

# REPUTATION CRUSADER

Reputation Management Services to Establish, Rebuild, Maintain & Protect Your Reputation

## Getting Started with Reputation Management

Negative publicity on the Internet can cost your business in both revenue and customers. While blogs and social media have transformed the way businesses communicate with the public, it's also easier than ever for people to post negative, false or scandalous claims about businesses in a public media outlet. By simply posting damaging comments on review sites, blogs and social media sites, people can tarnish your business' public image and reputation. Implementing an online reputation management strategy is crucial for any organization's success in today's business world. Managing your online reputation requires a multi-faceted and integrated approach including monitoring your online reputation, engaging your audience, and by publishing content to help develop your organization's Web presence. Lastly, in certain necessary circumstances, take legal action.

### 1 Monitor

It is essential for businesses to monitor what is being said about them online. In order to succeed in enhancing your company's online reputation, you must be a good listener. Listen to and address your friends, followers and fans' comments and concerns. Interaction, communication and awareness are keys to creating a positive image for your business. Your company must implement a listening platform so that you may quickly spot and address any complaints or damaging comments.

### Helpful Tools

One helpful tool is Google Alerts. Set up Google Alerts for your business to keep track of keywords, such as your business name or products, and receive updates whenever they are mentioned online. This service will allow you to monitor everything that is being said about these keywords online. Another useful tool is the Twitter search engine. Search and use hashtags (#), followed by the name of your organization, products or services. Twitter will then compile everything that has been said about this subject for you to browse through. The advanced Twitter search engine will provide you with auto updates of key terms. There are also a variety of social media monitoring programs. Another program, Icerocket, allows you to monitor Twitter, blogs, the Web, news, images and more, while offering the ability to bookmark your search results for later reference. Other social media alert tools include Addict-o-matic, Boardtracker, Twazzup, socialmention, Tweetdeck and Radian6. All of these tools report alerts when your keywords are found on social media sites and other online platforms.

Once the negative content is found, some defaming pages can be removed by contacting Web administrators. However, the goal is to prevent negative content from ever appearing, and when it does, to push it to the later pages of search engine results by deploying an integrated and proactive strategy. It is also essential to implement some form of damage control and prevention before the issue gets out of hand. Having good customer relations and engaging your audience is essential in this area.

### 2 Engage

Always encourage customer communication and feedback. Reach out to your audience and respond to any criticism in a professional and compassionate manner. Your audience will appreciate superior customer service and the effort you made to address their concern. Don't limit yourself to responding only to negative feedback. The goal is to reposition your business on the Web as a more customer-oriented organization.

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## Negative Feedback

— Index all negative reviews in one document. Try to match reviewers with past clients and send them all personalized emails or notes at home, addressing each individual concern and specific case. Apologize, if necessary, and offer them a great deal to get them to give your business another shot. If the matter has been resolved, invite reviewers to withdraw their negative review if their next experience has proven to be better than the last. If they cannot withdraw the comment, then invite them to post again. With the high presence of anonymity online, it isn't always possible to track down the culprits behind damaging material. For reviewers who cannot be identified, respond with an "owner's reply" online, addressing their concern and promising to do better next time.

## Positive Feedback

— Responding to praise and gratitude is just as important as addressing negative publicity. Always thank customers for positive comments and reviews. Facilitate positive postings in forms, emails and comment sections by thanking your audience for their time and encouraging feedback so that you may improve their experience.

## Improve Customer Relations

— Promote your business as a client-friendly organization, with their best interests in mind. Cater your content to what would be most valuable for your target audience. Write educational articles and post helpful videos. Another tip is to create and maintain a blog with a weekly question from a customer, responding in helpful and compassionate terms. This will demonstrate that your business is open to conversation.

## 3 Publish

### Develop Your Web Presence

— Carefully consider all content before you publish it online. When you post on a social media site, or anywhere else online, you are speaking on your business' behalf. Despite its casual feel, take social networking seriously. All content should be positive, accurate and put you and your organization in a good light. It is important to generate more positive publicity for your business so that the major search engines focus on this to create and maintain a positive online image. By creating lots of favorable online content, published on several online platforms, you will not only nourish your favorable reputation online, but also improve your search engine presence. You want your social media pages, blog, website and any positive media coverage to appear on the first two pages of Google when someone searches for your business. This will help to push negative publicity, if it cannot be removed, to the back and out of sight. Another tip is to create microsites to publish positive content and increase your organization's Web presence. Microsites tend to rank high when people search for your company, allowing you to have greater visibility in search engine results.

## Optimize Content

— Using the right keywords is essential to having your site found on Google and the other major search engines. The typical Google search consists of three words so you must choose your keywords wisely. They must be relevant, important, generate sufficient search volume and reach your target audience. Further, always maintain and update your website(s), blog and social media accounts with fresh content to ensure that they rank high in search engines when someone searches for your business. However, in your goal of optimizing positive content and pushing negative content out of sight, you cannot manipulate the search engine's system. Violating Google's guidelines may result in a negative adjustment of your website's presence on Google, or even the removal of your

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site from Google's index. There is no issue in using positive content to overcome negative content, but it must be done within Google's guidelines. This area can become tricky and a professional reputation management service will guide your organization through the process.

## Social Media

— Social media is all about enabling conversations. While you cannot control conversations, you can influence them. Create and maintain accounts on popular social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. Actively engage your audience through social media. For example, publish a tweet asking customers if they need help or assistance with anything and when they respond, address their problems accordingly. Upload a valuable how-to video to YouTube to demonstrate to your audience that you have their best interests in mind.

## Earned Media

— Continue to gain earned media through the development of positive news media stories about your organizations. Send press releases, articles and photos to media sources and participate in community events that may garner positive media coverage for your organization. News outlets generally have a high degree of authority online and rank high with the major search engines.

## Free Postings

— As press releases and articles are generated for media distribution, your blog or newsletters, post the content on appropriate local and national websites that accept press release and article submissions. Thousands of article directories will publish your content for free, enhancing your online visibility. When you publish an article on one of these directories, that directory will give you a link back to your website, driving traffic there. Some free posting sites include:

[www.PRLog.com](http://www.PRLog.com)  
[www.getyourcontent.com](http://www.getyourcontent.com)  
[www.articlesnatch.com](http://www.articlesnatch.com)  
[www.joinandpost.com](http://www.joinandpost.com)  
[www.articlecube.com](http://www.articlecube.com)  
[www.businessknowhow.com](http://www.businessknowhow.com)  
[www.bpubs.com](http://www.bpubs.com)

[www.articlesbase.com](http://www.articlesbase.com)  
[www.buzzle.com](http://www.buzzle.com)  
[www.ezinearticles.com](http://www.ezinearticles.com)  
[www.isnare.com](http://www.isnare.com)  
[www.articlealley.com](http://www.articlealley.com)  
[www.articledashboard.com](http://www.articledashboard.com)

## Legal

In appropriate circumstances, businesses should consider legal options to help address damaging content online. For libelous and defaming comments made about your company online, you may want to take legal measures, including filing a lawsuit for defamation, tortious interference with business relations and even criminal cyber-bullying or harassment.