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Online Reputation Management Part 1

BY KIM KELLEY, FRBMA

At a time when the bad reputations of big corporations have become highly visible, online reputation management has risen to the forefront of marketing efforts. This online scorecard can produce a wide range of emotions—from cheering at the successes to straight up cursing obscenities over what appears to be a low blow from an angry patient.

Why do we care so much?

It's natural to care about our company's reputation, but how well we rank online in the eyes of our customers can have a profound effect on business success, in general. A Harvard Business Review study found that a difference of just one star in the average rating of a typical business profile can lead to a five to nine percent difference in revenue. And there's a strong connection to search engine (SEO) rankings—an area many of us have worked hard to nurture in order to produce optimal position on results pages. Online reviews are everywhere we look these days. Google and Bing have done this purposefully. Investing in pay-per-click ads? Be prepared for your online reputation to positively or negatively affect your conversion rates. Affecting purchasing decisions relies on certain levels of trust, and there is data on people who trust online reviews. In fact, the significance of online reviews largely boils down to trust.

Trust management

Industry sources report 84 to 88 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation. Consumers choose where to get trustworthy information—some will ask their mom or a best friend, others will look online for the opinions of those who have had a similar experience. Data shows that 40 percent of people form an opinion after reading just three reviews and 88 percent after just 10 reviews. This means that businesses must make choices every day about how they will treat their customers because they are laying the groundwork for their online reputation. Proactively monitoring these reviews will ensure that your business is not getting blindsided by a negative image and therefore deteriorating the trust of potential customers before they ever utilize your services.

People and businesses behind the reviews

Now, I know that even a company with the best reputation is going to tick off somebody at some point. You just can't satisfy everyone all the time. But there are certain types of people behind the surge of online reviews. One type is the Altruistic personality. They just want to help others and believe they have a responsibility to do so. Others believe in reciprocity—they've been treated with fairness and grace, and they just want to pay it forward. And then, there are the Justice Seekers. They're mad and nothing is going to




stop them from venting their anger online. The power of speaking up online comes with a certain amount of anonymity. People are much more likely to say online what they won't say to your face. Further, online reviewers who make it part of their routine to frequent online review sites are being "rewarded" by these companies. Yelp, for example, boldly states that they give more preference to the reviewers who have a history of posting reviews over the infrequent poster. And, to the SEO connection previously mentioned, Yelp has done an amazing job vetting reviews and claiming top search engine rankings because of their efforts.

What's the right strategy?

To manage their online reputation, some companies will choose to invest in an Online Reputation Management (ORM) company; others will opt to manage their reputation with in-house resources. Investing in an ORM does come with benefits. They can help you obtain more reviews, monitor your pages and listings, and respond to reviews. However, there are many companies that over-promise and under-deliver on their services or use black-hat techniques that can yield negative results. If what they offer to do just doesn't sound right, or possible, it probably isn't. So how do you decide which method is right for your business? You might invest in an ORM if your company is currently struggling with a poor online

reputation or bad press, you are a large organization with multiple locations, geographically separated, or you have limited internal resources. Managing this effort in-house will certainly save money. You may also feel you can monitor pages more frequently and have faster response times when doing it yourself. Creating a dashboard for benchmarking and monitoring your online reputation is very doable.

Whichever strategy you choose, know this: You CAN buy reputation management services, but you CANNOT buy a good reputation. You have to earn that.

Now that you understand the importance of online reputation management, learn what you can do about it in Part 2 of Online Reputation Management—The Game Plan, in the next edition of the RBMA Bulletin. 



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~~WE~~
So, who do ~~you~~ think we are?

After 25 years, we have a pretty good idea:

Radiology is all we do. Radiologists are specialized physicians, we are specialized managers. We feel strongly that the complex and changing nature of Radiology billing demands a single focus, not a "one size fits all" approach.

We use technology to empower our people, not to replace them. As a result, we are a hybrid of cutting edge technology and high touch personal service.

All our work is done in the United States. We feel it's important to maintain control of client data in the US and to support our local communities.

A live person will always answer our phones during business hours.

If these concepts are important to you, contact **Cindy Pittmon, RCC, CHBME, FRBMA**, Acclaim's Founder and President to discuss how we can achieve your objectives together.

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