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Don't Give a D**n About Your Bad Reputation? The "Trump Effect" Can Get You Fired

The New Bad Reputation

Ahhhh online reputation—it used to be such a death knell: I once likened it—speaking to a male SrVP—to the shunned “wanton” girl of old who got pregnant in high school— BTW, I said in my head, no one ever vilified the impregnating boy. Now, no one is shipped off to a convent or otherwise cut off all from human contact if they become the central figure in any scandalous side-whispered story. This kind of potential meteor to personal reputation no longer has the stunning impact it once did, or logic might prevent the Kardashians from being something to keep up with, or prevent Donald Trump from being a viable candidate.

Volume Control

There's some of this dynamic when managing your company's online reputation, but there are also some key points of difference, having to do with the number of comments about your company that are out there—the “chatter” volume. It used to be that one bad comment could sink the team. Readers are now able to accept a bad online comment or full-on scathing review here or there. The reader can see it as subjective to the reviewer's personality—a bad day, a disgruntled employee, a competitor—as long as the good reviews far outweigh the bad. You can control the volume of good reviews, or “chatter”, to great extent, by controlling the customer experience. That is, knowing and being what your customers truly want. With the ready access to the reviewing process, a positive customer experience is crucial now. Companies are finding that if they did not care so much before, they now need to get with the customer experience program.

The “Trump Effect”

The Trump effect only works for celebrities. It does not work in business—ongoing perceived negatives in the media will not get you mileage. Some tips:

- Avoid getting in the news media or online chatter with shoddy workmanship, bad service to customers, or poor treatment of employees.
- Keep your reputation stellar by making sure that everyone in your corporate food chain knows how important s/he is to the customer. Train your people to see and accept that everyone is a sales person. Every single employee who comes into contact with a customer in any way is part of the sale—the person answering the door, the phone, or the online chat helpline.

Last week, I had a technical push through for a client that involved three different online companies. I had to contact all three to sort out the pre-existing problem on the customer's website. At one company, the online chat person corrected my speech on a topic that I'd already stated that I needed assistance with. At the second company, a phone helpline person acted like he was going out of his way to give me six strands of non-proprietary code. The third did a great job, and was very calm and helpful. I had not yet chosen any of the three to consolidate the business under. They all provide essentially the same product—which one do you think would get my recommendation to the client for future business transactions? And, (pregnant pause,) which one would get my good review?