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# Keep Calm and Post On: Managing a Social Media Crisis

CT Recreation & Parks Association Conference  
Mohegan Sun Convention Center  
November 25, 2019 - Sarah Miner

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# Description

This session will focus on how to prepare your organization for a social media crisis. Many crises have a tendency to erupt on social media and can quickly get out of hand. This often results in negative sentiments about your brand or organization. Learn how creating a social media policy and guidelines will help keep your brand organized, transparent, and at the ready!





# Learning Outcomes

- How to prepare accordingly for a social media crisis.
- Create social media guidelines that reinforce your mission.
- Identify what constitutes a social media crisis.
- Outline key roles.
- Analyze outcomes.

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**“Social media is not a media. The key is to listen, engage, and build relationships.”**

**David Alston**



**Tip**

Remember that social media is, at its very core, human to human interaction. Social media is about engagement and community.



# Preparing for a Social Media Crisis

- **Step 1:** Conduct a social media audit of your organization.
- **Step 2:** What is your social media policy?
- **Step 3:** Identify what constitutes a social media crisis; Know when to act.
- **Step 4:** Create and discuss crisis scenarios.
- **Step 5:** Analyze outcomes.

## Step 1: Conduct a Social Media Audit



# Who are you on social media? Where is your audience?

(Conduct a social media audit)



## Tip

Your online community will be ambassadors for your organization. Know where they are on social media so you are able to nurture these relationships.

# Social Media Audit:

## Answer key questions about your social media.

What networks are you on?

*(Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn)*

What is your handle?

*(@glastonburyparkrec)*

Who manages those networks?

*Marketing Team or only Deborah.*

What is the mission of the channel? For what purpose are you utilizing this channel? Do you have a defined social media voice?

*To promote the well being of town residents by sharing information about parks and recreation activities, events, and opportunities.*

What is your top content? Is it resonating with your audience?

*Photos of holiday extravaganza; Kids event at Riverfront Park*

What is your audience demographic?

*Young families, mostly female, Millennials.*



# Evaluate Your Content

- $\frac{1}{3}$  of your content promotes your organization and generates leads.
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of your content comes from other sources that align with your organization.
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of your content engages with followers through Q&A, responding to comments or reposting user-generated content.



## Tip

“Post content that resonates with your cause but is also highly relatable and easy to identify with. Your brand identity is created by moments over time. Each individual post, tweet, and share is an opportunity to impact how your brand is portrayed. **How do you want to be perceived?**”

