

# Managing your Social Media Communities during a Crisis

We have heard “We’re all in this together.” It applies to everything Door County businesses do and say during the pandemic. During a crisis, businesses are being judged not only on what they say and do, but on how they make their customers (both locals and visitors) feel.

If you decide to post news on social media, be ready to engage with your fans and followers. Below are a few best practices to protect the reputation of your business as well as Door County’s future.

1. Ensure you have Rules of Engagement on your page’s “About” section. For example, “[Your *business name*] invites commentary. We do require you to stay positive and refrain from swearing or attacking another individual or organization. We have a 3-strike rule for negative action from fans. We encourage stories about your experience and your plans to return.”
2. Check each of your social properties at least twice a day. Respond to all comments or messages as soon as you are able – ideally within 24 hours. If a person takes the time to engage with your business, reward them with a response. Be personable, helpful and authentic in your responses.
3. If your business chooses to post about the actions you are taking or important updates, pin that post to the top of your page. Do this by clicking the three dots next to your post and clicking “Pin to top of page.” This makes it so page visitors see the most important information first.
4. If you choose to post about a positive test of an employee, you are likely to receive comments thanking you for your transparency and wishing you and your employee well. It will be important to respond to your fans by liking their comment and/or thanking them for their support.
  - a. Use a model of acknowledge, answer and additional information. Acknowledge the person, answer the question and link to additional information. It might look like this:
  - b. “Thanks @SueSmith for your support! We wish we could stay open, but these are times when our employees’ and customers’ health come first. We look forward to seeing you in the near future. In the meantime, check out these great outdoor adventures in Door County: <https://www.doorcounty.com/adventure/>”
5. If someone writes a negative post on your page, try to move the conversation to a private message or phone call. Never engage in a negative conversation on your page for all your fans to read. It gives the negative commenter a louder voice.
  - a. You are able to hide a negative comment on your page by clicking the three dots to the right of the comment. The person who wrote the negative comment will not be able to see you hid their comment. Their friends will still see the comment, however, your tens of thousands of fans from around the region who do not know that person will not see it.
6. If a fan has a complaint, alleviate customer concern by letting the person know you are here to listen. If appropriate, acknowledge the commenter’s issue and thank them for bringing it to your attention. Provide advice or a solution.
7. Remember, there is another person on the other side of the computer and many people watching your posts and how you respond. Sarcasm from your business doesn’t translate as a caring response. Neither does alarmist emotion or all caps. Be cautious with your words. People may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.
8. Have a plan. Prepare language for specific scenarios ahead of time, such as what you’d post if you have to close for a short period of time. This helps ensure well thought out posts in times of emergency or crisis, and avoids you scrambling at the last minute trying to figure out what to say.

We know you can’t monitor social media 24/7 while running your business. Perhaps you can have someone alert you to concerns while they “LIKE” the positive comments or, consider hiring someone to help with monitoring or management. However you manage your social media, be welcoming, caring, helpful & concerned for everyone’s safety & well-being to get all of us through this pandemic together.