

Online Reputation Management (The Only Guide You'll Ever Need)



Assessing, building, tracking and managing your reputation is no small task. However, once you get to grips with the core concepts and techniques, you'll find that it's an initiative well worth your attention. Here's everything you need to get started with online reputation management.

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What Is Online Reputation Management?

Often shortened to ORM, online reputation management is all about monitoring, analysing and shaping the way people perceive your brand online. Depending on the type of business you have, 'online' might include places like social media, Google results, blog posts, industry news sites and review sites. Basically, anywhere that a potential customer could find your company mentioned on the web.

There are several tools and techniques that fall under the umbrella of online reputation management. Typically, it includes things like:

- [Review management](#)
- **Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)**
- **Social media marketing**
- **Public Relations (PR)**

A business may use just some or all of these strategies, but the end goal for Online Reputation Management is always the same - making sure your company is represented in the best possible light.

Why Is Online Reputation Management Important?

Warren Buffett, one of the world's wealthiest people, once said: **"It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."**

Each mention of your brand online contributes to your overall reputation. With the majority of customer journeys now starting on the Internet, it's all

the more important that these mentions are as positive as they can be. In fact, one study found that **as much as 63% of your company value is based on your reputation.**⁽¹⁾

Poor online reputation management can have a devastating effect on any business, big or small. Think of United Airlines, where in 2017 a crew member was filmed dragging a customer down the aisle. The video went viral on social media and was reported in news outlets across the world. As a result, **United Airlines lost almost one billion dollars in market value.**⁽²⁾

Sure, this example is extreme. But even on a smaller scale, negative experiences have the potential to damage not just your reputation, but also your revenue.

The Benefits Of Online Reputation Management

Keeping an eye on your business reputation isn't all about avoiding the negative! There are plenty of other benefits that online reputation management offers. Let's take a look at a few.

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Increased Trust

These days, potential customers will almost always check online reviews before they make a purchase. Reading genuine opinions from other people helps build confidence for any consumer. After all, if almost every reviewer had a positive experience with a brand, chances are that they will too.

In one study, **94% of people said that positive reviews increased trust in a brand.**⁽³⁾ On the other hand, **81% would not trust a company with no reviews.**⁽³⁾ That's why proactively asking customers for feedback is so important for business.

More Sales

There's a direct correlation between positive reviews and sales. According to a Harvard Business School Working Paper, **every additional one-star Yelp rating causes an increase in the business's revenue as high as 9%.**⁽⁴⁾

But that's not all! Positive reviews even have the power to override a higher price point. Research has shown that **if a customer is comparing two different products with a price difference of \$2, 73% would be inclined to purchase the item with the better rating.**⁽⁵⁾

A Stronger Online Presence

Collecting reviews can also be a great help with SEO, or search engine optimization. In other words, they have a direct impact on how high you show up in search engine results. The closer you are to the top of the page, the more clicks you will get on your site. Did you know that the **top 3 Google search results get 54.4% of all clicks?**⁽⁶⁾ Just think what that could do for your business.

Confused by SEO? You're not alone! Check out our short guide, '[How do I increase SEO traffic through online reviews?](#)', for a good general overview of how search engines work when it comes to reviews.

Valuable Insights

Being proactive in asking for reviews won't only make you look good - both positive and negative feedback can provide fantastic insight into your company. With the right tools in place (we'll dive deeper into this later on) it can help you pinpoint your customers' unique satisfaction drivers and make you aware of areas where you may be falling short. Act on those insights and you can make great strides in both your [customer satisfaction](#) and your business.

Improved Customer Retention

Online reputation management isn't just about creating a positive brand image. Sometimes, you can even win customers back. A key principle of managing your reputation is making sure customers feel heard and understood. Often, this gives them a reason to stick around, even after a negative customer experience.

One study showed that up to **70% of customers who complained to a business and got a satisfying response would come back and do business with them again**⁽⁷⁾ We all know that finding a new customer is far more costly than retaining an existing one, so this is a strategy well worth investing in.

Stand Out From The Competition

As we've mentioned, almost all customer journeys now start online. As a result, it's easier than ever for people to compare different companies and weigh up their options. It's rare that someone will spend their money with the first business they find. Instead, they take a deeper look. **Not only, "Does this company offer what I need?", but also, "What are other people saying about this brand?"** The [hospitality](#) industry is a great example of this. Most people consider several different hotels in any given location. If each hotel offers all the amenities they need and has similar price points, better (and more) reviews are often a deciding factor. If you are in a competitive or highly populated industry, this is all the more important.

