

The Dos & Don'ts of Responding to Negativity

The world is full of people with opinions. While participating in the IMAGINE Fundraising Campaign, Ambassadors might encounter someone who has a differing opinion from you about Great Rivers United Way. There are a lot of misconceptions out there!

Knowing how to respond to negative comments on social media is a necessity in fundraising, and how you respond can impact your campaign's success. A successful social media marketing strategy must consider what to do when negative comments inevitably happen.

Great Rivers United Way is here to support YOU as you support us! Tag us in any/all of your posts, and we will do our best to also respond to questions and negative comments, too! Bonus: your supporters will be able to see us tagged, follow us on our platforms, and learn more about GRUW as a whole.

DO: Respond in a Timely Manner

The last thing someone wants when they are upset or angry is to be ignored. They posted something because they want to be heard and they want a reaction.

Responding to negative messages as soon as possible shows that you care about what they have to say and the cause you are fundraising for. By addressing their concerns directly, you have the opportunity to change their mind about your cause and your local United Way!

Also, by responding, you are showing other followers that you acknowledge these issues and care about them. It shows them that you're there to make things right if they have issues. Ignoring them conveys the opposite!

DON'T: Lose Your Cool

Once the message/comment is posted, all eyes turn to you as your supporters wait for a reply and can see how you handle the feedback. It's important to remain professional.

Responding inappropriately could tarnish your supportive following and GRUW's image, and not only upset the person who left the negative comment, but you it will also look bad to anyone else who sees it, especially if the message is taken out of context. Losing your cool is a missed opportunity to turn a negative into a positive.

Thank you for becoming an Ambassador for Great Rivers United Way! We hope you never have to use the tips in this guide, but if you do encounter negativity, they will help you take the high road!

GRUW social accounts

Facebook

@greatriversunitedway

Instagram

@greatriversunitedway

LinkedIn

@greatriversunitedway

Do: Take the Conversation Offline

Just because you responded to a negative comment, doesn't mean that you need to go back and forth publicly on your social media page. When you respond to the comment, try to encourage the user to transition the conversation to a more private place, like in the direct messages of the social network the negative comment came from.

For example, you could say something like "Hi Sue, I'm so sorry to hear about your negative experience with United Way in the past. Could you please private message me with details about your experience, and I can work to directly connect you with more information to Great Rivers United Way in order to help clarify/answer your question(s)?"

Moving to a private conversation will prevent others from seeing further details on the situation. If you already have the user's contact information, comment back letting them know that someone will contact them about their concern/question, and reach out to solve the issue at hand. We at GRUW are happy to help with this!

Yes, some people who write negative comments are just looking for attention, but moving the conversation to a private setting will keep them from drawing more negative attention to your cause.

DON'T: Delete the Comment (With Exceptions – see sidebar)

The worst thing you can do when someone has left a negative post on your social media page is delete it. If they realize you deleted it, they might get even more upset. To lash out once more, they may decide to repost it and call you out for deleting it, or then post something in another location that you aren't able to delete.

Deleting comments can also make it look like you don't care, are wrong in the situation, or have something to hide.

DO: Personalize Your Message

If they have included information in their negative post, then mention it in your response, which shows that you took the time to read what they had to say and address their comment. GRUW has a FAQ sheet uploaded in your toolkit that might address some of the questions/comments people have (service region, funding allocation, overhead, programs funded, etc.). If it pertains, use the information in that document as a quick personalized reply to show that you care about their concern. Again, tag GRUW and we can address problems, too!

Exceptions

- explicit, sexual, racist, homophobic, or sexist content or language
- anything that makes you feel threatened or unsafe

If an individual continues to post and harass/spam your page, you may decide to block them all together.

DO: Monitor All Your Comments

Pay attention to all the comments that come through your social feeds and posts. Check your channels each day. Like mentioned before, it's important to be timely when responding to negative comments so followers don't feel forgotten.

DON'T: Forget to Acknowledge the Positive Comments!

Never forget about the positive comments! While responding to negative comments is imperative to maintaining your fundraising campaign, responding to positive comments allows you to express gratitude toward those who adore you and what you are doing!

These happy people are your biggest fans, and they aren't afraid to share about it. Give them a shoutout, share their message, and personally thank them for their kind words and support. Writing something as simple as "Thank you for your kind words" or "So glad to have your support!" can go a long way. If someone shares they have used GRUW programs in the past, you could respond with something like "So happy to hear GRUW has made a difference in your/your family's life! GRUW impacts so many lives a year, glad you had such a positive experience!"

There you have it: the dos and don'ts of responding to negative social media comments. Next time you receive negative comments on one of your pages, make sure you respond in a way that can turn the situation around in a positive way!

Don't lose sight of what you are campaigning for – let that shine through every engagement you have with your followers, and they'll know that you care about them and your community. Even a negative experience can be fixed with the right response and solution. You rock!

Have questions or need help? Don't hesitate to reach out!

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