



CYBER IDENTITY GUIDE

MANAGING YOUR COMPANY'S ONLINE REPUTATION



ANALYSIS



PLANNING



IMPLEMENTATION



RESULTS

FROM E-MAIL TO E-PRESENCE



We've come a long way since the only digital footprints businesses left were a website and email address.

It used to be that an email signature and a sensible correspondence policy were enough to prevent an embarrassing incident. Worries about hacking and data breaches were minimal... sometimes even non-existent. Now, it's more than likely your brand is online in dozens, if not hundreds, of ways.

Your own website, search engines, media and news stories published online, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Tumblr, Google+, Pinterest, Snapchat, any number of "check in" apps, perhaps your own business or brand app, Yelp! and other independent review sites, online tutorials, message boards, maps, Amazon and other retailers, the number of possibilities is staggering. What's even more mind boggling is the fact that people no longer need to find their way to a computer to access them – mobile devices and smartphones mean your online reputation is available at a second's notice to anyone, anywhere in the world.

Even at Kompani Group, we have to consider our online reputation in ways hardly anticipated by most other businesses.

Every project we work on has the potential to reflect positively or poorly on how we're perceived. Likewise, every impression or experience our clients have while working with us builds or tears down our desired reputation. And, we do the same on behalf of a number of clients each and every day — so we know how challenging it can be — and the tactics that best solve problems and simplify the process.

CHALLENGE #1 HOW CAN ANY BRAND HANDLE SO VAST OF AN AUDIENCE?



A common perception is that a company has to diligently assign resources to each and every possible media outlet. While this does allow a high level of control over any and all online communications, it's not the only effective approach.

Software developers have gotten wise to the ever-expanding monster that is social media, and created apps and tools to streamline things. A number also include helpful analytics to let you know how your social media strategy is (or isn't) performing with your target audience, and what simple changes you may consider to get better results.

CROWDBOOSTER – compiles Facebook and Twitter information and lets you analyze impressions, total reach, engagement, and alerts about users that may be interested in your products or services.

SOCIAL FLOW – scans and optimizes your data to help you refine Facebook and Twitter messages and content so that it's sent to the right users at the right time.

BITLY – you've likely already encountered a shortened url link in your daily news feeds and social media feeds, but subscribers can also access real-time analytics, bookmarking for favorite sites and pages and even click tracking.

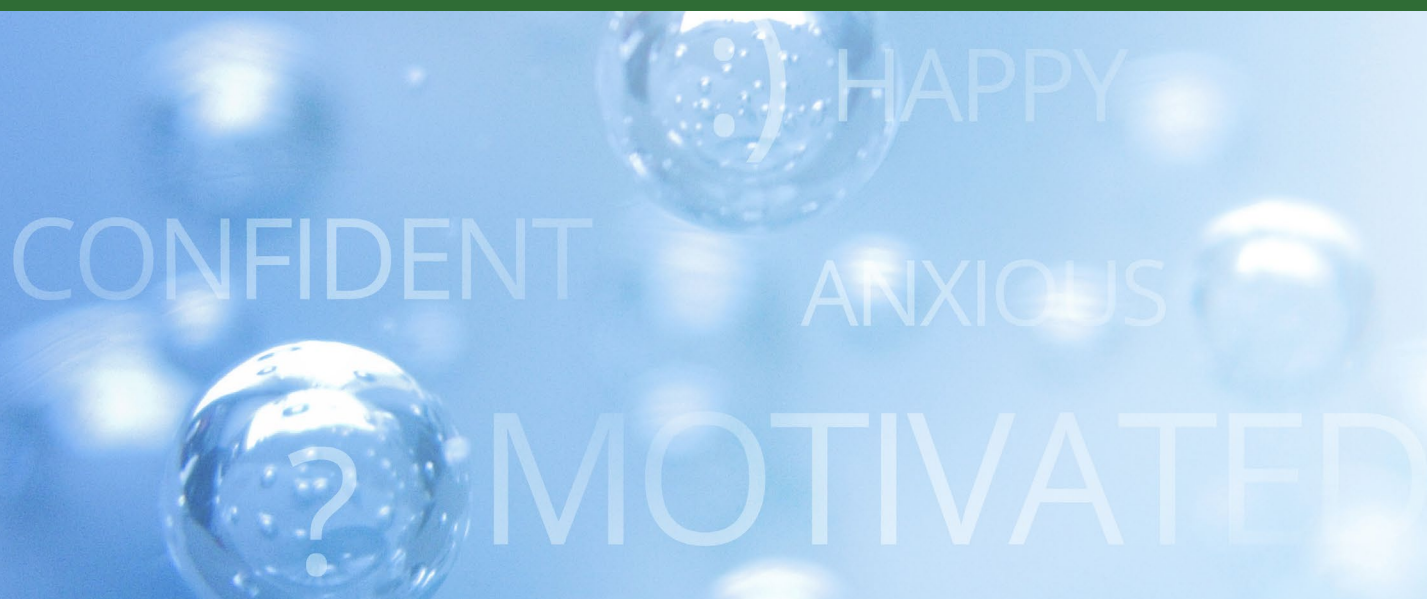
EVERYPOST – wouldn't it be nice to write a post once and have it appear on all your social media sites at once? That's exactly what the Everypost creators thought, too. So now, you can enter a single post and the program does the work. It will even shorten posts to a tweet-friendly 140 characters.