The Top Online Reputation Management Mistakes

There's a lot to learn when it comes to online reputation management and, as with any new initiative, there will be a bit of trial and error. But there's no reason you can't start off strong with a little bit of know-how. Here are some of the key things to keep in mind when tackling your digital reputation for the first time.

Not Having A Strategy In Place

Particularly if you have a small to medium-sized business, online reputation management may be lower down your list of priorities. But the fact is that a brand's online reputation doesn't take care of itself and, as we covered above, just a single negative review or negative experience can cost you sales.

If you're short on resources or overwhelmed by all the different strategies, review management is a great place to start. If it fits in with your budget and goals, online reputation management services can also take care of the hard work for you.

Getting Defensive

When you receive a negative review it can be tough to respond in a level-headed way, particularly if you feel the review is unfair, rude or downright untrue. But every business is going to get negative feedback sooner or later, so it's important to know how to deal with it.

Even big brands can make the mistake of getting defensive in the face of criticism. In 2010, Greenpeace launched an online campaign accusing Nestle of harmful environmental practices. Greenpeace posted a video on YouTube, encouraged its supporters to change their profile pictures to an anti-Nestle logo and write on Nestle's Facebook page.

Rather than accept and respond to the criticism, **Nestle wrote to users asking them to not use any version of their logo (due to copyright infringement)** or they would delete their comments. **They also attempted to have the video removed from YouTube. The uproar was so great that Nestle ended up temporarily shutting down their public page.**⁽⁸⁾

So how should you respond? Learn all the tricks of the trade with our free whitepaper: [Complaint Management](#).

Not Responding At All

Though not as damaging as a negative reply, not responding at all to reviews is a missed opportunity for your business. Why? As many as 97% of people who read reviews online also read responses from businesses. How you deal with criticism shows potential customers a lot about your brand and your standards of service. That alone can be enough to win them over.

You shouldn't just be responding to negative reviews either. Showing a genuine appreciation for positive feedback is great for your online image. It shows you really care about your customers (and makes them feel good in the process!). It gives a great indication of how someone will be treated should they decide to become one of your customers.

Not Proactively Asking For Reviews

Too many businesses sit back and wait for customers to leave a review. While that may get you one review a month or even one a week, being proactive will garner much better results. Once you start asking, you may be surprised at how many customers are happy to share their thoughts!

The key to getting more reviews is to make it as easy as possible for your customers to do so. For instance, you can set up a QR code that takes them straight to your Google My Business listing. Or set up an automated email that arrives shortly after their purchase or visit. If leaving a review requires just a few minutes of someone's time, they will be much more likely to see it through.

Posting Fake Reviews

It's clear that generating a consistent stream of reviews is important for your business. So it's no surprise that some companies see posting fake reviews as an easy solution. However, this is a big mistake that will only hurt you in the long run.

Google has systems in place to detect fake feedback (involving both computers and thousands of human analysts) as it violates their policies. If you get found out, not only will Google remove those reviews, but they may also apply ranking penalties that make it much harder for you to be seen online. All in all, it's simply not worth the risk. So what can you do instead? We talk all about it in the following section.

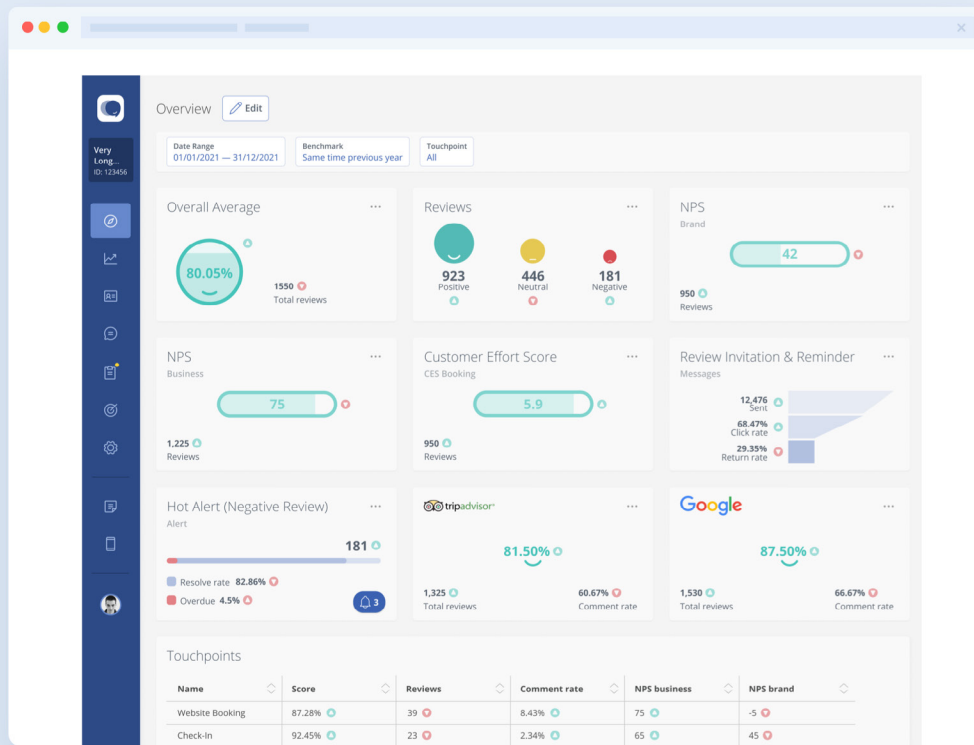
Getting Started With Online Reputation Management

