



L. Stern & Associates, Inc.
MARKETING THAT MEANS BUSINESS

Social Media Horror Stories – A Les Stern Marketing Musing

1. A few weeks ago, a client had somebody post a vicious, inaccurate post on its Facebook page. The client and I discussed what to do, but before we could take any action his customer called and removed the post after she realized she was wrong. However, we were prepared to keep the post up and respond online.
2. A few years ago, our local Caribou Coffee removed a sign the high school's Gay Straight Alliance painted on its window during Homecoming. The store got ripped on social media. But management responded to the posts and addressed the situation, with the store eventually getting back in the community's good graces.
3. A national retailer also got ripped for its political beliefs, but removed the negative posts. People then posted on their own Facebook pages that the retailer removed their posts.

Three stories with three different outcomes. But there are lessons to be learned, whether you are a mom and pop shop or a global organization.

1. First of all, monitor your social media daily so you can quickly pick up negative posts.
2. Do not remove posts. People will think you have something to hide. And they will absolutely find a way to spread their negative thinking around.
3. But if you are in the right, there is nothing wrong with responding in a factual, rationale manner that does not sink to the level of the original post. For example, my client was ready to respond to their customer's post, telling them in no uncertain terms that they were wrong, and providing proof.
4. On the other hand, if you are wrong, feel free to admit you were wrong, and publicize the steps you are taking to right that wrong. No reasonable person expects perfection; the *key is how you handle your imperfection.*
5. *Finally, don't let a negative post or two remove your faith in social media. The positives far outweigh the negatives.*

Les Stern is President of L. Stern & Associates, a marketing and market research consultancy with a simple mission: to generate more business for its clients. L. Stern & Associates provides strategic marketing, tactical marketing and marketing and market research management services all designed to mean more business for its clients. For more information, including a review of accomplishments, here is the contact information:

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