



Social Media Crisis Management

Here's an action plan for managing a social media crisis on twitter.

SEVERE!

You or your brand has tweeted something incredibly inappropriate, resulting in thousands/millions of impressions.

AJC @ajc

\$1M GA Lottery winner Willie Lynch can get 40 acres and a whole lotta mules.

Action Plan

- Remove ASAP.
- Issue apology, worded as sincerely as 140 characters will allow.
- Issue personal apologies to individuals who are mentioning your handle.

Example

Atlanta Journal-Constitution racist tweet about a lottery winner.
Response: Issue sincere apology, let the community know how you will do better. Be Specific.

HIGH ↑

Your brand's image is being directly attacked on Twitter, possibly in a viral way, via hashtag.

Jeffrey Taylor @jefferytaylor

So 'Let's see what we can get away with.' is the new strategy by @uber? How much 'we can apologize later' is acceptable? #deleteuber

Action Plan

- Sincerely apologize as much as possible.
- Do your best to right the wrong and publicize what you're doing.

Example

#DeleteUber/#UberGate. A C-level executive's comments about harassing journalists led to public sentiments against Uber.
Response: Uber doesn't respond on social media to anything but positive feedback, which is the perfect example of what NOT to do.

ELEVATED ↗

Moderate defamation/inflammatory situation.

Occupy Wall Street @OccupyWallStreetNYC

Here the #NYPD engages with its community members, changing hearts and minds one baton at a time. #myNYPD

Action Plan

- When hashtags become "bashtags" the situation is mostly out of your hands. However, a good PR team can often out a positive spin-on what looks like even the worst reactions.

Example

NYPD #myNYPD hashtag hijacked to share examples of police brutality.
Response: Defend NYPD reputation in a respectful and honorable way, while also not admitting to any wrongdoing.
"Twitter provides an open forum for uncensored exchange and this is an open dialogue good for our city."
Kim Y Royster
Deputy Chief NYPD

GUARDED X

A truly bizarre situation which is teetering on the edge of harm or help, could go either way — or be a total waste of time altogether.

TrekAmerica @TrekAmerica

We're taking action and have decided to #givegregtheholiday. A TrekAmerica mini adventure with flights to Vegas. #GregGotTheHoliday!

Action Plan

- Not every trend or trending topic is worth jumping on the bandwagon for.

Example

#GregGiveTheHoliday. and all of the brands who attempted to capitalize on what was at best a humorous anecdote.
Response: Be human. And don't try to shoehorn your corporate message into every social media event or interaction.

LOW ↓

A low impact event, or one-off tweet.

Joe Schmoe @JoeSchmoe24

@Amazon: lol ur shipping sux soooooo slow

Action Plan

- Go with the flow. Know when it's ok not to react, and especially when not to overreact.

Example

Amazon receives a non-viral, basic customer complaint about shipping speed.
Response: Monitor the situation and respond when necessary. Determine the severity, decide on public responses — or if responses is even warranted.