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Online Reputation Management For Your Small Business

Caroline Melberg

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Online reputation management has become the most important aspect of on-line marketing. You should incorporate this into your Internet marketing strategy today by doing the things that I will suggest in this article. If you are already doing these things, let this serve as a gentle reminder.

The fact is, anyone can go online and post anything about you or your company on any forum, blog, or user-generated website. They can even do this anonymously and you'll never know who is trying to ruin your reputation. The statements these anonymous posters make about you or your small business do not even need to be true. A lot of times, one comment can do more damage than you could ever do yourself through lousy customer service.

Let these businesses serve as your example:

- A private physician gave advice that a patient didn't like; the patient, a blogger, posted some negative things about the physician on her blog. Since the physician did not have a website or blog of her own, the only results for that doctor when a potential patient conducted an on-line search were the blogger's negative comments.
- A construction contractor fired an employee and in retaliation the former employee posted some comments on a popular forum online. Even though the company had a website, they had not done a lot of Internet marketing and the negative comments outranked the construction company's own website.
- A small business owner who also performs charity work through a separate organization was attacked through an anonymous blog on a free blog host by a former customer who began posting negative comments about the charitable organization as well as the business owner.

These types of attacks online are becoming more and more prevalent. The Internet gives the illusion that there are no consequences for comments that are not true. Offline, such comments would be considered slander, but online they can be made anonymously and influence potential customers to stay away from your small business based on nothing but hearsay. Once the damage is done, it is extremely hard to reverse.

The good news is you can manage your online reputation through an on-line marketing strategy that involves proven techniques that are not expensive or do not take up too much time. You can do it yourself or hire an Internet marketing consultant to do it for you. Either way, on-line reputation management is an absolute must for every small business owner, even if you do not have a website or do any business online. Here are the essential tools for your on-line reputation management strategy:

- A domain name with your personal and/or company name in it
- Your own small business website
- Article marketing
- A blog that you post to every day
- Social networking and social bookmarking on a regular basis
- Forum posting and blog comments on blogs related to your business

- Work/Life Balance



- Online press releases
- Building in-bound links to your website from quality, highly respected websites within your industry

ONLINE BUSINESS TOOLS

- Article Index
- Download Library
- Get More Clients Blog
- Member Success Blog
- Internet Marketing News
- OBU Promotional Forum
- Tip of the Week
- Internet Mktg Toolkit
- Product Reviews

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RESOURCES

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Online reputation management is all about marketing your business online in a positive way without tearing others down. You don't have to make others look bad in order to make yourself look good. Online marketing strategies are an extension of, and should be approached as an addition to, traditional marketing approaches. The first step to your online reputation management strategy should be to sign up for [Google Alerts](#) using your personal name, your company name, and your website URL as keywords. That way you can see when people are talking about you online and head off any repercussions from erroneous or negative comments before they get too entrenched in the search engine databases.

The essence of all online reputation management is ensuring that more positive reflections of your business appear in as many places online as possible, as often as possible, and to keep fresh content alive about you and your business that creates a positive impression. By maintaining a consistent approach to online marketing, you can ensure that your reputation online is unmarred by negativity and reputation-killing talk. For more information about on-line reputation management, consult an Internet marketing consultant with a background in managing reputations today.

About the author:

Caroline Melberg is President and CEO of Small Business Mavericks, a division of Melberg Marketing. She has over 20 years of experience creating marketing communications materials and writing copy for some of the largest and most successful companies in the world. Her small business columns are syndicated online, and she publishes the popular e-Zine, "Maverick Internet Marketing Secrets." Learn insider Maverick Marketing secrets you can use immediately to find new customers and increase your sales. Get your FREE subscription at www.SmallBusinessMavericks.com today!



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