

MARKETING strategies

When social media gets **UNCIVILIZED**

Check out the four biggest social media business flops of the last few years—and pause to think before you tweet.

By Bash Halow, CVPM, LVT

In some ways, social media is like the mirror, mirror on the wall. It can tell the whole world just how glamorous your business really is. But what happens when the image it reflects isn't as flattering as you'd hoped? Consider this countdown of posting blunders that got ugly.

4. Humble pie

When owners of Amy's Baking Company went on Gordon Ramsay's "Kitchen Nightmares" show, it got hot in the kitchen. In addition to the fiery on air exchanges between Ramsay and the restaurateurs, the show aired footage that made the owners seem downright nutty. They took to social media sites to explain—or rather hysterically rant—their side of the story. The couple's postings went viral and caused an enormous backlash, forcing the restaurant to close for several days.



3. Post politics

There are many stories about employees accidentally posting their personal views on company social media sites. That's what happened when a Kitchen Aid employee discussed his negative opinion of President Obama. This accident cost the tweeter his job and proved to be



a mess for Kitchen Aid that took weeks to clean up.

2. McMayhem

In 2012 McDonalds asked customers to post their stories about McDonalds using the hashtag #mcdstories. And customers came through. In just two hours, there were more tales of unhealthy food and bad service than calories in a Big Mac. This tweet proved to be the real fat in the fryer.

1. TMI FTW!

Imagine one manager's surprise when her veterinarian turned in her notice ... on Facebook! It was against company policy and TMI for this DVM's online followers. The resulting swirl of online traffic had prospective employers gasping OMG. **FL**

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Find it all here.
dvm360.com

Practice positive

Use the step-by-step guide at dvm360.com/secretpage to build a secret Facebook page that improves your team's communication.

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BUSINESS Center

Is social media ruining your life?

Whether you're dipping your toe into social media for the first time for your veterinary practice or you're an obsessive, face-always-in-the-smartphone user, here are tips to make your social media regimen a little emotionally—and physically—healthier.

By Ernest Ward Jr., DVM

I love social media. I use it almost daily. I advise veterinary clinics on using social media to promote their practice, connect with staff and clients, and improve standards of pet care. But I also have social media rules that help keep me sane, positive and productive. Could they help you too?

Unfriend the crazies. You know who I'm talking about. These are your "friends" that spout venom and vehemence as if it were their full-time job. You don't agree with 90 percent of what they post. Problem is, every time you expose yourself to their nonsense, you get so pissed you can't help but dive into a Facebook fracas. One hour later you emerge and spend another hour venting to your significant other about your crazy friend. Stop it. This is destructive, damaging and negative behavior. Discard these people from your life. I'm terribly worried this scenario is chipping away at the souls and sanity of untold millions. Fill your life, real and virtual, with people that make you better. Anything less is making you worse.

Do not disturb. I don't take calls from anyone outside my immediate family after 9 p.m. I don't check email. I don't Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest or Instagram. Set rules and stick to them. This is called self-control for you adults out there.

Your bed is for sleeping. Ditch the iPad, iPhone, laptop and other devices when you settle in for

the night. You must train your mind and body to recognize what the bed is intended for. Hint: It's not Twitter. Hard to be romantic when you're counting 140 characters. Just sayin'.

Veterinarian, schedule thyself. Social media is fun, cool and profitable—in moderation. You've only got so many seconds in your life. Use them wisely. I doubt anyone will say on his or her deathbed, "Let me check my Facebook before I go."

Remember that real life rocks. I'm concerned we're entering an era when we don't know how to interact face-to-face. I'm even more worried that many people seem less interested in connecting in the physical realm than in the virtual world. Have dinner with your family. At the same table. At the same time. Talk to your spouse. And look at them. Walk barefoot in the grass. Lie in a field and feel the sun's rays on your flesh. Listen to water lapping at the edge of a river or pond. The real world rocks. Crank it up.

If putting some boundaries between yourself and your social media sites can make you healthier and happier—why not try it? Let us know what rules you're implementing and how it's going here.

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GET social

Tweet this

Scan the QR code to send your “feline practice” tweet to clients.



Avoiding a practice cat-astrophe!

Use these ready-made posts and tweets to emphasize fear-free methods for bringing cats into the clinic.

Are you seeing fewer and fewer cats at your practice—or have you never seen enough? Encouraging clients to bring their pets into the clinic and giving them tips, like the ones at dvm360.com/catcarrier, to make their cats more comfortable could help drive up visits. Check out dvm360.com/postnow to use these encouraging posts for your practice’s social media streams. You’ll also find more Facebook posts and tweets to share with clients about annual exams, dermatology, senior pets, heartworms and more.



Did you know we’re a #cat-friendly practice? Bring your favorite felines in to visit for a checkup! #petcare

When you bring your cats into our clinic, cover the bottom of your #cat carrier with a towel to make it a comfortable trip.

Have you brought your #cat into the clinic recently? If not, come see us. Regular check-ups keep your #pets healthy!

When you bring your #cats to the clinic, keep them in the carrier and cover it with a towel to make them more comfortable. #pets

Want your new #pet to live a long, healthy life? Start now! Let’s talk vaccines, exams, etc. #pethealth #petcare



Bring your cat in for a free “happy visit”. Drop by for a treat-filled stress-free time to reassure your beloved pet that the clinic isn’t a bad place.

Is it almost your cat’s birthday? Cats are great at hiding illnesses so treat your friend to a wellness exam. And treat yourself to the security of knowing your feline is happy and healthy.

Is there something we could do to make your cat’s visits more comfortable? Let us know! We love getting feedback from you and your favorite feline.

Is your cat a bit overweight? Come see us so we can work out a nutritious weight management plan together!