



peachjar | Webinar for Schools

School Safety & Prevention  
Series with Rick J.  
Kaufman, APR

# How to Survive a Social Media Fire: The Good, Bad & Ugly



# What we'll cover...

- Social Media Crisis vs Social Media Issue
- SM Crisis Commonalities
- SM Crisis Communications Plan
- To Respond or Not to Respond



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- Using social media in a crisis is a powerful tool
- Social media provides a lot of information to the public fast!
- With the good comes the bad and the ugly

THE  
GOOD  
THE  
BAD  
AND THE  
UGLY

# Social Media Fire: **The Risks**

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- Cyberbullying, online conflicts
- Public ridicule, shaming
- Negative posts
- Embarrassing or inappropriate photos, video & info
- Rapid & widespread communication of crisis-related rumors or false info about what happened & who was involved



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The first step in knowing how to deal with a crisis is to understand what is a crisis?



# Social Media Crisis

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A social media crisis is an online incident that has a negative impact on an organization (school, district) or persons (employees, students).

Often triggers strong, negative emotions that:

- Outweigh common sense
- Elicit anger or create backlash with stakeholders, community
- Provoke viral behavior

# Characteristics of a Social Media Crisis

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1. School does not know more than the public about an issue
  - Students report scary sightings & threats from “creepy clowns,” then employees see images, posts on social media sites



# Characteristics of a Social Media Crisis

## 2. A decisive change in the norm

- Social chatter vs markedly different line of criticism

September 14, 2016...

Here is the text of the email I just sent to the School Board & Mr Fujitake:

I am a long-time Bloomington resident, a property owner of 28 years, a graduate of Bloomington schools and a parent of the district. It is important to me in MANY ways for Bloomington to have strong, vibrant schools.

I was in attendance at the 9/12 School Board Meeting. I even spoke, briefly, in support of the teachers. I did not plan to speak, so in the hours since, I have thought of several things I should have shared, but did not occur to me in the moment.

I voted for many of the current members of the Board. I also held my nose and voted for the 2013 referendum for funding "school security" and the technology upgrade. I think now, and thought then, that in most of the schools that I have been in had adequate security and that Bloomington was having a knee-jerk reaction to the horror of school shootings. I think the best way to make schools secure is to make them inviting places of inclusion, not to add doors and barriers. I would have much rather seen the \$2 million go to funding actual education based initiatives, teachers, support staff, and nutrition. But rather than disadvantage our district and the students of Bloomington, I chose to vote against my conscience on the school security issue. Sometimes we make sacrifices, like teachers do day in and day out.

I know that teachers are the backbone of the district and I feel that they are not currently be treated with respect, as a group, by the district in the negotiations. People do not enter the Education profession with the idea that it will bring them wealth, it truly is a calling. I know in my personal experience, the words and actions of teachers have incredible consequence on students, beyond what can be measured in charts and bar graphs. The small amount they are asking for, especially after working nearly 2 years on an expired contract, is a pittance.

Lastly, I want to say that I thought it was ATROCIOUS that Mr. Rick Kaufman was given the "green light" to cut the feed for the recording of the meeting when one of the BFT members was speaking. It is my understanding that we have freedom of speech in this country. I fully support that right, even when I, personally, find that speech distasteful.

As elected officials and employees of the district, it is incumbent on you to hear the prepared remarks in the time dedicated to comments. I also thought it was ridiculous that you tried to limit remarks to 20 minutes. As was pointed out to you early in the session, that is a totally arbitrary number and it appeared like a strong arm tactic to keep trying to gavel the comments period closed.

