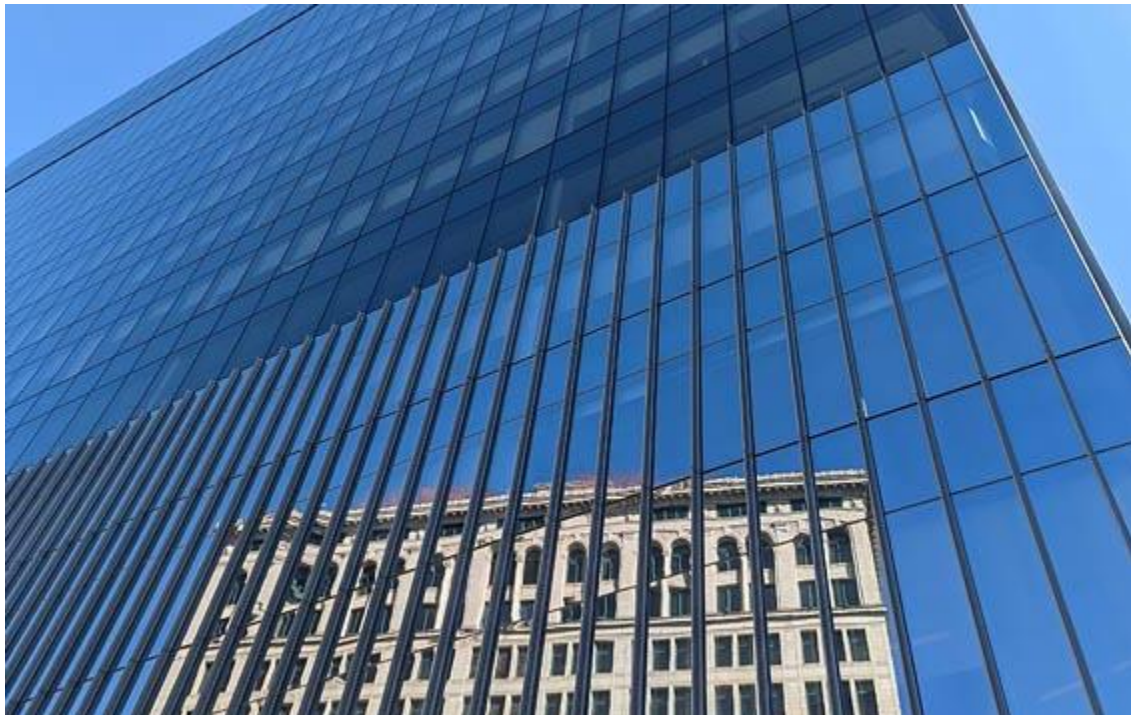# Use Online Reputation Management to Gain (and Retain) Clients

'Professionals and businesses can attract new business through Build, Boost and Repair Your Web Presence Reputation To Gain Clients
 reputation.

Naturally attract new business through an authentic web presence.

By Steven W. Giovinco

Introduction

Since the first thing people do is "Google" you, having a positive online presence is vital. This book explains in detail how to:

- Use reputation management to convert prospective customers into paying ones.
- Craft a web presence that conveys trust and expertise to attract new business naturally.
- Suppress negative links off the first pages of Google searches written by a competitor or disgruntled employee.
- Develop a strategy to highlight expertise across multiple platforms and media continually.

'Use Online Reputation Management to Gain (and Retain) Clients' shows professionals and businesses how to gain clients by boosting their online reputation.

No shortcuts or fake reviews--just targeted solutions based on real-world experiences. Broken into numerous subsections, this whitepaper shows professionals and businesses how to gain clients by boosting their online reputation. The stronger your web presence, the more appealing your business is for potential customers. This helps convert prospects into paying ones.

The information presented is not an academic exercise but is based on thirty years in technology, law, finance, the arts, and online reputation management.

Build a Reputation Consistently and Constantly

Want to gain (and retain) clients? Build an excellent online reputation.

