

GUIDE

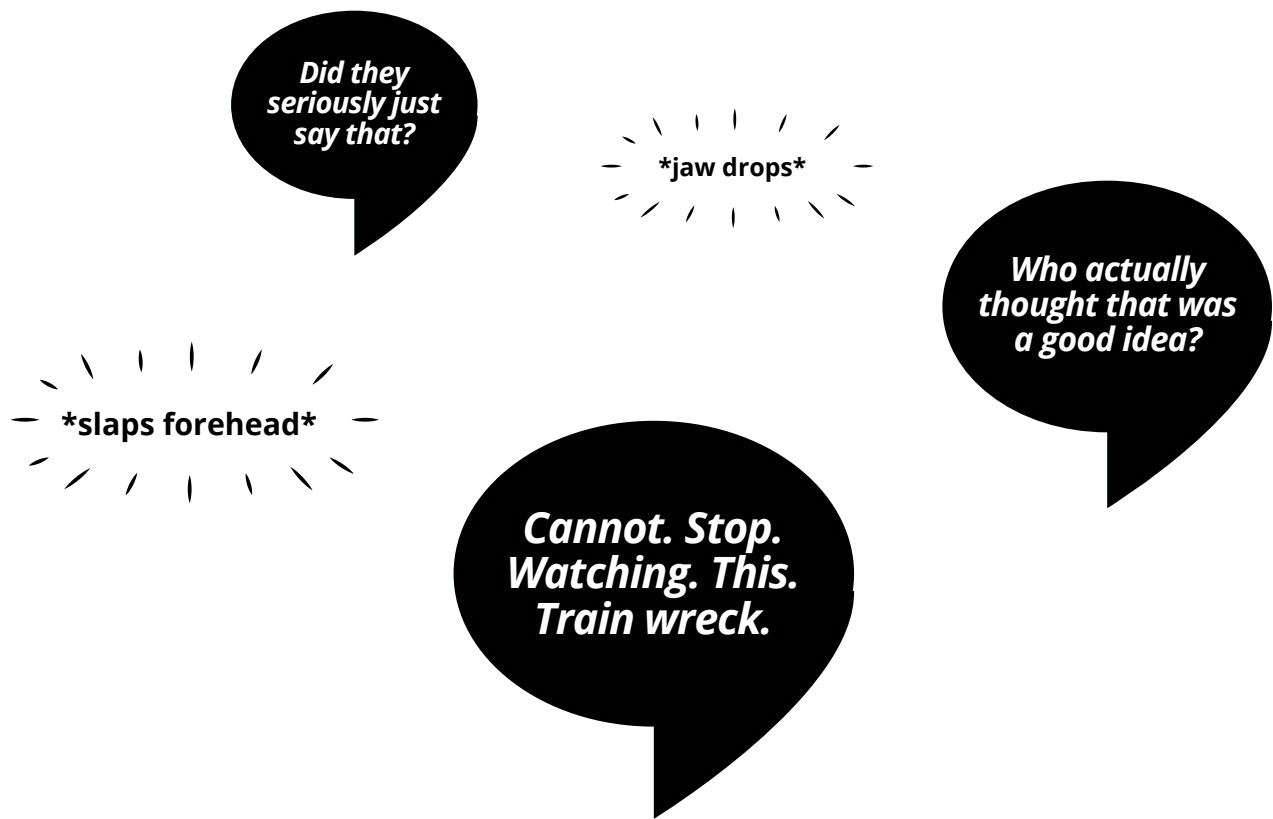
Make Your Social #FailProof

9 Types of Social Media Fails and the Lessons Learned



Table of Contents

Fighting Fire With Fire	4
Being Shady	6
Check Yourself Before you Wreck Yourself	9
The Lazy Game	11
Lacking the Sensitivity Gene	13
Begging for Attention	15
Playing With Emotions	16
No Checks and Balances	18
Getting Caught With Your Pants Down	20



Social media fails are an unfortunate byproduct of marketing—and life—on the web. But let's be honest—they also provide for some major entertainment. So, we have a laugh at another brand's expense. We sit back, roll our eyes, and pity the poor person who made such a thoughtless mistake. But if you think you or your brand are immune to social media fails, think again.

No brand, no matter how small or large, or how big its marketing budget, is safe from social mishaps. After all, behind the fancy brand logos, apps and contests, there are real people running these social media accounts—and people are not perfect. You can either choose to learn from the mistakes of others or be destined to repeat them.

In this e-book we will review 9 social media fails and provide shining examples of companies that crashed hard. We will discuss why these social missteps are fails, how they happened and detail how they could have been avoided. You'll also come away with useful tips to help prevent social fails from happening to you.



1. Fighting Fire With Fire

When your brand comes under attack, it is understandable that your first instinct is to defend it. But before you do anything, remember this golden rule: leave your emotions out of it. The best way to handle controversy is to respond quickly and with the facts. Be empathetic to the person's problem, but don't let yourself get drawn into a fight.

