Council Post: 14 Social Media Faux Pas To Avoid At All Costs

https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2020/05/14/14-social-media-faux-pas-to-avoid-at-all-costs/#45ae6379b5ec

May 14, 2020, 08:15am EDT

Forbes Agency Council COUNCIL POST

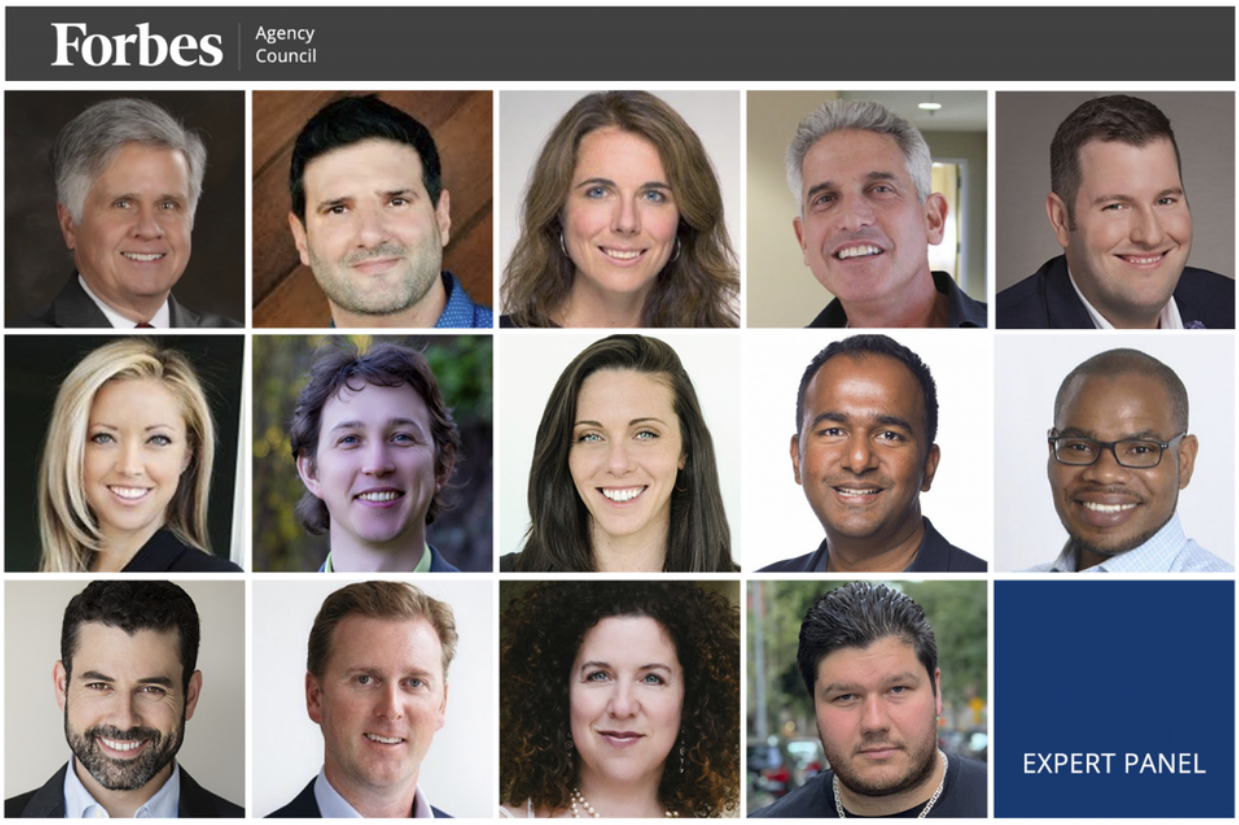
POST WRITTEN BY

Expert Panel, Forbes Agency Council

Successful PR, media strategy, creative and advertising executives from **Forbes Agency Council** share trends and tips.

Social media is an important part of any company's marketing strategy. While social media savvy helps promote brand recognition and overall success, one misstep can bring a business unwanted attention—even national infamy.

As industry experts, the members of Forbes Agency Council have seen their share of social media faux pas. Below, 14 of them share some of the biggest mistakes to avoid on your social channels.



Members of Forbes Agency Council discuss social media missteps businesses should avoid. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS.

1. Inconsistency In Posting

The biggest faux pas is inconsistency. If your company can't provide consistent, relevant content, then you're better served—in terms of brand positioning—by not using social media at all. - Gordon Andrew, Highlander Consulting Inc.

