
10 ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FACTS YOU **NEED** TO KNOW

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THE WILD, WILD WEB

The internet has changed the way we view our reputations. Today, you can search just about any of your friends, find out what they did last weekend and who they did it with. You can find photos, videos and much more from the comfort and secrecy of your own home. Not only can you do this with friends, but with businesses too.

Want to find a great Chinese food place? Do a quick search on Yelp.com or Yellowpages.com and within seconds you will have pages of results, all with reviews posted by current or ex-customers. Within seconds you will make long-term decisions about a business that you may have never even seen except for a picture on a computer screen.

While this advance in technology has allowed us to connect on a level never before possible, it has also brought with it a laundry list of negative externalities. The problem isn't the technology itself, but the speed with which it enters our lives.

The internet has turned into the American Wild West of old. The expansion of the internet is outrunning and outgunning law enforcement, social norms and ethics. Anybody with an internet connection and a keyboard can say anything they want to, about whomever they want to, and avoid any type of criminal punishment.

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Imagine a world where it was possible for a major corporation to send a single email to Youtube forcing them to remove 50,000 videos due to copyright infringement. While in that same world, if someone were to post a scandalous video of you or your family, you would have no legal power to remove it. Seems like an unfair and lopsided world doesn't it? Welcome to the current internet age that we live in.

Hackers, angry customers, competitors, ex-spouses and other malicious types are all able to take advantage of the loopholes in legal protection that should be protecting businesses and everyday people alike from fraudulent, slanderous and sometimes violent communications on the web.

Unfortunately, the law has lagged behind the expansion of the internet. Just like those pioneer towns of the American Wild West, we as internet users and businesses must find a way to keep our businesses, reputation and livelihoods safe from others.

This is where reputation management comes in.

WHAT IS REPUTATION MANAGEMENT?

Online Reputation Management is so much more than what the title suggests. Reputation managers will monitor any communications that might be happening about your brand. If they notice something that requires fixing, they will apply their broad and vast knowledge of internet marketing techniques to ensure that the problem is fixed.

You could think of reputation managers as part customer service and part online marketer. The goal of reputation management is not to squelch the honest feedback of customers, but to ensure that damages are minimized and that the company is being accurately represented online.

Anybody can start a blog. There are literally hundreds of free blogging platforms that people can use. If an ex-employee or a competitor wanted to start a blog that was meant to spread lies about your business or even about you personally, they could do it. They have done it. It is the job of the reputation manager to ensure that problems like this are dealt with properly and professionally.

10 ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Fortune 500 Company Executives Believe In Reputation Management

"58% Of Executives Believe That Reputation Management Should Be Addressed But Only 15% Actually Do Anything About It" [1]

You want to get a competitive edge? Start **DOING** what nearly 60% of big time executives say they **SHOULD** be doing but aren't!

2.

Professional Marketers Say "Trust" Is Number One for Making a Sales Worthy Impression

*"84% Of Marketers Believe That Building Trust Will Be The Primary
Focus For Marketing Efforts In The Future" [2]*

Most marketers feel that trust is what makes the sale. Do you trust someone with a bad reputation? Neither will your customers.

3.

MOST People Use Social Media to Decide What to Buy

*"4 out of 5 people state that they have received advice via social media
regarding what product or service to purchase." [3]*

It is no secret. Social proof is powerful. If your social media reputation is lacking, you lose.

4. More and More Large Companies Are Hiring Full-Time Online Reputation Managers

"The US Bureau of Labor Statistics puts the average salary of an online reputation manager between \$38,000–\$72,000." [4]

Want to know what big companies think about reputation management? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics they think highly enough of reputation managers to hire them full-time and pay them handsome salaries.

5. More Adults Are On Social Media Sites Than You Think

"46% of online adults have created their own profile on a social networking site" [3]

We can't dismiss social media as a young person's world anymore. The people with the money and the spending power are moving online and making decisions based on what they find there.

6. The Public Trusts Social Media...

"Half of online adults (48%) agree that getting to know new people now is easier and more meaningful because you can learn things online about the people you meet." [3]

Do you ever wish your customers could just get to know you better? If they knew you better they would buy your product or service. They can, and they want to via social media!

7. ... More Than You Know

"16% of all internet users have looked online for more information about someone they were dating or in a relationship" [3]

Think about that for a second! Even the most personal parts of our life are affected by our online reputation.

8. People Are Using Social Media To Gain An Edge On Their Competition. That Means You.

"31% of employed internet users have searched online for information about co-workers, professional colleagues or business competitors" [3]

How often are you being searched for online by your competitor or a fellow colleague? More than you think. Are you caring for your reputation like you should be?

9. Employees Feel Pressure to Manage Their Online Reputation

"12% of employed adults say they need to market themselves online as part of their job." [3]

If 1 out of every 10 employees think they need to be building their online reputation, shouldn't you as a business owner be doing the same?

10. Social Proof Reigns Supreme and Traditional Advertising Is Dying

"78% of consumers trust peer recommendations, only 14% trust advertisement." [3]

Guess what, your reputation goes before you and social media only ensures that. No matter what ads you are running, no matter how many banners you put on your storefront, it will be the recommendations of peers based on your reputation that will bring customers to your doorstep ready to buy.

THE FINAL FRONTIER

While the internet rages on, business owners only have one of two choices:

Choice A: Refuse to take your business online and miss out on the huge potential that so many other businesses are experiencing.

Choice B: Proceed with caution into the final frontier on internet marketing and reap the rewards for making the smart move.

With the help of a professional online reputation manager you can turn the internet Wild West into the California Gold Rush. Manage your reputation and you will make money.

Please contact us with any questions that you might have about online reputation management or how the internet can start making you money today!

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SOURCES

[1] Deloitte Study

[2] 1 To 1 Media Survey of the 1t1 Xchange Panel, 2008

[3] Pew Statistics - <http://sustainablejournalism.org/uncategorized/online-reputation-management-pew-statistics>

[4] Simplyhired - <http://blog.simplyhired.com/2011/11/hot-job-of-the-week-online-reputation-manager.html>