

Stealing Social Media Ideas From The Private Sector

Simple strategies to get results for your schools on social

Social media has changed the way people consume information. People choose products partially based off of the company's reputation online, making social platforms valuable tools in sales and marketing. The platforms provide companies the ability to connect with their audience in ways that were impossible twenty years ago; the fact that marketers have tracked their audiences onto the platforms is no surprise. As a result, many small companies have grown exponentially in the past decade by figuring out the mechanics of marketing online.

Let's take a look at what strategies schools can steal from these companies that will drive results in your school's marketing practice.

#1 Tell small stories that support your larger story

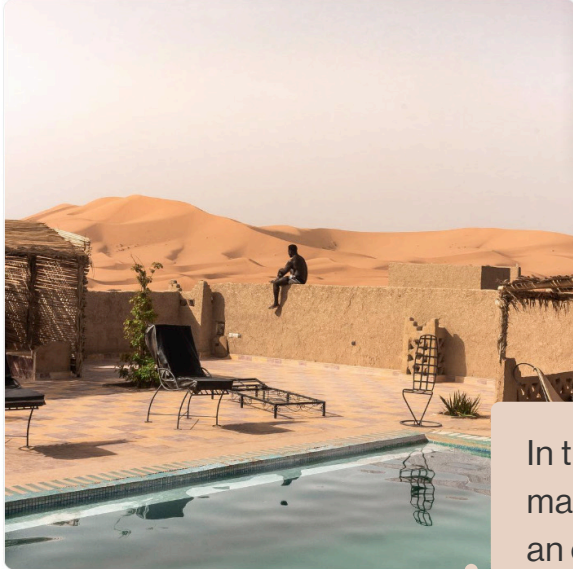
Airbnb is rethinking travel. The company has grown at a breakneck pace, bringing its value to over \$31 billion today. One of their strongest marketing strategies is to share many small stories that build up a larger narrative about adventure and excitement.

Instead of posting about value, security, and special offers, they post about people trying things for the first time, forging friendships, and witnessing incredible views. When their audience continuously sees these stories, it strengthens their overall narrative of their brand: Airbnb is an affordable way to find adventure, connections, and experiences.

Airbnb @Airbnb Follow

The terrain near Merzouga in Morocco is mesmerizing.

It could be the golden dunes of Erg Chebbi or the blush-colored sky overhead. Your only obligation is to enjoy the view.



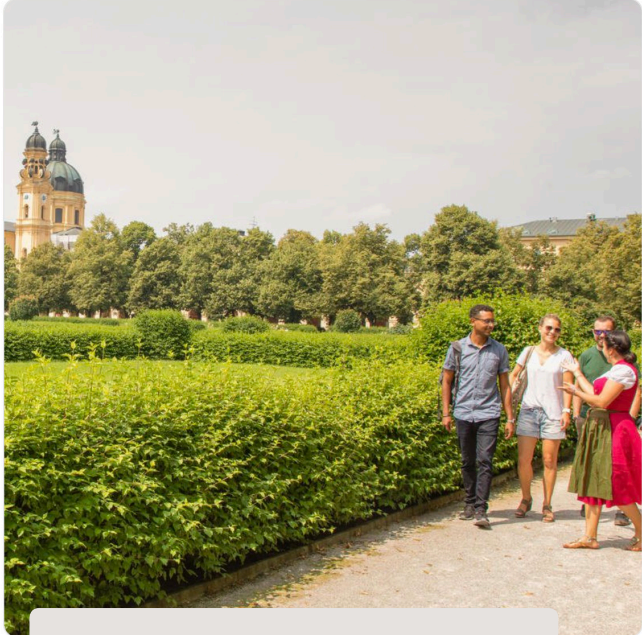
10:04 AM - 10 Sep 2018 from Morocco

91 Retweets 716 Likes

Airbnb @Airbnb Follow

When Sahar leads you to her favorite culinary hotspots, expect to eat pizza worthy of Munich's nickname, "the most northern Italian city".

Explore food and drink [#AirbnbExperiences](#) in Munich: abnb.co/vnyzn



10:5

People respond well to personal stories. The more specific details you can share, the better.

In this photo, Airbnb doesn't market a house, they sell an experience.

