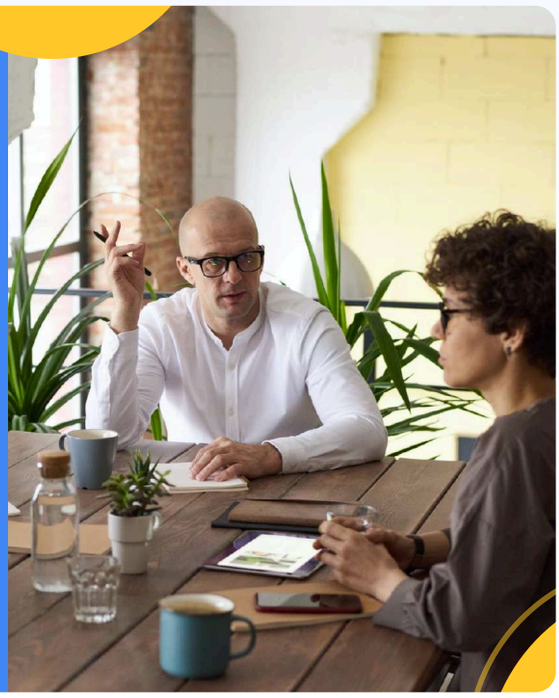
Reputation Management: How SEO and Digital PR Shape Brand Perception

Written by Manick Bhan, CTO of LinkGraph

01 Introduction to Reputation Management
02 Google and the "Right to be Forgotten"
03 Why Search Results Play the Most Significant Role in Online Reputation
04 What do Reputation Management Companies Do?
05 Where Online Reputations Can Be Harmed
06 The Mechanics: How to Perform SEO Reputation Management
07 Influencing Public Perception: An Ethical Lens
08 Final Thoughts on Reputation Management

01 Introduction to Reputation Management

No matter how big or small your organization, your brand's online reputation has a significant impact on whether potential customers choose your products and services over your competitors. Having a great reputation is so intertwined with revenue growth, corporations budget millions of dollars to their public relations departments with the sole purpose of generating positive content and mitigating bad press.



But reputation is no longer formed by word-of-mouth among neighbors or the front pages of newspapers; it is built up or torn apart in the vast landscape of the digital world. A brand's reputation can now be tarnished on so many different platforms, like high-authority websites, social networks, business listings, review sites, blog posts, to even a Wikipedia entry. Maintaining a positive online presence across all of these digital locations is a huge task. Reputation managers do the hard work of shaping a brand's narrative across all of them, ensuring that negative content doesn't take a more permanent hold in the search engine results pages.

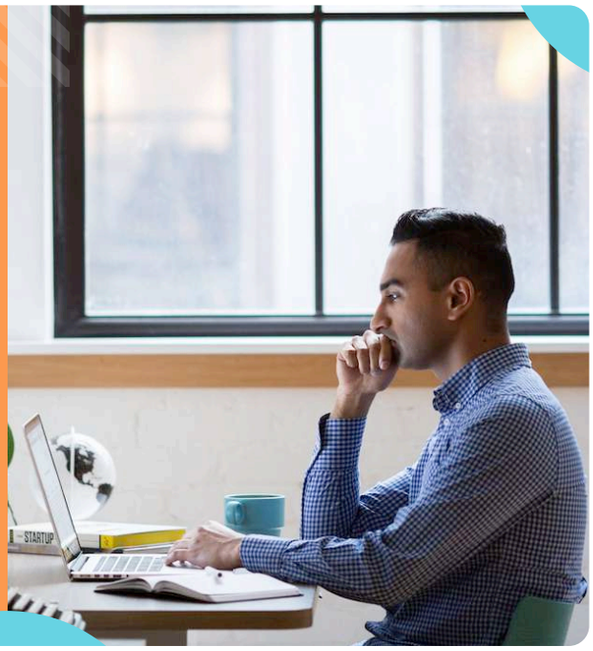
The first place that consumers go to discover new products or services is search engines like Google. What they discover about your brand on the first page of results will likely be a determining factor in their purchase decision. When a PR crisis unfolds, a public relations team can certainly do damage control, but it takes a nuanced understanding of search engine algorithms to make sure those unflattering news articles or poor reviews don't show up in Google for years to come when users type in your business name into their search bar.

