

Tips on how to handle social media trolls

 By AIMEÉ SERRÃO

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When individuals post negative, rude and controversial comments causing discord on a social media platform, they are referred to as trolls. Identifying a troll is easy. They are the ones trying to provoke reactions out of online communities by making fiery statements and using inappropriate language. All of this is done in an attempt to make users on the platform react and this is often referred to as trolling.



Trolls can usually be found on social media platforms such as blogs, internet chat rooms and discussion forums. Seeing as trolls are prevalent in the social media sphere it is imperative to know how to deal with them appropriately otherwise you may run the risk of them tarnishing your brand.

Firstly, you have to know how to spot a troll.

- Trolls usually use negative and derogatory language on social media platforms.
- Trolls are set in their viewpoints and will not change their mind on a particular topic.
- Trolls normally hide behind false identities.
- Trolls have unlimited time to create social media havoc.

Before you feel disheartened by having trolls comment on your social media platform here are a few tips on how to keep the trolling under control.

Remain cool, calm and collected then respond

Your social media platform reflects your brand's image so never respond to a troll in a negative manner. Think carefully about how you are going to respond and take what the troll has said into account. This way you can establish if their complaint is legitimate or if they are just trying to spark a reaction out of you. Never take their comments to heart.

Be positive

Always try to remain positive and polite when interacting with a troll. Acknowledge the troll and thank them for their

viewpoint.

Humour

An effective way to deal with trolls is to use humour. This way you acknowledge the troll and diffuse the situation at the same time. However, using this tactic will also depend on the troll you are dealing with as humour may aggravate the situation so tread cautiously.

Take valid points as constructive criticism, lurkers are watching

Never forget that a large percentage of your online community are lurkers watching this interaction unfold. Always remain polite and respectful taking the trolls points into consideration. Remember, some negative comments are valid and constructive criticism can work in your favour.

Diffuse rumours with facts

Trolls love to spread rumours. If you can see they are tarnishing your brand make sure you diffuse the situation with facts. It's hard to argue with facts.

Know when to stop the interaction

If you can see that your interaction with the troll is having a negative effect and not diffusing the situation, then end the interaction by banning the troll from your social media platform or deleting the negative comments.

So how can you keep the trolls under the bridge?

In order to keep the trolls under control, make sure you are always active in your online space. Monitor communication closely and let your online community know you have rules and boundaries that must be adhered to. State that bullying, vulgar language and derogatory posts will not be tolerated and let them know that there are consequences for these actions. Users engaging in this type of behaviour will be banned from the page and negative comments will be deleted.

Remember to always have a positive attitude and treat everyone, even trolls, with respect. You can use humour tactics and facts in order to diffuse negative situations that may arise. Don't forget that your social media platform represents your brand so remember to keep calm and respond respectfully and politely.

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