



Social Media Complaints – What You Should Do



business customers social media customer experience

Summary: Complaints on social media have risen as people become more comfortable airing their grievances online. Not only that, 48% of consumers use social media before buying products or services. Solving the problem is important, but doing so privately is key. Otherwise, you could run into overshadowing of other customers' positive comments and even the loss of social media engagement with your customers.

Saying “please” and “thank you” as part of common courtesy started around the 1500s by the middle-class merchants during the commercial revolution. Today’s merchants (your business customers) often say “please” and “thank you,” but there may be times when they don’t — and they may even exhibit that discontent on social media.

Everyone wants to please customers, especially on social media. But how should you interact with an unhappy customer on social media? Very carefully. We give you some reasons why you may need to acknowledge the issue, but shouldn't engage deeply with unhappy customers on this platform. We will explain what you should do instead to protect your online reputation.

It’s certainly tempting to meet customers where there are — and increasingly, clients post their negative consumer experiences on social media. The 2020 National Consumer Rage Study showed that the number of customers who complain on Facebook, Twitter, or other social media is 3x the number from 3Ys ago.

Moreover, 48% of Americans check out other people’s experiences with a company on social media before purchasing goods or services. Whether you’re the company, the complainer, or the audience, this is a big change from years past, when problems were aired and solved privately, in person, or via letter or telephone. As younger, more tech-savvy customers join your institution, you will want to be prepared, should this situation arise.

When a customer uses social media to post a complaint and you solve the problem on the spot or at least acknowledge their frustration, you’re showing that you care about your clients and are quick to respond to their needs. That’s all positive. But, there is more.

What can happen

Overshadowing the good. Unfortunately, addressing the problem on social media also brings attention to the customer’s negative experience. It usually includes some back and forth posts, so instead acknowledge their frustration and encourage them to contact you by phone or in the branch, where you can provide more tailored, confidential resolution.

Especially on Twitter, responding to a complaint makes the original, unhappy post visible to everyone who follows your institution. (When you don’t respond, only the customer’s followers can read the tweet.)

A community financial institution (CFI) that gets a few complaints could find that its Twitter feed, Facebook page, or Instagram feed has turned into the complaints department, overshadowing the other, more positive posts that the CFI wants customers to see.

Loss of customer social media engagement. The Harvard Business Review analyzed Twitter pages for 375 companies in the S&P 500, measuring tweet volume for firm tweets, customer complaints, and company responses. Then it compared those numbers to changes in consumer attitudes about those companies.

The review found that companies publicly responding to complaints made on social media lost ground in consumers’ eyes, compared with businesses that resolved issues through private channels. Public complaint responses on Twitter meant lower levels of engagement with tweets that had nothing to do with complaints, including the companies’ own social media messages.

So, what should be done instead?

Acknowledge problems promptly online, solve them offline

When you encounter a complaint on social media:

- Do respond. Ignoring these customers is not a productive strategy.
- Do express your regret that the client has experienced a problem. Everyone wants to feel heard.
- Don’t offer solutions or negotiate a resolution on the social media platform where the complaint appeared.
- Don’t get drawn into a longer discussion on social media.
- Do use a single response to invite the unhappy client to discuss the problem with you using a private channel. There, of course, you can do your best to bring the difficulty to a satisfactory conclusion.

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Treasury	Yields	MTD Chg	YTD Chg
3M	0.02	0.01	-0.07
6M	0.04	0.01	-0.05
1Y	0.04	-0.01	-0.07
2Y	0.15	-0.02	0.02
5Y	0.82	-0.03	0.46
10Y	1.61	-0.02	0.69
30Y	2.29	-0.01	0.64
FF Market	FF Disc	IORR	
0.06	0.25	0.10	
SOFR	Prime	OBER	
0.01	3.25	0.04	

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