

# Module 3. Negative impact and crisis. How will monitoring benefit?

## 3.1. Tips and tools for practice

The basic idea behind the optimization of the strategy within social media is that this means added value for the user and that it interacts particularly easily with the services offered. In addition to providing various services, there has been an enormous increase in the provision of source codes, the so-called “embed codes”, for easier integration of the content in other websites in recent years. In addition to various videos, more and more clubs and associations are also incorporating social media spots from their athletes in order to further enhance their own contribution. However, you should adhere to the following five rules:

### **Create engaging content**

- Create current content.
- Create sustainable content that offers added value (top lists, interesting facts, entertaining, etc.).
- Use short headlines that grab attention.

### **Make your content easier to share**

- Offer buttons (like buttons or social bookmarks) to save your content quickly.
- Assign well descriptive and relevant tags to position blog entries and pages in automatically generated lists as often and as high as possible.
- First save your entries on social bookmarking services so that you can assign descriptions and initial tags yourself.

### **Reward your audience users**

- Create opportunities for intensification (e.g., badges).
- Respond to questions, give tips and help.

### **Actively share your content**

- Use social networks yourself to share your content with others.

- Submit your content using all technical means.

### **Encourage the mash-up**

- Let others integrate your content and provide the necessary source code.
- Provide your content as an RSS feed.

The main strategies used in marketing activities are the following:

- “Viral” media (viral marketing)
- Communities: building your own community, for example, through a blog, social network or forum
- Monitoring: sentiment and campaign analysis
- Optimization of content: improving the findability of the content
- Expertise: building a reputation as an expert in a field of knowledge
- Gathering of information and knowledge
- Customer contact: pure presence through to intensive interaction with users
- Latest news: publication of current, relevant news
- Online reputation
- Events: creation of direct contact with the community

The development and implementation of these strategies often take place via specialized social media or seeding agencies, which have a network with diverse contacts and opinion leaders in order to place and disseminate advertising messages in a targeted manner via the aforementioned touchpoints and channels.

## **3.2. Find the focus - Identify goals**

One important thought in advance: fans must be offered added value through the respective social media presence! The target group uses social media to inform themselves and others, to exchange ideas, and to be entertained. Think about this before creating any content. Even if the main focus is on advertising on social networks, the whole thing should be packaged appropriately. The focus has to be on the content, and not the pure advertising.

In order to determine the content and to be able to identify the exact goals, the type of club or association, and the products and services offered must also be taken into account. How can the goals best be identified and conveyed? In addition, the communication corridor should be fixed and guidelines for communication should be established –it naturally depends on whether the focus is on the B2B or B2C area.

However, one thing is a fact: clear, measurable goals need to be set. One needs to know which problem should be solved and always keep in mind that added value has to be created in social media. And it reminds us that you can't manage what you can't measure. Even if the tools are becoming more and more sophisticated, the truth must never be ignored or set aside: no matter how much data is collected and how sophisticated the analytical tools may be, it does not work without analysis, in any case. But it is absolutely crucial that concrete goals are set before starting a new project on social media, because **if you don't know where you want to go, you end up where you don't want to go.**

### 3.3. Detailed planning and checklist

This should create great motivation and anticipation for the implementation of the activities in the digital media, especially in the social networks. However, the activism sometimes exceeds all plans. You just start, make contributions according to the situation and suddenly come into a “trial & error” mode that is difficult to get out of for a short time. Therefore, detailed planning in advance is essential. First of all, the following questions should be answered internally:

- What are the social media goals? What should be achieved with social media?
- What are the KPIs and benchmarks related to the social media measures?
- Who should be reached via social media, or who is the specific target group?
- How and where does the defined target group use social media?
- How does the competition use social media? Which channels are served and which messages are transported?
- Is there a willingness to deal with the topic of social media in the long term?
- Has a budget been planned for the planned social media activities?
- Will the social media presence have a face (managing director, etcetera)?
- How high is the level of knowledge of the employees who are supposed to deal with the topic of social media? Is there a training planned?



