

These brands are the BOSS of Twitter

By  Louise Marsland

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You won't find a better social media case study than what went down last Friday between Spur, Nando's and Woolworths, with a rock band thrown into the mix. This is how you do social media: savvy and switched on 24/7 so as not to miss an opportunity or counter a threat.

It all started when South African rockers Prime Circle checked into the Spur in Harrismith for breakfast. They were served a lovely looking breakfast - but with Nando's branded butters on the side. The picture posted by the band went viral within seconds.



But what could have been an epic brand fail for Spur and an opportunity for Nando's to throw some shade at their competition, turned into a marketing opportunity for all. Even Woolworths got in on the [banter](#) after the band mentioned the Woolies muffins they also bought for their N3 roadtrip.

The brands that lost out were others which were mentioned and could have jumped in with all kinds of comments or marketing opportunities (weekend specials; roadside safety, etc).

Some followers called the banter a 'twar' (Twitter war), but it wasn't really. Because the brands involved clearly have social media strategies in place and expert social media peeps managing their accounts, it was friendly banter and all the brands came out of it looking good, even Spur. They showed they have a sense of humour, can take a joke, can make us laugh, i.e., they have the brand personalities that we admire, that those of us in the 'audience' appreciate.

It may look easy, but getting the tone of your brand right is the hardest part. It takes experience, it takes strategy, it takes

investment in social media tools and people, it takes intimate brand knowledge to really know how to respond with the right tone of voice.

Mistakes happen, epic fails, people mess up. They are human. For brands to show their 'human side' and respond with the appropriate mea culpa, particularly in a larger Twitter 'debate' setting where several conversations are taking place all at once - and to the 34,000-strong audience of one of South Africa's leading rock bands - is social media gold.

So many brands, organisations and even media companies are getting it wrong with out of date tweets; boring tweets; arbitrary tweets that state the obvious, not the real news; too many retweets; too many tweets in a row; and so on.

Own your story

With conferences, awards, press conferences, major events, launches, new campaigns, organisational changes, it is imperative to hire a social media team to tweet the news as it happens - these kind of tweets can be prepped way in advance and approved by the client, the secret is in owning your own story by getting the news out first. It's a no-brainer, but the majority of companies and organisations are still not doing this.



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Just this past week with some key industry awards, I got my news first from other delegates and a day later from the industry organisation concerned, the official press release another two days after. Then a key industry conference, with some great speakers, was tweeting sporadically with facts or statements that weren't news, not the calibre you expect from a major news media brand.

You do your brand a major disservice by not managing your social media accounts appropriately. People follow you for a reason, because they want to hear what you have to say and they want the news first. That is where the social capital lies.

And if you're still not sure, follow the brands and people you admire. Watch and learn how they do it. There is so much written about social media strategy these days, it's also not hard to upskill in this domain. I bookmarked these links I saw on Twitter, just in the last couple of days:

[Five ways to create opportunities on social media](#): There is a way to create opportunities in social media and that is: by being open minded; being creative; doing your research into your community; understanding that instant-gratification doesn't always happen; and keeping motivated by recording your successes on social media.

[Building a sustainable social media strategy](#): CIO publish extensive White Papers on social media from all angles. This is what they have to say about having a social media strategy: "There is immense opportunity for organisations in the social web. By removing communication barriers between an organisation and its consumers, the social web makes it possible to maintain small-scale, one-on-one customer relationships against the backdrop of large-scale efficiency and growth. It is the resulting combination of creativity, collaboration and community with more staid business principles, that captures the

imagination of so many business leaders today.

"Doing this successfully requires a sound strategy and methodical approach which make social an integral part of the business-held accountable for results, governed by policies and guidelines, optimised for efficiency, and built into the fabric of business processes and systems," the CIO report states.

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