Ellie Burke

### Character/Persona

Friendly	Playful
Warm	Authoritative
Inspiring	Professorial

### Tone

Personal	Honest
Humble	Direct
Clinical	Scientific

## Social Media Brand Voice

### Language

Complex	Simple
Savvy	Jargon-filled
Insider	Fun
Serious	Whimsical

### Purpose

Engage	Entertain
Educate	Delight
Inform	Sell
Enable	Amplify

## Step 2: Create a Social Media Policy



# What is a Social Media Policy?

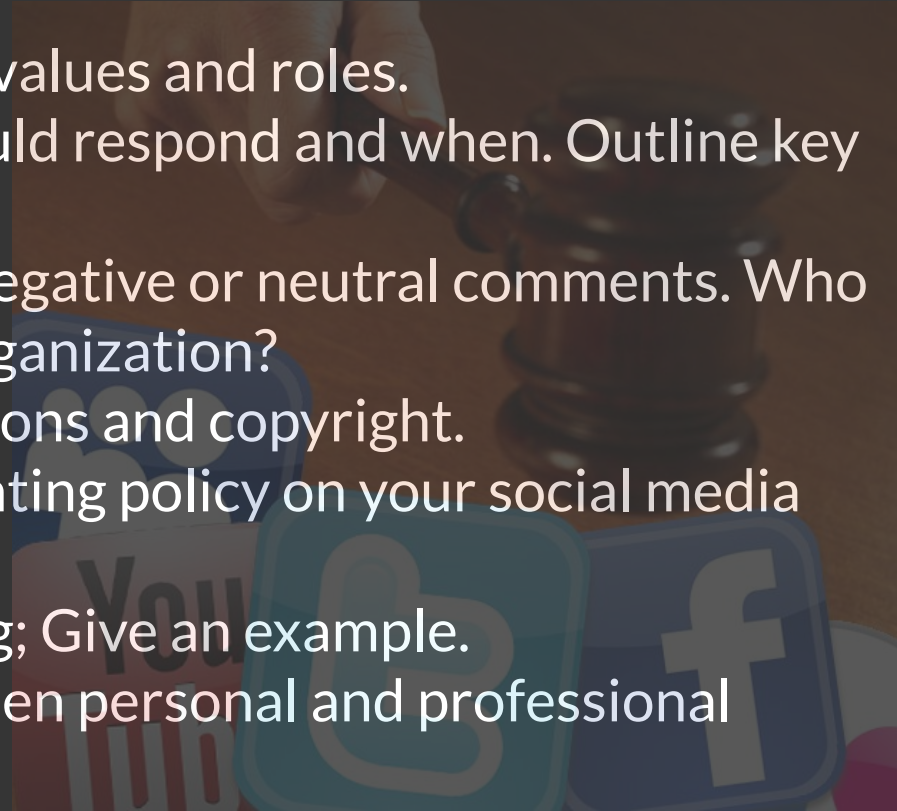
A social media policy is a guide for how your employees or team use your organization's social media in best and worst case scenarios.

The policy can be as long or as short as you see fit but should be a document you share with the entire organization.



## What goes into your social media policy?

1. Your organization's social media values and roles.
2. Your monitoring policy: who should respond and when. Outline key roles.
3. How you'll respond to positive, negative or neutral comments. Who acts as the official voice of the organization?
4. Your policies on privacy, permissions and copyright.
5. Create and post a public commenting policy on your social media accounts.
6. What kind of posts you're sharing; Give an example.
7. Where you'll draw the line between personal and professional opinions; Give an example.





## Step 3: Identifying a Social Media Crisis



## What constitutes a social media crisis?

- A social media crisis is a decisive change from the norm.
- A social media crisis has a potentially material impact on the organization overall.
- A social media crisis can indirectly impact more than one organization.

# During a Crisis

Remain Calm.

Pause regularly scheduled posts.

*"Happy #Throwback Thursday! We loved our Thursday night concert series - thanks to everyone who volunteered and participated!!"*

Acknowledge the issue or crisis = transparency makes friends.

Discuss and review the issue with your staff. Refer to your policy.



Post a long-form response on your website.

Don't be afraid to take it offline.



## Step 4: Crisis Scenarios



# Potential Crisis Scenarios



Threat of West Nile or EEE.

A child drowns at a local town pool.

A parent attends a sporting event with a gun.

Animal infestation causing destruction and unsafe areas in town park.

A camp counselor accused of sexual misconduct.

A dad watching his son's basketball game has a heart attack and dies in the gymnasium.

Natural disasters.

## Step 5: Analyze Outcomes



# Analyze & Review

What started the crisis?

How can we stop that from happening again?  
What can we do better next time?

What worked well?

# After a social media crisis....



What was the impact? How did it affect your brand?

Review your crisis response.

Moving forward, what will be your plan of action? Will you continue the conversation? Take it offline? Will there be updates?

Make adjustments to your social media crisis plan accordingly.

Keep calm and post on!

# Why is this topic important?

- Protect your reputation.
- Be prepared for legal issues both internally and externally that require documentation of policies and procedures.
- Creates transparency and subsequently support for your organization.



## Note:

A social media crisis plan is like buying insurance: You hope for the best but plan for the worst.

“When it comes to crisis communications, if you always focus on building a relationship with your customers, fans and followers, you will always find yourself communicating in the right direction.”

Melissa Agnes,  
President and co-founder of Agnes + Day Inc.

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# Exercise: Developing a Social Media Voice

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# Good luck!

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