



Did you know that the World Cup is the most watched sporting event in the world? Marketers have been hearing that this World Cup will be “[the most social sporting event in history](#),” and preparing accordingly. (I personally find that title a little ridiculous, because considering that social media hasn’t been around that long, it shouldn’t be all that hard to be the most social sporting event EVER. But I digress.)

Digressions aside, the opportunities for social media marketing are unmistakable. Yet with [great opportunity for success](#) comes [great opportunity for embarrassment](#).



Congrats team #USA🇺🇸! Nice goal
@clint_dempsey @soundersfc! #USAvgHA
#USMNT #DeltaSEA
pic.twitter.com/7C8iRzPzoa

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More



Delta Air Lines wanted to congratulate Team USA and at first glance, not so bad. Hooray USA! Then you realize that there are no giraffes in Ghana... And your tweet goes viral.



Rodger Sherman
@rodger_sherman



Follow

You can book flights to Accra, the capital of Ghana, on [@delta](#)'s website. Do not take those flights. They will end up in the Serengeti.



Bruce Arthur ✓
@bruce_arthur



Follow

I'm guessing that when you book a flight to any of Nigeria or Kenya or the Ivory Coast or Ghana, [@Delta](#) tickets just say 'Africa, whatever'

Or when German coach Jogi Loew picks his nose, then casually shakes hands with a member of the team they just beat.

The 5 Things Your Social Media Training Must Include For You To Win The Internet

Workflows

Why it matters:

Make sure your [social media training](#) clearly lays out the workflow for corporate social communications. It would only have taken one person to look at Delta's tweet and say, "Hey, are we sure there are giraffes in Ghana? Maybe somebody ought to double check that."



What to do about it:

Have an approval-based workflow for your social media communications. Your social media training should cover how to submit social media posts, an overview of the approval process, and define the

roles of everyone involved in the approval process. The larger your team is, the more critical this becomes.

Responsibility for their Actions On Social Media

Why it matters:

Social media has a real impact on business, although it's easy to underestimate the immediate financial impact a Tweet or YouTube video can have. Those 140 characters or 3 minutes seem pretty insubstantial, until they cause your quarterly revenues to drop by 2%. That's exactly what happened to Domino's Pizza, after [this gem of a video](#) was released by their employees. ([Burger King](#) and [Taco Bell](#) have had similar scandals. Avert your eyes if you ever want to eat fast food again .)

What to do about it:

Because social media is sometimes seen as a fun avenue of communicating with friends, especially from a personal account, employees may not realize that they are responsible for their actions on social media regardless of whether or not they are posting from a corporate account.

Mandate social media training for all employees, regardless of whether or not they have access to your corporate accounts. The training should clearly lay out what actions are not appropriate on social media, even from a personal account. After all, the Domino's YouTube pranksters went viral, despite posting from a personal account... And they faced criminal charges for their actions. Employees must be reminded that they represent your brand, even when they are not posting from your brand's account.

Real Scenarios & Flexibility

Why it matters:

Companies need to be able to respond to events in real time. Remember the [Oreo "dunk in the dark" tweet](#)? Or [Arby's hat tweet](#)?

What to do about it:

Your social media training can't possibly cover every possible scenario, but it can lay out a framework for approaching situations. Make sure you use an interactive training that allows employees to test out their new social media prowess before they get access to your Twitter password.

Your social media policy can also communicate your expectations, the most critical of which is that employees take responsibility for their posts. This responsibility (once communicated clearly and understood by employees) will encourage everyone to think twice before they post, without restricting real-time opportunities.

An Appreciation of Virality

Why it matters:

While I have yet to find any statistics about this, I have a strong feeling that brand blunders are much more likely to go viral than a brand's shining moments. I did find [this study](#), which suggests that anger is the fastest emotion to spread via social media.

What to do about it:

While you could, perhaps, use that knowledge to your advantage, it's likely that a tweet that infuriates your audience is likely a mistake on your part. (Hint: Remember the [Black Milk fiasco](#)? Or the [Amy's Baking Company social media meltdown](#)?)



Amy's Baking Company Bakery Boutique & Bistro

2,857 like this

6 hours ago · 🌐



WE DO NOT NEED THIS. YOU STUPID PEOPLE. AMERICA IS ABOUT RESSLING, IT IS NOT A BIG DEAL. THE CAKES WE OFFER ARE EXPENSIVE BECAUSE WE HAVE TO REPACKAGE AND SHIP. DO NOT BLAME US BECAUSE YOU CAN NOT AFFORD QUALITY. THE YELPERS, AND NOW THE REDDITS, NEED TO BACK OFF. YOURE NOT RIGHT JUST BECAUSE OF SOME TV SHOW.

Continuous monitoring of your own social media and social media that mentions you, also known as social listening, can help catch both harmless errors and reputation-damaging incidents before they escalate.

Social media training is an excellent opportunity to remind employees just how quickly a disaster can spread. While I don't have the magic formula for virality, I can guarantee rudeness and anger help accelerate the process. If an unfortunate social media post occurs, make sure you have a crisis plan in place to start immediate damage control, starting with an apology.

A Crisis Response Plan for Managers

Why it matters: Speed is everything. Delta's post was live for nearly 12 hours before they replaced the image, and then took another two hours to issue an apology.



Delta @Delta · 14h

Go #USA🇺🇸! #USAvgHA #USMNT



185

332



View more photos and videos



Delta @Delta · 12h

We're sorry for our choice of photo in our previous tweet. Best of luck to all teams.

← 297 ★ 158 ...

Why did it take two hours to issue an apology? Well, it actually, didn't, quite.



Delta ✓
@Delta



Follow

We're sorry for our choice of photo in our precious tweet. Best of luck to all teams playing in the World Cup.

← Reply ↻ Retweet ★ Favorite ... More

Luckily this apology was taken down quickly, and replaced with the correctly spelled version.

In the Black Milk fiasco, the company continued arguing with its customer base (never a good idea) and [didn't issue an apology until 2 days later](#) (which, in social media terms, might as well be an eternity). Worse yet, the statement didn't resonate with the audience, who expected a more sincere apology after the aggressive and offensive remarks the company had issued for the previous 48 hours.

Note that I said, "the company issued." It may have been just one employee behind those remarks, but his or her commentary will forever be associated with the image of the company.

What to do about it:

So let's say that a crisis does occur: do your managers know how to react? Your social media training should have a crisis management plan that lays out a template in case an incident occurs. The first 24 hours are critical, and your number one priority must be sending out an apology and removing the offensive comment. The faster, the better.

[This article](#) lays out how Domino's handled their PR crisis – an A+ for everything that the company did after the first 24 hours. Unfortunately, they dropped the ball in the first 24 hours. Even a simple, immediate apology from whomever first sees the offensive data will go a long way towards calming the crowds while you're working on damage control.

Recap

- With great opportunity for success, comes a great opportunity for embarrassment.
- Make sure you have an approval workflow in place. If nothing else, google where giraffes live.

- Remind employees that they are responsible for their actions on social media, regardless of whether it's a personal or corporate account.
- Give your employees a frame-work for approaching real-time opportunities to increase the Arby's hat virality versus the Amy's Baking Company virality.
- If a crisis occurs, apologize early, apologize often, and make sure your managers have received social media training that covers a crisis management plan.

How does your [social media training](#) set you up for success? We'd love to hear about it in the comments.

(P.S. Check out these companies who are rocking it out with their World Cup Marketing: (predictably) [Adidas](#) and [Nike](#), and (perhaps less predictably) [Hyundai](#) and [Visa](#).)