Now you know all the great benefits of online reputation management. But how do you actually implement it in your business? Fortunately, it's easier than you might think!

The best approach to your online reputation management strategy is to partner with a platform that takes care of the hard work for you. Whether you opt for this approach or would like to take care of it on your own, there are a few essential aspects to include in your plans.

Public Reviews Score

One of the easiest ways to keep track of your overall reputation is to put a number on it. At Customer Alliance, our Public Reviews Score takes the average star rating from all your reviews and converts it into a percentage. By using a single figure, you can see at a glance how well you are performing over time and take fast action if standards start to slip.



Using some kind of metric will make it much easier to monitor your reputation and also report your findings to others in your company. Without one, it can be harder to figure out exactly how you are performing and communicate it effectively. To learn more about the different metrics out there, head over to our article: [How to measure customer satisfaction KPI: NPS, CSAT, CES, & CLI](#).

Online Reputation Management Surveys

You don't need to rely on reviews and social mentions to get a solid grasp on your reputation. Making a habit of engaging with your existing customers can help you catch any issues that could translate to a negative post or comment further down the line. What's the best way to do this? [Surveys!](#)

Well-designed surveys allow you to capture authentic feedback when the experience is fresh in the customer's mind. Customer satisfaction metrics like Net Promoter Score ([NPS](#)) and Customer Satisfaction Score (CSAT) allow you to put a number on how well you are performing, while follow-up questions give you specific insights into where you can improve. Act quickly on your feedback and you can prevent damage to your reputation before it even happens.

Centralised Data

With so many different platforms and spaces involved in online reputation management, having all your data in one place is key. A dedicated space for all of your reviews and survey responses allows you to get a great general overview of your feedback and ensures you don't miss a thing. Ideally, this space should also have alerts in place for any negative feedback that needs your attention. Software like our own [Voice of the Customer](#) platform is ideal.

To avoid adding too much manual work for your team, make sure that the platform can integrate with any systems you already have in place. This way, you won't have to manually move any of your data from one place to another. Once you're set up, you'll find that managing your online reputation is much more streamlined and efficient.

Automation

When you have to manually reach out to individual customers, it's no wonder online reputation management falls by the wayside. Using a platform that automates part of your workflow will make a world of difference, saving you time and creating a streamlined process that anyone on your team can take over.

For example, think about asking customers for a review. Even if you use a template email, you still have to gather your customers' contact information, copy and paste the template and add each email address one by one. Not only that, but you need to leave enough time between each booking or purchase to ask for a review. This makes one seemingly simple task take up hours of your valuable time.

With software like Customer Alliance, review requests are sent automatically. You can choose exactly how long after purchase the request will be sent, and you can even send it through different channels. Once you have set up the message, the platform takes care of the rest, generating plenty of new reviews with almost no effort on your part.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

SEO is a complex topic, but as a component of online reputation management, there are just a few things you need to do to get started. Make sure you claim all of your social profiles, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and especially Google My Business. Doing so will help make sure you are in control of the top-ranking search results for your business. If you 'own' this real estate, you will be in a much better position to promote a strong reputation for your brand.

You should also establish a presence on the review sites most relevant to your business (e.g. TripAdvisor for hotels and restaurants, Jameda for [healthcare](#) organisations). Reviews across any of these sites will help improve your search rankings, and even boost rankings for keywords connected to your business. When combined with the other techniques we've talked about in this article, this helps ensure that you not only get found by more potential customers, but they have a great first impression of your brand.

