Reputation Management Response

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Reputation Management

In today's business climate, the process of reputation management is more crucial than ever. With everyone having access to a variety of social media platforms that allow for very little oversight, it is key that communications professionals stay abreast of how their companies' images are faring in the public eye. Today, it is observed that 95% of people 18 to 34 will read local business reviews when searching for goods and services (Wharton School of Business, 2019), and that many potential customers will read ten or more reviews before making a decision to patronize a particular business. Armed with this knowledge, it is crucial for communications professionals to understand how to shape that public opinion, and what steps to take that will maximize the likelihood of that reputation staying positive.

Reputation management primarily begins with whether the business is offering value to their customers, but there are many contributing factors to building that positive image in order to offset any negativity. A solid mission is key, as is a unified branding package that exhibits the company's attitudes and values. This branding extends from company name to logo, to printed materials, and finally to website and social media presence. After these factors are in place, the communications team should actively monitor the business reputation on social media and business review websites. These positive or negative image trends should then be compared with individual customer feedback, and positive customer experiences should be highlighted. If an opportunity presents itself, well-known personalities and influencers should be approached to conduct a review of company goods and services, much akin to getting popular elected officials to endorse candidates for other elected seats.

Negative input or reviews must be tempered with understanding. There will always be customers who have negative experiences that are impossible to salvage, but many customer relationships can be salvaged by providing excellent follow-up service. Complaints from those customers should be listened to and valued as constructive criticism, and an examination of business policies should be conducted to determine if a change is required that would better serve the customer base. Studies show that customers who leave negative feedback often do so simply to elicit an apology from the business. Very few leave feedback in hopes of damaging the business's reputation. Careful monitoring and execution of strategy can often alleviate the effects of negative press, and repair or restore any damage to the company's reputation rapidly.

References

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