Unlike other digital marketing efforts -- content strategy, link building, paid media -- reputation management focuses on the digital assets of which your brand has no control over. No company can fully influence what others choose to say, write, or publish about them online, but you can use SEO techniques to shape online narratives to your advantage.

Reputation Management is a growing digital marketing service as more individuals, companies, and brands go through the difficult experience of receiving a barrage of negative attention on the internet. The more well-known and influential your company, the more essential it is to have a strategic and highly intentional reputation management strategy.

02 Google and the "Right to be Forgotten"

One of the externalities of negative press is that sometimes it doesn't go away. Negative content often keeps reappearing in search engines. It's not always fair, particularly if the individual, business, or organization has served their penance in the court of public opinion or law. Sometimes, people just can't walk away from a bad story because it keeps showing up in search engine rankings.



This reality speaks to a broader family of problems which Google has been considering and is commonly referred to as, "The Right to be Forgotten." Many have advocated for a legal right to request to have private information removed from Google or search engines under specific circumstances. When someone dies, or something negative happens in their life and they want to move on from it, they often can't, because every time someone Googles them, there is a storehouse of online information about it. Their identity becomes tightly coupled to the negative story or incident. Despite their growing application, "Right to Be Forgotten," laws are still being discussed in regards to their implications on free speech, censorship, and personal privacy.

Versions of "The Right to be Forgotten," have been applied in both European and Argentinian courts, but in the United States, no law has been implemented, despite 9 out of 10 Americans wanting some form of the practice. Unfortunately, we are still a long way from any law granting individuals or brands more agency in getting information removed from search results if deemed "inaccurate, inadequate, irrelevant, excessive and not related to discourse regarding the public interest."

Google's 2009 Caffeine update did make it so the algorithm considers the age of news and articles when they think of how relevant they are to user's queries. As a result, negative articles are less likely to rank as time passes. But this doesn't necessarily help out those who haven't gotten any new positive publicity since the time of the original bad press, meaning there are no recent, positive digital locations to outrank those negative results.

According to Forbes, Google received nearly 850,000 requests to remove information or links between 2014 and 2019. Without more societal agreement or public policy action, the problem is not going away anytime soon. Until then, there are different ways to use SEO and digital PR to get these negative items removed and keep your online identity in better standing.

03 Why Search Results Play the Most Significant Role in Online Reputation

Ever used the phrase, "Did you Google them?" We all go to Google when we are not quite sure about an individual or company in order to see what comes up at the top of the search results. When a bad result appears, businesses or individuals can lose their credibility immediately. Would you pursue a relationship or strategic partnership with someone who had a bunch of negative articles about them showing up in Google? Probably not.

Many brands get very concerned about bad social media mentions or negative reviews on popular review sites like TrustPilot, TripAdvisor, and Yelp. This type of negative can be frustrating, but they don't have nearly the long-term impact that negative search results do.

Why? Because search results linger. Although Google rankings are not permanent, influencing them doesn't happen overnight. It's why brands and corporations team up with SEO reputation management agencies: They hope to shape the narratives communicated by the search results for their brand.

In this ebook, I'm going to address the multiple places where an online reputation can be harmed and some of the techniques reputation managers use to repair the damage. However, the important thing to keep in mind is that the top focus of all brands should be influencing what appears in search results, because it is the most influential digital location for your online brand. Here's why:

It's the first place customers go

93% of all online experiences begin with a search engine, and Google owns over 90% of the search engine market share

Customers do their research

80% of people perform some type of research online before choosing a product or service

Bad search results cost customers

One survey estimates that the presence of three negative articles in a search query has the potential to lose almost 60% of customers

The reality is, Google has indexed those negative articles or negative feedback about your brand name, meaning there is currently no way to permanently remove them from ever appearing in the SERPs.

The good news though? All you have to do is get them off the first page.

75% of people never scroll past the first ten results in Google, meaning your company's reputation can mitigate tons of potential revenue loss simply by being more intentional about getting negative content ranking just a little bit lower.

04 What do Reputation Management Companies Do?

The sheer number of places an online reputation can be harmed is why maintaining a positive online reputation can be a herculean task. The bigger the brand, the more work online reputation managers have to do. An occasional press release or content marketing piece is just not enough to shape how all of the above digital locations might eventually become negative search results.

As a result, sometimes the work needs to be outsourced to an online reputation management company. The best option is a reputation management firm that is also skilled in providing SEO services, as they are better equipped to implement the different strategies that help shape what appears in Google results.

