

Handling Social Media Criticism

Introduction

Social media is a powerful tool for women entrepreneurs in low and middle income countries that helps them to promote their businesses and connect with a local and global audience. While the benefits can be massive, the positives often come with negatives like criticism or in some cases, bullying. In this article, we look to support you in handling these challenges by providing valuable insights and strategies to effectively handle negative comments and maintain a positive online presence.

Understand the Nature of Negative Comments

In order to properly handle negative comments on social media, it's important to understand where they come from and why. As difficult as it may be to receive negative comments or feedback, it's important to acknowledge that they are an unfortunate part of any social media presence. People may criticise or express dissatisfaction for various reasons, often unrelated to the quality of your products or services. When receiving these comments, consider the following: Is this legitimate feedback for my business? What are their intentions? Is this a voice I want to listen to? What might be their aim? Is it so that I can provide a better service, or could it undermine me or my business? Understanding the nature of negative comments and that they're inevitable can help you gain some perspective and distance yourself from the negativity.

Don't Take it Personally

Separate your personality from your business. Negative comments are often more reflective of the commenter's mindset than the quality of your work. Remind yourself that you cannot please everyone and constructive criticism can be an opportunity for growth, but only if it is actually constructive.



Evaluate and Learn from Constructive Criticism

Some negative comments may contain valid points or constructive feedback. Take the time to consider what the commenter is actually trying to communicate to you about your product or business to see if it adds any value to your offering. Once you understand the nature of the comment, you can decide how you want to handle the situation. If it's a legitimate piece of feedback from a reliable source, then consider how to take it on board and respond to it. However, if its purpose is to undermine you as a woman entrepreneur, then you can take steps to protect yourself mentally, emotionally and physically.

Develop a Social Media Policy

Establish clear guidelines for engagement on your social media platforms. Encourage positive and constructive conversations, and make it known that disrespectful or offensive comments will not be tolerated. Having a policy in place allows you to set expectations for your online community and protect yourself and your brand.

Respond Professionally

When responding to negative comments, maintain a professional tone. Avoid getting defensive or engaging in arguments. Acknowledge the comment, express your commitment to customer satisfaction, and offer to address the issue privately if necessary. A calm and composed response demonstrates your professionalism.

Use the Block and Delete Function Strategically

If a comment crosses the line into harassment or contains inappropriate content, don't hesitate to use the block and delete functions. Creating a safe and positive online space for yourself and your audience is crucial for your well-being as an individual and business.





Focus on the Positive

Counteract negativity by highlighting positive interactions and testimonials from satisfied customers. Share success stories, customer reviews, and achievements to foster a positive image of your business. This not only uplifts your spirits but also showcases the strengths of your brand.

Seek Support

Don't hesitate to lean on your support network. Share your experiences with friends, mentors, or fellow entrepreneurs who can provide guidance and encouragement. Building a strong support system can help you navigate challenges more effectively.

Take Breaks

Even on your personal social media, it's important to log off platforms every once in a while to give yourself a break from the social media sphere. This is especially applicable if you're receiving negative comments regularly, as you can risk getting stuck in them instead of focusing on what really matters to you. Try to schedule a social media-free day once a week to help you step back and gain perspective on negative comments.

Conclusion

Handling negative comments on social media is an inevitable part of being a woman entrepreneur in the digital age. By understanding the nature of negative feedback, maintaining professionalism, and focusing on the positive aspects of your business, you can turn challenges into opportunities for growth. Remember that every successful entrepreneur has faced criticism, and it's your resilience and ability to learn and adapt that will contribute to the long-term success of your business. Many negative comments will have no value or relevance to you, so be sure to nurture an environment of support and healthy boundaries when dealing with these situations.