- Is it a social media policy planned to clearly define how it should be dealt with?
- Is there an editorial plan or are there any ideas?
- What is the plan in a crisis situation? What should the reaction look like in a crisis?
- Is social media monitoring required?
- What measures should the social media presences use to publicize the public?

With the answers to these questions, you have created a solid basis to ensure entry and correct addressing of the target group. In order to use social media in a targeted and successful manner, specific strategic preliminary considerations are required. Only when it is clear who and what is to be achieved with the social media activities, should instruments and mechanisms be selected and operational measures planned or implemented. The following checklist provides additional assistance and structures the process of strategic planning for activities in the social web.

<b>Analysis of the current situation</b>	Has a specific analysis of the internal and external framework conditions been carried out? Have the products and services offered or to be advertised been determined?
<b>Objectives &amp; goals</b>	Have concrete goals been set for the activity in social media? Do these build on the club numbers and form the basis of the actual analysis carried out?
<b>Target groups</b>	Is it clearly defined who is to be reached with the activities in the social web , on which platforms the target group is and what needs the target group has?
<b>Resources</b>	Has it been determined who is responsible for social media within the association or organization? Are there sufficient competent resources available?
<b>Content</b>	Is relevant, target group-specific and platform-specific content available? Is it clearly defined who internal content providers are?
<b>Plan</b>	Are social media activities planned in an editorial plan and are the measures an integral part of general marketing planning or press and public relations work?
<b>Networking</b>	Are all activities logically linked and build on each other? Is digital cross-media guaranteed? Are the online and offline world connected?



<b>Guidelines</b>	Are there specific guidelines / assistance for all employees with regard to behaviour in the social web ?
<b>Monitoring</b>	Is it observed what is communicated on the social web about the association or the organization? Has a process been defined for negative reports?
<b>Success measurement</b>	Is the success of the activities measured in the social media environment, and are the results taken into account in the follow-up planning?



With this tool, the planning basics should be possible in order to successfully master the next step in the development of the strategy or the implementation.

### **3.4. Attracting attention – Reaching your own target group**

Probably, the most important question about the necessity or sense of social media (both for yourself as a private person and a commercial brand) is the question of your own recipients. ¿Who do I actually want to reach with my topic? Actually, this already answers the question of the must of social media. But does it even make sense to join the collective madness of the masses and get involved?

Sports and the sports industry are now also benefiting from the virtual platforms, because these tools can be used to establish proximity to target groups that were previously inaccessible. This makes it possible to obtain feedback directly through fan or customer contact. Fans can also act as positive multipliers and maintain the image of their idol: ideally, this ensures the desired public perception and, at the same time, the fan community exerts a motivating effect on athletes' performance. Now that the competition between sports players is also taking place in the media sector, the role of reputation is steadily gaining in importance.

The clubs can reach their target group globally and no longer only have to turn to the regional or national market. Promotional items, tickets, etcetera, can be completely repositioned in this way. However, with the advent of the digital age, the image of the respective club is also in a kind of "shop window". And how do people communicate with a network that connects so many old and new applications? In the communication of tomorrow, private individuals will be able to reach the masses and, conversely, the media will be able to offer individual program content specifically to individuals. Among other things, this will change the form and content of language; it will adapt to social media.

Some companies use successful athletes in the hope that the positive attributes associated with the athlete will be carried over from the consumer to the company. Such athletes are often used because they are credited with generating strong connections with consumers. They embody values such as dynamism, performance and success, and have a high level of awareness and likeability among the target groups relevant to advertising. From an industrial point of view, this means that all the requirements for an image transfer of positive properties are transferred to the product or service to be advertised.



As part of customer management (CRM), the use of social networks is becoming more and more important for companies. In the future, marketing and direct addressing of target groups will increasingly take place on the Internet, and the “word of mouth” is the decisive factor for the spread of brand and product messages. Building a brand community can help to get a direct line to the target group and to learn from them.