Depending on the nature of your crisis or the type of business you have, you can likely find a reputable firm that specializes in the reputation management service that is the best choice for your specific needs. At LinkGraph, we specialize in using advanced SEO techniques to help maintain brand reputation across a variety of digital locations. Here is a brief summary of all the services that online reputation managers (or reputation management software) can offer businesses today.

Build Reputations

Online reputation management companies can help newer business owners build and grow their online reputation. From link building to local SEO citations to content marketing, they implement the best practices of digital marketing strategy to help your brand awareness or your own website gain visibility. Some of these growth strategies may include:

- **Search engine optimization**
- **Content marketing**
- **Social Media profile creation**
- **Blogger outreach**
- **Influencer Marketing**
- **PPC Management**
- **Email Marketing**
- **Local Citations**

Manage Reputations

If your brand has been around for awhile, you've most likely used a Google alert to stay on top of your brand mentions to see what is being said about you across online platforms in real time. But as your brand grows, the more complex this task becomes. Likely, your in-house team members are focused on the content on your company's website and don't have the resources or time to monitor the online visibility of other web properties that mention your business. Online reputation services for managing reputations may include:

- **Review Management**
- **Review Acquisition**
- **Guest Author and Blogging**
- **Social Media Marketing**
- **Web Development**
- **Great content creation**
- **Online Forums Monitoring**
- **SMS Marketing**

Repair Reputations

When a brand suddenly gets a rush of bad press from all angles, online reputation management firms go to work quickly. There can be hundreds of new online properties with inaccurate, misleading, or negative information. With so many syndications, online communities, and defamers on the web, negative items can quickly get out of control. A brand with a good name can suddenly have slander appearing in Google SERPs, local listings, or social profiles right as the potential buyer is trying to gather more information about that brand or company across different channels. Reputation management campaigns can mitigate the damage via:

- **Reverse SEO**
- **Website Design or New Pages**
- **Thought Leader Opportunities**
- **Review Generation**
- **Social Media Marketing**
- **Reputation Crisis management**
- **Social Media Content**
- **New Positive Online Content**

05 Where Online Reputations Can Be Harmed

The sheer size of the internet makes it difficult to fully monitor online presence, particularly for enterprise-level brands with a wide social presence, popularity, or influence. Below are the digital locations most likely to cause significant reputation damage, because they have the visibility, backlinks, engaged online communities, and site traffic to spread that bad information about your brand. They are also extremely likely to become top results in Google searches for your business name.

Bad Press or Publicity on Reputable Publications

Anyone who has an elementary understanding of SEO knows that domain authority is king. Site authority is the #1

ranking factor, so those websites with lots of backlinks are more likely to appear at the top of the search results. It may sting a little to get bad press on a small news blog, but bad publicity in a reputable, dominant publication like the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal? That is a nightmare scenario for any brand that can cause serious damage.

In addition to having high domain authority, these publications also have high traffic, large audiences, staff authors with highly-engaged Twitter followings, and can easily secure long-term SEO rankings. It's the same reason why public relations teams devote tons of resources to showcase the positive information about their brands through press releases. They hope that these top publications will write positive things about them. The digital footprint of these reputable publications is simply massive, which is why the type of content that appears on these high-authority publications can make or break a brand's image.

Anyone who has an elementary understanding of SEO knows that domain authority is king. Site authority is the #1 ranking factor, so those websites with lots of backlinks are more likely to appear at the top of the search results. It may sting a little to get bad press on a small news blog, but bad publicity in a reputable, dominant publication like the New York Times or the Wall Street Journal? That is a nightmare scenario for any brand that can cause serious damage.

In addition to having high domain authority, these publications also have high traffic, large audiences, staff authors with highly-engaged Twitter followings, and can easily secure long-term SEO rankings.

It's the same reason why public relations teams devote tons of resources to showcase the positive information about their brands through press releases. They hope that these top publications will write positive things about them. The digital footprint of these reputable publications is simply massive, which is why the type of content that appears on these high-authority publications can make or break a brand's image.

Or see what prospective employees will find on the first page when they search, "What's it like to work at Amazon?"

With their respective domain authorities of 94 and 96, it's no surprise that web pages from the Washington Post and Medium are still finding their way to the first page of the SERPs, even though it's been years since the original publication dates of the negative articles.

