

Social media in times of chaos

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We can all agree that social media is a powerful tool for individuals and businesses alike. Whether promoting new products or increasing customer engagement - social media platforms offer a plethora of tools and opportunities to engage directly with the audience you seek. But how should we communicate when things get chaotic?



Source: www.unsplash.com

South Africa's recent spate of violent looting and protests amid a record Covid-19 outbreak is certainly a remarkable and unexpected case in point. While some businesses continued to promote their pre-planned campaigns and posts, others decided to change course reacting to what was happening around them.

Posting etiquette during turbulent times is essential. Things can get tricky really quickly on social media. Some things posted in jest or poor taste can result in a media storm, as we saw with some comments made by South African celebrities about the unrest in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal in the past week. From tone-deaf tweets to hastily deleted posts, errors were certainly made.



The state of social media in South Africa

Richard Lord 20 Jul 2021



One year in, Covid-19 has altered everything - including how we use social media. It may feel silly to show happy stories in a pandemic as everything starts to feel inappropriate, but the truth is what is appropriate and not for social media has changed a lot in the past year. The new normal, where many more of our daily interactions are made possible by screens, has forced us to change the way we behave on those platforms, with the messiness and realities of pandemic life crowding out many preconceived ideas.

While we can't always control what happens to us, businesses and individuals can control how they communicate both internally and externally in a time of crisis. Here are some tips to navigate social media during these times:

Personal and private lines are blurred

Just because you are posting on your private personal account doesn't exempt you. As soon as you accept followers, your page is no longer personal or private. Always be mindful of what you share, comment, or like on social media. Remember algorithms show the comments and likes of people they think you know.

Show support

Use this as an opportunity to show your support by reposting or congratulating those who are making a real difference. Alternatively, offer to volunteer or donate to a cause that aligns with your core business. Not only will this show that you are relevant, but will also position you as an individual or business that cares about more than just the bottom line.

Don't be an opportunist

While showing support is vital, don't cannibalise opportunities just for the sake of it. If a particular cause is far removed from your own – be mindful of how you choose to comment or lend support. Make relevant and realistic links.

The show must go on... but not right now

While the business must continue now is not the time to market or sell – but rather a time to reinforce the values that define leading organisations and individuals. Choose to rather promote messages of unity and brand building instead as people want to engage with purpose-driven brands.

Onwards and upwards as we rebuild SA together.

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