

THE 20 SECOND GUIDE TO THE ESSENTIALS OF SOCIAL MEDIA REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

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Social media may well be here to stay, but there still appears to be a wide range of views as to how best to use it. Not only that, but with many organisations already committed, there are also plenty of views about who has got it right and who hasn't.

So what is the best way to use social media? How can you adopt social media to get the best out of it for your business and its brands? How do you decide if it's the right thing for your business? And if you do decide to go ahead, what do you need to do to make sure you get it right, and what should you avoid to make sure you don't get it wrong?

Based on a study of Facebook sites, The Purple Agency has come up with a number of simple suggestions to help you make the right choices for your business. There is no doubt that social media can be a powerful medium for extending and building a brand personality. But it can also be a tricky and prickly media to get to grips with. Our simple rules are a beginning and not an end in themselves, but we hope you find them helpful when it comes to deciding how to make social media work for you.

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Andrew Woodger
Data & Planning Director



THE DO'S OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Do make sure you have a clear strategy from the outset. What are the gains for your business and what are the potential pitfalls and risks? You need to be clear right from the start. Above all, how will you measure and assess the benefits, both soft and hard? Social media might not be the most appropriate way to support your goals, so have this discussion now, not when it's already up and running.

Do decide just how you want people to 'interact' with your brand. Is Facebook going to be a billboard, or a genuine space where they can interact with your organisation, its products and brands?

Either approach might be right for your organisation, but the choice of which will very much depend on the outcomes you want to achieve. Make sure that whichever route you take is the right one for you.

Do decide who is going to be responsible for managing and maintaining your presence. You need to be on the ball when it comes to monitoring, responding to and seeding posts, content and discussion threads.

Do decide if you are likely to face controversial, negative and even hostile threads. People often use social media to 'sound off' especially if they have issues they feel have not been resolved to their satisfaction.

If a social media site is going to open you up to publicly aired complaints or attempts to challenge you over ethical issues, you need to be prepared to manage these, just as you'd be prepared to manage any PR or media crisis your organisation could face.

Do make sure people know about your site and encourage them to use it, participate and get engaged. Have some ongoing strategies to make this happen and keep the social interaction fresh and creative.



THE DON'TS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't expose your brand to unnecessary and damaging critical comment, unless the upsides and rewards are likely to be greater than the downsides. It's one thing to be open and welcoming, but there is little point if the reaction is likely to encourage a negative free for all. Social media shouldn't be the modern day equivalent of being locked in the stocks and pelted with rotten eggs.

Don't respond in a style which is totally unlike that of your brand. If you have a welcoming and friendly tone on your website, don't then resort to overly corporate language and standard responses.

The people out there are individuals, and they expect to be treated as such. So talk to them as you would to a friend, not a machine.

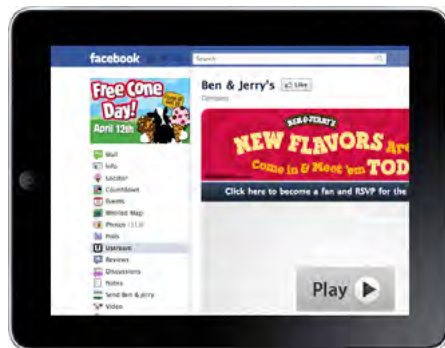
Don't duck issues. You may not like the content of a particular post, but it's best to be up front and deal with it. If you have a strong brand, you may find unfair posts are tackled by your loyal customers on your behalf, but don't expect this to be the case. If you're potentially going to be at the heart of a storm, prepare for it, and show a little corporate humility, which is always going to be better than corporate arrogance.

Don't leave the people who are your 'social net workers' unsupported. If there are prickly issues, make sure they can call on people with the right skills in customer services and PR to address them. Be ready to respond and resolve issues quickly and decisively, rather than see them escalate and get out of hand. So ensure that front line staff have the back up and support they need to deal with all the potential issues they may face.

Don't leave issues unresolved. If a negative post needs to be tackled, tackle it. Left out there it could encourage others to jump onto the band wagon. Clean it up fast and on a one-to-one basis if needs be.

FIVE FACEBOOK SITES WE LIKE

There are many great examples of good use of social media, here are a few ways businesses have used the medium to successfully add value to their brands.



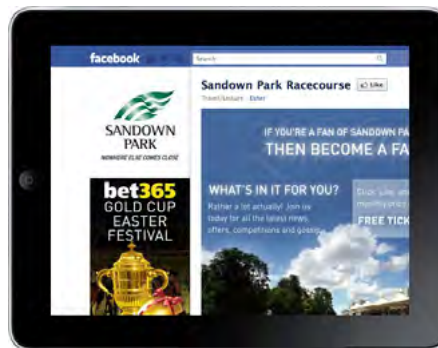
www.facebook.com/benjerry

A brand using Facebook to give it a voice and enabling it to express its very human personality. Not just about ice cream but plenty of product feedback from fans too!



www.facebook.com/HuggiesclubUK

Very engaged conversations in near real time – but then everyone loves baby photos!



www.facebook.com/sandownpark

Showing how communities can be built around shared experiences, giving life and ambience to the venue



www.facebook.com/UKAofficial

A real community feel, that supports the role and function of UKA informing, colourful and engaging



www.facebook.com/cocacola

The non corporate face of a global brand, more fun and more personal. You'd hardly know it was Coca Cola!

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We hope you find our essentials of managing social media useful. Purple has wide experience of integrating multi-media communications that ensure clients get the best out of all the channels they use. From advertising and social media to data and digital development, we bring creative ideas to life, building brands and growing businesses.

If you'd like to talk to us about helping you manage your social media reputation, or any aspect of marketing,

Give us a call on 01256 631 660 or contact us at: enquiries@purple-agency.com.

If you'd just like to learn a bit more about us, visit our website at: www.purple-agency.com.

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Andrew Woodger
Data & Planning Director
andrew.woodger@purple-agency.com
M +44 (0) 7880 545 062

Vantage House
1 Weir Road
London
SW19 8UX
T +44 (0) 20 8946 7537
F +44 (0) 20 8947 2740

One Faraday Office Park
Faraday Road
Basingstoke
Hampshire
RG24 8QQ
T +44 (0) 1256 631 660
F +44 (0) 1256 631 699