

10 Q&A about Managing a Business Reputation



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We help you Build & Market your Reputation

With the Internet being a major source of information, it is also becoming the go-to place for sharing feedback and reviews about almost anything.

Now, more than ever, customers are flocking online to share their latest experiences with businesses whose products and services they have tried.

Customer comments can literally cripple a company's ability to generate new customers – especially if there are multiple negative comments and hardly any positive comments...

“Whatever you do, DON'T go there!” or “I will NEVER go back to that place again!”



You obviously don't want to see these comments about your business floating around online. Any prospective customer that hasn't tried your business will run the other way.

There is no doubt that customer reviews on the Internet have a real impact on the company's ability or inability to get new clients.

Consequences can be really disastrous if multiple negative reviews are posted, and overpower the positive ones... So avoiding the publishing of negative reviews about you on the Internet is a priority.

Similarly, it could be as disastrous for your image if there was no comment about your company. Customers will, indeed, tend to choose your competitors' offer, especially if it has collected good reviews.

For all these reasons, monitoring your reputation is a crucial step.

That is why **Online Reputation** has become, in a few years, a priority for many companies.

And it's a lucrative strategy... Companies with a good reputation can see their sales increase, while others lose market shares due to negative reviews (or lack of reviews!).

As an entrepreneur, you've probably already asked yourself if it was wise to spend time and money to online reputation. The answer is undoubtedly «yes»!

Even if you do not currently have a negative reputation, you should still work towards building your brand and monitoring what is being said about your company, so you can avoid any future damage.



Q&A about Managing
a Business Reputation

1. What is Online Reputation Management?

Online Reputation Management is exactly what the name implies; the ability to manage your online reputation. But what does this really mean?

These days, every single piece of information, every single review, and every single comment written about your business online **can be seen by all**, no matter your business sector or size.

In fact, everything ever written about your business online is accessible to anyone via what is known as your 'digital footprint.' One thing you have to realize is that, regardless of the size of your business, your customers are talking about you.

Years ago, if a potential customer wanted to use a business, the only way of finding out about its reputation was through word of mouth; they relied solely on the recommendations (or warnings to stay away) from previous customers.

Fast forward to the modern day and social media, Facebook, Twitter, Google+ Local, Yelp..., allows the world to see instant opinions and experiences regarding every aspect of your business: **your products, quality of service, pre-sale & after-sale services...**

No matter how good you are at what you do, it is difficult to please everyone all of the time.

For larger scale businesses in particular, keeping a 100% perfect online reputation all of the time is tough, if not near impossible!

However, a 100% squeaky clean online image is not to be expected; every business will have at least one unhappy customer. But your goal should be **to have**

more positive mentions about your company than negative.

People will leave negative comments about even the smallest things that bother them and usually the first place they head to do so will be online.

Reputation Management allows you to keep up to date with what is being said about your business online and take back control to some extent if your reputation is being portrayed wrongly.

In particular, if someone is searching Google looking for a product or service, at first glance they are open to all businesses that a Google search presents them with. However, when they start looking in greater detail, one or more bad reviews could mean an instant rejection off your business, and move them onto looking at others instead.

After all, why should they choose to go with a business with negative reviews when there are businesses that have mostly positive ones?

With it being so easy for consumers and past customers to voice their opinions in the form of online reviews and comments, online reputation management has become a critical part of business.

Look, here's the deal. You can invest as much time and money into advertising and creating your brand to be just how you want it; but at the end of the day, nothing

beats a fantastic online reputation and if your reputation is less than stellar then all the positive things you are doing to build your business may be in vain.



2. Why is Reputation Management so important?

You may be thinking, "Do our potential customers really care about what is being said about us online?" The simple answer is, of course they do.

In life, and especially in business, **first impressions mean everything.**

3. How Do We Monitor What is Being Said about Us Online?

It's all about research. Knowledge is power and the more you know regarding what is being said about your business online the better.

Knowing where you stand is the best starting point; as in knowing if there's anything that needs to be improved in order for your online reputation to be the best it can be.

Have you ever Googled your own name? Come on, admit it, we've all done it at some point, just to see what search results come up. Well this is the same; Google your business name and see what comes up in the search results.



