

Responding to Facebook Posts

1. Identify the type of feedback.

Negative feedback comes in a variety of forms, and each will require a certain type of response.

Straight Problems – Someone has an issue with your product or service and has laid out exactly what went wrong. This type of feedback is negative in the sense that it paints your institution in a poor light, but it can be helpful in exposing real problems that need to be dealt with.

Constructive Criticism – Even more helpful is when the comment comes with a suggestion attached. Many customers – including some of your most loyal – will use social media to suggest ways in which you can improve your product or service. While this type of feedback may point out your flaws, it can be extremely helpful to receive.

Merited Attack – While the attack itself may not be merited, the issue that prompted it does have merit in this type of negative feedback. Essentially, you or your institution did something wrong, and someone is angry.

Trolling/Spam – The difference between trolling and a merited attack are that trolls have no valid reason for being angry at you. Also in this category are spammers, who will use a negative comment about your product or service (whether true or not) to promote a competitor.

2. Determine the best response.

When responding to all criticism, even the negative type, be positive. Adding more negativity to the conversation by being drawn into an argument with the user will only reflect poorly on the institution.

When dealing with **Straight Problems**, a response is necessary. Whether that response is personal or a broad public-facing message depends on how widespread the problem is and how many people reported it. Regardless, if a real problem exists, steps should be taken to fix it and customers should be notified that those steps are being taken. Remember that there will be times when such criticism is the result of a perceived problem rather than an actual problem (e.g., someone who just doesn't like the method by which you do something). Even this type of complaint should be given a response, if only to say, "Thanks for bringing it to our attention, but here's why we do it that way."

Constructive Criticism also requires a response. There will be times when you won't want to implement the suggestion given – probably most times you won't – but you'll build loyalty and trust by responding to criticism with a positive message. It is well worth the effort to thank those users who took the time to provide you with a suggestion or point out a flaw.

A **Merited Attack**, though delivered in a harsh manner, has a basis in a real problem. It is best to respond promptly and with a positive tone (e.g., thank the commenter for the feedback and assure them that steps are being taken to correct the issue or mitigate their problem).

The final category is the only category of negative feedback that does not require a response. It is almost always best not to respond to **Trolling or Spam**. You should always ignore this variety of feedback, and when appropriate, remove it as soon as you spot it.

3. Respond.

When a fan posts a negative comment about an experience at UW-Superior which requires a response, consider the following:

- Apologize for their unfavorable experience and thank them for sharing the information in a timely manner. If the comment sits on our wall for a week with no response, it may irritate the individual who posted the comment even more and make UW-Superior look unprofessional to other fans. Responses should be carefully planned and be as positive as possible.
- Attempt to resolve the situation or explain what you are going to do to prevent that same situation from happening in the future. If necessary, ask them to email the details of their experience, which you can then share with the appropriate unit/department. This could help keep more unflattering comments off of our wall, and allows the conversation to continue privately.
- Continue to monitor the comment and keep in touch with the individual until they are satisfied with the situation.