. Be as specific as you can about how their input will be responded to!

Is it outright negative?

(i.e., (1) the commenter blatantly disagrees with your mission — e.g, they don't support the people you serve OR (2) they agree with your mission but not your approach — e.g., your CEO is paid too much, too much of your funding goes to X service or program area, or someone is complaining that they have to give their email address to take a quiz/survey/opinion poll, etc.)

Has your community already
responded on your behalf?

That's great!

Let your community engage in dialogue! Keep watch to see how the conversation evolves and only respond if you see a need to intervene. If you do jump in, use it as an opportunity to educate or redirect the conversation.

Consider waiting 24 hours to see if your community steps up to weigh in. Still concerned?

Is it taking over your page?

You should look at negative comments and questions as an opportunity to educate the commenter

(and anyone else who might be having similar thoughts!). You should reply not because someone deserves a response, but because it's an opportunity to educate.

To respond, we recommend you:

- Refer to your organizational talking points and respond. (You may need to develop these working with other departments in your organization).
- If your protocol is NOT to address an issue, then that's fine, leave it alone!
- Be sure to consider whether something is a new educational opportunity

Is the question negative?

Is it a question?

(i.e., a request for information such as: Where is the rally? How can I donate?)

Can you answer the question?

Respond! Ideally within 24 hours.

Only respond privately if, for example, it's a donor with a question about their gift. Otherwise, always respond publicly.

Can you point them to useful
information you can find elsewhere?

(i.e., within or outside of your organization)

Consider responding to say “I’m checking in on this & will get back to you” —

and then once you know more, point the commenter to outside links, phone numbers or other resources for more information — e.g., your customer service (if you’re not in that department), your PR team, etc.

So long as capacity allows: ALWAYS reply!

Like or comment back. You should prioritize which POSITIVE comments you're responding to within your capacity based on a few factors:

- **Based on your objectives.** For example, is part of your organization's mission to be a resource or to educate? If so, prioritize when someone asks for help & information.
- **Based on visibility.** Respond to the top comment first since it's the one people see most.
- **Based on who's asking.** Specifically:
 - Get to know your influencers (people with big followings and/or big influence in your community). When they comment, you should always respond!
 - Use tools like attentive.ly to identify your donors and email list members who follow you on social & be sure to respond when they engage.
- **Based on complexity or difficulty.** For example, if something is a quick and easy gimme (e.g, a thank you, words of praise) and only requires a quick response, you can tick those off easily & in no time.
- **Based on overall balance of positive/negative comments on your page** — i.e., you should respond to positive comments to balance out any negative comments you might be also be responding to.

Is it positive?

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