# Characteristics of a Social Media Crisis

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## 3. Potential or actual material impact on a school or district

- Scope and Scale
  - Student snapchat of a loud cafeteria during lunch isn't a crisis.
  - A fight in the cafeteria involving students being videotaped on a cellphones is a social media crisis

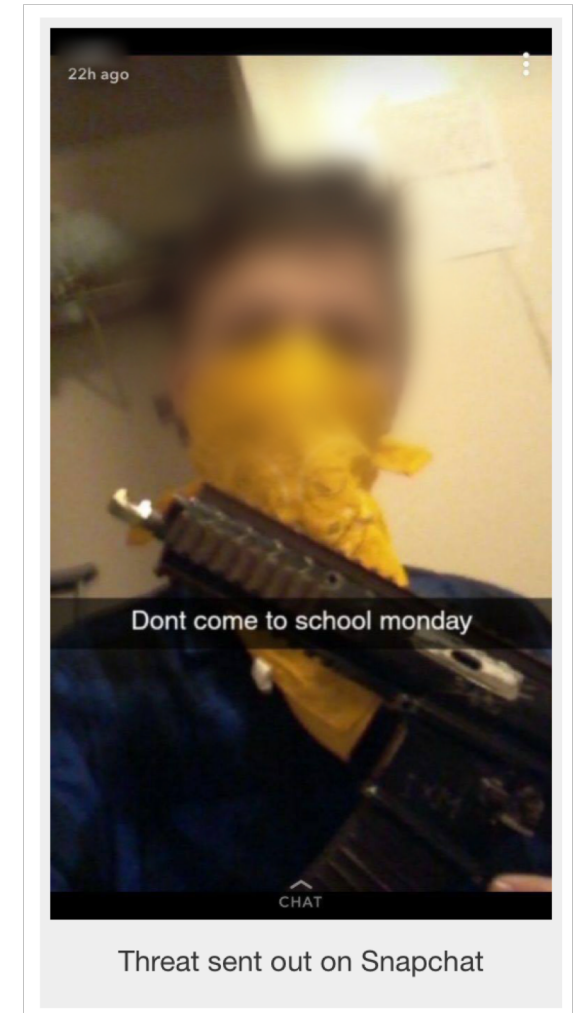




# Characteristics of a Social Media Crisis

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4. Incident has a clear impact on school's reputation
  - Posting a threat on Snapchat is today's version of pulling a fire alarm 25 years ago



# Social Media Issue

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A social media is less serious, but must be addressed and resolved in a prompt manner, or run the risk of the issue escalating into a crisis

## Examples:

- Negative comments, discussions
- Unacceptable staff comments tied to school, district
- Negative stakeholder experiences
- Negative media coverage



## Bloomington Public Schools

Published by Sprout Social [?] · May 31 at 6:52pm ·

We're introducing new security measures this fall to expand current safeguards to before- and after-school hours. The elements are intended to reduce security risks and improve emergency preparedness beyond the normal school day hours. Read more: [bit.ly/before-after-school](https://bit.ly/before-after-school)



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Bootsie Anderson, Andrew Carlson and 21 others

Most Relevant

6 Shares



Write a comment...



This is great. What about regular school hours? Are any new safety measures in the works?

Like · Reply · Message · 5d



Our safety measures during normal school hours have been in place since 2014, and include single-point entry to the main office, door locks on all classrooms and other measures. To ensure the integrity of other safety measures we choose not to make those public.

Like · Reply · Commented on by Rj Kaufman [?] · 4d



2



Is there any discussion to add security officers at the front door or metal detectors? I have 2 children in 2 schools and I'm not satisfied with current safety measures. I've talked to the principal at the daughter's elementary and am aware of the set up. It's ok, but not enough. Any student could enter with a weapon. And, the back door is also open at my son's middle school. It's sad to even have to consider these things, but unfortunately reality.

Like · Reply · Message · 4d



No other doors are open other than the main entrance during the school day. We know there are times when students or others may prop a door open, but these are caught and closed when found. Our building custodians and security paras at the high schools do a great job of checking for doors. There is no plan to add metal detectors or security officers to our schools.

Like · Reply · Commented on by Rj Kaufman [?] · 4d



It's also important to note that security hardware and equipment can be a helpful tool, but they are only as strong as the weakest human link. Which is why we focus a strong concerted effort on the people side of school safety with training and drills.