Avoid Getting Burned

This isn't Vegas. What happens on social media stays on social media. If you make a huge social blunder it will not only get out, but the internet will never let you forget it. So do yourself a favor and take a big breath before posting that snarky response to a customer's complaint.

["Picture every member \[of the social web\] with a screenshot tool aimed and ready to fire"](#)

Food and beverage company, Nestle, saw major backlash on its Facebook page after it was attacked by Greenpeace over its palm oil-buying policies in 2010. Instead of calmly replying to the negativity or even choosing to ignore nasty comments, Nestle's moderator let emotions get the best of him or her and was rude and dismissive which further escalated the fight.

Always remember that social media is above all, a social tool. Treat your audience the same way you would treat people in the real world. As a community manager, you should always remember that you are representing your brand and company. Whatever actions you take or comments you make reflect directly on the brand.

Make sure all of your posts are words that the brand can stand behind. And in case you think you can simply delete a mistake away, stop and think about just how large the social web really is and then picture every member with a screenshot tool aimed and ready to fire.



Nestle's sarcastic and disrespectful comments left users with a bad taste in their mouths.

Don't Cave In To the Trolls

There is negative feedback and then there is trolling. A troll posts inflammatory content with the intent of provoking an emotional response from you and others in the community. Trolls are merely there to stir up drama and disrupt your normal discussions. Their intention is solely to get a rise out of you—and sometimes it works.

Amy's Baking Company, a restaurant in Scottsdale, Arizona, found its Facebook page under attack by trolls after it was featured on an episode of the reality show Kitchen Nightmares. Instead of trying to defuse the situation the restaurant chose to blindly fight back, which caused the blaze to get out of control. The trolls might have started the crazy train, but the restaurant hopped on and cut the brakes.



Amy's Baking Company's goes down in a social media blaze of glory

When under attack, respond as calmly as you can and in the case of trolls, remember that sometimes the best response is no response at all.

Avoid Fighting Fire With Fire

- ✓ Make sure all of your posts are words that the brand can stand behind
- ✓ Be empathetic, but keep your emotions in check
- ✓ Don't feed the trolls



2. Being Shady

The social web has removed the barricade between brands and consumers, letting them connect directly to one another. While this can provide exciting new opportunities, it also leaves your brand vulnerable. Suddenly your image isn't entirely in your own hands as your consumers can now express their opinions freely and for the world to see. You want to project the best image possible, but resorting to underhanded tactics to do so will not fly in social.

Delete Happy

Of course it would be nice if feedback and opinions on your brand were all rainbows and sunshine, but like the real world, social media sometimes has rain. Negative feedback will happen whether you like it or not. Attempting to cover up negativity by deleting comments will only further enrage the angry posters and will make your brand look sneaky.

So while you shouldn't remove unwanted comments you can choose to delete things you find to be inappropriate. But first you have to be very clear about what you deem unacceptable in your community. This is why every brand should have a moderation policy that clearly spells out what is allowed in the community and what is not.

If you are not sure what your policy should include, take a look at Intel's excellent Facebook policy for inspiration, which clearly states what types of posts the brand considers inappropriate. The detailed policy confirms Intel is actively monitoring its community and it protects the brand from backlash from those whose comments it chooses to delete.

The screenshot shows the Intel Facebook page's 'About' section. At the top is the Intel logo and a navigation bar with 'Intel' and 'About' (with a dropdown arrow). The 'About' section includes the tagline 'Inspired Innovation that's Changing the World.', the 'Mission' statement 'Keep the innovation economy moving into the future.', and 'HOUSE RULES' which welcome users and provide guidelines for discussion. A disclaimer at the bottom states that by using the page, users agree to Facebook's Terms and Conditions, and that Intel does not confirm the accuracy of fan posts.

Playing Favorites

Your brand is utilizing social media to connect directly to fans, and guess what? Your fans are doing the same. Social media is a two-way street. Your fans don't want to just hear from you, they want to hear back from you. Trolls aside, most fans that reach out to a brand have a real problem and want a real response. Take a look at those negative comments that you've been ignoring (but not deleting, right?) and really try to hear what those people are saying.

Do the comments touch on something your brand can improve? Is someone making a valid point on something your brand did wrong? Acknowledge the problem and express empathy for the person's frustrations. Can you fix the problem? Tell them what you're doing to help. Take action and follow up once you have a resolution. Helping to resolve an issue or simply just apologizing for an inconvenience can help change people's minds and opinions about your brand.

Completely ignoring someone who is coming to you with a rational complaint could potentially turn into a major headache. Now not only does that person feel wronged by your company they feel insulted, which could escalate their initial anger into a very public attack on your brand.

It's easier to respond to compliments than criticism, but by responding to both positive and negative comments you show that you are a brand that is not only listening, but who cares. Responding only to positive comments will make your brand appear closed off, which is the last thing you should be in social media.

