

5 Keys to Reputation Marketing Success

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What is Reputation Marketing?

Reputation marketing is a specialized version of brand marketing. Companies devote a great deal of time and resources to branding their business, with more attention devoted to digital branding than ever before.

Reputation marketing refers to the real-time brand identity that businesses capture from online comments, reviews, complaints, and critiques that come from their customers.

Word of mouth is more powerful than ever, only now it comes in the shape of blog comments, re-tweets, Facebook likes, and sharing/liking/following on every social media platform possible.

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Reputation marketing allows your business to take what consumers are already saying about your products or services, and leverage it for your own use, to increase your industry ratings and, ultimately, your revenue.

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Given that reputation marketing stems from what other people are saying about your business, it's tempting to sit back and relax.

You can't control what people will post or change the mind of every customer who has a bad review, so you can just leave them to say what they will, right?

Wrong – reputation marketing isn't just people's ideas about your business that pop into their head for no reason.

Reputation marketing is the active management of your customer's comments and criticisms to create the brand image that you desire.

Reputation marketing doesn't need to be complicated, just stick with these core strategies to achieve reputation marketing success:

1. Create Systems for Collecting Feedback

Rather than just trolling around to find out what people are saying about your product, go out there and capture that information yourself.

Customers are eager to review products and weigh in with their opinions, so create forums for them to do so and collect the data that comes from it.

Some of the most effective ways to gather feedback on your brand is through online surveys, contests for users on your Facebook page or from your email list, opening your blog posts up for comments, or tweeting questions for your followers to answer.

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This type of data collection is priceless – it gives you a direct link to what your customer thinks.

Don't let this information go to waste – devote some analysis to your reputation marketing strategy where you look closely at who your customers are. Are they the same people that you thought you were targeting?

What are their buying patterns? Ages? Where do they live? Which customers seem more likely to leave a positive review?

Developing systems for data collection and interpretation allows you to tap into the great resources that are already out there via your online presence.

2. Build Your Reputation

Waiting around for a good reputation to “happen” to you isn't an effective marketing strategy.

If you want to have your customers say positive things about your products and services, you need to put the time and energy into making that happen.

To do this, you need to open yourself up to what's going on around you. Read the comments, search relevant hashtags, or scan the internet for reviews of your business.

Once you're aware of what people are saying, you have the power to harness it.

Take your bad reviews and deconstruct them. What specifically are you doing wrong? If enough people have the same comments, changing the way you perform in that area can create a huge shift in your customer's minds.

Then look at the praise your brand gets – what are the areas that you excel in? How can you strive to be even better, so you leave your competitor far behind you?

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Reviews are an indispensable way to gather your customers' likes and dislikes about your products so you can turn around and give them exactly what they want.

3. Market Your Reputation

Even though your customers are doing a substantial portion of your marketing for you, it doesn't mean you shouldn't continue using your existing channels to communicate your brand's message.

To use reputation marketing to your advantage when creating your other campaigns, you need to pay close attention.

This means looking at more than just whether your customers are leaving positive or negative reviews. Drill down into the specific things they're saying.

Paying attention to the keywords that keep popping up in your comments or online reviews can inspire your next campaign and directly address those comments.

For example, if you keep seeing the word "inconvenient" coming up in negative reviews, you can tailor your marketing campaigns or social media strategies to focus on highlighting how convenient your product or service can make their lives.

In this way, reputation marketing helps you identify a problem and create a solution to it that you can drop directly in your customer's laps.

4. Manage Your Reputation

The beauty of reputation marketing is the wealth of information it gives about your customers. To keep their comments and reviews pouring in, you'll need to spend some time creating an incentive for your customers to engage in the conversation.

For example, you might see a spike in reviews when you introduce a new product. However, after several months on the market, you may lose momentum and see your customers turn their attention elsewhere.

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To manage your reputation and keep the dialogue open, your business sometimes has to make an effort to keep the hype going, so you don't fall off your customers' radars.

Some ideas for generating buzz is to create and offer promotions, special offers for your followers, host events, or offer exclusive discounts.

These tactics motivate customers to purchase when they might normally be ready to move onto the next thing.



5. Monitor Your Reputation

The key to monitoring your reputation is in repetition. This doesn't mean reading reviews once and then never looking at them again. The conversation is always changing. What was irrelevant yesterday could be tomorrow's hottest trend.

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For this reason, monitoring requires regular attention to what's being said about your brand. This might mean a weekly or daily read through your social media posts, searching for online reviews, and scrolling through the comments on your blog or Facebook page.

Regular monitoring allows you to see if things are working or if they're de-railing in a relatively short period. Looking at comments once a year means that someone may have said something negative six months ago that you could have acted on or addressed, and now it's too late.

Keeping close tabs on your reputation allows you to spring into action as soon as your customers identify an area that needs improvement.

Consumers love to support businesses who have a personal touch. If your reputation matters to you and you make an effort to give your customers what they want (not just what you think they do), you'll stand out in a sea of faceless businesses who don't have the time to listen to their ideas and comments. Satisfying and delighting your customers doesn't require a flashy sales tactics or aggressive marketing.

What you need to do is get quiet and listen. Your customers are telling you what they want, what they dislike, and what they love.

Now it's your job to deliver more of the things that make them happy and keep them engaged in the success of your business.