

Protect Your Business



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What is Your Online Reputation?

Your online image is NOT just your business website. There is much more to it. Google says this:

*"Your online identity is determined not only by what you post, but also by **what others post about you** – whether a mention in a blog post, a photo tag or a reply to a public status update," - Google*

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In a nutshell, your online reputation is made up of everything about your business that exists online. The range of materials that could potentially impact your business' online reputation is broader than you might realize at first. Here are just some components of your online image:

1. Comments made about your business on social media such as Twitter or Facebook
2. Images about your business online
3. Videos about your business (Good or Bad) on YouTube and elsewhere

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4. Posts and articles published online about your business
5. Geo-location information broadcast through services like Foursquare
6. Comments that others make about you in social media or in blog posts
7. Images of your business that others publish on social media

Even what people say in an email or through instant messaging could potentially be copied and made public.

In fact, if you're beginning to feel like virtually anything that others do on the Internet could become part of your business' online reputation, then you're starting to get the picture.

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Now throw in the mobile internet and smart phones, where people can read and write reviews from anywhere. You can see how a bad review about your business will hit harder and spread faster than ever before.

Why Online Reputation Matters to Travel Business and Destinations

Many travel businesses have found themselves in the unenviable position of being lied about, falsely accused, slandered, and attacked online. It's a growing problem.

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The cost is immediate, staggering, and long term.

Here are some common internet search facts you should know about:

- *95% of internet users do not search past the first page of search engine results.*
- *80% of the United States population researches a product on the internet before purchasing.*
- *72% of those that research will not buy if there's a negative comment*

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Just look at these search results for Spas



Who would you start with in these results?

The business with the most stars and reviews, of course! So, you can see how your business' online reputation can directly impact your bottom line. Now the question is: **How to grow, improve, and protect it.**

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We've put together a list of the five most critical things every travel business should be doing to protect their online reputation.

When it comes to managing your business' online reputation, you must be proactive. Think of it like a football game, it's better to be on offense.



You want to be in control of your own results.

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What are people saying about your business?

The first step is to find out what people are saying about your business online. The best way to do this is to simply Google your business name. Are there any reviews about your company on the first page?

[Hyundai Las Vegas Price, Henderson Hyundai Price Quote, Planet LV...](#)

Get a Hyundai price quote today from Planet Hyundai! Get a great price and ...

[www.planetlv.com/quote.html](#) - Cached

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7 reviews

"I had "a noise" and I know how service people best laugh at that (esp coming from a woman!). But Corey and the others we"

[www.insiderpages.com/b/37184577/planet-hyundai-las-vegas](#) - Cached

[PLANET HYUNDAI LAS VEGAS SUCKS!](#)

PlanetHyundaiSucks.com, was created in response to sales and service issues with prior ownership and management of the Planet Hyundai dealership. ...

[planethyundaisucks.com](#) - Cached - Similar



Ouch!

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How many spots do your business own on the first page? Look at these results for Rainbow Pharmacy:



Do you have positive content and reviews past the first page? If so, moving these items to the first page of Google would help your online reputation.

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Getting Google Love for Your Business

To get your positive content to the first page of Google, focus on search engine optimization (SEO) for these items. Good SEO strategies, by default, combat negative mentions. SEO typically takes at least three months before your business will see an impact, but the long-term value is unlike any other online marketing effort.

Your goal is to own the first page of Google for your business name with all positive content. Remember, 95% of all searchers will never go past the first page.

If you look at the search results below, you'll see the Grand Wailea has positive content all over the first and second pages.

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You might not know that Google has an online business directory called Google Places. These listings are free and compiled by Google from various online directories like the online Yellow Pages. Here is what a place page looks like:



Here is how a place page shows up in Google search results:

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What makes this page even more important now is that Google recently stopped displaying reviews from other sites, like Yelp. They now only display Google reviews on your place page.

How to Get Reviews

The best way to get reviews is simply to ask. Seek out your most loyal customers and ask them to leave a review on Google or Yelp.

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You could also offer some sort of incentive, such as 10% off their next visit or purchase if they leave a review. Here's an example of some incentive cards



Video Reviews

Another great way to get reviews is to keep a small video camera or just use your smart phone to record video reviews.

Then, just upload them to YouTube. Do a little SEO on these videos and they'll show up on the first page of Google.

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This is a very effective tactic for generating more leads and sales for your business.