In some ways, journalists do negative SEO. They may not realize that's what they are doing, but the pieces they write can linger for a long time in the search results, particularly if those staff authors work at reputable, more well-known publications.

Launch every PR campaign you want, but ultimately, when a crisis at your organization occurs and it's considered "news," these publications will write about you. There's little you can do to prevent it, but there is a lot you can do to alleviate the long-term consequences.

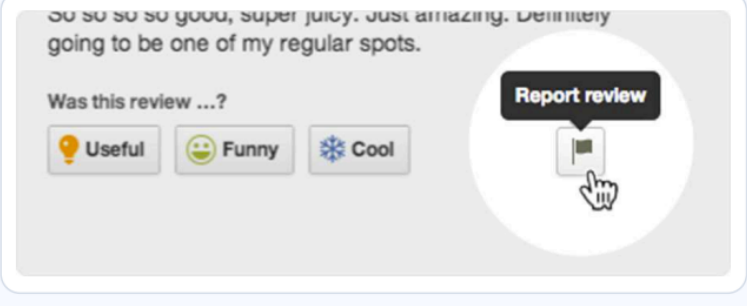
Fake or Negative Reviews on Major Review Platforms

Online reviews are everything for local businesses. Google considers your online reviews in its ranking algorithm, meaning those small businesses with bad customer reviews are just not going to get to page 1. A few unhappy customers can have a big impact on your bottom line, so closely monitoring review sites to ensure that they are primarily filled with positive feedback is important for all brands.

In general, review websites skew toward negativity. People are more likely to leave a review when they've had a bad customer experience. For these reasons, it's important to take a proactive approach to online review management by soliciting positive reviews from those happy customers that you're confident had a positive experience. There are multiple software programs that can help businesses encourage these positive reviews with automated review generation emails, text messages, or other contact forms, and then direct those recent customers to the review sites that will have the greatest impact (e.g. Google My Business).

Even if you have a good reputation on the industry-specific review sites and directories in your niche, a colorful bad review from a disgruntled customer can have a significant impact on other potential respondents. Many online review platforms have features like, "Was this helpful?" or Yelp's popular "Useful," "Funny," and "Cool," options, which can influence where in the list a negative review appears.

If you get a sudden influx of negative testimonials or 1-star reviews, it's possible that you may be experiencing a negative SEO attack. Competitors may hire someone to post a bunch of fake reviews to harm your business's reputation or to try and start ranking above your site for specific keywords. Many of the more popular review sites have features where you can flag reviews if you have reason to believe they are fake. Check out my, "How to Identify and Recover from a Negative SEO Attack," ebook to learn more about how to identify these malicious SEO tactics.



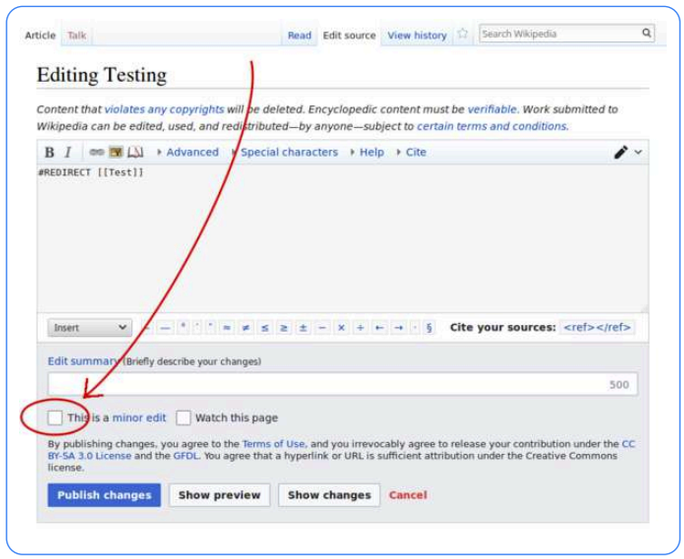
If your small business has bad customer service or products and is constantly acquiring negative comments on review sites, that's a different problem entirely. Your customer feedback may be communicating that you need to work on other areas of your business. Sometimes, poor reputations are deserved.

Inaccurate or Bad Information on Wikipedia

Wikipedia pages appear in almost half of all searches, so if your brand is big enough to have one, it will very likely appear in the SERPs for keyword queries with your brand name, and most likely on the first page. If you have any key stakeholders or well-known executives who also have Wikipedia pages, any information that's false, exaggerated, or unflattering can have an impact on overall customer sentiment and whether or not someone chooses to make a purchase.

