



## 6 Ways Brands can Protect Themselves Against the Next Social Media Hoax

Last month, Instagram had to face a social media hoax that claimed it is implementing a rule “where Instagram can use your photos.” The hoax is further fueled by an advised that a person can prevent Instagram from using one’s photos if s/he publishes a statement revoking his/her permission for it to do so. Notably, this is not the first time that has happened with a reputed brand like Instagram.

In 2014 and 2015, the same hoax resurfaced yet again. There are also other variations of this hoax about privacy notice. One that dates back to at least 2009, for example, says that users can pay Facebook a subscription fee to keep their posts private.

Though Instagram was quick to debunk this claim but the few hours had done the damage as its shares saw dip on Tuesday later that week. For brands trying to promote their brand story and spread the word about their business through social media, this can be a nightmare. So, what should a brand do to avoid getting scammed by these social media hoaxes?

### 1. Social Media Marketing Strategy

Just joining the social network, making your profiles, posting great content out there to attract attention is not going to prepare you for when things go south. You ought to have a proper social media marketing strategy. It empowers you with the knowledge on how to eliminate the risk of blind spots in your interpretation of any issues and also how to and where you should respond, your desired tone and a list of topics you might want to avoid altogether if an unwanted situation arises.

### 2. Skilled Response Team

Brands need to be vigilant with their media management in order to prevent these problems from occurring and in ensuring that the press they get is optimized for success. A quick reaction to such hoaxes can save your brand but it is ineffective if you don’t have reasonably experienced copywriter, designer and internet-savvy strategist to defend your brand from needless attacks. Ensure that this team is equipped with the tools they need to detect

any rumblings online early before mainstream media picks up the story and boosts it to new audiences.

### 3. Know Your Audience

Most of the times it is the consumer rather than any organization with malicious intent that spreads bogus content on social media. But in their defense, they consume these anecdotes from fringe media publications. Knowing where your potential customers get their information from goes a long way in helping you avoid these situations. Also, cultivating relationships with credible media outlets can give you opportunities to defend yourself in front of your target audience.



### 4. Admit Fault

In this internet savvy world, it is imperative to understand the power of social media that can built as well as break empires. It is generally the unhappy or unsatisfied and sometimes misled consumers who create fake news or social media hoaxes. What can a Brand do? Just accept if you are wrong. Yours isn't the first business to make a mistake, but while many make them, far fewer actually own up to them. A simple acknowledgment that a problem existed and the assurance that it is being addressed as quickly and thoroughly as possible can do wonders for consumer engagement that eventually leads to positive image building.

### 5. Strategize your Response

Being honest about your branding helps you in fostering an honest discussion about known areas of risk and faults and is a good

tactic. But playing defensive shouldn’t be your only plan of action. There are patterns to every social media hoax, so your reaction should be based on it too. If it demands aggressive reaction be aggressive but if it demands you to be passive be that too.

### 6. Content is King

A creative but counteractive content plays a massive role in brand affinity and integrity that cements your position in the market and helps you weather any storm. Put your team to work in developing educational and entertaining content that’s just as shareable as the fake news, memes or social media hoaxes your consumers see from malicious creative counterparts. Remember it is always good to tell your story before it’s told for you.

#### Geek Out!

*The programmer got stuck in the shower because the instructions on the shampoo bottle said: Lather, Rinse, Repeat.*



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