4 Steps to Building the Best Online Reputation

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Are you looking to build an online reputation for your business? If so, you're not alone. So far, in 2022, there are over 1.9 billion websites online. That's a lot of competition, making a strong online presence more important than ever before.

From drumming up a new business to making your brand stand out as a 21st-century industry icon, establishing a positive online reputation will only benefit you. But what is it exactly?

Online reputation is the perception that your business holds on the internet. It can be influenced by a variety of things, such as customer reviews, social media activity and mentions in news articles — which can all affect your ability to attract new customers and partners. It can also impact your bottom line; studies have shown that a negative online reputation can lead to a 20% decrease in revenue.

It's important to stay on top of your online reputation and take steps to improve it if necessary. But how do you go about crafting an online reputation? Here are four steps to get you started.

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1. Create content to get your brand

out there

Start by creating a website or blog that includes high-quality content related to your area of expertise. You'll know your content is high-quality if:

- It includes visuals like charts, graphs, infographics and diagrams
- It has a hook that draws people in
- It includes external links to high-quality sources (i.e. not Wikipedia)
- It is plagiarism free
- It provides new information the reader can't find elsewhere
- It uses statistics, studies, and data to back up important points

Website content isn't the only content you should produce. In 2022, over 4.59 billion people will have social media. That number should include you – social media is a great place for starting discussions, creating connections with your customers and making a digital mark. To make waves on social media, post three to five times a week, use hashtags, comment on other people's posts and create content that excites people.

We also recommend you participate in online forums and discussion groups related to your field. These are great for networking and showcasing your knowledge. Just be sure to always interact professionally and respectfully.

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2. Engage with your audience

Customers and clients will research you and your company online before doing business with you, so putting your best foot forward is essential. One way to do this is by engaging with your audience on whichever marketing medium you choose to

use.

Show that you're listening to their concerns and responding to their needs. Take the time to answer their questions, address their feedback and resolve any issues they may have. Be a leader, a listener and a voice of reason people can trust.

There are many, many ways to engage with people online. Here's a short list:

- Create a Facebook poll
- Reply to comments
- Share your followers' posts
- Start a forum discussion
- Ask a question
- Share your opinion on a topic and ask for people's opinions
- Start a hashtag
- Host a giveaway
- Ask for advice

No matter how you choose to engage, ensure you're accessible (and prompt) above all else. By demonstrating that you're responsive and reliable, you'll create a good impression and encourage customers to do business with you.

3. Be consistent with your messaging

One trap many marketers and small businesses fall into is the trap of trying to wear too many hats online. It's fun to dip your toes into each new trend, but if there isn't a theme drawing all your posts together, people will get confused fast.

You need to be sure that your messaging is clear and consistent across all platforms. This means ensuring that you always stay on topic and don't constantly change your opinion

on things just because a certain stance is popular.

Consistency also means using the same user name, profile picture and bio on all of your social media accounts. Doing so will make it easier for people to find you on different platforms.

And, of course, consistency also extends to how you interact with others online. Try to use the same speaking style and engage with everyone in a similar manner. Leads will see how you engage with people online, so if you turn into a completely different person when you speak to them, they'll rightfully see it as a red flag.

Related: How to Create (and Keep) a Winning Online Reputation

4. Monitor your reputation and your results

It takes years to build a strong online reputation, but it only takes a few minutes for that reputation to be destroyed. Your digital footprint is forever, so it's more important than ever to monitor your online reputation and take steps to protect it.

First, set boundaries with yourself, so you stay professional online. If you're cranky, tired, grumpy or cynical, it might not be the best time to post. It's okay to miss a day of posting because you have nothing of value to say.

You might also want to restrict the topics you talk about. The internet is full of petty Twitter fights about big topics. But most of the time, the people involved don't change their stance or learn anything – they just like screaming into the digital void and making each other feel small. If you can't add a new viewpoint to a discussion or do good with your platform, just skip it.

Additionally, monitor what other people are saying about you carefully. Google yourself regularly and see what comes up. If there’s anything negative, take steps to have it removed or address it. Google Alerts is also great for this – it can notify you every time your name is mentioned.

Finally, take advantage of Google Analytics and monitor your online results regularly. Spend more time creating content on topics that get you results, and really prioritize the content your audience requests.

Related: 5 Ways to Protect Your Brand’s Online Reputation

Conclusion

Building a positive online reputation is a fantastic way to boost brand awareness and attract customers online. It takes time and effort, but it’s well worth it in the end.

For the best results possible, make sure to engage with your audience and be consistent with your messaging. Don’t be afraid to put yourself out there, but be deliberate and create content you know will deliver results.

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