Although going to Wikipedia is not the first thing most people do when looking for new products or services, it is a very common internet reference site. When someone wants comprehensive information or details about a subject's history, the easiest way to get it online is to go to Wikipedia, even though it contains user-generated material and often has inaccuracies.

The process for building a Wikipedia page for your business is not complicated, but it is unlikely to be approved if you're a small business or brand that doesn't have a wide influence. If your business reputation does warrant a page, then take note that submitting revisions can take a lot of time. Wikipedia discourages businesses from submitting revisions because they want pages to be unbiased and non-promotional. But if there are inaccuracies or violations of privacy, you can certainly make a case to their community of volunteers who approves or denies edits as to why a change needs to be made.



The Wikipedia page for my former company had some false information, and although it bothered me personally, it ultimately did not put our good reputation or online image at risk in the long run. Use your own discretion as when an edit is warranted.

Some online reputation management services strictly specialize in building and editing Wikipedia pages. There is also software that will send alerts when changes are made to your Wikipedia page so you can be continually reviewing those edits for false or negative information. Strategically placed backlinks on Wikipedia pages can also have SEO benefits, and some online marketers specialize in these types of SEO services.

Take note that if the negative information included in the page is a big part of your brand history or had a wide-ranging, long-term impact on the general public, it's unlikely that Wikipedia will approve any edits. The reality of negative situations and crises is that they do sometimes make their way into the historical record. For business or personal brands in these circumstances, it’s better to instead try and push other digital locations higher in the SERPs to rank above Wikipedia or to create reference or resource pages on your own site that can rank for branded searches.

Unflattering or Unwanted Images on Google Image Search

Images show up on the first page of Google for 27.3% of all searches. If a user does a branded search and finds unflattering, irrelevant, or inappropriate images as top results, it will not leave a positive first impression.

Whenever key stakeholders with associations to your company name experience negative attention with visual documentation -- from current and former employees, to customers, to executive leadership -- those images may appear in Google, putting your brand's trustworthiness and net reputation at risk. The more well-known your personal or brand identity, there's a good chance there are multiple images with relevance to your name online.

Although not all searchers are going to use Google Image results when seeking more information about companies, it's important to be aware of what images and video content appears in the search rankings for mentions of your brand name or related searches. Images can also be in violation of trademark, privacy, or personal security, giving your company reason to seek out attorneys and take legal action.

The first step though is to go through Google's normal process of getting images removed, but it isn't guaranteed that they will do so. Google's removal policies state the specific circumstances for which they will remove images, but they prioritize personal privacy and copyright laws over anything to do with corporate reputation or crisis management.

Instead, there are ways that reputation managers can use negative SEO to build low-quality links to images that they don't want to rank as high. Or, reputation managers can publish new relevant, more positive images that they then try to get ranking for the same target keyword. Using alt attributes and other techniques to drive certain images up is a very effective way to help maintain a positive online image in Google Images.

It's a good idea to be regularly monitoring image results, particularly for those search terms about your brand name that have the highest search volume. The search landscape is wide-reaching, so although it may not seem like images matter at first glance, there are many different ways that potential customers will perform web searches about you. Even one negative result can have a huge impact.

Negative Buzz or Trends on Social Media

Although challenging or harmful in the short-term, reputation attacks on social channels like Twitter, Facebook, or LinkedIn are more temporary and are not usually reflected in the SERPs. Google does not look to social signals as much for rankings, so it's unlikely those negative social media posts or engagements on your Facebook page will last much longer beyond that exact moment in time. Also, because social media algorithms have strong recency signals, the negative buzz or trending negative attention often disappears as suddenly as it arrives.

A great example of this is when a video of a United Airlines passenger being dragged from his seat on an overbooked flight went viral on Twitter. The video reappeared on a variety of social media channels, spurred a bunch of negative news articles, was covered by multiple television media outlets, and was eventually followed by a lawsuit from the upset customer.

Although it may seem like a bad experience documented across social platforms would cause permanent damage to brand image, it's clear that United Airlines is continuing to earn new customers, get great reviews, and has not suffered in their lead generation.

Corporations are often really concerned about the hubbub of social media and solely focus on mitigating negative PR, but the ability of social media sites to impact those companies is a little overstated. For a small business or B2B brand, the impact is a bit more weighty, but usually after the negative mentions have their moment in the spotlight on social sites, the overall reputation of the company goes back to what the average person thinks about them and their already earned customer loyalty.

