

Best Practices for Responding to Negative Comments on Social Media

It can be tempting to delete or ignore negative comments on social media but that's usually not the best path forward. While it may not feel like it at the moment, negative comments are an opportunity to flip the narrative and create an outstanding customer experience, especially if the negative comment is legitimate.

If a legitimate complaint causes your clinic to make process changes, this is a great opportunity to make good with a dissatisfied client and show your audience that you value feedback.

Here are few best practices for handling negative comments:

- Don't ignore or delete negative comments from legitimate clients.
- Reply as soon as you possibly can. Get feedback on your response from a friend or colleague before posting your response. It can be difficult to formulate a constructive response when you are feeling attacked, so getting feedback from a neutral party can help.
- Respond publicly and acknowledge the pet owner's feelings. Validate the way they feel and assure them that the clinic values them and wants to talk offline to make it right. Do not accept blame for whatever the 'incident' is, just acknowledge the way they feel. Responding with empathy and understanding and inviting an offline conversation typically stops these conversations from continuing in a public setting.
- If they respond negatively again, send one more response inviting them to discuss it with you on the phone so you can make sure everything gets made right. Some people just want to fight online. If they continue to write negative responses after you've responded twice and invited a conversation, stop responding. Others will see the string of communications and will see that you've been inviting and kind.

Here are few best practices for handling negative comments:

- If your clinic made a mistake or has decided to change a process as a result of client feedback, use it as an opportunity to show your community how the clinic is making changes to better meet the needs of clients. This is a great way to take something negative, turn it into a learning experience, and celebrate that your clinic values feedback.
- If you promise follow up, make sure you follow through. The worst thing you can do when someone is already upset is break promises.
- Even when people are being rude, make sure your response posts are kind and polite.

Example:



Jess D.
Detroit, Michigan



August 14, 2023

Stay away from this place! Dr. Smith and Vet Tech Jane abused my beloved dog Luna. They forcibly held her down while she resisted and they hurt her which caused her untimely death! Dr. Smith is unstable. I do not recommend this clinic!



Darren A.
Business Customer Service

August 15, 2023

We take your feedback seriously and welcome the opportunity to discuss this experience further. Please call and ask to speak with our practice manager so we can hear your concerns.