Dos and Don’ts of Responding to Comments

It’s always nice to hear “thank you” or “nice job,” but are you prepared to deal with criticism or unhappy customers?

The first rule of social media is be responsive—your response should be timely and helpful. Here are some dos and don’ts for responding to comments on social media:

1. **Don’t ignore them.** Ignoring the comments will not make them go away. Conversations about your agency or customer service are happening with or without you. It’s your responsibility to monitor what’s being said and to respond appropriately. According to Social Media Today, the average Facebook user has 100 or more friends. Those 100 or more friends are your potential customers—don’t sabotage a potential connection.

2. **Do respond within a reasonable timeframe.** If you are primarily on social media during the work week, your followers will understand if you don’t respond over the weekend. However, if more than 24 hours goes by without a response, you are giving customers a reason to complain.

3. **Don’t use social media to discuss any private policy information.** Social media is no different than any other communication tool—you are responsible for protecting private information. A simple response is best, “To protect your privacy, we prefer to handle all future communication about this matter directly with you and not reply through Facebook.”

4. **Do be sincere in your apology.** If you receive negative feedback through social media, it’s important to look into the problem, apologize (if appropriate) and offer a solution. This is your opportunity to turn a disgruntled customer into a loyal brand advocate, according to Social Media Today.

5. **Do reinforce positive behavior.** If someone gives you a compliment or recommendation, like, retweet or share the comment. Your actions will reinforce the good behavior and give your followers a reason to keep the compliments coming.

There are always exceptions to the rules. For example, if a negative comment is posted and it includes vulgar or inflammatory language, it’s OK to delete the comment. Just make sure your page includes a link to comment guidelines that outline clear expectations for interaction between fans and followers. Read EMC’s comment guidelines and use them to help craft your own.