#5

Our Top 5 Social Fails

Bing

How you can **#SupportJapan** - <http://binged.it/fEh7iT>. For every retweet, **@bing** will give \$1 to Japan quake victims, up to \$100K.

7:45 AM Mar 12th via CoTweet
Retweeted by 100+ people

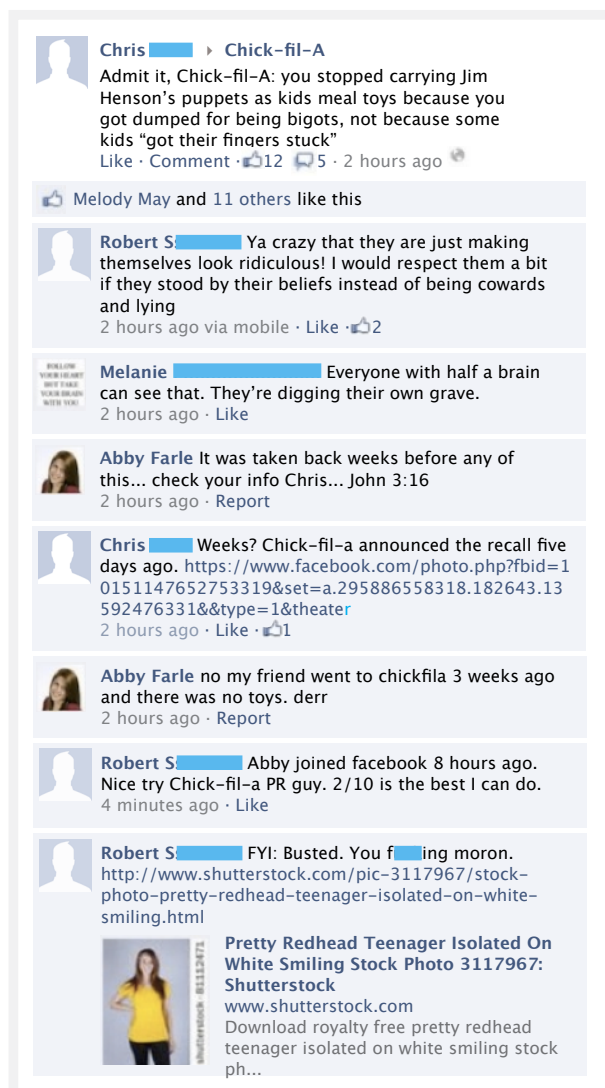


On March 11, 2011 a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck Japan, followed by a 7 meter tsunami. Bing offered to help—but only in exchange for your retweets

Faking It

Brands, like everyone else in social, have a built-in opportunity to express opinions, explain decisions and even defend actions. If your brand finds itself under attack, make your statement and participate in the conversation when it's productive—that's all.

Fast food chain, Chick-fil-A, went to further extremes to defend its brand. The chain found itself in the middle of a publicity firestorm after its president voiced his opposition to gay marriage. A huge backlash ensued and people took to the social web to criticize the restaurant. Chick-fil-A allegedly used fake Facebook profiles to join the conversations and support the chicken chain. In a Facebook exchange that soon went viral (remember that screenshot army we talked about during Fail #1?) a user named Abby Farle fiercely defended Chick-fil-A so much so that other posters did some digging. It turned out that Farle's account was created only eight hours prior to her comments and her profile picture was a stock image.



Filleted in Social: Chick-fil-A gets caught using a fake profile to defend its brand

Rather than speaking its piece and getting out of the way, based on available evidence Chick-fil-A attempted to defuse the controversy in an extremely manipulative way. Creating a fake user to defend your actions suggests that your brand is either unwilling or incapable of defending itself in an official capacity. Neither bodes well for your reputation.

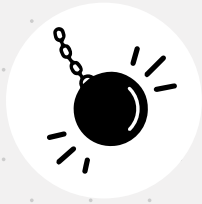
People will respect your brand a lot more if you give them the facts and let them make up their own minds rather than attempt to force their hand. This not only applies during times of controversy, but in day-to-day social activities as well. Attempts to increase engagement by using fake profiles (or even employee profiles) to comment on or share content will not add real value to your social communities. Instead of tricking people into interacting with your brand, aim to provide valuable content that your community will want to engage with.



Shady Behavior: Firebox London attempts (and fails) to impersonate a fan in order to increase engagement

Don't be Shady

- ✓ Don't delete negative comments that are not malicious
- ✓ Have a clear moderation policy
- ✓ Respond to both positive and negative comments
- ✓ Don't attempt to manipulate your audience with fake fans or comments



3. Check Yourself Before you Wreck Yourself

Social media moves fast. Blink and you'll miss something. The speed of social plus the amount of platforms you manage can become overwhelming. Quick, get that tweet out! Be the first to post that story! Plus, as a social media professional you're no doubt handling your own personal social presence in addition to your brand's. It can be easy to get caught up in the social whirlwind and rush what you're doing.