Like · Reply · Commented on by Rj Kaufman [?] · 4d



3



That's all good, but what that basically means there's nothing stopping a student with a gun in his backpack walking through the front door, like the one in Indiana or Texas.

Like · Reply · Message · 4d



What about searching backpacks?

Like · Reply · Message · 4d



maybe you should consider home schooling.

Like · Reply · Message · 3d





Fox 9

18 hrs

Like Page

The error in the payroll system affected 78 employees, who on average were overpaid \$890 each. Since they are public employees, they will need to pay back the money.



FOX9.COM

## 'Miscommunication' leads to \$80,000 overpayment to Bloomington school bus drivers

Like

Share

22

7 Shares



A fuss over \$890? Can we get the same amount of scrutiny over politicians budgets? Or CEOs? Or doctors? Or lawyers?

And it looks like the district discovered and fixed the error on its own. For those who complain about inefficient or incompetent government services, I know professionals who waste at least that much money every week.

Like · 16h · Edited

9



I am a bus driver. There are several different issues here. One, bus drivers are literally the 'guinea pigs' for the new software system. We are not given paper copies of our pay and many of the drivers are not computer literate or even own a computer. Bus drivers do not have punch clock hours like office people and it is hardest to track. We are not highly paid [Curtis Griesel](#) while the 15.00 starting pay might sound high to you, We get paid for two small time slots a.m. and p.m. and while we are virtually unavailable to do much else between those two times, most drivers have a hard time begging for a route with enough hours to cover insurance. (30) This is why many drivers are retired and on S.S. /medicare. There is no way a person could support a family as a bus driver alone. We are required to be trained and maintain our 1st responder type training, we are required to have DOT medical examinations every 2 years, we are subject to random frequent drug/alcohol testing. We are driving up to 77 of YOUR children in below zero and 100 degree weather trying to keep them safe through construction, auto drivers running our stop signs people on their cell phones while driving (you wouldn't believe what we see from up there). So I do take some offense to being compared to other 15.00 workers. We are the front line between parents and the district for many things that are out of our hands. There is a severe shortage of school bus drivers nationwide. Our district is at the moment hit particularly hard and that work load is being put on to the drivers in ways that only increase stress and not pay. Like eliminating routes due to lack of drivers and crowding the students onto remaining buses. We contract out a growing number of school charters and routes to other bus companies for MUCH higher costs. The working conditions make it difficult to find and maintain good drivers. It is a vicious circle to be sure. This "payroll error" is coming on the heels of a major security breach in the payroll/finance dept where all district employees were affected and will be for life.

Like · 8h

7



Sorry I got sidetracked. As you can tell this is a very sensitive subject for me. I worked hard and the 1200 they want me to repay trickled to me over the course of a year. I DO check my hours every pay period and spend more time then any employee should have to making sure my own pay is correct. If the hours match I would like to assume that my employer will do their due diligence. This amount will be my entire summer school pay. There are so many other issues involved in this and I know it bores most of you and that is unfortunate. But it is NOT a clear case of fault. They also try and fit all district employees under an easy payroll umbrella. That has proven not to be very effective when you have both salary and hourly employees. I do not want money I did not earn. I'm not trying to cheat the system. There are drivers who are hit even harder then myself.

Like · 8h

6



They quickly brought us papers to sign allowing them to take the money out of our pay the day before the last day of school. When asked they told us they had not even told the school board about it . Again things are not always as clear as they seem.

Like · 8h

2



\*sighs\* I promise this will be my last post on the subject. The bottom line is the people hurt by this. While the lowest payback per check might be 30 over time. That is 60.00 a month to a single mother. Medicines, food, gas. 60.00 a month seems small to a 100,000.+ year or multi income family. But can be devastating to someone else. In the long run asking for full payback from employees may end up costing the public more then just sucking up the one time 75,000. bill if they can't recoup from the software company.

Like · 8h

7

# Commonalities Among Impacted Sites

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## Lack of ...