A positive online reputation attracts clients naturally. Gaining new business is rarely easy, especially when starting, but having a robust online presence helps substantially.

Google search results filled with positive links draw in prospective buyers. However, people seek answers as well as credibility when searching for you or your business, wondering, "can I trust them?" If they see articles, blog posts, interviews, social media platforms, videos filling the first page of searches, they will likely hire you over a competitor. As a result, online reputation management needs to be a priority.

On the other hand, if minimal information appears online, potential clients might wonder if the business is active, uncaring, or negligent--both about their web presence and their business. If negative links or poor reviews appear, any potential clients swiftly move on to someone else. In both cases, the best personal recommendations from a friend or colleague become immaterial as its essence is trust.

Potential clients usually have a series of questions about new business partnerships. Some are:

- Are they trustworthy?

- Have they been in business long?

- Where can I see examples of success?

- Can they solve my problem?

- Do they understand my issue?

- Will they give me good advice?

- Are they overcharging me?

- Is it a good value?

- When can I see the results?

- Who else have they worked with?

- Is there a guarantee?

An online reputation needs to address and answer these questions.

What Is Online Reputation Management

First, what is online reputation management, and why is it important? Everything appearing in Google search results--blogs, articles, videos, reviews, etc.--make up your web reputation. Since this is what many see first, it is crucial to get this right. Reputation management also includes social media posts and tangential but related areas such as search engine optimization (SEO), media, and even print products. As you can see, this encompasses much more than just reviews. At its essence is **trust**.

Additionally, a well-crafted online presence needs to convey a professional, friendly, experienced tone that helps confirm that you are the right person to work with. Finally, compelling online content substantiates confidence.

Articles, white papers, presentations, videos, social media platforms, and your website need to drive this point home. However, the work here should always be focused on what the potential client wants, showing you as the definitive and dependable source that solves their problems.

When customers see a positive web presence, they feel more comfortable choosing you to work with over a competitor. Don't be afraid to give away information because this signals to clients that you are comfortable being helpful to address their issues.

Personal Referrals and Reputation Management

Initial business referrals could come from various sources: a hearty personal endorsement from a friend or family member; through a strong business recommendation; via a convincing ad, email introduction, cold call, or networking event--or yes, even through a Google search.

Often, the next step for prospective clients is verifying your talents through an online review of your reputation, where they assess and confirm your abilities through Google searches.

Poor or Negative Online Reputation

An online reputation with limited or no search results is highly problematic. Essentially, your business is invisible. Almost as bad as negative reviews, When few links appear in Google, potential customers ask themselves, "Are they still in business?", "Are they unprofessional?", "Do they even care?" or "Is this the kind of firm I want to work with?" A poorly defined online reputation is seen as untrustworthy, forcing clients just to move on.

Most severe is if a damaging issue appears in a few pages of Google searches. Competitors, "trolls," ex-partners, disgruntled employees, and of course, unhappy buyers, can write negative posts, and even if it's not genuinely condemning, new and existing clients will quickly move on to someone else without even investigating the problem.

So, to gain new clients, establish an accomplished online reputation.

Reputation Building Strategy

Before building a reputation, develop a carefully considered strategy. It should be built around who you want to work with, where to reach them, and how to connect with them. Requiring continual tweaking, the best approach always is focused on original content, sharing meaningful information, and being helpful.

To formulate this, start by asking essential but crucial questions--even your business is well-established:
- Who are you trying to connect with?
- How will you build trust?
- What kind of content will you create?
- How and when will you share it?

Each reputation strategy needs to be customized for the targeted ideal client. As a result, no two solutions will be alike. Other significant considerations include industry, geographic location, company size, specific challenges, and business goals. Keys are creativity, constant updates, and constant adjustments.

For example, repairing a reputation for a financial advisor differs substantially from that of building an initial web presence for a recently graduated student or young professional. Equally different are the needs of an entrepreneur who received initial investment funding compared to an established CEO professional working at a large firm. A biomass firm in Brazil is still different from an international divorce lawyer in Paris, etc.

