

Social Media Crisis Response - A checklist.

Respond quickly.

Acknowledge that you're aware of the specific issue at hand. If appropriate, convey deep concern/regret. If you don't have answers yet, tell people exactly how you're looking into it and when you'll get back to them. Check back in periodically, even if it's just to give a progress update. Don't leave people hanging.

Own your screw ups.

The quickest and best way to extinguish social media furore is to apologise and mean it. Explain how you're working to fix the problem. The worst thing you can do is get defensive.

The internet is always right.

In almost all situations (even if you feel like you haven't done anything wrong) the best thing to do is to cop to it (quickly) and say sorry. Digging your heels in will usually just anger more people.

Be a human.

Not a machine that spits out media statements. The single golden rule is to be genuine. You don't need to pretend to be an expert – just focus on being authentic and approachable. Interact with people as individuals -- don't copy-and-paste the same canned response to everyone if your responses will be visible to everyone. Use the kind of language you would with people in a social setting (because *social* media).

Look for (or manufacture) common ground.

People almost always respond badly to being told they're wrong. If you can, find a small piece of common ground and lead with that (even if this requires slightly 'misunderstanding' something they've said).

Be polite.

In social media world (as in the human flesh world) people respond well to good manners.

Be discerning, but not cagey.

Don't say anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing quoted in the media. But *do* be as honest and open as possible. Give people as much info as you can about what's going on.

Know when to walk away.

Don't get into flame wars with people. You won't win, and you'll come off like a crazed ideologue. As a general rule, reply to people just once or twice, then leave it alone.

Know [our comments policy](#). Enforce it.

People are allowed to disagree with us. They're allowed to be passionate, provocative, ignorant and inarticulate. They're *not* allowed to be threatening, abusive, discriminatory or defamatory. They're *not* allowed to make our page a scary/unwelcoming place. Delete inappropriate comments and ban repeat offenders.