A brand that fell victim to haste was KitchenAid, who surprised its followers by appearing to go political with an insensitive tweet about President Barack Obama's late grandmother during the 2012 presidential debate. KitchenAid apologized for the tweet and admitted that the person who sent it had inadvertently posted from the brand's account rather than from his personal account.



KitchenAid
@KitchenAidUSA

Obamas gma even knew it was going 2 b bad! 'She died 3 days b4 he became president'. [#nbcpolitics](#)

KitchenAid "mixes up" identities into a social snafu

Avoiding Human Error

Clearly, the KitchenAid tweet was an accident. But it was an accident that could have been easily avoided. The poster was most likely using a social management tool to control not only his personal account but the KitchenAid account as well. The upside of using these tools is the convenience of handling all of your different social accounts in one place. The downside is that mixing up your accounts is now that much easier.

And what could be worse than mixing up accounts? How about sending a message only meant for one person to thousands? Congressman Anthony Weiner knows firsthand the embarrassment of making this mistake. Mr. Weiner literally and figuratively went public with his privates when he accidentally tweeted out a lewd picture that was meant to be a direct message. While this example may be extreme (and more amusing due to a name perfect for punch lines), nothing good can come from tweeting something that was never meant to be public.

Do not rush posting anything—tweets, direct messages, Facebook posts—either from a social media management tool or directly from the platforms. Are you posting a public tweet or a private message? Are you sure? Take the time to confirm you've selected the right account. It's also wise to consider using different management tools for personal vs. private accounts. This way the chance of mixing up the two is reduced.

While there is not a surefire way to prevent all human error you can get pretty close by just stopping for moment to review what you're doing.

#4

Our Top 5 Social Fails

Entenmanns



Hashtag Fail: #notguilty was about the Casey Anthony verdict—not donuts

How to Check Yourself Before you Wreck Yourself

- ✓ Slow down!
- ✓ Double check EVERY post—are you sending it from the right account? Are you sending a public tweet or a private message?
- ✓ Consider using different management tools for personal and private accounts



4. The Lazy Game

So now you've seen what can happen when you rush in social. But simply slowing down will not help you avoid all errors. You have to be fully invested in what you're doing and more importantly, what you're putting out there. Everything you post reflects directly on your brand. Don't risk taking a hit by choosing to take a shortcut.

"Don't risk taking a hit by choosing to take a shortcut."

General Laziness = #NotAppreciated

Sometimes you are in a rush to get that tweet/pin/post up. But no matter how important the post, it can wait the 10 seconds it takes to check your work. Doublecheck your spelling and grammar. Use spell check. Read it out loud. Do whatever you have to do to avoid making simple—but grating—errors.

After you check your spelling make sure you check any links—even ones you made in a URL shortener service. If your fan is led to a dead end after clicking on a link, chances are they aren't going to dig for the right page. You lost them at "I'm sorry, that page does not exist."

Same Strokes For Different Folks

So, you've checked your spelling, grammar and links. You are now ready to copy that message and post it onto all of your social accounts. But....just...don't. You've spent the time to make sure your message is quality, don't diminish it by blasting it blindly.

All social media networks are different. They all have their own forms and conventions and their users expect certain things. Because the networks are so different, the content you provide on each should differ as well. Do not approach all of your social networks the same way. What does this mean? Well for one, do NOT blast the same message to all networks. Your fan that follows you on Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest should be rewarded for her loyalty with specialty content, not the same generic message in three different places.

Take the time to customize your content for each articular network. And please, please do NOT autopublish your tweets onto LinkedIn or your Pins onto Facebook, or any other kind of automation. It's lazy marketing at its finest.

Piggy-Backfire

Twitter hashtags have been used as successful marketing tools for both brand awareness and as a way to unite targeted conversations. They've also been used by brands to “piggyback” on the success of the existing trend. And sometimes that creates lazy marketing at its worst.

On July 20, 2012, a mass shooting occurred inside of a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado. Soon after the news hit the web, #Aurora was trending on Twitter and online fashion store CelebBoutique used the hashtag in what appeared to be a disconcerting act of insensitivity—using a tragedy to hawk a dress.



Unfashionable Piggybacking: CelebBoutique's lazy behavior causes outrage

Repeat after us: Do your research. Before you attempt to piggyback on any sort of trending phrase, research what that conversation is really about. CelebBoutique later apologized for its tweet, admitting that it didn't check the meaning behind the hashtag before using it. Instead, the brand chose to jump on a trending story to promote a product. The fact that the hashtag was about a mass shooting elevated this mistake to an epic fail.

Before you decide to piggyback, take the time to consider the impact of what you're doing. Is your content relevant to the trending hashtag? Meaningful hashtags, like #Aurora, should not be abused. They are being used for breaking news and discussions about very specific— and most likely sensitive—topics. Using the hashtag for a quick promotion is sure to cause a backlash. Only use the hashtag when you have something meaningful to add to the conversation.