SPROUT SOCIAL – similar to Everypost, Sprout Social manages, posts, and analyzes multiple accounts and allows you to schedule posts, monitor activity through a streaming inbox, and track metrics over time.

HOOTSUITE – one of the most popular management tools currently available, Hootsuite offers the ability to execute multiple campaigns across multiple platforms from a single dashboard. You can also track conversations, click through, campaign results, schedule posts, and view built-in analytics.

With just a couple of the right tools for your organization, the media sphere becomes way less complex and far less daunting. But even the best app won't tell you what to say, how to say it, or how to respond to others' feedback.

CHALLENGE #2 HOW TO GET AN AUDIENCE TO THINK OR FEEL A CERTAIN WAY



This is something every business and every marketer wrestles with on daily basis. However, the answer almost always relies on three components:

1. REALITY

What are you trying to get people to believe about your brand? If it's not based in reality or truth, you can expect a lot of backlash. You can almost count on negative feedback, a lack or drop in followers and re-tweets, and a general lackluster performance on things like click through, event attendance, or other promotions.

HINT: Always lead with your actual strengths, however small they may seem. This will not only resonate better with your audience, but help carve out your own individual market niche that's yours and yours alone.

2. SIMPLICITY

It can be tempting to see what happens with different messages on different media at all times. However, the idea of "testing" works best with some limitations. For example, if you're trying to get shares of a coupon or event invitation, it can be counterproductive to offer a certain incentive to some social media platforms and not to others. Likewise, if you lead with "come to our event" on some platforms, don't confuse the issue by talking about your new hires in another. Stay focused on the intent of each message so your audience knows what it is you want them to do.

HINT: Pick a single "theme" or message for the week, and stick to it. Then direct all messaging and communications towards that approach. The following week, re-align with your latest objectives.

3. CONSISTENCY

Just like reality matters in helping an audience adopt a message, so does repetition. When you're constantly switching up what your brand stands for, people can begin to think you stand for nothing at all, which is hard to recover from. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to say the same words over and over again – thus boring your audience to death – but you should at least have your brand ideals in mind as you create content.

If your key attribute and brand advantage is quality, then there should be an element of that present in all your communications. That could be simply well-shot, well-lit photos, it could be attention to proper grammar or it may even be the style or tone you use with each post.

HINT: Consistency not only helps make your message clear, it makes consumers comfortable with your brand.



TROUBLESHOOTING “THE TALK”

In a perfect world, online reputation would be a simple input-output equation. What you decide to put into your messaging would be exactly how people would accept it. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Today, you put a message out there almost as a suggestion.

The public now waits for someone (or many someones) to “vet” the message and affirm its truth. And this is how online reputations are built, through a careful exchange of input-output-feedback-re-input, in a constant loop. So your company's task, then, becomes one of relating to the audience, not just throwing messages at them.

YOUR WEBSITE SHOULDN'T JUST “convey” information – it should keep a running dialogue through blog entries, news updates, press releases, content marketing, and more.

IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO SIMPLY have a Facebook page – you should be using it to promote events, post pictures, and reply to customer comments or feedback.

COMMENTS ON REVIEW SITES SHOULDN'T be left to sit unanswered – thank people for their positive feedback and work to resolve any complaints so others know you're committed to their satisfaction.

CONSIDER SUBSCRIBING TO POPULAR message boards where your brand, products, or services, are discussed. If allowed by that particular forum, participate in discussions regarding customer experience and establish a rapport with other members. These people have the power to become brand ambassadors or your worst enemies.

BE AWARE OF WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING in the world around you. No one cares about a new widget release on the day of a huge natural disaster (unless of course your widget can help).

MAKE SURE YOU'RE BEING SENSITIVE to different groups, nationalities, ethnicities, cultures, genders, and more. If your current brand image is consistently offensive to one group, think of ways you may adjust it to be more inclusive or appropriate.

ALWAYS TAKE THE “HIGH ROAD” when it comes to disputes. A simple apology and offer to try and make up for a bad experience is all that is ever necessary in the eyes of reasonable people. You won't always be dealing with reasonable people, however. So don't stoop to their level. Simply reiterate your apology and make-up offer (a discount, a free giveaway, an upgrade) and then leave well enough alone.

RESPECT YOUR COMPETITION. Don't use social media to throw darts or insult others in your industry. Nothing good can come from it. Likewise, don't feel the need to reply to others' unprofessional remarks about your brand.

YOUR REPUTATION... IN GOOD KOMPANI



More than any other aspect of your business, your online reputation is deeply personal. It should not only reflect the things you do well, but also the things you believe in and hold meaning for you and your employees. At Kompani Group, we help uncover what those characteristics are, and then also help you leverage those traits across the right platforms and strategies for maximum performance.

We also assist brands in using their social media presence to control challenging or crisis communications. For instance, when a clean energy client started to focus more strongly on solar energy, we not only tailored their brand to include solar in the name, but we also built out their online blog and news areas with press releases, white papers, and a number of content marketing pieces that are now being picked up and re-used by multiple industry publications.

Similarly, we're helping a designer floral décor brand promote its products in a timely manner across social media platforms to help increase exposure. And, we can do the same (and more) for you.



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