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How to Craft Your Own Communications Strategy When You Don't Have Your Own Comms Department

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Objectives

Look at 10 Effective Government Communication Principles

Audience and Channel Mapping

Messaging Framework

Responding (or not)

Do's and Don'ts



10 Effective Government Communication Principles



1. Transparency

2. Accessibility

3. Timeliness

4. Accuracy

5. Two-Way Communication

6. Inclusivity

7. Consistency

8. Strategic Focus

9. Crisis Readiness

10. Tech Integration



Audience and Channel Mapping



Who are your stakeholders/audience?

Where are they digitally?



What type(s) of media do they consumer?



Messaging Framework



Your core messaging framework should include ***mission and values alignment, plain language, transparency & accountability, and cultural competency.***



Content Types

Policy updates and regulations

Community engagement
initiatives

Public service announcements

Emergency communications

Project updates and milestones



Keep in mind **plain language principles** and **transparency requirements** (disclaimers) in your messaging.



Crisis Communications Planning





Crisis Communications Planning

Response Protocols?

Media Relations During Crisis?

Spokesperson Designation?

Message Templates?

Approval Process?



When to Respond or Not Respond



For every action,
there is an equal
and opposite
reaction, plus a
social media
overreaction.



What to Ignore

Rantings

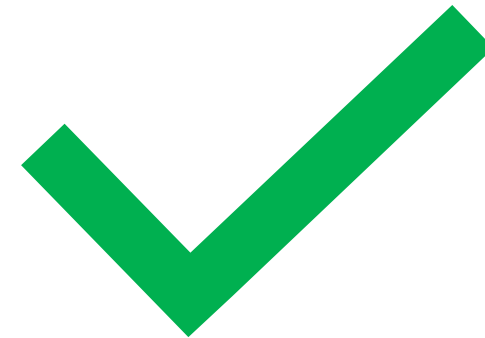
Personal Opinions that have no merit.