If you choose to play it safe and create your own hashtags, do not forget to research those as well. Just because a hashtag isn't trending doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Take the time to look up the phrase and see if there is any content out there that you do not want to be associated with. Better safe than sorry.

#3

Our Top 5 Social Fails

7-Eleven



Funny to some, offensive to others. 7-Eleven should stick to relevant content—like Slurpees.

Don't be Lazy

- ✓ Double check your spelling and grammar
- ✓ Test all links before posting
- ✓ Customize content for each social network
- ✓ Do your research! Check all hashtags before using



5. Lacking the Sensitivity Gene

At its core social media is about forming relationships and having conversations with real people. You might be representing a brand, but you still have to act human. This means approaching social interactions the same way you would offline. You have to find a way to connect to people but you also have to use common sense.

Many brands have found success in social media by using humor and providing edgy content. By choosing to keep it light, brands may find it easier to connect with consumers and generate conversations. But humor can be a tricky thing. It can backfire if it crosses the line into offensive.

Poor Taste Isn't Funny

Sometimes jokes fall flat. We've all been there. But there is a big difference between an unfunny joke and one that is downright offensive.

Belvedere Vodka crossed over the funny line into distasteful when it posted an image on its Facebook and Twitter accounts that appeared to be making light of sexual assault. The image was quickly taken down and apologized for but the damage had already been done. Thousands of fans were outraged and many called for boycotts of the brand.

When attempting humor, stay away from any hot-button issues. Consider rape, abuse, religion, race and politics off limits. If you're not sure if you're crossing the line, ask someone else on your team for his or her opinion. Still not sure? Don't post it.



Belvedere Vodka's Hangover: It wasn't so funny the next morning

Don't Be A Total Newsjack

Many times, current events can be great inspiration for content. Some brands are even finding ways to leverage those events into coverage for their own content. Newsjacking, a term popularized by David Meerman Scott, is “the process by which you inject your ideas or angles into breaking news, in real-time, in order to generate media coverage for yourself or your business.” It can be a powerful tool if done correctly, but if done in poor taste it can seriously harm your brand’s reputation.

As Hurricane Sandy raged up the east coast in October of 2012, some brands attempted to pull positive marketing out of the disaster. Urban Outfitters offered free shipping, along with ill-fated humor about the hurricane. Unfortunately for the retailer, the insensitive attempt at newsjacking didn't blow over—it was accused of exploitation and berated across the web.



Urban Outfitters creates its own natural disaster by attempting to leverage Hurricane Sandy into sales

While the team behind the Urban Outfitters’ tweet may not have known the severity of the storm at the time of tweeting—it left over 100 people dead, six million without power and racked up 20 billion dollars in damages—it was still in bad taste to use a natural disaster as a promotional tool.

Newsjacking is essentially real-time marketing. To be successful, you have to move fast, which also means you have to use caution. Make sure your whole team agrees on the content before running with an idea.

Any attempt at newsjacking should be relevant, genuine and add to the conversation. If you have to question any of these three, then it’s best to abandon the idea. And if you only take one lesson away from this e-book, remember this: Don’t EVER use a tragic event as an opportunity to plug your brand without providing value to the conversation, no matter how harmless it may seem.

Keep it Classy

- ✓ Use common sense
- ✓ If you’re not sure if your content is offensive, don’t post it
- ✓ Don’t EVER use a tragic event as an opportunity to plug your brand without providing value

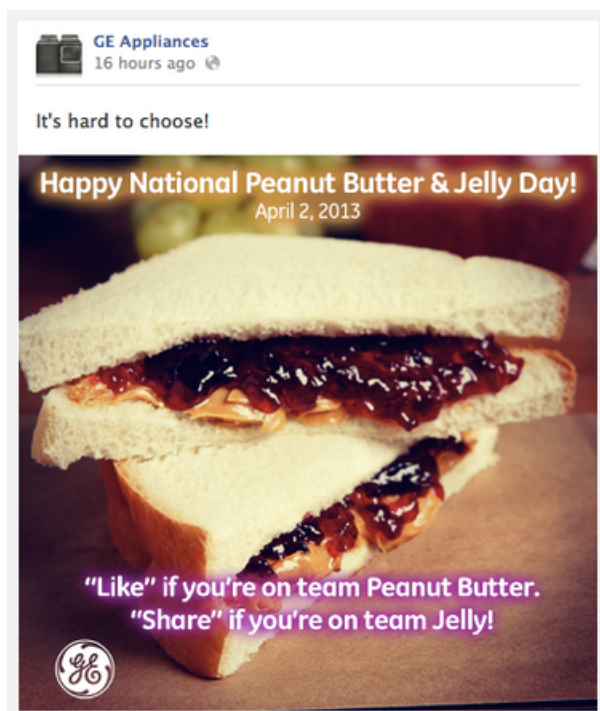


6. Begging for Attention

A brand's social media presence should not be any different from its already established branding. Think of your social networks as extensions of your brand. Your voice and your strategy should match your brand.