- Professionals schooled in social media & crisis response
- Proper internal education
  - Social Media Policy
  - “Use of” guidelines to prevent misuse of & misinformation on social media
- Crisis response, communication plan



# Are you ready?

Don't wait for a social media crisis to happen. Plan ahead.



# Social Media Crisis Plan

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**1. Monitor:** Listen & keep an eye on activity, conversations

# Social Media Crisis Plan: **Monitor**

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- Use your eyes and ears
  - One of the most important elements of a social media crisis communications plan
  - To effectively manage your social media presence, must be tuned to the conversations & posts, especially after a crisis or unplanned event
  - If a negative comment or complaint is posted to a school, district or community (grapevine network) page, be prepared to engage (correct misinformation and rumors).

# Social Media Crisis Plan

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- 1. Monitor:** Listen & keep an eye on activity, conversations
- 2. Identify:** Who, What, Why & How (to resolve)

# Social Media Crisis Plan: **Identify**

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- What is being said?
  - Seriousness of the issue drives the response
- Who is saying it?
  - Influence or authority of initiator may give weight to post or comment; left unattended, a crisis is likely
- How often is it being said?
  - Visibility, volume and velocity provides an insight into whether the issue is growing, peaking or going away



# Social Media Crisis Plan

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- 1. Monitor:** Listen & keep an eye on activity, conversations
- 2. Identify:** Who, What, Why & How (to resolve)
- 3. Consider:** Is there a need to respond?

# Social Media Crisis Plan: Consider

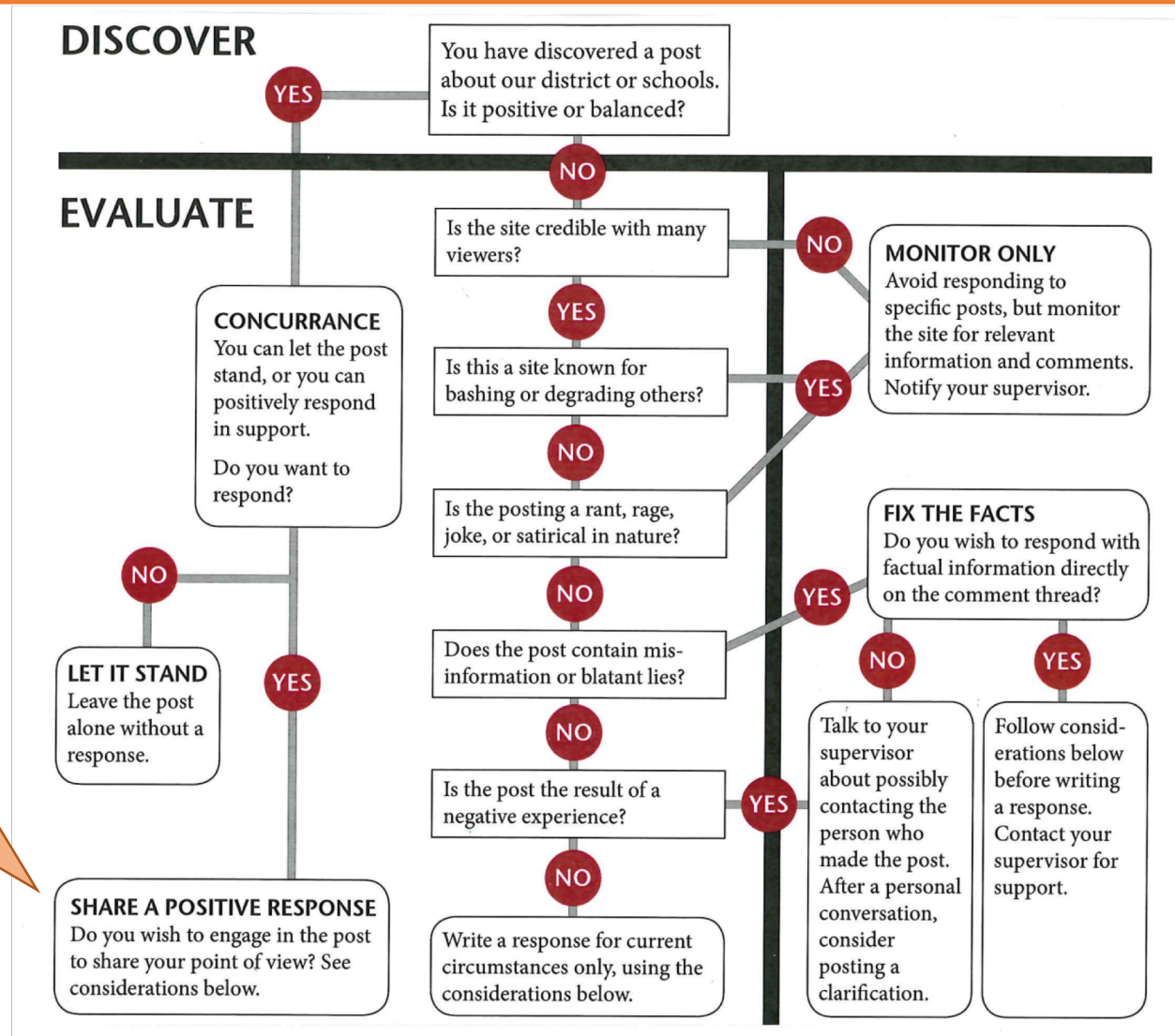
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- Is there a need to respond?
  - At times the best action is to simply not respond.
  - If crisis/issue is minimal, short-lived or going away, making a comment is likely to give air to a flicker of flame.
  - Threats, serious incidents that may impact a person, organization requires a timely response.

