A Brand Safety Checklist for Social Media Managers

Brand safety is crucial for protecting your reputation online—but in an increasingly complex digital world, staying ahead of risks can feel overwhelming. From AI-generated threats to influencer partnerships, managing brand safety requires proactive strategies and the right tools.

This comprehensive brand safety checklist gives you the key steps and best practices to assess and strengthen your brand's protection across social media. Whether you're mitigating emerging threats or enhancing platform security, this resource helps you safeguard your brand with confidence.

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Using this checklist

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Platform & Security Settings

○ Use a centralized social media management tool to manage logins, approvals and publishing within a single platform. Be sure to avoid password sharing to maintain an accurate audit trail of who's done what and when.

○ Enforce two-factor authentication on all accounts to prevent unauthorized logins.

💡 **Pro tip:** Combat password fatigue by choosing social media management tools with **built-in security features** like multi-factor authentication and single sign on.
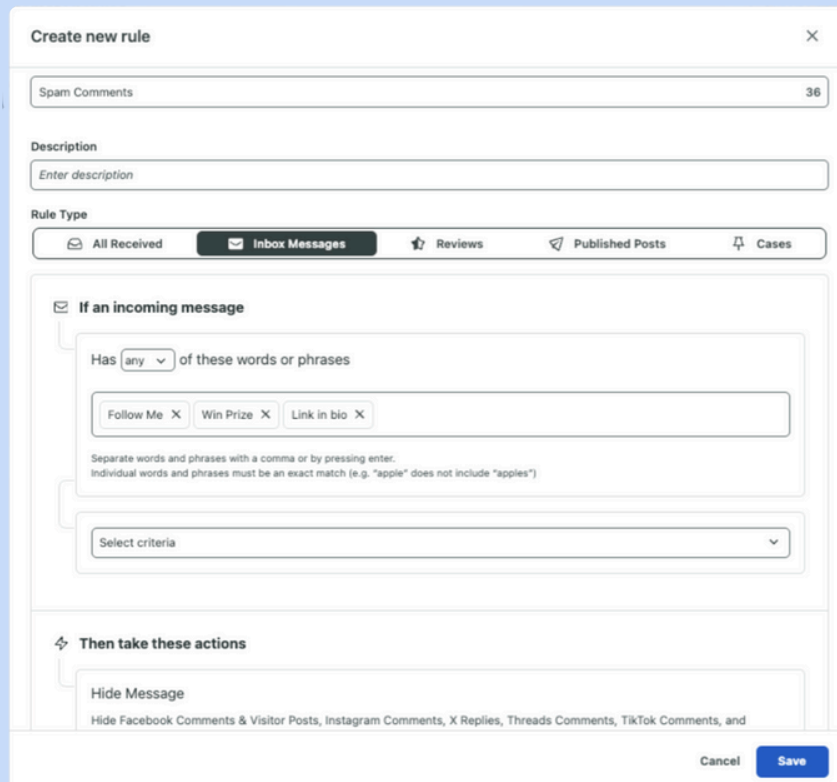
○ Restrict admin access to essential personnel only to minimize the risk of accidental or malicious actions. Regularly audit permissions within your social media management tool to remove inactive users.

○ Set up automated alerts for unusual account activity within your social media management tool and native networks to proactively respond to potential breaches.

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Content & Community Management

○ Define and establish a clear **content approval process** to prevent unauthorized or off-brand posts.

○ Implement a **moderation strategy** for comments and replies to reduce brand risk from harmful content.

💡 **Pro tip:** Set specific rules for hiding, deleting or responding to inappropriate comments. If you're using Sprout Social, you can also set up **Automated Rules** that proactively hide unwanted messages from your Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and X profiles.

- ○ Monitor user-generated content (UGC) before resharing to prevent unintentional association with harmful content.

- ○ Train social media managers, community managers and social customer service agents on brand safety protocols to ensure consistency across teams.

- ○ Establish a point person responsible for providing policy updates, new platform risks and ongoing training.