Some brands think they have to be funny, witty or plain outrageous to earn traction in the social web. But that approach won't work for every brand. Nothing sticks out more than a social strategy that's offbrand. Some brands think that the only way they can gain attention is by using cheap thrill content like memes, puppy pictures or irrelevant themes. Take "National Peanut Butter & Jelly Day" (yes, this is a real thing). This would be an appropriate theme for a peanut butter company to participate in, but an appliance company? Not so much.

Make sure the content you post and share is relevant to your brand. The whole point of creating a social media following is to talk directly to consumers who are interested in your brand and who might invest in it. This means you should be creating content that appeals specifically to the audience that your brand is trying to reach. Who are you mostly likely to buy an oven from? A company who posts meme after meme who makes you laugh or one that provides a valuable checklist for how to choose the right oven for your needs?



GE Appliances: Always there to help you pick your favorite foods

Stop Begging for Attention

- ✓ Make sure your voice and strategy match your brand
- ✓ Make sure all content is relevant to your brand
- ✓ Focus on creating valuable content for your target audience



7. Playing With Emotions

“Like this if you don’t kick puppies.” We’ve all seen these kinds of posts (and probably “Liked” them out of sheer guilt). But did these “Likes” result in any real worth for the original posters? Nope. And they didn’t stop people from actually kicking puppies either.

Likes and Shares are important. The more people that “Like” or share your posts, the more people the message is reaching. But is that message enhancing your brand? The amount of “Likes” won’t matter if the message has no value.

Today’s TMJ4, a local news channel in Milwaukee, posted a video that showcased all the ways the city was giving back to those affected by the Boston Bombing tragedy. It seemed like a nice piece of content, until the station guilted its audience into sharing it.

Emotionally manipulating your fans into sharing or liking a post will not gain you meaningful exposure or engagement. If you’re posting interesting content that’s right for your brand, the right fans will share it, which means it is more likely to reach your intended audience. Fans who genuinely like your content will promote it because they want to, not because you’re guiltling them in to sharing it.

“Fans who genuinely like your content will promote it because they want to, not because you’re guiltling them into sharing it.”

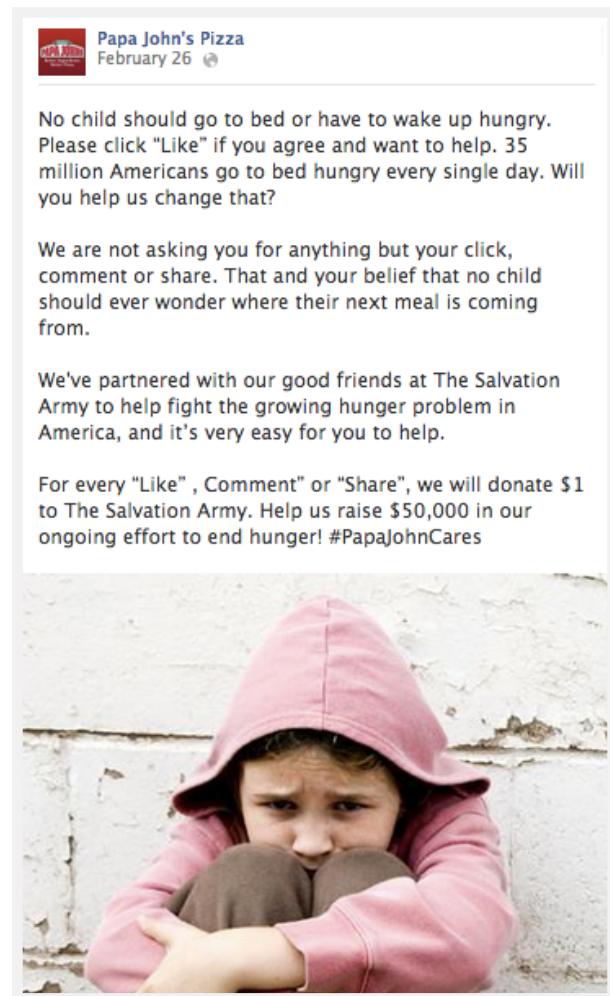


Today's TMJ4's Translation: If you do not engage with this content you have no soul

Social Charity

Some brands have taken “Like” abuse to the next level by involving promises of charitable contributions. The brand presents a worthy cause and then asks you to share the content. The more you share, the more it donates.

Papa John's Pizza has run several of these promotions in conjunction with The Salvation Army on its Facebook page. Posts claimed that for every like, share or comment the pizza brand would donate to The Salvation Army and help feed children in need.



Papa John's: Better engagement, better donations.