There's no mention of an apartment to rent here. It's all about adventure.

The image focuses on people in action, not just the place itself.



Airbnb
@Airbnb

Follow

The canals of Amsterdam are best discovered on a boat with Robby and his endless supply of interesting facts, Dutch cheeses and lighthearted humor.



5:28 PM - 6 Sep 2018 from Amsterdam, The Netherlands

10 Retweets 81 Likes



Airbnb
@Airbnb

Follow

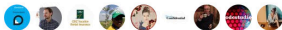
When learning the ancient and forgotten art of effigy making from Chwee Lian, you're also helping to preserve her family's 120-year-old legacy.

Find more [#AirbnbExperiences](#) that can teach you about the past: abnb.co/ndep4



11:14 AM - 11 Oct 2018

3 Retweets 12 Likes



1 3 12

The detail about a "120 year-old legacy" plays into the idea of unique, rare experiences.

Multiple photos allows for a richer experience of an event.

For schools:

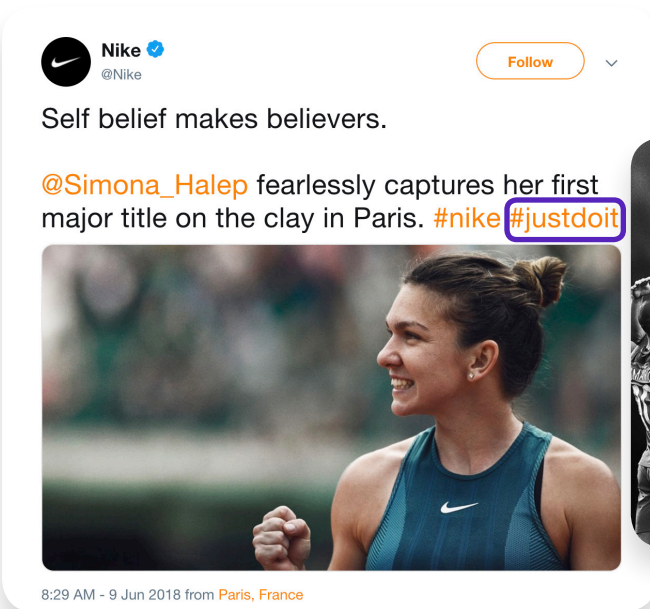
- 1 Repeatedly share small, personal stories that relate to a larger narrative about what makes your school special.
- 2 Keep sharing new content with the same core message.
- 3 Use action images as a storytelling tool.

#2 Repeat yourself again and again

Nike uses their tagline, #justdoit, in post after post to drive home their branding. Companies in the private sector understand that getting your message across means repeating yourself again and again.

Each post is an opportunity to paint the company's vision. Nike attaches the same messaging, #justdoit, to inspiring athletes' stories, keeping their content fresh while

maintaining their brand. Depending on the sports season, Nike shares updates about different athletes' games and races as they correspond with the company's messaging. Nike crafts posts that are meant to inspire, which fits into their branding narrative. The company inspires athletes to dream big, then provides them with the technology to meet those goals.



Nike @Nike Follow

Self belief makes believers.

@[Simona_Halep](#) fearlessly captures her first major title on the clay in Paris. #nike #justdoit

8:29 AM - 9 Jun 2018 from Paris, France



nike • Following Paris, France

Stand as one. Play as one. Win as one. #justdoit

820,762 likes

July 11, 2016



nike • Following

You don't need a crowd. You just need a court. #justdoit

191,273 likes

APRIL 8, 2014

Add a comment...

Nike lets the picture speak for itself. Sometimes a shorter caption can be more powerful.



Nike @Nike · 6 May 2017

Replying to @Nike

Eliud Kipchoge - 2:00:25

The barrier just got that much closer. #Breaking2 #JustDoIt



Eliud Kipchoge

107 2.7K 6.1K

Nike tells longer stories over time by posting about different races, letting the audience get to know their athletes.



nike • Following
London, United Kingdom

nike They wanted to measure London in minutes, miles and medals. All you wanted was to run a beautiful race.

Congrats, @kipchogeeliud. You did. #justdoit

Load more comments



479,756 likes

APRIL 22

Breaking stories into pieces makes athletes' victories more exciting.