What to Address

Personnel issues/complaints

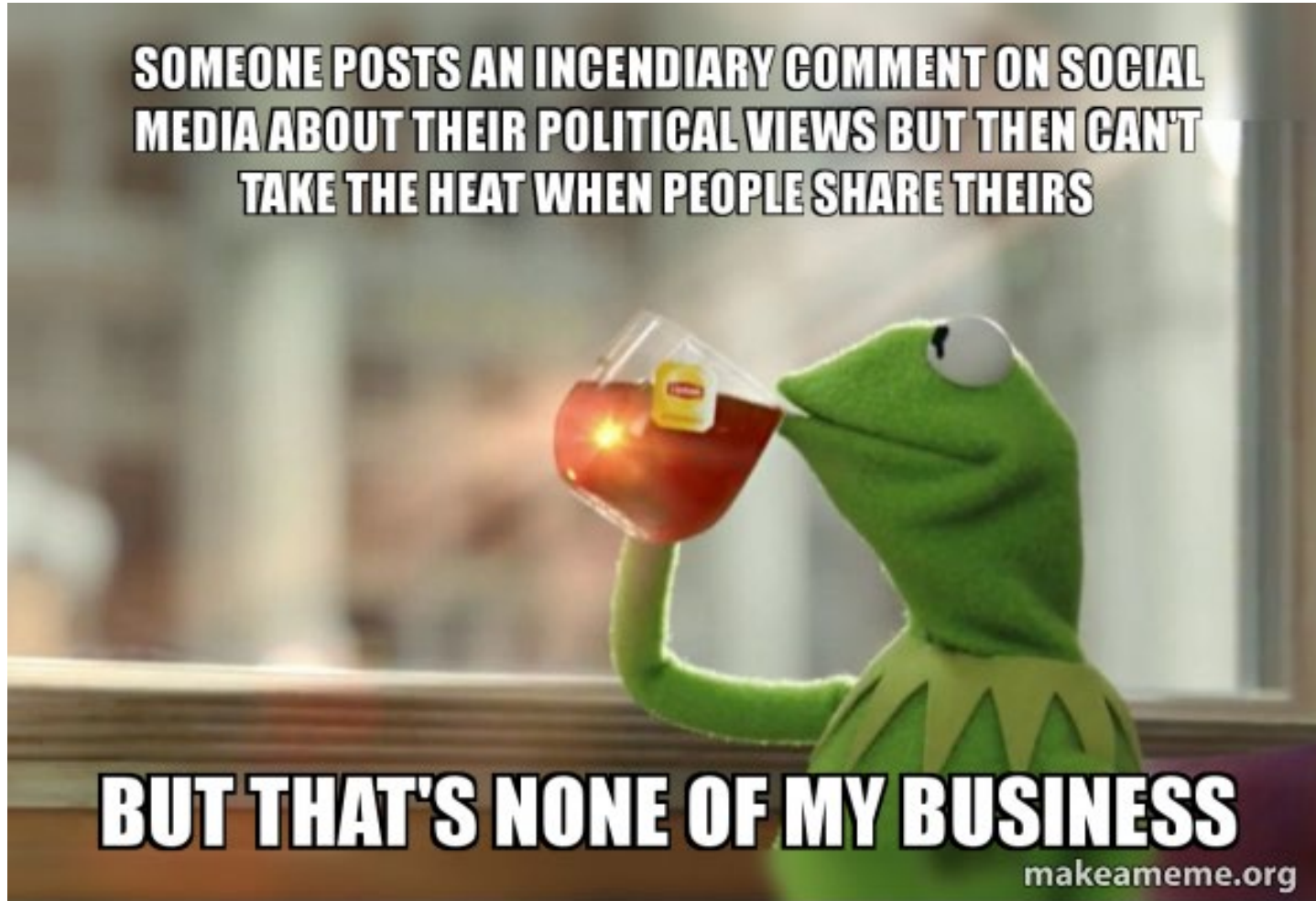
Misinformation



How to Handle Responding on Social Media



**SOMEONE POSTS AN INCENDIARY COMMENT ON SOCIAL
MEDIA ABOUT THEIR POLITICAL VIEWS BUT THEN CAN'T
TAKE THE HEAT WHEN PEOPLE SHARE THEIRS**



BUT THAT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS

makeameme.org



1. Develop guidelines for what types of posts/topics could possibly require a response.
2. If someone is posting negative comments, offer to take it offline to address their concerns/issues.
3. Make sure to provide clear and accurate information.



4. Be transparent and open.

5. Maintain a professional tone.

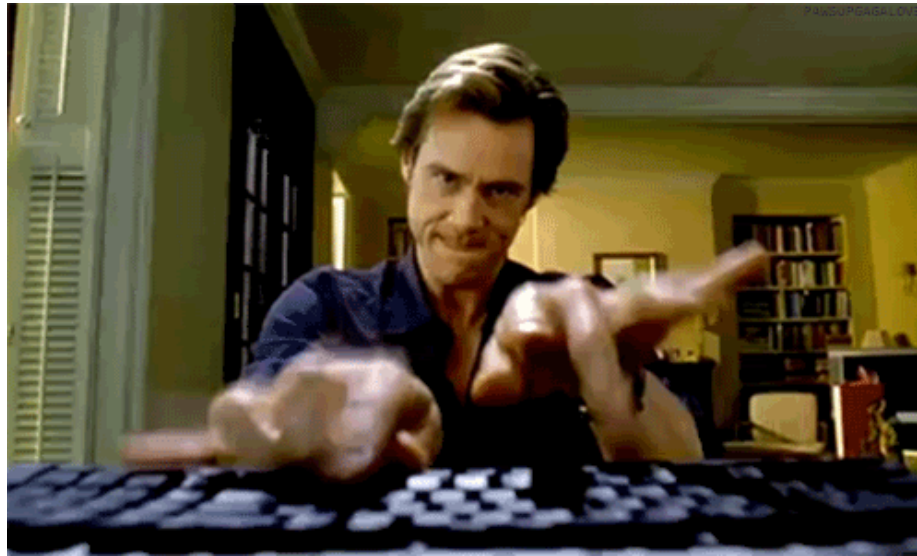
**Remember to keep
comments
respectful and to
follow our
Community
Guidelines**



**Comment
section**



Deleting Content on Social Media



What CAN you delete*?

- Clearly defined prohibited content
- Off-topic or irrelevant comments
- Personal attacks and harassment
- Illegal content
- Repetitive or excessive posting

**Laws are always changing.
Please always consult with
your City/County Attorney.*



What CAN you delete*?

- Impersonation
- Security Risks
- Violations of platform-specific rules
- Non-public forum content
- Content in languages other than those officially used by the government entity.

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Please always consult with
your City/County Attorney.*



Elected Officials and City/County Government Staff – What You **Shouldn't** Be Doing



*It is not the City/County Manager's job to keep the peace between the public and elected officials. **Elected officials have to take some ownership of the heat online.***



What You Shouldn't Be Doing*

Officials and staff should not use their social media platforms to endorse political candidates, parties, or specific political agendas.

Avoid sharing personal political views.

Avoid heated or emotional responses.

Do not engage in personal attacks.

Do not spread misinformation.

**These are just advisory practices.
We fully support freedom of speech.*



What You Shouldn't Be Doing*

Avoid speculative statements.

Do not share confidential, sensitive, or privileged information on social media. This includes details about ongoing negotiations, legal matters, or private citizen information.

Avoid promoting personal business ventures.

Avoid using your role to gain advantages/special treatment on social media.

**These are just advisory practices.
We fully support freedom of speech.*



What You Shouldn't Be Doing*

Avoid posting inappropriate content.

Do not delete criticism.

Do not block people.

**These are just advisory practices.
We fully support freedom of speech.*



Elected Officials and City/County Government Staff – What You **Should** Be Doing



What You Should Be Doing

Have a clear, publicly available social media policy outlining what content can be removed and why.

Apply the policy consistently to avoid claims of viewpoint discrimination.

Document all removed content and the reasons for removal.



What You Should Be Doing

Provide an appeals process for users who believe their content was wrongfully removed.

Consider hiding or muting comments instead of deleting them when appropriate.

Consult with legal counsel to ensure compliance with local laws and recent court decisions regarding government social media use.



Remember, the law in this area is still evolving, and different jurisdictions may have varying interpretations. Government entities should stay informed about the latest legal developments and adjust their policies accordingly.



Questions?



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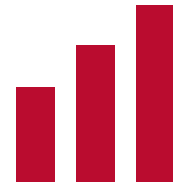
COMMUNITY BRANDING



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DOWNTOWN
DEVELOPMENT



DATA ANALYTICS
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