On the surface these types of posts appear to be a nice gesture, but when you really consider the motivation behind them, it just feels sleazy. Rather than just donating the money, brands like Papa John's appear to be scheming its audience into engaging with their content.

#2

Our Top 5 Social Fails

Chrysler

I find it ironic that Detroit is known as the #motorcity and yet no one here knows how to f—ing drive

about 3 hours ago via web

Reply Retweet



Chrysler Autos
Chrysler Autos

Easy mistake, horrible timing. At the time of this mistweet, Chrysler was running ads that celebrated Detroit.

Stop Playing With Emotions

- ✓ Don't rely on empty likes to push your content
- ✓ Don't force engagement with charitable causes



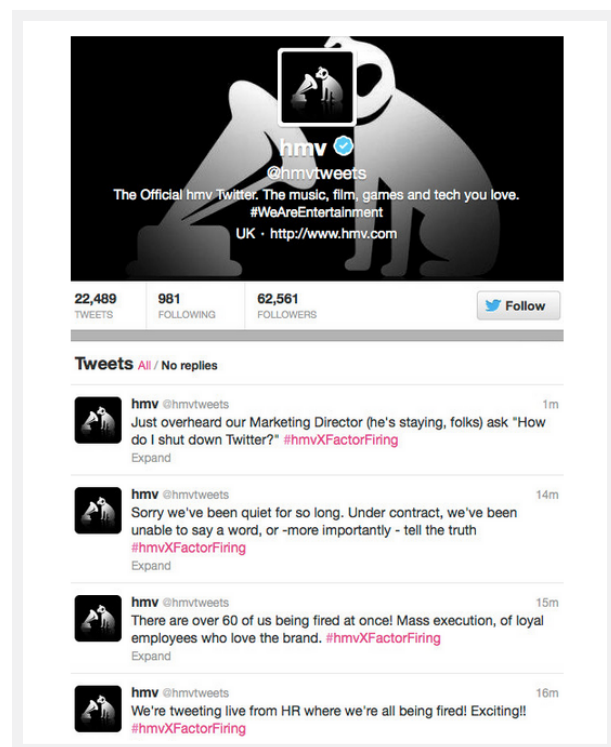
8. No Checks and Balances

If the examples of social media fails we've covered so far have taught you anything, it should be just how valuable—or detrimental—your social media presence can be to your brand's overall image and reputation. That's why it is important to have the right people in charge of handling your brand's social activities.

There has been a lot of debate over who should handle the day-to-day management of a brand's social accounts. Should you entrust an intern? Your marketing director? The CEO? We could debate for hours on the merits and dangers of each one of these positions being in charge. The job title or age of the person doesn't matter. All that matters is that your community manager (or managers) needs to be someone you trust. Perhaps it's someone who has been at your company long enough to prove them trustworthy or maybe it's a new hire that comes highly recommended. Whoever it is, you need to not only trust them with your social accounts but with your brand itself. Heavy huh?

A brand that found out the hard way that it trusted the wrong person is HMV, a leading specialist retailer of music, film, games and technology products. HMV went down in Twitter infamy when an employee who managed its social media live-tweeted the mass firing of over 60 of its staff members. By the time management got control over the account, some serious damage had been done. The tweets had gone viral, blogs went up and by the next morning the debacle filled the headlines.

Your social media presence is an extremely vital component of your brand image. Learn from HMV and put serious thought into appointing your social media manager.



HMV's Live Entertainment: When an employee goes rogue, the brand pays

How Many Keys?

Another lesson you should take away from the HMV debacle is that whomever it is you choose to drive your brand's social accounts, they shouldn't be the only one with the keys. More than one person should have access, but be careful to not give permissions to too many. Again, access should only be given to those who have proven that they can be trusted. And more importantly, management should always know who these people are. Who manages and has access to your brand's social media accounts should never be a mystery.

Do you Need a Backseat Driver?

Letting employees have an all-access pass to your social accounts could prove to be problematic. Some brands choose to set up a management system where all posts must be reviewed before going live. Depending on the industry and post frequency, that could be unnecessary, but there should be some middle ground, particularly when the social media manager is just starting out. The marketing team should all agree on the focus and strategy of social. This way all who manage the actual accounts have the same directions and will be sure to stay on brand (remember how important that is from Fail #6?).

It's also important for all team members to be aware of any planned social campaigns and follow the social activity in general. This way if the person in charge of a certain campaign gets sick or "goes rogue," there is a backup plan and someone else can step in and take over.

Social media managers are human and sometimes they'll make mistakes. Even the most trusted employee might go a little haywire when being faced with a pink slip. If you're going to let go employees who have access to your social accounts, it's best to change the access settings or passwords before you fire them. Not sure who has access to your accounts? Go back to the start of Fail #8 and read again.

#1

Our Top 5 Social Fails

Kenneth Cole



Millions are in uproar in #Cairo. Rumor is they heard our new spring collection is now available online at <http://bit.ly/KCairo> -KC

Fashion designer Kenneth Cole makes light of violent protests in Egypt to promote his new collection.