For schools:

- 1 Only a fraction of your audience will see each post, so repeat yourself to spread the message to every user.
- 2 Continually link each post to the school's vision; Nike accomplishes this goal with #justdoit.
- 3 Just as Nike shares stories about different sports, post student stories from a diversity of interests, relating those stories back to your school's values.

#3 Spotlight staff

Google frequently shares thought pieces from executive staff members. Each post focuses on something the “Googler” specializes in, allowing the staffer to put their best foot forward on social platforms. In turn, the company gains credibility in association with the staff

member's knowledge. Oftentimes their posts will be shared across social platforms, even contributing to larger conversations on the topic. Allowing employees to share their expertise is a small way to highlight their excellence, improving employee engagement.



Spotlighting staff members' outside interests builds a culture that celebrates learning.

Let your audience get to know the team.

Build up your school's reputation by highlighting employees' accomplishments.





Follow

“We need to take a different approach to computer security that doesn’t feel like playing whack-o-mole.”

Chrome Director of Engineering @lparisa shares her optimistic dissatisfaction with the status quo of security → goo.gl/kEFQ49



Portrait photos put a face to your brand.

Celebrating an employee's talent can boost moral.

12:00 PM - 12 Sep 2018

For schools:

- 1 Get to know your teams' passions and interests, or identify elements of their classroom that are truly exceptional.
- 2 Give your team a platform to share their expertise, like creating a schedule for blog posts.
- 3 Include a headshot that highlights their personality, putting a face to their name.

#4 Redirect to a private channel

To avoid a messy argument, most companies publicly provide users with the option to address the issue on a private platform. Apple is a great example; they generally request that customers send them a direct message on Twitter; it's one of their most consistent customer service tactics.

While this works well for large companies, a superintendent that we spoke to in Illinois emphasized the importance of getting people into your office. People are willing to say all kinds of horrible things online that they would not mention in person. Speaking face-to-face can deescalate the situation by humanizing both parties.



Apple moves an angry conversation, to a private direct message (DM).

They politely ask for a rational explanation to an emotional post.

Apple keeps the tone light while focusing on a solution.

Repeating the user's concerns shows that they were heard.



We would be delighted to offer assistance. Thank you for asking!

Use the button below to send us a DM with a description of what happens when you try to use your front camera. We'll meet you there.

[Send a private message](#)



Ryan (@ryanwhitehead) · 38m
Another pair of @apple shitty white cable ear buds crapped out again, right before work. Tell me again why you changed from universal headphone jack to the apple exclusive slot design #garbage #trashearbuds

2



Apple Support ✓
@AppleSupport

Follow

Replying to @ryanwhitehead

Thanks for reaching out. We know you need your headphones working as expected. We're happy to help. Meet us in DM, and let us know if these came with your iPhone, and what's not working. We'll continue there.

Send a private message

7:23 PM - 11 Oct 2018

2

Studies show that when people get angry at a company, they have a stronger connection to the company if the issue is properly resolved than if they had no issue at all.

Apple responds to a passive aggressive post with an earnest offer to help.

The user's frustration stems from feeling powerless, so they give them something to do.



Ryan Whitehead
Just setup a new iPhone. The majority of my messages are missing. There's no indication as to whether they are still downloading, or if something has gone wrong. I'm unsure as to how a billion dollar company hasn't yet solved syncing for their most popular service. cc @Apple

6:51 PM - 11 Oct 2018

1



Apple Support ✓ @AppleSupport · 12h
Replying to @ryanwhitehead

We'd love to help! Are you connected to Wi-Fi? Are you able to see the missing messages on iCloud on the website apple.co/1U2npx0? DM us to let us know, and we'll continue there.

Send a private message

1

For schools:

- 1 Avoid addressing the user's issue in the comment field or in public messages.
- 2 Provide users with all of the information they need to move the conversation into a private forum.
- 3 Get them on the phone or in your office to address concerns.

#5 Respond quickly, with empathy

When users become upset on social media, it's easy for them to forget that they're interacting with human beings instead of a computer screen. Because of this phenomenon, anonymous users are somewhat dehumanized. Responding to a concern with empathy, however, shows the customer that you care. A word of understanding can stifle frustration in understanding customers.

