

7 deadly sins of community management

By [Shannon Atherfold](#)

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Bar the obvious, there are seven things no social media community manager should ever do. Brands need to be aware that the person/team who has access to their social platforms has a tremendous amount of power - the power to make or break its reputation.



The days of blaming the 'intern' are over. It's time that companies remain accountable and invest as much into selecting a community manager as they do a CFO. Below is a list of definite don'ts, all based on real situations and experiences (the brands involved will not be mentioned as they have suffered enough embarrassment already...)

1. Missing crucial customer questions or DMs

Responsiveness is everything - not replying quickly enough can be detrimental to ongoing brand trust. Community managers need to be prompt in responding to easy questions, such as “where are you based,” “what time does your Greenside branch close” or similar. Yes, automatic responses in Facebook Messenger will buy some time, but after that customers will expect to interact with a real live person who can actually provide real live answers.

2. Missing a complaint

Negative comments are inevitable. Of course, there will be trolls who will not change their stance no matter what you do and often, after you have tried everything to resolve the issue, may not warrant any further response (sometimes a voucher just isn't enough to deter their moment of “fame”). However, the majority of the time, you sincerely acknowledge the comment or concern and move it to the DMs as quickly as possible to resolve it offline.

3. Even worse, missing a compliment

There is nothing worse than a customer taking the time to praise good service or rave about a product to just hear crickets. The best way to reinforce emotional buy-in and keep those positive reviews streaming in? Give the compliment as much validation as possible and assure the user that the feedback will be passed on to the correct franchise owner or employee and yes, emojis are allowed.

4. Launching into a personal attack

Being a community manager means being objective and impartial. Far too often, we have seen actual owners getting way too emotional and semi-harassing users for saying something negative (but legitimate) about their businesses online. Establish a brand voice or tone from the start and stick to it! Remember, it's never "I", it's always "we." Be polite, genuine and interested, and never launch into an aggressive tirade. You will end up looking like the "Karen" at the end of the day...

5. Accidentally being logged into your own account instead of the company's

This unfortunately happens a lot. The "what a great piss up" tweet that ends up in a company's official feed...oops. Screenshots suck - reacting too late may mean that valuable followers have already seen the error and worse, taken a snapshot cementing its existence for all of eternity. Moral of the story, Hootsuite is your friend - keep personal accounts and business ones completely separate.

6. Deleting negative comments or complaints

Oh dear - something to hide, skeletons in the closet, an attempt to conceal a glaring mistake? This is such a no-no - acknowledge those comments you know are legitimate (see sin number 2 above...) and follow due process. Be engaged and face the music. No one is going to trust a brand that isn't transparent or won't admit to its mistakes. This also refers to the mistakes of community managers who very often try to cover their tracks if a user spots an error or points out the obvious. Don't, just don't.

7. Reporting a user's comment when they correct your spelling/grammar

Yes, this happened. The worst of the worst deadliest sins, deleting and reporting a user's correction as hate speech. Why oh why? Brand X, in what world is correcting the plural of "elf" contravening community standards? Acknowledge the error, say a thank you, give the user a top fan badge and fix the mistake. If it's too late for the artwork (which, again, miraculously went through five million approval stages) just edit the post (yes, it's possible on Facebook).

Don't destroy Christmas, just give the *elves* the credit they deserve. Wrongly reporting a customer is just a travesty (not to mention, a grave injustice) and bound to antagonise your online community - of all the sins this one, quite frankly, is the one that breaks Santa's heart the most.

Brands and community managers, confess your sins, repent and just plain stay clear of the above. Openness, trust and transparency are everything. Those who manage your channels are, by default, an extension of who you are and what you stand for. Choose wisely.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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