If they have a positive reputation overall, the damage to corporate reputation is minimal and can usually be overcome with strong social media monitoring and an honest, transparent, carefully crafted public relations response across social accounts. If the company does business poorly or has a bad product though, that's a long-term problem. They'll likely always have negative social media unless they improve as a service provider.

When a company slips on a banana peel and people throw tomatoes at them cause they've done something off, social media will lampoon them for a couple weeks. And if a searcher sets out to specifically find references to these negative experiences or dig up past social media comments, or unflattering customer feedback, they will find them.

But all of that stuff eventually fades into the cosmic background noise of the universe and it's just gone. SEO is the exception -- it lingers. As stated earlier, Google search results play the biggest role in business reputation. Think about the primary ways that your customers find you, and design a reputation management and marketing strategy that is proactive in preventing them from ever seeing those negative results in their customer journey.

06 The Mechanics: How to Perform SEO Reputation Management

All of the same SEO principles apply to reputation management. The same things SEOs do to make our own clients' web pages perform better in search you can also do for a Wikipedia page, a social media profile, or an article you published on another website about yourself or about your company. It's essentially doing positive PR on those other digital locations.

There are some reputation management tactics you can perform on your own company website without needing the help of a third-party. However, you do need a good understanding of ranking factors and the judgment to determine what strategies will apply best to the situation.

The Bright Side

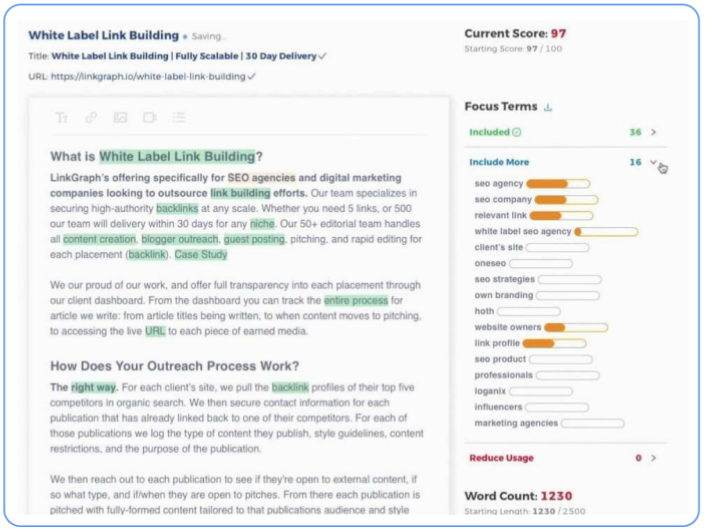
Positive SEO Strategies that help Digital Locations Rank Higher

The fundamental building blocks of search engine optimization can be used as reputation management tools. The primary distinction though between the two is that SEO is concerned about the onsite content of your own website while reputation management SEO attempts to influence the rankings of multiple web pages across many different sites. The most effective approaches will depend on your particular brand, your target market, the size of your digital presence, and the type of pages you aim to promote or demote in search results.

#1 Optimize the On-Page Content

Sometimes it's best to go back to the SEO basics. Optimizing the content on any webpage for the keyword you're targeting is an easy and effective way to boost that page's rankings. Having better SEO on your blog posts, landing pages, meta descriptions, or existing digital assets is the simplest way to get the content on your site ranking higher in searches with your brand name.

You obviously can't change the content of all other online properties, but you can optimize the content on those web pages that your business has the ability to modify and improve -- such as your profiles on third party review sites or social media platforms. You can use our landing page optimizer tool to not only optimize your own content, but to find the focus terms that will help a piece of content off-site rank higher for the same target keyword where the negative content ranks. Add content that include those focus terms to push those positive digital locations higher in organic search results.



#2 Boost Authority of Positive Web Pages with Backlinks

Google is more likely to rank pages with more backlinks, so launching link building efforts to get positive digital assets ranking higher is a great way to mitigate negative search results. Creating original pieces of content that link to those off-site pieces of content you want to rank higher is a foundational tactic of online reputation management services.