Once you have your goals and primary audience firmly under control, the next step is to get the message out to as many people as possible and reach new people with it. This is a key factor for future success.

## 3.5. Perceiving emotions – Recognizing the mood

Clubs / associations whose messages contain the right number of emotions strengthen brand awareness among fans and lead to a higher recommendation rate. Seriousness, sadness, and surprise are among the emotions that evoke a particularly strong connection to a brand among fans. The emotionality as well as the length of the content that clubs / associations share influences the interaction rate and the frequency of recommendations. But happiness and surprise also influence brand awareness. Fans who react emotionally to a brand message share content significantly more often than those who do not feel affected by it. And one thing is clear: people believe like-minded people (or others) more than advertisers. Sport is in the fortunate position of being able to convey precisely these emotions – great successes are matched by bitter and narrow defeats that captivate the fan emotionally, and these parameters can also be used in a targeted manner in communication.

You want to catch the mood with automated tools. Today's sentiment analysis is based on large lists of sentiment words that express something positive or negative. This approach is useful when analysing extremely large documents. For Twitter analyses (a 140 or 280-character corset), however, these methods prove to be insufficient to assess a comment positively or negatively.

In a data science research project (2019), Ema Kušen and Mark Strembeck (Institute for Information Systems and New Media) investigated which emotions trigger different types of events and how these emotions affected communication in social media. It was also examined how communication between human users differs from so-called “social bots”, i.e., automated software programs that simulate human behaviour patterns in social networks and sometimes appear as “fake accounts”.

### Positive news despite negative events

The results of the study (Kušen & Strembeck, 2019) made it clear that emotional messages were disseminated significantly more often than neutral messages. In the course of the analyses, the existence of the so-called “Undoing Hypothesis” was also demonstrated for the first time on a large scale in social media. This means that an astonishingly large number of positive messages is also sent in relation to negative events. The reason for this is the attempt to use positive emotions in social media as a kind of “antidote” against negative emotions.

Social bots use emotions in social media to influence discussion

With regard to social bots, it became clear that they tried to influence the discussion with the help of emotional messages, especially with polarizing bots. In a study that included social media messages on 24 systematically selected real-world events, it was shown that social bots sent emotionally polarizing messages during controversial events, such as the awarding of the Olympic Games or elections tried to influence public opinion. In addition, the results made it clear that human users generally tend to follow the basic mood of a discussion, while social bots try to turn the mood through opposing emotions, the so-called “shifted emotions”. It is precisely in this way that social bots try to force the dissemination of these messages and attract attention in the form of likes or retweets. (<https://www.social-media-magazin.de>)

### 3.6. Receive reactions - Trigger actions

Social media brings clubs and organizations closer to their customers and helps to carry out quick, simple and effective communication, and to get quick feedback on the published content. One of the strengths of social media is the interactions that can arise through it, because fans can just as easily contact the club / association. You can find out more about the products and services, express your wishes, exchange experiences and give feedback.

However, it is also easier to send negative feedback via the Internet and thus to show a reaction, because the feedback can be conveniently written on the sofa at home or perhaps on the bus. Fans can, so as to speak, hide and avoid personal conversations, which reduces the stimulus threshold, especially in the case of negative feedback.

What should clubs and organizations do if they receive negative comments via social media? Below are six tips for dealing with negative feedback on social media.

#### **Fast and personal response**

The digital world is extremely fast. Users can access social media at any time via their mobile devices and share pictures and updates in a few minutes. It is practically just as



bad not to reply to a tweet or comment on Facebook and not to respond to a call to fan service.

A quick response is essential. A posting, regardless of which social network it is played on, can be seen by hundreds or even thousands in just a few minutes. And the longer the club / association doesn't react to the situation, the worse the image that users receive.

A modern and effective media monitoring service and an active fan service support the quick reactions. Media monitoring helps to identify negative comments, even if they are not addressed directly to the recipient. Through the service, clubs / associations can take part in discussions that would otherwise have been difficult to find.