2. Seeming Disconnected From The World

Too often, companies are so focused on their own messaging and goals that they come across as disconnected from what's happening in the world or industry. Especially at a time like now, it's so important for companies to start by listening, paying attention to what others are saying and exhibiting the appropriate level of empathy. Doing the right thing is as important as saying the right thing. - Matt Berry, Conversion Agile Marketing

Forbes Agency Council is an invitation-only community for executives in successful public relations, media strategy, creative and advertising agencies. ***Do I qualify?***

3. Engaging Haters

Sometimes the simplest advice is truly the best: If you've made a misstep online, apologize and move on. If you take time to engage the social media haters, the fight will never end. There are professionals whose job it is to do this for a living. Other people have too much time on their hands and simply no empathy or filter. Don't make their problem your problem. Apologize. Move on. - Megan Cunningham, Magnet Media, Inc.

4. Sharing Polarizing Content

First, steer clear of political or religious opinions in general—this should go without saying. Second, be careful when trying to be humorous or catchy by posting "too soon" when it comes to current events. Third, remember that social posts will live forever in some form, so if you can't stand by your words forever, then you need to reconsider that post. - Bernard May, National Positions

5. Failure To Understand Your Audience

The vast majority of social media missteps are a result of not understanding or considering your audience, the global landscape or both. Poor attempts at humor, a statement that does not reflect the beliefs of your audience or poor handling of an issue can all lead to public consternation. Avoid "hot takes" and speak authentically and true to your brand voice to avoid those faux pas moments. - David Harrison, EVINS

6. Being Self-Serving

Being conscious and appropriate to what is happening in the public domain is critical when posting socially. For instance, in our current health and economic crisis, posting things that do not acknowledge it or take it into consideration would seem self-serving and inappropriate in a time of need. - Jessica Hawthorne-Castro, Hawthorne LLC

7. Letting Quality Slip

It almost always comes down to common sense. The problem is that these things usually come up when social media managers get relaxed about making sure everything goes out right. As long as you keep your quality standards up for every tweet or post you send from the company's accounts, these unfortunate mistakes can be avoided. - Dmitrii Kustov, Regex SEO

8. Acting Opportunistically

One of the biggest missteps in social media is trying to be opportunistic or lacking empathy about the current conversation. Understanding a trending topic and wanting to join the conversation makes sense if you're staying true to your brand values. But simply pretending to be informed or to care to get your name out there can have disastrous results. - Jessica Reznick, We're Magnetic

9. Not Monitoring Response

The best thing you can do is monitor the comments. If the comments are positive, then that's great. If they're negative and it's not being monitored, it's going to look worse. It would seem as though you're promoting something that people want you to take down. This can be avoided if you monitor it. Do it not just once a day, but multiple times a day. Update the ad and listen to your audience. - Solomon Thimothy, OneIMS

10. Too Much Self-Attention

One of the biggest mistakes on social media is the fact that there is too much self-attention happening out there. What that means is that it is necessary to know the right blend of personal and promotional content. You must give to the community to make sure that you have a responsible balance in the mix. - Jon James, Ignited Results

11. Political Posts

Unless you are a news organization or work in the political world, bringing politics into your posts should be avoided at all costs. Getting political can alienate a lot of your customers and clients. Always steer clear of talking politics. - Zachary Binder, Bell + Ivy

12. Capitalizing On A Serious Matter For Marketing Purposes

The biggest faux pas a company can make on social media is being apathetic to what is happening in the world. Capitalizing on a serious matter for marketing purposes is a great way to bring unwanted and oftentimes detrimental attention to your business. Double-check your content and look at it from all angles to ensure your message can't be construed in a negative light. Empathy is always key! - Tripp Donnelly, REQ

13. Tone-Deafness

On social media, it's essential to build relationships with customers. If a company is too self-focused or is tone-deaf to what its market wants, needs and seeks, its presence will not be valuable or brand-building. Social media should be outward-focused interactions ("What can

I do for you?"), not self-focused. It's about relationships above all else! - Lynne Golodner, Your People LLC

14. Running Away From Attention

Never run away from attention, whether good or bad. If there is negative attention on you or your business on social media, address it. Whether it's an irate customer, viral clip or other potential mishap, identify it and address it in a genuine and empathetic way. Be open to bad attention and take it as a lesson to learn from. It's also something others can learn about how you and your business handle situations. - Tony Pec, Y Not You Media

Forbes Agency Council

Forbes Agency Council is an invitation-only, fee-based organization for executives in successful public relations, media strategy, creative and advertising agencies.