

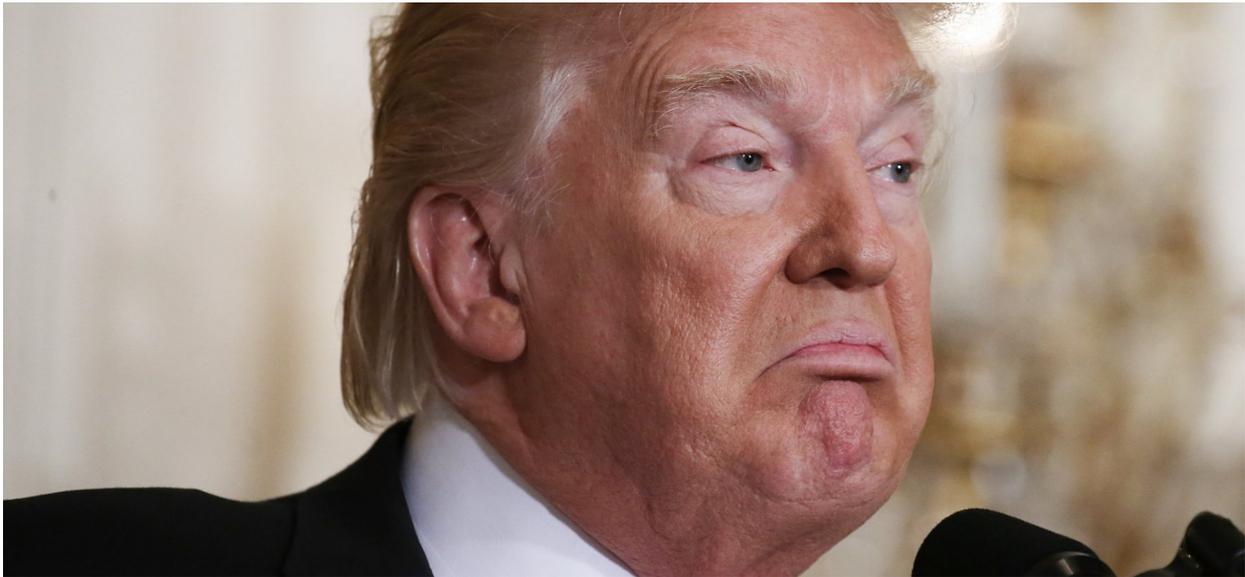
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# Trump's Good or Bad Mention Can Hurt Your Brand on Twitter

There is one company that get a boost from a bout of Trump disapproval.



By [Erik Sherman](#)



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Donald Trump is to Twitter as a guppy is to water. Neither Trump nor the fish seems able to exist without the medium. And the President is as happy to go after brands with disparaging remarks, criticism, and a "bad" or "sad" as not. But what does it mean for a company's business?

Twitter and more generally social media can be dangerous places for brands. Just ask the [Democratic National Committee, which took an online spanking](#) after asking the wrong question in a tweet. So-called [influencers may take your money for promotions to fake followers](#). So what do you do when the guy with a bully pulpit, major Twitter following, and readiness to lay into someone takes notice?

The good and bad news is that, for the most part, there's nothing you can do because the results come out the same. Social media monitoring company 4C Insights, which provided me with the [social media comparison data](#) for some top airlines, did an analysis on some companies that Trump mentioned. Below are the results.



Brand	Avg Engagements 3 Days Before	Avg Engagements 3 Days After	Avg Sentiment 3 Days Before
General Motors - Negative Mention	1,479	9,420	70%
General Motors - Positive Mention	658	7,052	74%
Walmart - Positive Mention	4,620	12,828	84%
Toyota - Negative Mention	5,529	16,637	70%
LL Bean - Positive Mention	15,869	20,451	69%
Ford - Positive Mentions	5,625	11,931	74%
Boeing - Negative Mention	160	2,204	68%

Sentiment means the percentage of sentiment in Twitter mentions that was positive. Engagements refers to the mentions of the brand.

You might assume that a positive mention by Trump would lead to a positive result for the brand and that a negative mention would do the opposite. However, no matter what the nature of the mention, sentiment measured in the tweets about the brand were less positive after Trump's mention than before.

The worst drop was for Boeing. After a negative mention, the percentage of positive sentiment dropped from 68 percent to 57 percent. In addition, the number of mentions climbed close to 14 times. But the second worst drop, of 8 percentage points, was for Walmart, and Trump's mention of the company was positive.

In general, at least on Twitter (which is far from a representative sample of the American consumer), you pretty much can't win if Trump mentions your brand. You can only lose, even if just temporarily.

There was one exception: Nordstrom. Before Trump's mention, which slammed Nordstrom for dropping his daughter's clothing line because, according to the company, it didn't sell well enough, average daily positive sentiment three days ahead of the mention was 45 percent on 48,185 mentions. Three days after, it was 54 percent on 197,665 mentions.

Even then I'd be wary of declaring victory. Given the polarized political attitude these days, the shift could have been individuals using the event to promote their personal views.

I spoke with a strategic marketing expert I know: Ira Kalb, a professor at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business. In his view, results this unpredictable are hardly surprising.

"The rule I use is it's risky to say anything political when you're representing a company," Kalb told me. "The problem is you have constituents who may have different views." There are shareholders, customers, employees, the media, and, in the case of Trump, a whole lot of people on either side of a political divide.

"If they're pro-Trump [and] you go against him, that could be bad," he said. "If they're anti-Trump, if you don't go against him, it could be bad." Getting political won't generally help. "You're always going to have a group of people who are going to knock you for their own agenda," Kalb said.

The approach that might work is positioning a company as being pro-American and pro-Constitution to reach Trump's followers. And remember, whatever the case, the memory of consumers is usually short so things will blow over in not too long.

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