Create Checks and Balances

- ✓ Choose your community manager based on trust
- ✓ Make sure more than one person has access to social accounts
- ✓ All team members should monitor social activity
- ✓ Have a backup for your community manager



9. Getting Caught With Your Pants Down

Every brand should have a social media crisis management plan. Why? Well, let's see. We've already covered fired employees taking over a Twitter account, a fashion boutique appearing to make light of a mass shooting, and a politician who literally got caught with his pants down. Twit happens! Your brand needs a plan on how to handle the unexpected. You should have a response strategy in place so if (or when) a crisis happens you are ready to react quickly.

Get Ahead Of It

As a general practice you should always be monitoring your brand, the names of your management team, your blog, your events and even your competitors' names in social media and throughout the web. With constant monitoring, a crisis is less likely to slip through the cracks.

Your management plan should contain a clear chain of command for who needs to be made aware of a potential crisis and also who will be handling the response (spoiler alert: You do need to respond to the controversy.). Make sure all parties are contacted and have input on the brand's reaction.

If your brand typically needs approval by your legal team for most social activities, it would be wise to have the team approve initial response posts for each social platform ahead of time. This way when a crisis hits, you can easily edit and publish the posts relatively quickly.

It's also important to monitor all social platforms for general news and not just news related to your brand. Why? Because when something like the Aurora shooting happens your brand shouldn't be caught off guard. The social web loves to go after brands that continue normal marketing efforts during a time of tragedy.

Stop And Review

When your company is caught up in any kind of controversy, one of the first steps you need to take is to halt and evaluate your social media activities. All social efforts should be delayed while your team figures out its response plan.

One of the first things you need to do is cancel any auto-scheduled tweets or posts. After eliciting public outrage when horse meat was discovered in its beef burgers, UK supermarket chain Tesco added more fuel to the fire when its own Twitter account made a horse reference. Posted the very night the scandal broke, the tweet was met with a bombardment of angry responses from people who didn't find it so amusing. The supermarket quickly apologized, saying that the tweet had been previously scheduled.



Unbridled Tweet: Tesco forgot it scheduled one very loaded post

And while the odds are your scheduled tweets won't contain as great of a coincidental gem as Tesco's tweet, any scheduled tweet will make it seem as though you're going about business as normal—or worse, that you're simply ignoring the issue—and it will not reflect well on your brand.

All of this applies during times of tragedy as well. Halt any social activities until your team has a chance to review and decide its course of action.

Acknowledge The Problem

One of the biggest mistakes a brand can make during a crisis is waiting to acknowledge the problem. It may seem logical to wait until your legal team or CEO writes an official statement, but the social web moves too fast for these kinds of safeguards. While you're waiting for your statement, your silence is causing outrage in the form of angry tweets and Facebook wall attacks. People understand that mistakes happen, but they won't stand for a coverup or having the issue ignored.

If you do not yet have an explanation, then don't offer one. There is no need to lie in an attempt to cover up a mistake. It is best to respond to the crisis quickly by acknowledging the issue and ensuring the public that you're looking into it. An immediate apology may also be called for depending on the problem.

Keep Your Pants up

- ✓ Keep a constant watch on mentions of your brand
- ✓ Establish a clear chain of command for handling a response
- ✓ Delay all social media efforts while you work on your response plan
- ✓ Cancel any auto-scheduled tweets or posts (in times of crisis or tragedy)
- ✓ Acknowledge the problem immediately

Fail-Proof Social



Each of the social media fails we have covered in this e-book has a lesson to teach. While it may be easy to brush some of them off as highly unlikely, think about some of the companies we have talked about here. Do you think a reputable brand like KitchenAid ever thought it would make such a huge blunder? Or did HMV ever think it would be the victim of employee sabotage? Probably not. Don't trick yourself into thinking your brand or company will be exempt from these types of mistakes.

Whether it's reevaluating your social strategy or simply slowing down, you now have an actionable list of what your brand can improve upon. Remember that you won't be able to control everything so don't try. Embrace the good, embrace the bad and have fun experimenting. Focus on ways you can make your social accounts better and don't forget to plan for the unexpected.

Social media has changed the world of marketing and the relationship between companies and consumers, which means there is great responsibility in representing your brand online. Don't approach it carelessly. Otherwise, we might be talking about your fail next. But then again you did read this e-book so we're sure you won't make our next list.

About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation



Hootsuite is the most widely used platform for managing social media, loved by over 10 million people around the globe and trusted by more than 800 of the Fortune 1000. Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era and scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and regions. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of social networks complemented by 200+ business applications and integrations, allowing organizations to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

Along with our channel and agency partners, we help organizations build deeper relationships with customers, stay connected to the needs of the market, grow revenue, and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help organizations pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through product training, group training and tailored organizational training, as well as security and compliance services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting enterprise.hootsuite.com

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