Handling Negative Reviews



When you see negative content or reviews about your business online, it's important that you act quickly. There is a saying, "Silence is consent."

Many sites such as Yelp let the business owner respond to the reviews. The longer you wait to respond, the more potential

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customers see the negative review and believe it's a true representation of your business.

Your goal in handling an upset customer should be threefold:

1. They turn from upset to satisfied
2. They post positive things about you and rebut or remove their negative remarks
3. You learn something about your business that will improve it and help to avoid future negative reviews

But first, is the Criticism Legitimate or Fake?

Unfortunately, there is a small subset of people online who think it's fun to leave bad reviews about businesses. If you find this to be the case, resist the urge to respond in anger.



Instead, demonstrating concern and wanting to discuss the specifics of their encounter will go a long way towards showing other potential customers that you are interested in their feedback and want to improve the situation.

Empathy is a powerful tool, and being sincerely concerned with their bad experience is a trait that every business owner should have.

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In the case where you're dealing with someone who simply wants to hurt you, be very selective with your response. If the insult is small, a simple apology will do. As the insults escalate, you must be careful with your reply.

Sometimes, the customer is clearly wrong because they expect too much for too little. Fight the urge to call them unreasonable. Instead, say something like this:

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"We are very sorry you feel that way and will do everything within reason to resolve this. If you will contact us, we would like to work together to find a solution."

If the complaint was legitimate, they may contact you. If they are simply being obnoxious, you will likely never hear from them, but at least you were professional in your reply and those who read the review will hopefully see that you were trying to be helpful and address the situation directly.

Be Transparent and Honest

Under no circumstances write fake reviews or ask your family, or worse, employees to write reviews for you.

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These tactics are almost always found out and will do your online reputation more harm than good.

If the Negative Comment is true

- Don't ignore or hide
- Participate in the discussion and be honest
- Add response to your website
- Issue statement addressing what has been done
- If it's serious, get help. Seek out an online reputation management expert

If the Negative Comment is False

- Post a professional response
- Politely ask for the comment or review to be removed
- Post a response on your website
- Find or create positive content about your business and use search engine optimization to get it on the first page of Google
- Consult a lawyer

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Use Social Media

Social Media is all the rage these days. Facebook and Twitter have given anyone a voice to express their opinion.

Good for people, but this can be a challenge for a local business. Especially since Google shows some Facebook updates in its search results. This is what Tech Crunch had to say:

*"The only problem with the new addition is that Facebook is only granting Google access to updates from its 3 million Pages, which are generally for celebrities, politicians, brands, **and local businesses**" – not your average Facebook user. (Tech Crunch 2010)*

How can local businesses take advantage of this new technology to generate more business and help their online reputation?

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Establish a presence on the 3 major social media sites

- Create a Facebook business page
- Create a Twitter account for your business
- Create a Linked In profile for your business

Be a part of the conversation

Participate in social media. Check you Facebook business page daily and update content regularly. Actively seek out local followers for your Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Most importantly, when you're commenting on these sites, be yourself. Let your customers know you're a real person and truly interested in helping them to have a great experience with your business.

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Creating Positive Content for Your Business

Sticking to our number one tenant of being proactive in managing our business' online reputation, we can't just wait for others to post positive things about our business. We have to go on offense. Here are some of the best ways to do that.

Press Releases

Writing compelling press releases and distributing them across the internet is a great way to get positive content out there. Google thinks highly of most of these sites and will more than likely show the press release in its search results.

Articles

Creating positive articles and distributing them across various directories or getting them posted on blogs relevant to your business is another great way to get positive content out about your business.

YouTube Videos

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Did you know YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world? Creating either informative or funny videos about your business on YouTube can generate great press and if one goes viral, it could put your local business on the map.

Also, Google owns YouTube, so they like showing videos in their search results.

Other Web Properties

Creating a blog or other websites about your business is another great way to own more of that first page of Google. Sites like Tumblr, Wordpress.com and others allow you to create blogs on their sites.

Make sure you read the terms of service on these sites, some of them don't like anything that looks commercial.

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Thank you for taking the time to read through this report. I'd love to have a chance to talk with you for even just 10 minutes about how our online reputation management services can protect your business and improve your results.

It's possible that by making a few small changes, you could see huge results. So please, give me a call at 0408 225 766 or email us at Bronwyn@smallbusinessmarketingaustralia.com and we can chat further. We offer additional consulting services in this area if you would like us to help you in managing your online reputation

Thank you again for reading this report.

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