



Responding to Comments on Social Media



If your organization is active on social media platforms it is important that you are prepared to respond when someone outside of your organization comments on your posts. Consider the following scenarios and the types of comments you may receive.

Comments on Posts by the Organization

POSITIVE

Type of Comment:

SUPPORTS YOUR CAUSE

How to Respond:

REPLY and let them know how much you appreciate their support. If applicable, consider sharing opportunities for them to get involved in your organization.

LIKE the comment to publicly acknowledge it.

Type of Comment:

ASKS FOR SUPPORT

How to Respond:

REPLY with contact information or appropriate resources for support.

PRIVATE MESSAGE this person if the request is sensitive. For example, someone expresses frustration with trying to convince a loved one to quit smoking.

LIKE the comment to publicly acknowledge it.

Type of Comment:

SHARES PERSONAL EXPERIENCE (e.g. they quit smoking)

How to Respond:

REPLY and thank them for sharing. If congratulations are in order, by all means... congratulate them and reaffirm any positive behavior or outcomes.

LIKE the comment to publicly acknowledge it.

NEGATIVE

Type of Comment:

THREATENS OR OFFENDS

PROMOTES TOBACCO PRODUCTS

How to Respond:

HIDE the comment from public view but know that they and their friends will still be able to see it.

DELETE the comment so that no one will be able to see it.

BLOCK the user from being able to view your page or comment on any posts entirely.

Type of Comment:

MISINFORMATION

How to Respond:

REPLY to the comment and sincerely correct the misinformation and cite your sources. For example, if the comment claims that vapes are completely risk-free OR misinterprets a policy.

If you sense that the comment can lend itself to a teaching opportunity, consider inviting them to discuss the matter further if there is still some confusion or misunderstanding. If they are not receptive, and the comment does not hinder your organization's image, consider leaving the comment alone.

Type of Comment:

BAD EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR ORG

How to Respond:

REPLY to the comment and apologize. Provide a general email and ask them to make contact to rectify the situation.



Comments on Posts that the Organization is Tagged In

POSITIVE

Type of Comment:

SUPPORTS YOUR CAUSE

ASKS FOR SUPPORT

SHARES PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
(e.g. they quit smoking)

How to Respond:

See section above for how to respond.

NEGATIVE

Type of Comment:

THREATENS OR OFFENDS

PROMOTES TOBACCO PRODUCTS

How to Respond:

REMOVE THE TAG since you are unable to moderate comments on someone else's page or account. If the post you are tagged in is from a partner organization, consider reaching out to them to communicate your concerns.

Type of Comment:

MISINFORMATION

BAD EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR ORG

How to Respond:

See section above for how to respond.

Comments on Twitter Posts

Type of Comment:

SUPPORTS YOUR CAUSE

ASKS FOR SUPPORT

SHARES PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
(e.g. they quit smoking)

How to Respond:

See section above for how to respond. Additionally, you can:

RETWEET posts to show support. If you want to add a comment about the post you'd like to retweet, use **QUOTE RETWEET** instead.

Type of Comment:

THREATENS OR OFFENDS

PROMOTES TOBACCO PRODUCTS

MISINFORMATION

BAD EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR ORG

How to Respond:

DO NOT ENGAGE. For tobacco control advocates, Twitter has become a stream of mean comments from detractors who do not seek to have productive, honest conversations. Rather, they seek to waste our time. It is best to simply ignore these types of comments overall.

Other Helpful Information

Some organizations have a "no comment" policy for certain types of comments. If this applies to your organization, prioritize the guidelines laid out by your local/organizational policy.

