



3 Easy Precautions Save Businesses From Oprah Winfrey's Experience of Horrific Customer Service and Social Media Backlash

In response to Oprah's negative customer experience in Switzerland, Lingstar shows businesses 3 simple social media reputation management strategies they can start using today

Recently in Switzerland, Oprah Winfrey, one of the world's richest women valued at over 2.9 billion dollars, was refused 3 times the opportunity to examine and purchase a 37 thousand dollar Tom Ford handbag.

The resulting news and social media backlash for the boutique involved and Switzerland itself (the country's tourism office also apologized to her) is rampant, with negative commentary from news organizations, Facebook, Twitter, media publications and the like chiming in.



[Barbara Ling](#) of Lingstar is not surprised by that rapid negative publicity fallout. "Anything that touches on deeply personal values (racism, gender equality, lifestyle, health, etc.) will quickly mushroom into a gargantuan social media unconscious event," she commented. "In other words, it will either become a social media dream or in this particular case...the ultimate social media brand reputation management nightmare."

This wakeup call provides a powerful opportunity for businesses regarding their reputation management process. Not every business has a plan in place and for those who don't know where to start, Barbara suggests the following simple precautions businesses can implement today.

First, begin to track your brand's mention on news alert services like Talkwalker or Google News . These free services will automatically alert social media/brand managers whenever their business shows up in news sites, blogs and other Internet properties.

Second, track your brand's mention on Facebook and Twitter and Tumblr via hashtags. This will provide social media/brand managers an early alert to either positive or negative mentions online and give them an edge in quick response. To do this, simply visit the social network's search feature and append a "#" in front of the brand name like #oprah or #toysrus or #sears . Save that search for future reference.

Finally, companies need to educate their sales force on how to amplify positive customer care experiences. Today's wealthy influencers might not dress like Wall Street executives but they certainly have the media clout to alert the world as to their shopping experiences and brand interactions. Sales personnel need to be sensitive to the notion that every reaction they offer can be immediately broadcasted online, positive OR negative.

"Bad news travels faster than good news," Barbara said. "Fast Company reported that the typical customer tells an average of 16 other people about a poor service experience, but only tells nine about the good ones. Add to that the power of social media gives to sharing online experiences, and it simply makes good business sense to proactively protect their brand reputation online."

About Barbara Ling:

Barbara Ling is a full-time authority marketing innovator who coaches businesses on how to emerge as the dominate expert authority in their niche. For more social media authority marketing practices, visit her site at <http://barbaraling.com> .

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