If you're looking specifically for people's reviews and opinions on your company then try **Googling your company name plus the word 'reviews' or search social media websites the same way.**

Results should be obvious:

- either nothing is being said about your business and you're not using the power of the Internet to **get new customers at the expense of your competitors,**
- or you have negative reviews about your business, your products or services: **you might lose customers because you are not marketing your reputation,**
- or reviews (how many?) are generally positive. Are you sure you can **avoid a future reputation crisis?**

If you want to stay on top of what is being written about your company online then consider setting up Google Alerts. If you

haven't heard of this service before, it's very simple and easy to use.

You can set up updates to be sent to your email address every time a new result appears that matches your query (in this case your company name). This is all in the name of research and is the very starting point of being able to manage your online reputation effectively.

While managing your online reputation on social networks is becoming increasingly difficult, social media sites also allow you as the business owner, the opportunity to interact on a personal level with customers, giving them a chance to ask questions or run ideas and suggestions by you.

Transparency in the business world is often a good thing, as it builds trust with customers and makes you accessible to them, giving them as the customer a feeling of importance.

4. What if We Already Have Some Negative Comments or Reviews?

If you know there are already some negative comments or reviews out there, to be honest, there isn't much you can do about the reviews themselves. You can't necessarily change anything that was written about your business in the past but there is A LOT that you can change regarding how you want your online reputation to be seen in the future.

You should be working towards a reputation in which the positive far outweighs the negative. If you have 99% excellent reviews and only 1% negative reviews, which do you think people are going to take more notice of?

Work on producing more positive content on the web and this will not only go

towards improving your Google rankings, but it will also create a positive reputation that is backed up by an equal amount of positive reviews.

Concentrate on creating published content that is useful and sends out a positive message about you and your business. Blog posts, helpful videos, and content that people find valuable will all go towards pushing your business name up Google search rankings and getting you noticed in a positive way.



5. Is Online Reputation Management Only About Negativity?

Not at all.

Online reputation management is also about taking a proactive approach to how your business is viewed by others, namely potential customers.

It's also about spreading the word about your brand, thereby resulting in creating an excellent reputation amongst your customers and growing your existing customer base.

How your business is viewed, is really up to you. Hard work and an excellent product or service will create a buzz about your business in the local area and online.

There is nothing better for your reputation than great online reviews. Any company can advertise how great it is, how great its products are but, **more than anything else, potential customers trust reviews from past customers.**

Reading about someone else's experience with your company can determine whether or not someone will give you a call or place an order with your company.

Great reviews or comments on review websites or social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, are essentially free advertising for your company, which is great! It's up to you to take advantage of it. But optimally managing your reputation is also **ensuring that new reviews are published as regularly as possible.**

If no comment is left on a product or service, users have no reference to turn to. Therefore, they can't form an opinion.

If your competitors do have good reviews and most importantly, have responded to them, they have much better chances of winning the sale...

As bad as negative comments, **not having any review (or very little) is also a critical situation that needs** to be controlled as soon as possible!



6. How Do We Take Control and Protect Our Online Reputation?

If you don't take control and protect your online reputation, then you're letting other people do it for you. Remember, this is your business and you need to take a **pro-active approach so potential customers or clients find more of what you want them to read about your company** and less of what you don't.

If you aren't actively promoting **the positive points about your business** and pushing away the negative, then you are essentially letting other people's comments and reviews control the way that new potential customers are viewing your business.

Ideally, you need to a **Reputation Expert** on your team when it comes to effective

online reputation; to research all of your directory listings, such as Google+ Local, Yelp, CitySearch, Yahoo Local, Super Pages, etc. and **let nothing be written about your business without making sure that you're immediately aware of it if and when it does happen.**



7. What Will Happen if We Ignore Our Online Reputation?

These days, **competition between businesses for new customers is more intense than ever.**

Ignoring your online reputation would be a critical mistake and basically handing your competitors the lead.

If you are ploughing all of your time and money into advertising, promoting your business, networking, etc. but are ignoring your business' online presence then all your positive efforts could very possibly go to waste.