Generic or automatic answers don't fit in with social media and don't necessarily go down well with fans. Any feedback should be responded to personally by providing an immediate response to the problem. Even a short answer can show the fan and those who follow the discussion that the club / association values contact with its fans.

### **No censorship**

Deleting feedback can only make the situation worse. Removing comments can be easily discovered, especially in social media. Sticking to the censorship of negative comments can lead to a bad reputation and a lot of frustration.

Of course, a previously formulated request can be used to try to keep the discussion friendly and professional, but the removal of messages is not recommended. The only exceptions to this are clear, personal threats, sensitive or illegal material, or the dissemination of unsolicited personal information.

### **No empty apologies**

If the club / federation has made a mistake, it is important that an honest and decent apology is published. The formal apologies often used in communication, also known as "non-apology" in English, should be avoided at all costs.

With a formal apology, the responsibility is usually pushed aside, the clubs and organizations do not admit to having made a mistake. Such excuses never improve the image. The hashtag #nonapology tweets empty apologies from companies on Twitter every day, and those tweets can spread widely.

An honest apology paints the picture of a responsible club / association that admits its mistakes. As a result, it doesn't seem like you want to put yourself above your customers.

### **Professional service also in social media**

It is incredibly important for fan service to be professional and polite at all times. Although the discussions on social media are relaxed and personality is valued, it should not be forgotten that your own club / association or organization is also represented on these channels and that it is a real fan situation.

A professional and calm attitude and a willingness to compromise are important. The fan does not necessarily have to be right, and misunderstandings can be gently cleared out of the way, but the fan must always feel valued.

### **Referring to private conversation**

If finding a common solution takes longer or is difficult, an attempt should be made to lead the discussion into a private conversation. This also creates a positive image among fans, because personal contact shows respect that cannot be expressed in comments left on the Facebook wall.

In private messages, situations can be discussed better without attracting the eyes of the world. The fan can relax by the fact that the club / association has personally taken on the task of solving the problem. A phone call is even more personal and satisfies even unknown sympathizers.

### **Identify troublemakers**

Trolls can also be found on the Internet, people who try to provoke as many angry reactions from others as possible. The reason for the outbreak can be completely independent of the club / association. The person simply lets his/her anger flow wherever he/she can.

If the fan is clearly unwilling to resolve the problem and is acting unprofessionally, an attempt should be made to end the discussion quickly. It doesn't help anyone to keep discussing endlessly. If the irrelevant comments don't stop after that, the troublemaker can be reported to support.

## **3.7. Success factors in social platforms**

Today, almost everyone is on the move on social media platforms. But how can the potential of Instagram and Twitter & Co. be used in the best possible way? There are five factors for successful communication.

### **Plan human resources**

Messages, strategies and content have to be adapted for different platforms, and posts have to be planned and created. It is important to actively manage the community in order to fulfil the promise of dialogue. All of this takes a lot of time and requires sufficient human



resources. Without manpower, users can quickly react dissatisfied or turn away with disinterest. Larger organizations are therefore well advised to set up their social media team well. In addition to a head of social media who plans and controls strategically, ideally a content manager creates the content and a community manager moderates the discussions. A communication designer takes care of the visual content. It is best to add a social media advertiser and an analyst to evaluate the activities.

### **Invest in talent**

For a long time, social media communication was in inexperienced hands. Often, the attribute “young” is enough to be considered a social media expert. That alone is no longer enough. There are now many platforms that have different users and features. At the same time, other networks, such as LinkedIn, are gaining in popularity. Experience and a good overview are therefore required in order to skilfully skip short-lived hypes, but to use permanent trends early and profitably. Without a sure instinct for the manners and tonality customary in social networks, this is not possible.

### **Take risks**

In a real dialogue, unforeseen things can happen. Yes, even the dreaded “Shits torm” can break in on you. However, content without corners and edges quickly becomes boring. Reactions from the followers are then likely to be absent, and a dialogue hardly takes place. If you want to be as invulnerable as possible, you prefer to forego social media communication entirely. It is better: Don't act mindlessly, avoid unnecessary risks, but show the courage to be offended and polarize in a targeted manner.

