

Reputation Management

While the phrase “I don’t give a d- about my bad reputation” works well for someone like Joan Jett, it’s probably not a good practice as a business owner. As a business, your reputation matters. After all, over 90% of consumers look up reviews before choosing a business.

In today’s connected society, keeping track of your reputation is more important than ever. And that’s where reputation management comes in. Reputation management may sound like a fancy term, but all it really means is controlling consumers’ perception of a business, particularly online. Consumers are savvier than ever. They know who they want to do business with before they even step foot into their brick and mortar what about businesses like HVAC where they are just calling for an in-home appointment? And, consumers expect the best – as Bright Local found, 49% of them won’t choose a business unless it has a four-star rating.

But how can you ensure your business reaches the upper echelons of the four-star rating? It starts with providing your customers with a quality experience or product, every time. According to Walker Consulting, by 2020, a customer’s experience with a business will be “the key differentiator.” Your business could have the best-looking creative, the coolest product, and an unbeatable price – but if you provide your customer with a horrible experience, all those eye-catching details won’t mean much. When your customers are happy, they will spread the word, and may even pay more. Walker Consulting also found that “86% of consumers are willing to pay *more* for a better customer experience.”

Once you’ve made your customer’s experience a priority, you can start to nurture the reputation that comes from it. As we mentioned, consumers frequently read reviews to determine who to do business with. They also place a premium on word-of-mouth recommendations from people they trust – 74% of people said it was their top influencer. Online reviews act as digital word-of-mouth. And since those reviews are out there for the world to see, both good and bad, it’s important for your business to keep track of them. Get a positive review? Thank the customer for their patronage and for the review. Have a customer who leaves a not-so-favorable review? Address it quickly, and offer a solution to the problem.

Though you want to avoid getting bad reviews online, it is unavoidable. But how you deal with those reviews will tell your customers a lot about how seriously you take their

satisfaction. When prospective customers are searching for a new provider and see that your business cares about their customers and is willing to address bad experiences quickly, your attentiveness and consistent reputation could mean those customers choose you rather than the competition.

Additionally, you'll want to make sure you have a consistent presence across the web. By performing an audit of your brand as it stands today, you can determine what areas you need to improve upon. Start with a review of your online reviews on sites like Facebook, Yelp, Google, and more. As we mentioned earlier, responding to reviews, whether positive or negative, is just as important as making sure your reviews are positive.

It is also imperative to look out for any negative articles or press. According to [Moz](#), "businesses risk losing as many as 22% of customers when just one negative article is found by users considering buying their product or service." Additionally, review your website and social presence to be sure you're consistent with your branding and contact information.

But your business isn't necessarily in the service industry so how important is reputation management, really? According to [Forbes](#), "buyers in all industries (including B2B customers) are using digital content and online search to make their purchasing decisions." The results are clear: investing in reputation management is essential for any business, not just for those who are B2C.

Other businesses are checking for you, so it's important no matter the sector you're in to maintain a good reputation, not just with your website or reviews, but also on social media. In addition to checking the web for negative press, you should also consider "social media monitoring." As blogger Neil Patel says, social media monitoring "allows companies to gather public online content (from blog posts to tweets, from online reviews to Facebook updates), process it, and see whether something negative or positive is being said affecting their reputation."

So, what can you do if you've already noticed some negative press? What happens if you've already got several negative reviews? There are a few steps you can take here – first, it's important that you address the negative review or negative press quickly and politely. Don't underestimate the power of an apology. Saying "I apologize for your experience in our store/ with our product" can go a long way to making your customers feel heard.

Your next step, of course, is to determine how you can make things right. Often, just responding quickly and acknowledging the issue can be enough. In situations where you need to take more action, consider offering a discount towards the customer's next service or product. No matter what you decide, make sure to follow up with the customer once you've taken action. This shows that you are committed to making things right.

Now that you know the importance of reputation management and what it can do for your company, it's time to choose the right agency to help. While your company can handle a certain amount of reputation management, an experienced team of marketers can help you keep your reputation on good terms. An agency can help maintain your reputation online, by helping you address client concerns, respond to reviews, and generally monitor your presence. Additionally, they can make recommendations about what you can do to avoid negative reviews or ways to screen customers and how to request reviews from your satisfied customers.

As experienced marketers, Darwill has helped our customers manage their reputations for years. Through the use of a platform we developed, we are able to address reviews and help you keep a sterling reputation.

When you're ready to learn more about our services, contact the team at Darwill today.