Not getting this right could mean failure.

Define Clear Goals

After the strategy is set, layout specific reputation goals. Clearly define online outcomes and milestones, such as:

- Fill the first page of Google search results with positive links.

- Repair a damaged web presence by pushing down negative article(s).

- Generate leads and close deals quickly.

- Convey trust and experience online to convert new clients quickly.

- Work with targeted, niche clients.

Each intention has a slightly different approach. Once a clear vision is mapped, define exactly how these will be achieved with measurable, time-bound, and specific tasks.

What does this mean for your reputation? First, identifying vital objectives keeps the process on track. Importantly, it prevents tarnishing your online reputation if clients misunderstand your web presence.

Part of the strategy includes systematically generating content on appropriate platforms. These sites, such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc., are also places to post informative articles,

videos, and links made by other experts. Being active and engaging builds your web profile. This, in turn, draws in prospective clients who see you as the trusted professional that solves their problems.

Set Your Online Persona

Define your online voice or web persona. Since your reputation should be a reflection of your real identity, be who you are. Tweak it slightly to attract target clients. Are you easy-going or strikingly opinionated? Do you prefer academic discussions, or is your style casually breezy? Can you be snarky/sarcastic? Emphasize one over another.

Understand Your Client's Business Process

Understand where prospective clients are in their buying stage. They may be just starting, seeking initial research, comparison shopping, or are ready to sign-up now. Each step has its reputation process, so knowing where they are in the business cycle is paramount.

Typical milestones are:
1. The client has a problem and seeks solutions.
2. , you are discovered through recommendation, etc., discuss their situation and understand the damage it's causing them.
3. Present clear solutions that solve it.
4. Convey trust that you can help, sharing additional white papers, videos, case studies, as needed.
5. Negotiate and close the deal.
6. Work together, delivering successful solutions, as agreed to.
7. Follow up to see if they are satisfied.
8. Ask for recommendations or reviews.
9. Share success on social media.
10. Update your new case studies.
11. Stay in touch regularly with helpful articles; be friendly.

There are a variety of tasks, which have their distinct approach.

Great Content Draws in Clients

Craft an exceptional reputation by assembling superior content. This might appear straightforward but can be challenging to implement in a way that engages meaningfully with customers appropriately. Keep the focus on:

- *What* content to make.

- *When* to share it.

- *Who* to share it with.

Knowing *what* matters to prospects and delivering solutions is fundamental. Meaningful written and visual posts are powerful ways to stay top-of-mind.

If you are just starting an initial conversation, send relevant posts or white papers to forge trust. If you are negotiating with a new client, point them to ROI calculations and case studies. If you've worked with someone in the past but think they could benefit from an additional service you offer, reach out with new information. Even if a buyer says "no" or decides to work with someone else, continue to circulate occasional articles since you never know when their situation will change.

When to share depends on the platform and other factors. Some social media sites have optimal posting times, which could be during business hours, weekends, evenings, or other times. For example, 9-to-5 generally is the best time for Twitter and blogs; early morning and end of the day for LinkedIn; slightly later in the day for Facebook; night and weekends for Pinterest. When to share also significantly depends on the client's buying stage (see more below).

Who to share it with prospective clients, people who've shown interest in the past, previous clients, and people you'd like to work with. Don't forget ancillary professionals who are natural referrers.

Create Exceptional Content to Build Trust

Create unique content. As an experienced professional, write, post, and share real insights that resolve prospective client's problems. Quality work illustrates credibility, integrity, and proficiency. People seeing this in Google searches will be naturally drawn to working with you and are more likely to become customers.

Where to Find Content

Collect or create information from a variety of places. The primary source should be authored by yourself, but carefully curate text, images, and video from topics based on what matters most to clients. This should be thoroughly researched before starting to make sure it properly resonates with customers. Other content sources are related social media posts, Google Alerts to capture real-time industry news, business experts, magazines, etc.

