

# THE MONDAY MINUTE

marketing for the soul - coaching the life saving community

## *Lessons for your Center from the U.S. Air Force...*



Monday Minute  
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Like most pregnancy resource centers, **your community doesn't see you as a positive.** Instead, many centers are **perceived as a controversial and negative.** As the story goes, we receive a **massive amount of negative press, hateful, rage-filled anti-center releases and discussions on anti-life, pro-abortion blogs.** Yet, in the face of all the opposition we face we must continue to **win the hearts and minds of our client.**

We are not alone. Another institution faces **massive opposition** similar to the pro-life community. They have **engaged their "public" with the use of social media to manage public awareness and public complaints.** Who is this institution? It is the **U.S. Air Force!**

**Lesson #1: The U.S. Air Force has a better social media strategy than your nonprofit does.**

- a. Answering emails and feeding their blogs and social media sites is done through a huge 330,000 member team*
- b. The protocol is standardized to insure approved promulgation of all communications.*

**Lesson #2: The U.S. Air Force flow chart rearranges all negative web complaint postings into positive follow-up categories.**

According to a report by Capt. David Faggard, Chief of Emerging Technology, the U.S. Air Force wants to foster an environment in which **all enlisted personnel are equipped to engage in online discussions** about the Air Force.

**Can you imagine the scope of a 330,000-member public-relations communications team?**

**Click this link:**

[http://www.donorpowerblog.com/donor\\_power\\_blog/2009/01/try-the-air-force-approach-to-social-media.html](http://www.donorpowerblog.com/donor_power_blog/2009/01/try-the-air-force-approach-to-social-media.html)

Check out Capt. David Faggard's flow chart for **responding to criticism and complaints in public, online blogs, social sites and discussion forums,**

I like this chart because it's so easy to follow and can apply to so many different situations. I see nonprofits (and for-profits too, for that matter) making the same two mistakes again and again when addressing criticism online:

***1. Not differentiating between trolls and legitimate questions.** This can go in either direction. Don't waste your efforts replying to people who are just trying to be funny. But when people aren't trolling, take their concerns and opinions seriously. You may agree or disagree with the criticism, but they deserve a respectful reply.*

***2. Not being transparent.** Not only is it unethical to pretend not to work for your nonprofit when writing about it online; it's also bad marketing. If you care enough to read what someone has to say about your nonprofit, that says volumes about you and your organization. Why would you want to keep it a secret?*

While this chart is not specific to your center's incoming traffic, the chart and social media concept of how to create a working protocol that **can serve as a policy for moderating comments on an organization's blog or message forum.**

Create a flow chart like this and give a copy to every staff member and volunteer at your non-profit. Your volunteers are already tapped into some of these same social communities like MySpace, FaceBook, Twitter, Blogger and others. Because they care about the same issues your nonprofit cares about, it's likely that they're already writing about your nonprofit online. **Why not recruit them to help strengthen and polish your online message delivery.**

Using a system like this could **empower your volunteers to be better, smarter spokespeople.** Using a system like this can **improve your public persona.** Using a system like this can **increase your marketing and public relations.** Using a system like this **works.**

Imagine if you shared this effort across even only 10 people, then you increased your marketing exposure 10 fold. **Think about it!**

Oh I know, blogs and social media aren't a representation of your client audience and are not something you as a director typically focuses on. But, handling outside complaints, bad press and attacks are. Use this same process concept to deal with those who come against you and your center.

**Remembers this RULE:** Don't spend all of your time trying to make the loud people happy; the quiet ones are just as important.

There's probably criticism of your nonprofit on the Internet. There's criticism of our nonprofit on the Internet. The way in which you address and handle criticism can make a huge difference in what sort of impression you'll give potential allies, donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries each time they Google you.

As a final thought, what would happen if you began your next fundraising letter with the story of a time your nonprofit was wrong about something, and how you changed because of what your **clients were telling you online?**

**Listen to criticism about your non-profit.** Then, maximize your center's impact **by implementing a proven process of handling complaints and customer comments.**

Last but not least, **listen to what people are talking about online.** It can open your eyes to new ideas, resource, tools and solutions. It may also show

you where you have been missing the mark. I know from my own experience with this Monday Minute, that I find that more of you listen when I first have listened to you. Thus, each week, my policy is to telephone at least one state's list of pregnancy center directors a week. What they tell me in that conversation often becomes the focus of a Monday Minute.

**The key is to LISTEN!**



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<http://mondayminute.blogspot.com>***

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A free coaching and encouragement support service for directors of non profit agencies, especially pregnancy resource centers. An introductory services of Coach Me Ken.  
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Ken Freeman

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Email: [askkenfrfeeman@gmail.com](mailto:askkenfrfeeman@gmail.com) if you have a question about this report .

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