### **Enable freedom**

Voting chains are often relatively rigid and hierarchical. However, social media teams need a high degree of autonomy. Followers expect comments to be responded too quickly. Current events require dynamic action and a high degree of flexibility. If you don't act like this, you will hardly generate any real interaction and deprive yourself of the greatest advantage of social networks. But that does not mean to act completely anarchist. An autonomously acting team moves on the basis of clear guidelines that have to be defined in advance.

### **Analyse continuously**

The more social media activities there are, the more recommendable it is to evaluate the response. This is the only way to guarantee that the published content will work well. And this is the only way to optimize future content and prepare it even better. Initially, it is sufficient to evaluate the performance in the analysis area of the respective platform. If you invest more and expand your activities, it is best to switch to an analysis tool. That makes regular reporting easier. Tracking relevant topics and mentions of your own



organization makes it easier to keep an eye on current discussions and to actively take them up.

## **3.8. Tips for a problem-free social media presence**

The successful network thrives on the fact that users exchange information and communicate quite openly with one another. But caution is advised. The social networks are like an open book in which many can read along and turn the pages if necessary. This are a few rules that should be strictly observed:

### **Protect privacy**

Full address, telephone number, career, interests, political opinion: such information should not be visible to everyone on the Internet. The social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing, etc.) offer security settings with which you can choose exactly what should be seen in your own profile. You can also prevent your own Facebook page from being found in online search services such as Google, for example.

### **Choose friends wisely**

It makes sense to only accept friend requests from people you really know. You don't share your private life with everyone on the street. It is also not impolite to turn down friend requests as well. Ending friendships is also up to everyone. A qualitative selection is always more serious than a list of friends, which shows that people are crazy about collecting.

### **Separate personal from professional life**

What friends find funny may be less laughable for the boss, colleagues or HR. Under no circumstances should you write anything defamatory about the company or employees. It is also helpful that you can divide your friends into groups and determine what they can see from your own profile. Business platforms such as Xing or LinkedIn are much more suitable for relationships with business partners than connecting on Instagram.

### **Maintain contacts**

When posting on the wall or sending a message, it is polite to reply as well. After all, a social network depends on communication.

### **Post wisely**



“I’m tired”, “Nice weather”: in the early years of digital media, some users simply documented everything, some still pull it off today. But hardly anyone is interested. Less is often more and you give your posts, which tell an exciting story, a much greater meaning and value. You should also be sparing with your own comments on reports from other users. Anyone who reports status every few minutes raises the suspicion that they have nothing better to do.

### **Don't get too personal**

If you want to tell someone something personal, it is advisable to send a message instead of writing on the wall. It should go without saying that you do not get rude when communicating.

### **Avoid embarrassing pictures**

Party photos, embarrassing situations, pompous self-presentation are all images that you might get annoyed about later. The golden rule: only post photos that mom would also approve. This also applies to pictures with others, which, in any case, should not be published without their consent. It makes sense to keep an eye on whether you are shown or linked to photos of friends. If necessary, insist on deletion from friends. Even if it is not officially allowed, many HR departments look at the social media profiles of new applicants and thus get an impression. Wouldn't it be a shame if you missed a great job opportunity due to some rash posts?

### **Observe copyright**

Copyright also applies to social networks. Therefore, only self-created or already public content may be uploaded. Due to its simplicity, you are quickly tempted to “steal” pictures from other people and publish them on your own profiles. However, if that should be checked (more and more photo agencies and photographers, the so-called “photo police officers”, take on exactly this topic and, so to speak, collect money for the photo rights) and paid for, it can often be expensive.

### **Switch off sometimes**

One should not forget that virtual friendships are not to be equated with real ones and cannot replace real friends. Therefore, simply log out again and meet real friends in the analogue world.

## **3.9. Determine marketing potential**

Sports organizations' investment in social networks and digital media across the board must also have a return on investment (ROI). While it was a “nice to have” in the past few



years, it is already required today to create additional sources of income via social networks. More and more clubs and associations have recognized this opportunity, but have different approaches.