Spotify is known for their online customer service; the company doesn't even own a call line to address customers' complaints. Instead, they address concerns with SpotifyCares. SpotifyCares is a model public relations page. The group consistently takes the time to listen to their customers, addressing issues from the customer's perspective in order to find the most thoughtful course of action.



A screenshot of a social media post from SpotifyCares. The post is from October 6 at 12:34 PM. The text of the post reads: "Like the service, but absolutely hate the useless website user interface! I have given up after multiple tries to figure out how to actually get to my playlists, etc. It's absolutely crazy! Everything else BUT the very point of getting to the playlist or playing music website is there. Best service. But worst website interface!". Below the post are three comments. The first comment is from SpotifyCares, replying to the post: "Hey [redacted] thanks for sharing your feedback! We'll make sure it reaches the right team. On the other hand, are you running into anything we can help out with? If so, let us know and we'll go from there." The comment has 1w (one week) of age.

Asking for more ways to help out makes it hard for the user to stay angry.

When mistakes are made, apologizing quickly can defuse the situation.

Spotify's greeting contains less than ten words and still communicates empathy.



A screenshot of a social media thread. The first post is from Delana James, asking: "Why is spotify billing me when I do not have an account and have not clue what it is?". The post has 2w (two weeks) of age. The second post is a reply from SpotifyCares: "Hey Delana! We're sorry to hear that. Check out <https://support.spotify.com/article/why-am-i-being-charged/> for what to do next." The reply has 2w of age. Below the reply is a link to a support article titled "SUPPORT.SPOTIFY.COM Why have I been charged? - Spotify". The final post is a reply from Delana James: "Thank you I will go there now." with 2w of age.



Wendy Wendy I NEED HELP FIXING MY STUPID ACCOUNT AND CANT FIND ANY HELP!

Like · Reply · 3w



SpotifyCares Hey **Wendy**, the calvary's arrived! Can you send us a private message with your account's email address? We'll check on a few things backstage <https://www.facebook.com/help/142031279233975>.



FACEBOOK HELP CENTER
How do I send a private message to a Page?

Like · Reply · 3w

Humor is another way to break tension and humanize the brand.

Spotify treats every concern as though it were highly important, showing empathy for the customer's needs.



Wendy Wendy I really want spotify app badly but this app is not available on my country INDIA so I'm not able to install from play store PLS HELP ME

Like · Reply · 4w



SpotifyCares Hey **Wendy** While we haven't made it to India yet, we're launching regularly in countries around the world. Sign up here to be first to hear: <http://spotify.com/why-not-available>. Let us know if you have any other questions.

...



SPOTIFY.COM
Music for everyone.

Like · Reply · 4w

Even if Spotify can't solve the issue, they still provide the user with a way to move forward.

Responding to suggestions rewards users who are engaging with your brand.

For schools:

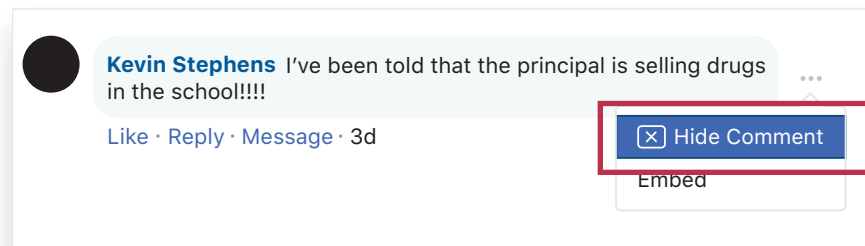
- 1 Respond quickly and politely to respectful concerns.
- 2 Show empathy to users' complaints.
- 3 Emphasize that you care about helping them.

#6 Know when to hide, block, or report

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter all give page administrators the power to manage malicious or dishonest comments on posts. When people see your page, they can also see the comments on every post, so tactically using these techniques will improve your brand image. Marketers in the private sector are quick to remove posts that are not constructive to the conversation.