If your business is being falsely portrayed online, you could be unknowingly cultivating a negative online reputation.

You could be losing out on potential customers and you might not even realize it's because of your bad online reputation.

You have to take control and know when to get help for improving your online reputation so that you can make sure your business is being accurately and fairly represented by the content that's floating around online.

Ignoring your online image could eventually lead to your competitors getting more leads, customers, and sales.



8. What if Negative Comments About Our Company Are False or Mistaken Identity?

Honestly, you can't make bad-hearted customers and competitors looking to slander your reputation take down these reviews.

But you can fight back!

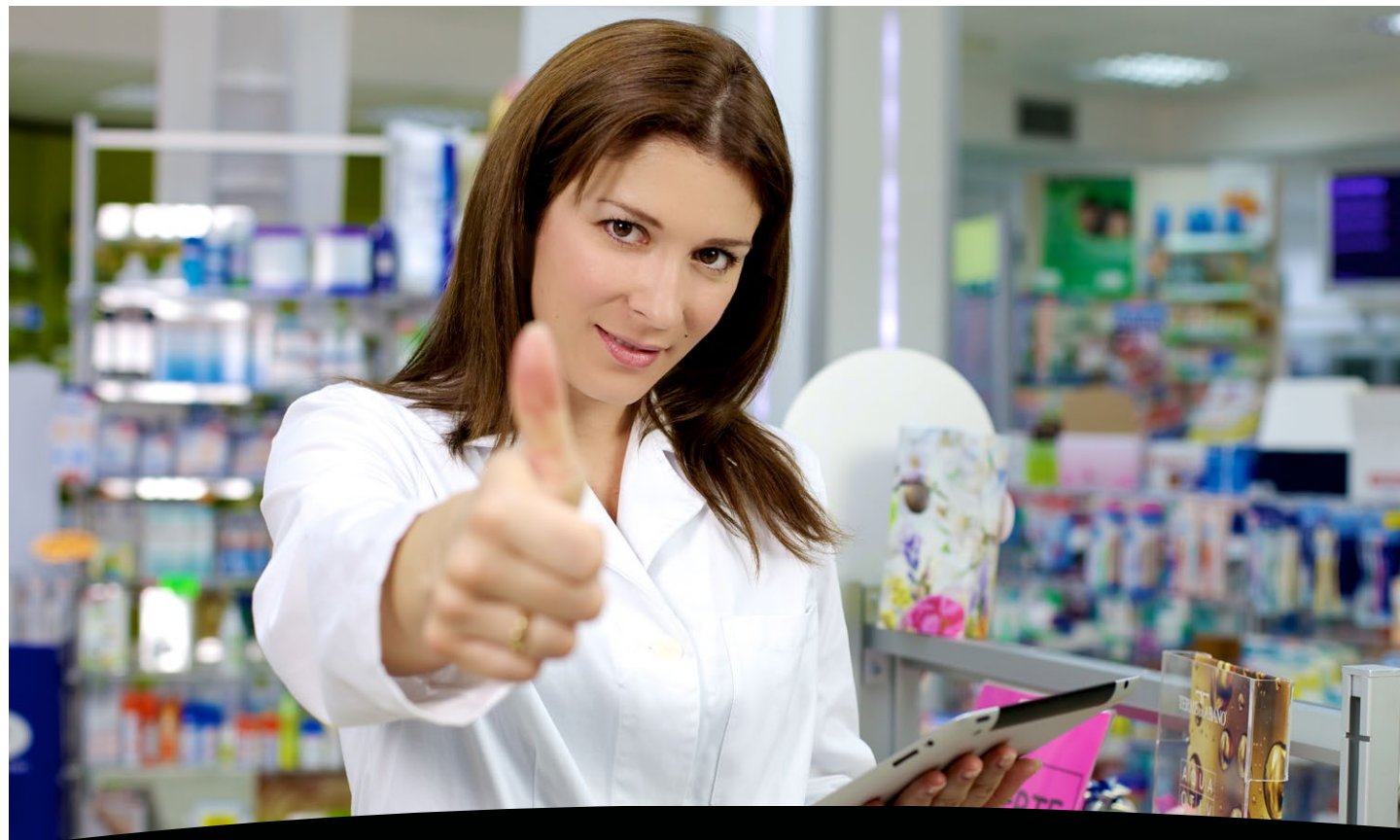
False negative reviews and comments can really hurt your business and result in your losing potential customers. Sadly, intense rival competition from other businesses may result in them leaving false negative comments about your business;