Here too, however, you have to determine exactly what can and should be marketed. And above all, you have to be able to present the interested company with verifiable and specific measures and goals. A few years ago, all that counted for many companies was the classic advertisement, the classic TV or radio commercial, and various “out-of-home” campaigns – advertising in social networks and their viral possibilities were not tangible for many. In this area, however, there was a clear rethinking: awareness of target group-specific advertising has grown dramatically not only among companies, but also among clubs and athletes. Of course, clubs accepted this development with gratitude and were not only able to expand their marketing portfolio, but also generate new sources of income. An extensive online marketing catalogue was the result, which often also contained many creative possibilities, and so you can look for existing as well as new partners who could make it more interesting.

## Visual

Various channels are available for disseminating content in social media, which differ according to how much control is possible over their use: Own and paid channels offer full control over the content, but there is little influence with “earned” channels on how other users share or comment on the content.

Clubs, leagues, associations, and athletes who are involved in social media must not consider this commitment in isolation. Because communication, participation and collaboration apply not only in relation to the users, but also in relation to the platforms occupied by the clubs. In other words: a social media strategy includes the consideration of all platforms on which the association is active, regional, national, and even global, including all goals of the organization (brand, marketing, sales, merchandising and corresponding marketing).

That sounds like a lot of effort, but it is not when the focus is initially on one or two platforms. Media that best reach the target groups should be selected. In the case of a sports organization that is in direct dialogue with the fans, this could be, for example, Facebook and Instagram; in the B2B area, perhaps LinkedIn and Xing. The digital communication radius can, however, be expanded very quickly.

This means that the association must completely include its entire communication structure, from the home page, the mobile offer and the numerous offers in the social networks, in the considerations for its digital strategy. Business with business has become complicated. The multitude of possibilities has brought challenges. In the area of marketing, due to the enormous reach of the club or athlete profiles, they are playing an



increasingly important role.

But also with individual athletes, as well as with the players of a club, the marketing in the social media takes an increasingly bigger place. For advertising companies, the players are particularly interesting as testimonials and influencers if they have the necessary public awareness and popularity in the target group to be advertised. Companies use the credible presence of the players on the field and increasingly their reach through the various media, and integrate them into their communicative marketing process.

The main challenge is to find a company that fits the player's image. At the same time, this is an essential basis for achieving positive image transfer as the main goal of sponsoring. In addition, it must be taken into account whether the individual marketing with which the club is in conflict. This is often a matter of maintaining industry exclusivity for the club sponsors. It is therefore important that the contracts are precisely coordinated. It must also be ensured that the athletic performance is not restricted by numerous promotions and appointments. The most important thing in successful marketing, however, is that it appears authentic, so that the player is perceived according to his character. This is because it is not the number of advertising partners or dates that is decisive, but the authentic and efficient positioning and the correlation between the personality of the player. Those who appear credible and personable will increase their level of awareness sustainably and also do better in terms of marketing.

## **Conclusion**

The integration of partners and sponsors in clubs or athletes, which can be both strategic and goal-oriented, is an increasingly important and central success factor in the sense of a holistic social media marketing approach; sponsoring the social media as a multiplier. In sponsorship, the sponsored person transmits a specific message from the sponsor. In the perception of the recipient, an image transfer from the sponsored to the sponsor should take place. In the sports sector, every company knows exactly what it is getting, the target group is known and clearly defined. But the emotions of the clubs or athletes can also be used ideally for themselves.

In social media, there is not only receiving, but also interaction, so the quality of contact on social media is higher than on traditional media. The recipients have the opportunity to interact with the messages of the sponsored by commenting on, liking, or even sharing them. When using social media for sponsorship, the viral effect means that there is a greater contact quantity than with traditional media.

## **References**



**Kušen, E & Strembeck, M.** (2019). An analysis of emotion-exchange motifs in multiplex networks during emergency events.

