

4 ways brands should switch up their social media during Covid-19

By [Natalie Pool](#)

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Content in the time of corona is a minefield. Luckily there are so many great articles right now with advice on what not to do as brands on social media.



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Don't be flippant. Don't be gimmicky. Don't take advantage of the situation. And don't let your scheduled posts and media run wild without a good sense check.

So what should you do?

No one has all the answers. I certainly don't. But I do have some thoughts.

Now is the time to shine. To truly help our followers and customers. To offer them real value. To foster meaningful relationships that will last beyond the lockdown.

It's about going back to basics. Remembering what our brands stand for and why we loved social media in the first place. Social media connects people. It gives us unique insight into how they are feeling and what they are worried about. It

enables us to help them from afar.

Your brand may not be able to drive sales right now. And this presents a unique opportunity to do what some of us have always secretly wanted to do – simply engage!

You have a captive audience, spending more time online than ever before, desperate for some good news and positivity. Put them first and speak to them with intent.

So how do we do this? Here are 4 ways:

1. Refocus on community management

It's never been more important. Scrap the automated responses. Beef up the team. Take time to refine FAQs and polish those escalation plans. Let no comment or question go unanswered. And answer them in a human, compassionate tone. Prepare for the fact that your brand could face negative comments because of situations beyond your control and arm your team with responses that handle criticism with care.

[Slack](#) understands that people are relying on their product for remote working more than ever before. Their Twitter responses are human and helpful.

“ Working from home for the first time? If so, you might find yourself with a slew of questions, starting with "How exactly do I do this?" 📧📧

A quick thread.— Slack (@SlackHQ) [March 11, 2020](#) ”

“ @SlackHQ Within a channel, I'd like to be able to categorize conversations to refer back to later. For example our engineering team tagging [#requirement](#) or [#optional](#) would allow them to quickly locate threads with required features vs optional features. Any suggestions?— MichaelAmico (@MichaelAmico) [March 30, 2020](#) ”

“ thanks. since it's a new feature or I missed it in previous layout, there were a lot of drafts that really already outdated messages, some typos etc. But this tab is in "active" state, keeping attention. So I had to delete about 70 drafts one by one.— Evgeni Makarov (@makar) [March 30, 2020](#) ”

2. Establish a virtual newsroom

Meet (remotely of course) every morning to update the team on developments, queries and social listening findings. Identify opportunities to create real value and support for customers. Some of these will be content opportunities. Some of them will be business innovations. Think all of them through.

[Standard Bank](#) became the first financial institution to announce instalment relief for SMEs and full-time students who had taken out loans and they have continued to announce new measures on their social media platforms.

“ We're standing with South Africans and helping to [#FlattenTheCurve](#) by making a R10m donation towards several non-governmental organisations that are working with [@GovernmentZA](#) to combat the spread of [#Covid19](#). Read more on <https://t.co/gp8nUKsiG4> [pic.twitter.com/AvlpjLDdre](https://t.co/AvlpjLDdre)— StandardBankZA (@StandardBankZA) [March 25, 2020](#) ”

“ We understand the pressures of being a Small Business owner 📧📧. So we would like to lighten the load by giving our customers with a turnover of less than R20m a 3- month payment holiday, effective 1 April 2020. Visit <https://t.co/bXXJqJLM1D> for more information [#BankFromAnywhere](#) [pic.twitter.com/sQ689qHwwj](https://t.co/sQ689qHwwj)— SB BizBanking

(@SB_BizConnect) [March 22, 2020](#) ”

“ To assist students in managing their finances, we have pre-approved a payment holiday from 1 April - 30 June 2020 for our student loan customers studying full time. No applications needed, 0% interest & no fees will be charged. Read more <https://t.co/zf7RMLLYNH> #MakeMorePossible pic.twitter.com/5qfRpmYBv6— StandardBankZA (@StandardBankZA) [March 22, 2020](#) ”

3. Embrace new content types and platforms

I haven't even been at home for two weeks and I've already devoured all my favourite podcasts; I can't get enough of watching musicians streaming free concerts from their living rooms, and I'm loving all the free meditation apps and educational courses people are sharing. The point is – it's never been easier to create content from your couch and share it with the world.

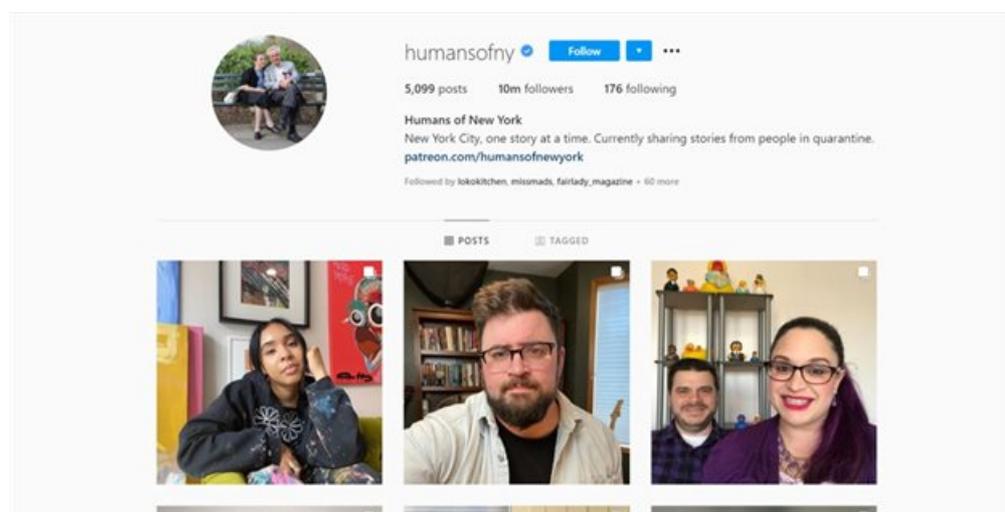
[Pick n Pay](#) did just that when they teamed up with South African musicians to create the song *Don't Panic Buy* encouraging consumers to shop responsibly during the lockdown. It cleverly shows the musos singing from the homes via video calls with a catchy tune and some questionable props.

“ No one likes 'that guy'. That's why friends don't let friends panic buy. Some of SA's musos hit the studio to remind you to shop responsibly and with your community in mind. pic.twitter.com/l78JSkFxt1— Pick n Pay (@PicknPay) [March 25, 2020](#) ”

4. Collaborate with influencers, ambassadors, experts and your community

Take a leaf out Pick n Pay's playbook and collaborate with the people in your brand family to create content that matters. Twitter Q&As with company insiders, video tutorials with influencers, playlists for your fans, podcasts with experts ... the possibilities are endless.

And If you are truly committed to putting our customers first, why not give them the space to tell their stories? User-Generated Content (UGC) goes beyond sharing a pic someone tagged us in. It means letting them tell their stories. [Humans of New York](#) has always done this, usually with beautiful portraits and heart-string pulling captions. Now in a time of self-distancing and isolation, they have asked for fans to send in their own pics and stories. And the content is no less emotive.



It's simple: showing your true values and purpose at a time when people most need to see them will earn you the trust and love that all brands strive for. Steer clear of being opportunistic and embrace the empathetic. Do the hard work now and set yourself up for success in the months ahead. People will remember the brands who did good when it mattered most.

ABOUT NATALIE POOL

A former magazine editor, Natalie found her place at Native VML in 2013, creating content for brands like Nestle, HIV South Africa and Isuzu...

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