the goal is usually to steer potential customers away from your business and into theirs. If you are confident that a negative review has been falsely written by a business competitor, you are well within your rights to contact the review site's administrator and ask for it to be removed, provided you can prove it is a false review.

Again, you can try this but there is no guarantee that it will be taken down.

Regardless, whether the negative review was from a past customer or from a rival business, **it is all about how you act in the face of negative comments that matters.**

Often, **it is useful to potential customers if you leave feedback for a negative review.** This shows that you're involved and attentive to the customer experience. It lets the potential customer see a balanced perspective from both sides.



In other words, **it's your chance to stand trial for your "wrongdoings".**

You may be very hurt or disgruntled about a negative review or a disparaging comment left online about your company but it's how you react (or don't) to the negativity that matters.

Sometimes a reaction or reply to such comments isn't really necessary and would only result in more negative feelings towards your company.

If there are several reviews complaining about the same thing, then it would be wise to address these issues to a wider online audience.

It can be difficult knowing when and how to react, but whatever you do, do not take things personally; always remain professional at all time.

While a negative comment can hurt you or upset you. It's the way you answer to it that matters the most.

9. What Should We Look for in a Reputation Agency?

Before you look for an online reputation management company, you first need to decide what areas you need help in and what it is you want the company to do for

you. Ideally, you want a company to first look at where you currently stand and do an analysis of your current online reputation.



Following that, you'll want them to:

- Identify any keyword searches that result in negative feedback and push these down the rankings, while at the same time pushing the positive results to the forefront of search engine results.

- Publish positive online content and reviews that will replace, or at least outweigh, any negative comments. Then, distribute this content amongst blogs, news sites, social media sites and others where it will be noticed by potential customers.

- Use social media and search engine optimization techniques to help the newly created positive content rank highly in search engine results, ultimately pushing down any harmful negative content.

10. Is Online Reputation Management Costly?

In short, it depends. But ask yourself this:

How much will it cost your business to continue to have a bad reputation that turns away customers?



The cost could depend on how damaged your online reputation is and how much negative content needs to be ‘fixed.’ It may depend on the size of your company and how many reviews need to be screened and researched.

Obviously, if you are a new start-up business there may not be much talk online about your business just yet; whereas if you have been in business for ten plus years, then there will be a lot of older content that needs screening.

We hope you’ve found this report useful in your quest to understand just how important your online image is to your success...

Being that the internet is usually the first point of contact for potential customers, it is crucial now more than ever that you stay on top of your company’s image – as well as

implement strategies to build your brand in a positive light. In other words, having a good reputation can “make” your business, and having a bad reputation can “break” it.



About Reputation Aegis:

The Aegis, as stated in the Iliad by Homer, is the shield of Athena and Zeus. The concept of doing something “under someone’s Aegis” means doing something under the protection of a powerful, knowledgeable source. We are that source!

Reputation Aegis is a full-featured reputation management platform designed to help businesses:

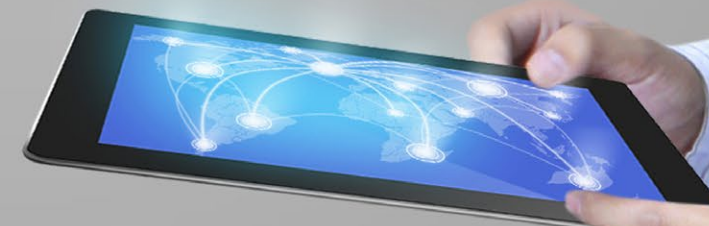
- establish a 5-star reputation,
- market it both online and off,
- and monitor any changes.

Your reputation is everything! Don’t leave it to chance. Learn more by visiting us at:
www.reputationaegis.com



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