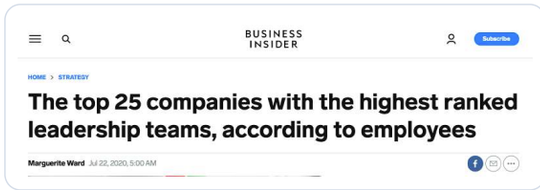
This can sound simple, but if that negative news article is ranking in the first result instead of the 8th or 9th, it's going to take a lot more work and resources boosting the authority of those multiple digital properties before that bad result gets knocked off the first page. This is why full-service digital agencies like LinkGraph can provide reputation management services as well. We have the infrastructure to do link acquisition at scale.

If your site has high domain authority, having a dedicated landing page on your site for your positive press coverage is a great way to use the power of your own site authority to pass link juice to those positive digital locations. Remember, content that appears on news sites will eventually drop off the SERPs due to Google's caffeine update unless they have strong SEO analytics, so the more backlinks coming to them from reputable websites, the more likely those web pages will move up the results and stick around for the long term.

#3 PR to Earn New Positive Coverage

Although PR firms cannot guarantee that your top search results always project a positive light on your brand reputation, they still play an important role in earning the type of online properties that hold major SEO power. Publicity teams actively seeking out press coverage are particularly advantageous because Google's recency signals with news articles means new coverage can quickly overtake any negative material that is currently ranking.

Entrepreneur online profiles, founder biographies, general business profiles, and thought leader pieces are all likely to rank well when someone searches for your company name. Your PR firm or team should be constantly seeking out these opportunities that are good for your brand's image and SEO in both normal times and in times of a damaged reputation.



#4 Paid Search Marketing Campaigns to Intercept Clicks

Although this is one of the more expensive options, paid search campaigns are an easy way to immediately rank above those digital locations you have concerns about.

Paid search ads intercept 46% of the clicks away from organic rankings across all online searches, meaning you can steer those users away from those negative news articles and toward your business website. This can work for a little bit (i.e. long enough for that negative coverage to lose its recency and relevancy signals) but it is not a long-term solution if the negative content remains in a top spot in the SERPs.

Very few brands have an unlimited budget to be constantly running Google Ads campaigns -- which are very expensive. But SEO takes time and doesn't happen overnight. Until you secure higher rankings for those positive digital assets or your onsite content, paid media can be an essential tool in SEO reputation management for the short term.

The Dark Side

Negative SEO Strategies that push Digital Locations Lower in the SERPs

The same SEO strategies that can be used to help digital locations rank higher can also be used to push them off the first page. Google relies on the same signals and ranking factors, regardless of whether the intention is noble or nefarious. These techniques are commonly referred to as black-hat SEO, because some new businesses and sites use them to trick Google into thinking they are high-quality sites with reputable, organic links, so the search engine will rank them higher.

Google red flags and penalizes any site that appears to be engaging in black hat seo, which is why the same techniques can be used to drag web content off the SERPs. The best reputation management companies focus on the brighter side of SEO reputation management to avoid ethical concerns. Still, it's important to be aware that these types of reputation management services are being readily provided by freelancers. When it comes to my own marketing agency, we prefer to stay on the right side of the force.

#1 Spammy Links

Backlinks from low-quality urls or websites without industry relevance to the linked page will look like black-hat tactics to Google crawlers. As a result, search engine reputation management abusers who want to kick a web property off page one of the SERPS will build hundreds of these low-quality backlinks from sites from private blog networks with low DA, website traffic, and other SEO weaknesses.

The negative assets that are the greatest risk to a business's online reputation though usually have strong site authority and won't come down with a few bad links. However, there are link farms and providers who have the capabilities to build thousands of toxic links to take them down, and at discount prices. It is certainly not a noble internet reputation management strategy, but there are people who utilize it without guilt to repair their negative reputations.

#2 Comment Spam

Comment spam is another common negative SEO tactic that can push websites off the SERPs. By leaving comments on private blog networks that link to the negative news article or digital asset, Google will red flag that web page because of the lack of relevancy and quality of those backlinks. Comment spam is one of many different things black hat SEOs can do to build toxic links, but it is one of the more common types, because it can be easily done by people or bots.

#3 Unnatural Anchor Text

If a backlink has anchor text that doesn't have contextual relevance to the linked site, Google will also recognize this as a nefarious tactic and penalize the site that has the bad backlink. Lots of backlinks with irrelevant, unnatural, or even explicit anchor text is very bad for SEO rankings, as it confuses Google about what a website's content is about.

