

360° Digital Influence

How to Create Commenting Guidelines

October 8, 2007

360[°]
**DIGITAL
INFLUENCE**

Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide

How to create commenting guidelines

Social media allows for dialogue between the client and their customers or target audience. When consumers generate content (i.e., blog posts, viral videos, photos) about your client's brand or issue, it is an opportunity for engagement.

By commenting on the content, the client can achieve three objectives:

Amplify a positive message – the blogger is likely to respond to your comment or post about it and perhaps share with their online and offline social networks

Transform a negative message to positive – The client can correct misinformation or, in the case of valid customer dissatisfaction, attempt to remedy the problem.

Communicate to consumers a very personalized and empowering message – “We’re listening to what you have to say and it is having an impact.”

How to create commenting guidelines

Establish how you will be monitoring for content: human or machine.

- available budget
- potential volume of content
- need for immediate response (crisis situations) versus monthly reporting

Establish how you will be providing reports/alerts to the client to allow them to know when and if to comment. Daily? Weekly?

Determine who – on the client's side – will be responsible for commenting, whether it's a department (customer service, public affairs) or an individual.

- Ogilvy should not comment on the client's behalf, as doing so covertly betrays our ethical code of transparency and could backfire – on both Ogilvy and the client. Doing so overtly undermines the message that the client is listening.

Create categories that signify tone (positive, neutral and negative) and topic versus trying to create a "one size fits all" guideline.

How to create commenting guidelines

Draft potential scenarios and appropriate comments for each category, with the clarification that the client should not cut and paste canned language when commenting.

- use their own voice
- make direct reference to points made by the consumer

Determine turnaround time for commenting. Ideally, clients should comment within the first 24 hours, particularly when commenting on blogs, as older content moves down and eventually off the page and readers may not see the client's comment.

Continue to monitor comments for **responses** to the client's comment and advise them to continue to participate in the dialogue.

How to create commenting guidelines

When the content is negative . . .

And there is valid reason for customer dissatisfaction

- Express regret for their dissatisfaction, confidence in product/service and commitment to resolving the issue
- Provide concrete steps as to how they can resolved their issue: a phone number or email address, specific steps to take, an individual to contact (if appropriate) and a way to follow up with you if their issue is not resolved
- If the email address of the consumer is available, follow up to ensure their issue is resolved
- Transform them from a detractor to an ambassador by inviting them to share the eventually positive outcome of their experience with other consumers via review sites, etc.

How to create commenting guidelines

When the content is positive . . .

Thank them and invite them to . . .

- Try out additional products
- Join the client's customer loyalty program
- Share their positive comments with others via consumer review sites
- Subscribe to your client's RSS feeds or e-newsletter to stay on top of new information
- Share additional information with their readers, friends and family members
- Join the client's affiliate marketing program
- Become engaged in your client's advocacy campaign

If they are influential, **stay in touch with them**. Developing a relationship with them will increase the likelihood that they will serve as an ambassador for your client's brand, product or issue in the future.

How to create commenting guidelines

When the content is negative . . .

But it contains misinformation about an issue, product or brand

- Politely clarify the misinformation
- Provide links to help to back up the client's comment, including links to the client's site and third party sources (including CGM)
- If they are influential, provide them with the opportunity to experience the client's product or service or to engage with the issue or organization in some other way.

In some instances, either because the consumer is simply being contrary or is not influential, advise the client not to comment. If they are not influential, the comment will just fade away and if they are contrary, commenting may unnecessarily fan the flames.

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