SOCIAL MEDIA: A CRITICAL TOOL FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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CLIMATE POLICY.
HOUSING.
EDUCATION.
PUBLIC SAFETY.
INFRASTRUCTURE.
NATURAL RESOURCES.
HEALTHCARE.
ENERGY.
WE’RE AN AGENCY DEDICATED TO HELPING COMMUNITIES EMBRACE PROGRESS.
JAYME PIERCE

• Five-Year Staff Attorney at LOC
• Spent Five Years prior working at the Oregon Department of Justice.
• Loves working with and providing best-practices to our city officials.
• I’m an attorney, but I’m not *your* attorney.
AGENDA

- Warm up
- What’s the point?
- Legal considerations
- Public park scenario
- Wildfire scenario
- Questions
WHO ARE YOU?
OREGON VOTERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA

- 80% of Oregonians use social media
- 75.7% of Oregonians voted in 2020
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

First Amendment
Public Records
Public Meetings
PUBLIC PARK OPENING
AT ITS BEST, SOCIAL MEDIA IS A TOOL FOR PROMOTION.

Your local city is opening a public park that you worked on and would like to call attention to.

How do you promote the opening and ensure your constituents are informed about the event?
- Matches the tone
- Includes an appropriate visual
- Tags partners/organizers
- Shows work + commitment
- Speaks to the larger benefit

- Incorrect information
- Lacks visual
- Confuses constituents
- Focus is on you
- Lacks community buy-in
IN REALITY, SOCIAL MEDIA IS A NECESSARY TOOL FOR EDUCATION.

A week after the park’s opening, local activist groups call attention to the water consumption of the main fountain.

How do you educate residents and prevent more negative attention on the new park?
• Acknowledge the planning process
• Point to resources and experts
• Outline a plan to monitor water usage
• Create genuine responses
• Ensure cohesive message

• Respond to every comment
• Go solo
• Commit to anything you can’t or won’t follow through on
• Block comments
OFTEN, SOCIAL MEDIA IS A TOOL TO DEMONSTRATE REACTION.

Despite your education efforts, your social media posts begin receiving negative comments and a local TV station is doing a story on the call to remove the fountain.

How do you react to shifting public perception of the park and control the narrative?
• Reinforce the community benefit
• Amplify allies
• Create space for digital dialogue
• Showcase actions in response to concerns

• Turn off comments
• Publicly dismiss comments
• Issue a long statement
• Seem unsympathetic
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Content Moderation
- Record Management
- Avoid an Unintended “Public Meeting”
WILDFIRE TEARS THROUGH TOWN
SOCIAL MEDIA IS A GREAT TOOL TO SPREAD INFORMATION.

A summer wildfire spread from the mountains and into a local city. Many homes, businesses, schools and more were badly damaged or destroyed because of this natural disaster.

How do you share key information with those impacted and those who want to support?
• Quickly share information
• Speak with compassion
• Video updates
• Partner with experts
• Acknowledge evolving information

• No response/presence/information
• Lack of sympathy
• Make commitments you cannot follow through on
• Blame others
• Use this as a political gain
SOCIAL MEDIA IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE GO FOR COMFORT.

After the community has learned about immediate steps, the town is wondering what this means for the future.

How do you showcase on social media the work that is being done to solve this current situation and avoid it in the future?
• Acknowledge the issue
• Restate genuine compassion
• Work with experts and highlight the findings
• Make tangible promises
• Show images and give detail of the work that has been done
• Elevate victim’s experiences

• Make the situation about you and/or your platform
• Ignore key stakeholders (ex. first responders)
• Be silent
• Fight with online troll comments
YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

Months after the fire, the community goes to social media to reprimand city officials for not doing enough in the past to avoid this situation.

How do you address these negative comments and ensure it doesn’t pickup traction with a larger audience?
- Restate good work that is being done
- Employ trusted partners to amplify your positive messages
- Reshare past content with progress updates
- Before and after photos

- Blame others for lack of action
- Engage with negative comments
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Potential for defamation
- Absolute privilege may not apply
- Content moderation
• Social media is **one tool**
• **Walk** the talk
• Be **adaptive** and **evolve** your thinking
• Social media should **work for you**
• Could vs. **should**
• Consider a **social media policy**
• Treat as a **permanent public record**
QUESTIONS?
Pause Before You Post

Basic social media guidelines for the public sector.

Choose a clear profile image, without others, to ensure you are easily recognizable.

Make your profile name relevant, concise and easy to remember.

Write a succinct bio that includes priority issues, title and description.

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Thinkhubbell.com
Joined October 2003

Hubbell is an agency dedicated to creating progress on the PNW’s most complex issues.
Four Considerations Before Posting

1. Confirm the content is accurate.
2. Double check already scheduled posts or events.
3. Ensure the post aligns with your public stance and promises.
4. Think about the material being tied to your identity forever.

Remember to Connect with:

- Reporters
- Community Leaders
- City Departments
- Elected Leaders

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