When someone wants to quickly repair a negative online reputation, they can build tons of links with bad anchor text to try and get Google to push that digital asset lower. If your own website ever gets an influx of backlinks with nefarious anchor text, it's your signal that someone is trying to influence how Google ranks your own content.

07 Influencing Public Perception: An Ethical Lens

There are some ethical questions about reputation monitoring that naturally arise when discussing how to influence the good content or negative things that appear in internet searches for a company's name. Some would argue that a bad reputation is earned, and the general public should have access to all of the content they need to make an informed decision about whether to purchase from a particular brand, even if it cuts into corporate profits. Does the effort to suppress those negative posts or news articles mean reputation management agencies are deceptive or coercive?

In a few cases, yes, but in most cases, not at all. Professional and personal lives have experienced extensive collateral damage from the negative content published about them on the internet. Often, the level of vitriol, anger, or criticism they receive is not always appropriate to the size or impact of the original wrong-doing. Also, some individuals use the internet as a means of extortion, meaning the bad information we see about others may have been intentionally placed there to harm innocent people.

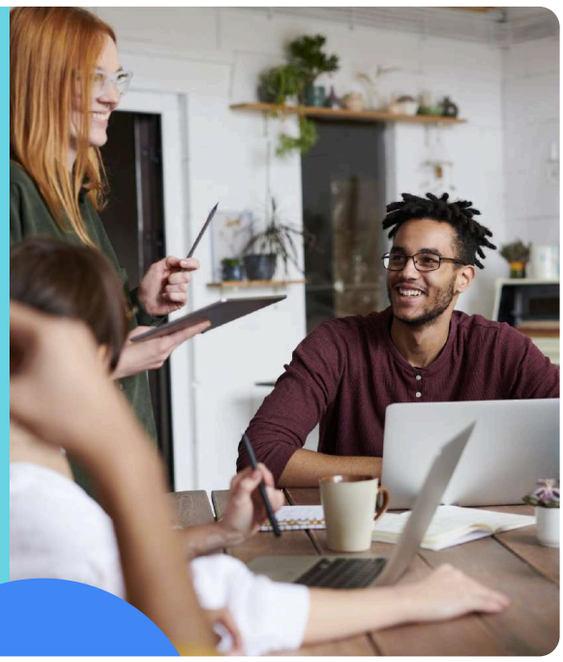
All brands, individuals, and businesses are bound to face obstacles, but does every mishap deserve to result in a permanent, long-term negative reputation online, particularly if the brand or individual is generally respected and has made amends with those they may have harmed? Not everyone will answer that question the same way when it comes to corporations, but if we experienced a tarnished reputation ourselves, the majority of us would want the opportunity to move forward and do better.

The role that internet content plays in shaping the perceptions we have of businesses and brands, of influential people and ordinary ones, is more powerful than it has ever been before. It is one of the challenges we are still trying to work through (as a society and as digital marketers), which is why we should maintain an ethical consciousness and lens when doing this kind of work.

Every circumstance will have its own nuances to consider when deciding how to use the SEO forces in a fair and good way. The existing versions of the "Right to be Forgotten," law state that those negative items that have to do with public interest and welfare should not have a legal right to be removed. In my opinion, this is a good benchmark for reputation managers as they determine what specific narratives we should and shouldn't try to suppress in the search rankings.

08 Final Thoughts on Reputation Management

Whether you're a small business owner, an SaaS founder, or an enterprise-level executive, we all know that online reputation matters. Your social media accounts, content marketing strategy, and public relations efforts can go a long way to help promote your brand image, but when a crisis occurs, you need the help of SEO professionals to protect both your brand and domain name.



If you're not quite sure where your online reputation stands, a great place to start is with LinkGraph's free reputation analysis. We use our proprietary software to gain insights on which keywords and digital locations your reputation needs some work or repair. As a digital marketing agency, we have comprehensive expertise to monitor the entirety of your digital footprint, from social media platforms, online review sites, to the first page of the SERPs. Our reputation managers can put together a plan that will have a positive impact, making sure your brand image is cast in the best possible light wherever it appears on the web.

Always remember that search results are the most important reputation signals for your brand. They will be shown to users just as they are actively searching for information that will influence their choices about whether to make a purchase or use your services. It is vital to make sure your potential customers have a good experience at every part of the customer journey, but particularly the starting point. In today's digital marketplace, that beginning is most likely to start on a search engine like Bing or Google.