

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL REPUTATION

Regardless of how you choose to leverage social media for your community or organization, the fact of the matter is this: Residents, residents' family members, employees and the community at large are using social media. And, whether you like it or not, there's a good chance they'll be communicating about your organization.

We can't shut down the Internet, but we can certainly choose to participate in a smart and well-thought-out manner. When it comes to your social reputation, here are four tips to keep in mind:

1. Have a plan in place.

Know who will be in charge of social media for your organization and who the backup will be. Don't be caught off guard by not knowing that you're being talked about. Invest in a social monitoring tool so you're always aware of the conversation.

2. Don't be afraid to join the conversation.

Individuals will often write a review about your community. It might be positive or it could be negative. By engaging in the conversation, you acknowledge that you've read their comments. Your response could be as simple as "Thanks for your kind words about our community" or "Your comment seems to be personal in nature, and I'd welcome a phone call to discuss in person."

3. Engage in the positive; don't be defensive.

Social media gives the public a voice in matters that they're passionate about. If you receive a negative review or comment, don't take offense. Instead, choose to respond in a manner that invites the individual to take the conversation offline.

4. Be timely with responses.

Regardless if a comment is negative or positive, if you don't respond in a timely manner, you're sending a signal that you don't care or aren't listening. Rule of thumb: Respond within 24 hours, if not sooner.