

HOW TO

manage online reputations

People will talk about you online whether you know about it or not. So, isn't it better to put yourself in a position where you can learn about what you're doing right and correct what has gone wrong as it comes up? It can be intimidating to wade into the world of online reputation management, but with a few tips and some daily diligence, you'll be on top of what the online world is saying about you.

You can get started today with some free tools. A great place to start is with Google Alerts. This free service sends digests straight to your Gmail inbox or RSS feed with all references Google can find with a specific phrase you have chosen to get alerts for. Try typing in your name, and your competitors name to see the different kinds of presence you both have. You can also follow your industry or anything else you want to see people talk about online.

Want to see more of what social media is saying about you?
Check out socialmention.com

Now that you know what they're saying, it's time to move to the engagement part of management. This can be quite a bit trickier. It requires maintaining a positive presence online, while dealing efficiently and ethically with any problems that arise. Try and become a positive force online, so that you'll have a stronger foundation to start from should a crisis occur. Interact with customers and peers through social media. If you get the

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occasional negative comment or review, deal with it calmly and professionally.

See it as a chance

to make your business better. Reach out and offer solutions or try to make amends to the person commenting.

IMPORTANT ONLINE REVIEW SITES

Lots of important conversations online happen on Twitter and on blogs. Monitoring them can really pay off.

There are some great, free tools you can use to monitor both spaces.

Search.twitter.com lets you search any keyword or topic. It can be a little unwieldy, though, especially for more popular keywords. Tweetbeep works like Google alerts for twitter. You can use it for free, or upgrade to a premium account for \$20 a month.

Passionate people blog, and their discussions can have a lot of impact.

For blogs, a lot of it will be picked up by things like Google alerts, but if you'd like to do a little digging on your own, Technorati is a blog search engine that allows you to search by topic or category. Even if no one is talking about you, you can benefit from following blogs that talk about your industry.

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