

Why Your Business Needs Online Reputation Management

There once was a time when online reputation management services were considered superfluous and unnecessary. Many businesses thought the need to manage their online reputation was a bad business decision and something not worth investing in. Many of these businesses went about their daily business completely unaware of the power that the internet had given to the average consumer.

With the advent of Twitter, consumers began to demand things of the businesses that they bought from. Large corporations were forced to become more transparent in their customer service dealing and small businesses were given the opportunity to prove themselves based on merit alone.

When review sites like Yellowpages and Yelp hit the internet scene, those companies that continued to ignore the need for online reputation management services began to suffer. More and more clients, customers and consumers filled these review sites with nasty, negative and revealing testimonials of these companies. The consumer empowerment revolution had started and those businesses caught ignoring the need for reputation management services suffered the most.

The Power Of Reputation

Why should you care what people say about you online? If you are busy running your business, why do you need to worry about what someone said about you on Yelp?

The answer to these questions lies in one of the most powerful selling tactics known to modern industry: social proofing.

Most consumers buy what their friends buy. This has been a long known fact in the business world, but what is it that makes it true? Without delving too much into the psychology of selling, let's examine the why behind purchasing decisions.

Human beings are social creatures. It is the social nature of our species that has allowed us to adapt and overcome many obstacles. Deeply engrained in our natures is the need for social affirmation before we do anything. This need for social affirmation extends far beyond our friendly encounters with others, human beings make large life decisions, sometimes without regard to rationality, based solely on this aspect of social affirmation.

The same holds true for individuals making purchases and interacting with businesses online. Users want to "see" that others are socially affirming a business before they proceed. Just taking a look at the popularity of sites like Yelp shows you just how real and powerful social proofing is.

Managing Your Social Proof

One of the most powerful and easily recognizable examples of social proofing can be found in the restaurant industry.

How many times have you been to a restaurant simply because your friend said they liked it? Now think about how many times you have avoided a restaurant simply because of the reviews that you either read or heard about from your social circle.

Multiply this same example by the power of the internet and mass connectivity, and you can begin to see the trouble that your business might be in if you start ignoring online reputation management.

Imagine running a business successfully in the offline world only to be run out of business simply because a few negative reviews were left on Yellowpages.

Managing your online reputation requires more than just having a profile on these review sites. Aggressive reputation management includes the act of collecting and updating positive reviews. Building your social brand and starting a stream of positive reviews.

Conclusion

To compete in today's market you need the added edge of being online. In order to make sure that your online presence is one that builds your business and not one that tears it down, start taking action to managing your online reputation today!