# Guide for Responding Online

## Response Considerations

- Respect Privacy
- Respect Ownership
- Be Credible
- Be Appropriate
- Be Timely



# Social Media Crisis Plan

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- 1. Monitor:** Listen & keep an eye on activity, conversations
- 2. Identify:** Who, What, Why & How (to resolve)
- 3. Consider:** Is there a need to respond?
- 4. Respond:** Be quick. Be honest. Be complete. Be transparent.  
Be prepared.

# Social Media Crisis Plan: Respond

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1. Respond first in venue where crisis broke (others as necessary)
2. Acknowledge in a timely manner (primary source of information)
3. Details (employees first)
4. Specific action steps to address crisis (updates based on additional or ongoing feedback)
5. Real or potential impacts on organization, people (short- & long-term)
6. Procedural changes to prevent future occurrence
7. Reaffirm social media policies, “use of” guidelines



# How **NOT** to Deal with a Social Media Crisis

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- Denial
  - Blaming others, staying silent are social media equivalents to throwing gas on a fire
  - Silence is not golden, it reflects uncertainty, passivity
- Censoring negative comments
  - Consider engaging with an angered online populous offline
- Deleting page
  - Akin to sticking one's head in the sand with a pride of lions closing in

# Social Media Crisis Plan

## Next Steps

1. Assess impact on organization, employees & stakeholders
2. Evaluate crisis communication plan
3. Keep your promises
4. Engage stakeholders in same manner as before crisis
5. Update social media policies & “use of” guidelines



## Parting thought...

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Properly responding to and managing a social media fire will cost relatively little, but if you get it wrong it can be very costly. In the digital era, it is critical school systems have a well-developed social media crisis management and response plan for when bad stuff happens.



An aerial photograph of a large, partially frozen lake at sunset. The sky is filled with dramatic, orange and purple clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The lake's surface is a mix of dark, open water and white, jagged ice formations. In the background, a dense forest of trees displays vibrant autumn colors in shades of red, orange, and yellow. A small, dark island with some trees is visible in the lower right foreground. A solid orange rectangular box is positioned in the lower-left corner, containing white text.

We'd like to hear  
from you!





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Next Webinar: January 15th

“Crisis Communication in the Age of Social Media”

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Thank you!