Social Media

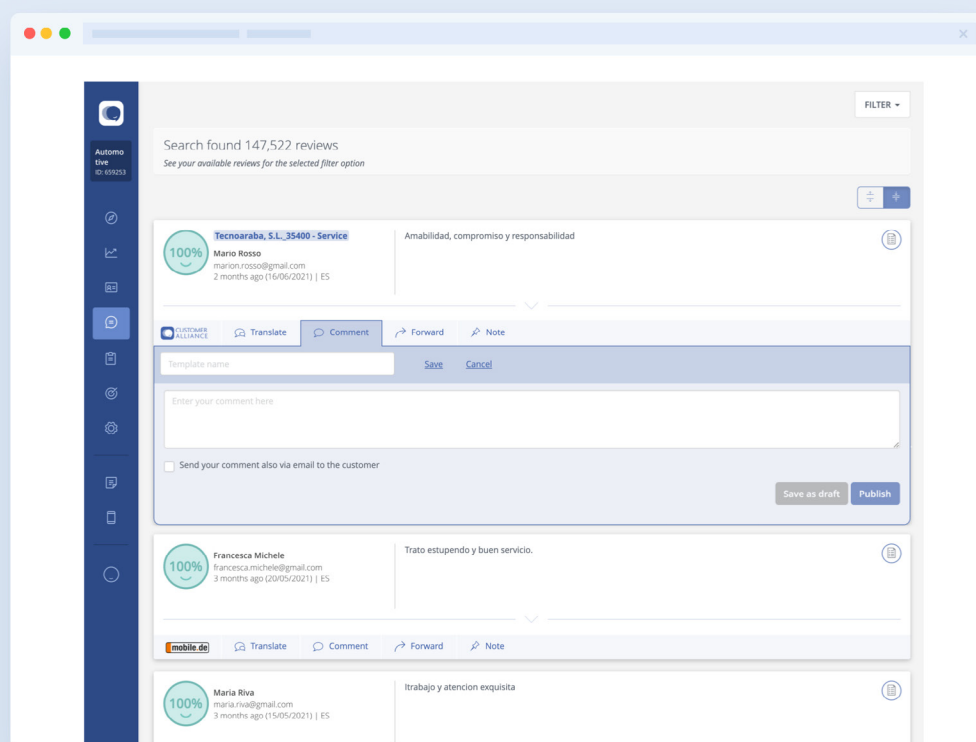
Platforms like [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) can be great tools for business owners. However, the nature of these sites means that negative comments can quickly be circulated and damage your brand perception. Oftentimes, customers also take their complaints directly to your social channels instead of customer service. That's why keeping an eye on your social media accounts is essential.

The good news is that social media monitoring doesn't have to be too complex. You can set up alerts for brand mentions (whether that be directly or with a hashtag) directly on social media platforms. You can even help build your positive reputation by sharing positive testimonials and reviews on your channels. If you want to dive deeper into your social media results, you can always come up with a more in-depth strategy further down the line.

Conclusion: Online Reputation Management (The Only Guide You'll Ever Need)

Online reputation management helps you put your best foot forward in a competitive digital landscape. Even for brick-and-mortar businesses, the huge impact of online reputation can't be underestimated. As well as winning you business, fostering a positive reputation has plenty of other benefits that contribute to your overall success. So if you're not making the most of online reputation management, now's the time to start.

As part of our [Voice of the Customer](#) platform, we provide an easy-to-use solution to managing your online reputation. From our seamless review stream, you can see all your reviews (from every major platform) in one place and can reply directly, with alerts to let you know when a review needs your attention. Not only that, but our Public Reviews score shows how you are doing at a glance, while a range of other innovative features help you dive deeper and see where you can improve.



Learn more about how we can help your business and see the platform first-hand in a [personalised, free demo](#). One of our experts will be glad to walk you through and answer all your questions. Alternatively, fill out this short form to gain access to your own free test account.

Want to learn more about online reputation management in the meantime? Check out these other helpful resources:

- [**Online Reputation Management is more than asking for feedback from guests**](#)
- [**The rise of Online Reputation Management in an age of online reviews**](#)
- [**The Hospitality Industry faces a changing landscape in Online Reputation Management**](#)
- [**Hotel Reputation Management—Control your online reviews**](#)

Schedule a free consultation

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