Crisis Escalation Planning

- ○ Define a tiered crisis response framework by categorizing crisis levels (e.g., low, medium, high severity) and outlining appropriate actions.
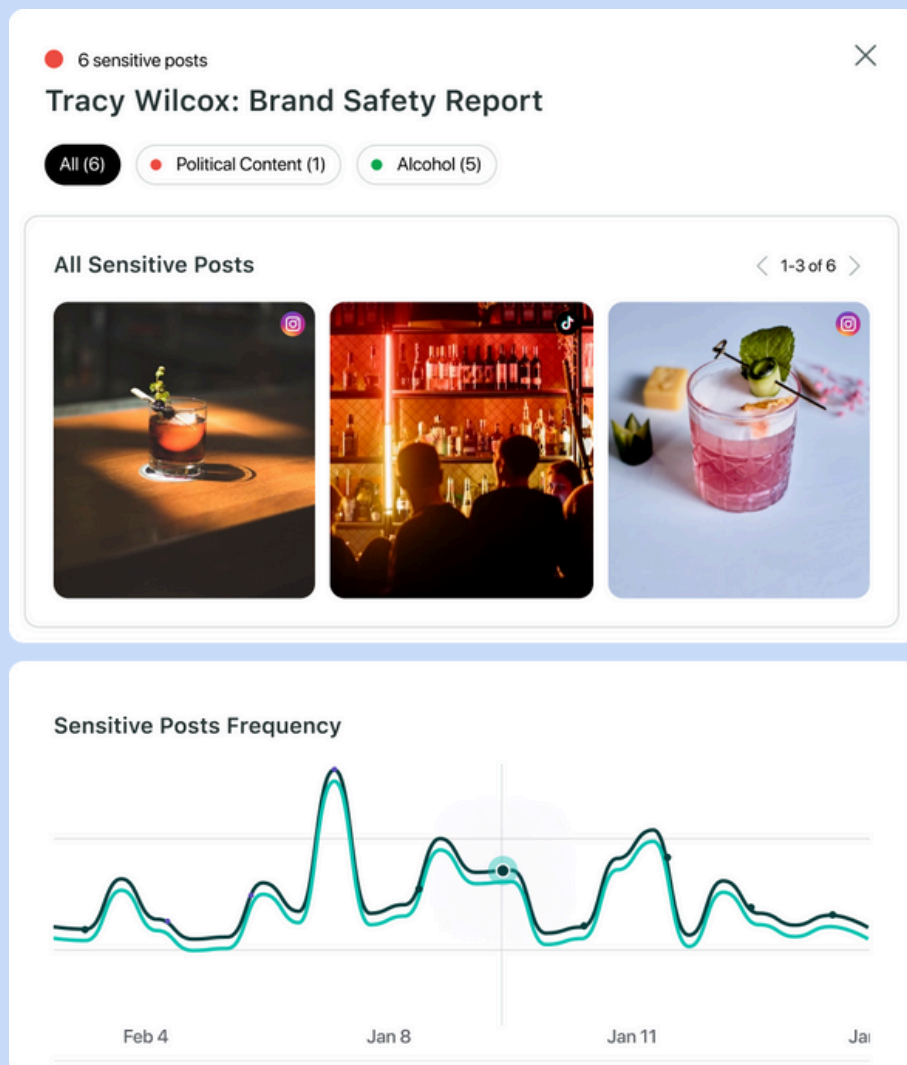
> **Bonus Resource:** If you don't have a crisis response framework in place yet, use our **3-step crisis management template** to outline your plan today.

- ○ Document who to contact in the event of a crisis (e.g., PR, legal, executive leadership). Socialize that escalation matrix with key decision-makers, so they're prepared to act quickly in the event of a crisis.

- ○ Use social listening tools to track spikes in negative brand sentiment for real-time monitoring.

Influencer & Partner Brand Safety

○ Vet influencers and partners before engagement by reviewing past content, audience sentiment and any history of controversies.