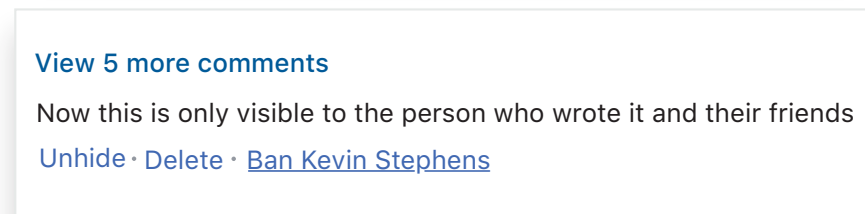
Be advised that overusing these tools can make it seem like you are censoring your audience. We recommend only using them only when someone is intentionally malicious or dishonest. Responding to respectful criticism lets your audience see answers to questions they may have for themselves, similar to the way that Spotify responds to their customers' concerns.

Facebook



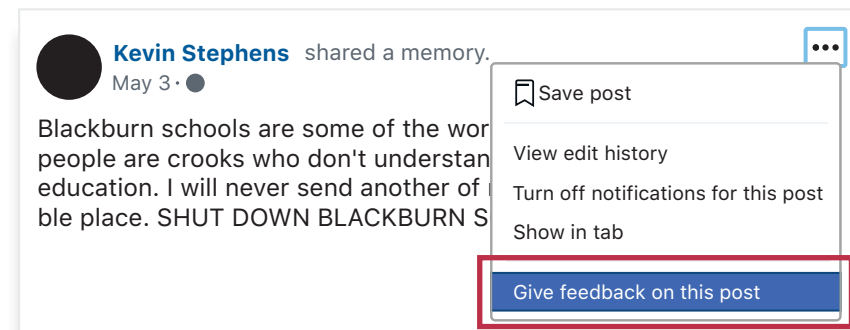
A screenshot of a Facebook post. The post is by Kevin Stephens and says "I've been told that the principal is selling drugs in the school!!!!". Below the post are options: "Like · Reply · Message · 3d". A red box highlights the "Hide Comment" button, which has a small 'x' icon next to it. Below the button is an "Embed" link.

Hide comments on your own posts.



A screenshot showing the management options for a comment. It says "View 5 more comments" and "Now this is only visible to the person who wrote it and their friends". Below are links: "Unhide · Delete · Ban Kevin Stephens".

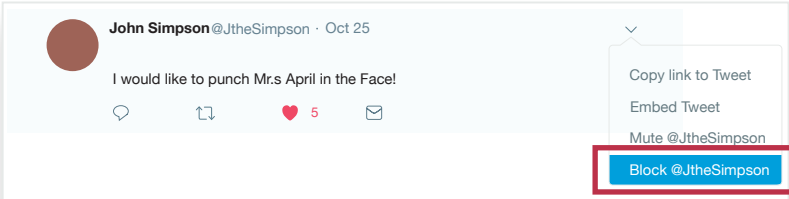
You can choose to block a user, after you hide their comment.



A screenshot of a Facebook post by Kevin Stephens. The post text is partially visible: "Blackburn schools are some of the wor... people are crooks who don't understand education. I will never send another of... ble place. SHUT DOWN BLACKBURN S...". A menu is open over the post with options: "Save post", "View edit history", "Turn off notifications for this post", "Show in tab", and "Give feedback on this post". The "Give feedback on this post" option is highlighted with a red box.

Report posts that mention your page.

Twitter

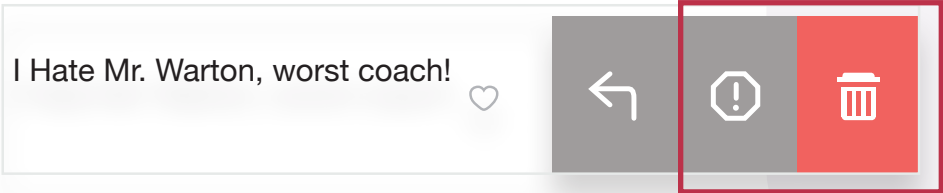


Block the user from seeing your page.



Report malicious Tweets.

Instagram



You can swipe left on any comment on an Instagram post and delete or report the comment.

User guidelines

Given the news about widespread abuse on social networks, each platform has released a detailed user guide on what types of posts are not allowed. Anyone running a school website should read through these guidelines:

| **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/policies

| **Twitter:** www.help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies/twitter-rules

| **Instagram:** (we suggest searching "Instagram Community Guidelines") www.help.instagram.com/477434105621119/