💡 **Pro tip: Sprout Social Influencer Marketing's** built-in brand safety features let you set custom safety parameters and generate automated brand safety reports for each creator. Quickly flag and review potential risks before signing a partnership.
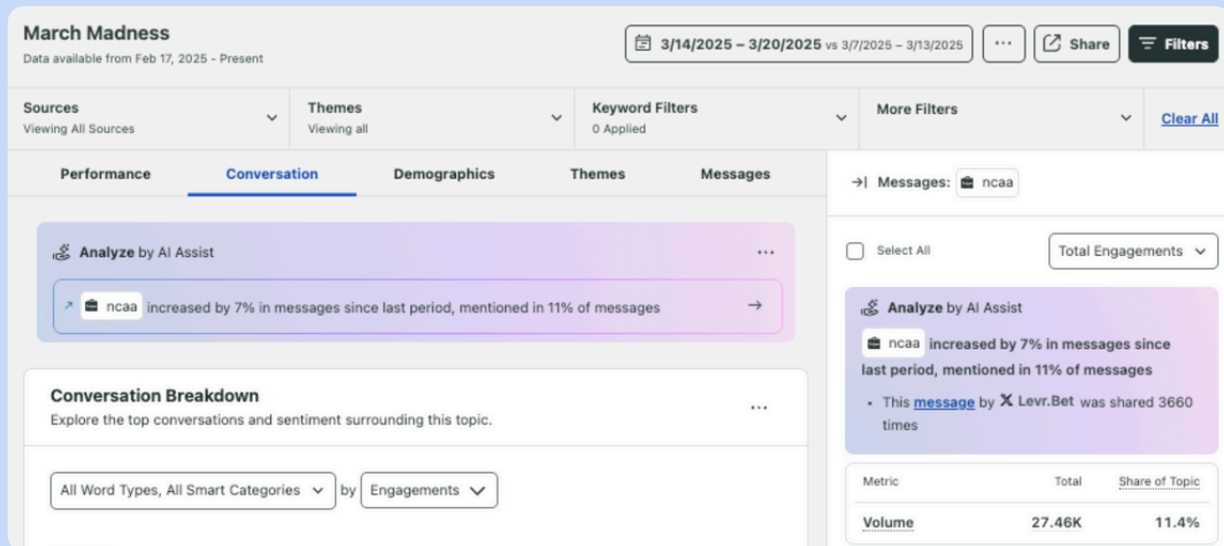
○ Include brand safety clauses in **influencer contracts** to set your team up with legal protections—that includes a force majeure clause in case unforeseen events—such as natural disasters, pandemics or controversies—prevent them from fulfilling contractual duties.

○ Clarify how logos, taglines and trademarks can (and can't) be used by creating a thorough **influencer marketing brief**. This will limit unauthorized use of brand assets.

○ Require disclosure of sponsored content per **FTC guidelines** to maintain legal compliance. Stay up to date on disclosure requirements by platform.

○ Require pre-approval for sponsored content, and set those expectations with influencers up front. If you're using Sprout Social Influencer Marketing, you can streamline and manage content submissions and approvals directly within the **Creator Hub**.

AI & Emerging Threats

○ Adhere to company-wide AI content guidelines that define when and how AI-generated content can be used, including disclosures.

○ Educate social media managers and social customer service agents on AI-generated risks, like phishing scams or chatbot manipulation.

○ Implement AI-powered content moderation tools, like **Analyze by AI Assist**, available in Sprout's Social Listening tool. This feature highlights significant metrics, hashtags, keywords and emojis, translates that volume into insights and displays them in clear sentences.

○ Collaborate with IT and security teams to anticipate and mitigate AI-driven risks and other evolving security threats, like synthetic media or bot-driven attacks.

Understanding Your Brand's Risk Level

Use this checklist to assess how well your brand is safeguarded against social media risks. Each completed item earns **1 point**, except for the four **Platform & Security Settings** items, which are worth **2 points each** due to their critical role in account protection.

Scoring instructions:

1. Go through each checklist item and mark the ones your brand has fully implemented.
2. Assign 1 point for each completed item (except for the four platform security items, which are worth 2 points each).
3. Add up your total score and use the guide below to reflect on areas of strength and opportunity.

19-25 points = Strong Foundation
Your brand follows many key safety practices. Keep monitoring for emerging risks and refining your approach.

12-18 points = Needs Strengthening
You have a solid start but may have some gaps in your safety strategy. Consider prioritizing areas that could enhance your overall protection.

0-11 points = High Exposure
Your brand may face increased risks. Exploring additional safeguards—such as enhanced platform security measures, crisis escalation frameworks and software solutions—could help strengthen your brand's approach.

Consider integrating software tools—like **Sprout Social** and **Sprout Social Influencer Marketing**—that can help close multiple gaps at once.

About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of approximately 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact. Named the **#1 Best Software Product** by G2's 2024 Best Software Award, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy, and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's software operates across all major social media networks and digital platforms.

For more information about Sprout Social (NASDAQ: SPT), visit **sproutsocial.com**.

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