Get Active Online

Generate a constant flow of rich content in a variety of forms.

Do this frequently:
- Consistently write excellent new blog articles.
- Post valuable information frequently to a range of critical social media platforms.
- Engage with prospective clients across all relevant channels by sharing, commenting, retweeting, etc.
- Develop guest blogs; create posts for others.
- Participate in online groups.
- Join in-person networking organizations.
- Be open and helpful.

Show up online constantly, clearly, and consistently, always delivering value and connecting in meaningful ways.

Different Content at Different Times

Offer the appropriate content at the right time. Be mindful of the time of day, as mentioned above, or where a client is in the business cycle. For example, during the initial client consultation, listen attentively, then point them to helpful blogs or white papers. If they have additional questions, pass on detailed case studies to further trust that you are the right person to hire.

As you continue working together, be transparent and forthright when addressing any client concerns. Not paying attention to their issues can lead to online reputation damage for you, especially if they voice complaints on social media.

When the project is complete, continue to stay in touch since this could yield recommendations. Send occasional emails asking how they are doing, share articles they would like, and see if you can help them in other ways. Update your case studies based on your success, and put these online to show your reputation as an adept specialist.

Implement One Reputation Tactic at a Time

Start small when constructing a web reputation. There are many tasks, each requiring detailed steps and integration with other tactics. Don't take on too much when starting or you'll feel overwhelmed, tempting you to drop the whole effort. Instead, start with one step and master it before moving on to the next.

Evaluate the reputation actions that you think would work for your business; prioritize them by what might appeal most to a prospective client; and appraise time, money, effort, and difficulty that is necessary. Don't add a second approach until you have systems in place to manage the first entirely must. Doing several things poorly can lead to lost prospects and a negative web presence.

Don't Sell; Share and Help to Build Trust

Listen intently to potential prospects. Concentrate on what they have to say rather than present your plan and **perceived** solution—pausing to hear what they have to say signals you're capable of really comprehending their issues and are ready to help.

For example, share a pertinent blog article you've written that points them to a solution you've found for a previous client. Gain their trust, and they'll ask you about your services on their own without the need to push for a sale.

Tweak and Update Constantly

Be nimble. Pivot to alternative solutions since reputation management is more alchemy rather than a mathematical formula. Google never divulges the "secret sauce" used for their page ranking system, so it's essential to monitor, review, and tweak your strategy constantly.

Also, Google itself is a "wild card" in the reputation process since they are constantly tinkering with their algorithms, making major--and unannounced--updates about every six months. In other words, the strategy that worked three months ago might not work three months from now; what worked a year ago will probably not work a year from now.

Since reputation management is always a moving target, the only constant is to institute unique content for your prospects.

There is No Overnight Success

Building an online reputation takes time. When consulting with clients about building or repairing their reputation, I sometimes get the response, "I tried that already, and it didn't work." But

digging deeper, I often find that they only tried one approach and quickly gave up because they didn't see immediate results.

To fill the first page of Google search results with positive articles is a long-term process. Although some steps can be made nearly immediately (i.e., within weeks), a properly built robust reputation can take six months or a year. Remember too that ongoing maintenance can and should continue throughout the life of the business.

So don't give up, and continue pushing forward, developing your web presence incrementally.

Track The Cost of Getting a Client Using Your Reputation

Gaining clients can be surprisingly expensive, even in service industries. To get more clients, you need to know what works and what doesn't and, significantly, what it costs.

Businesses are often dark about essential metrics such as the time and expense needed to acquire new clients. As a result, most companies have unsustainably high costs, spend too much time with little return, or invest virtually nothing in client development. Knowing what is necessary to bring new projects on board is crucial. Streamline this process by clearly knowing who your prospective clients are through research and constantly generating excellent content efficiently.

Create a Contact Marketing Campaign

Drive marketing campaigns around reputation initiatives. Meet clients' needs armed with a newly updated web presence. Send a personalized message to targeted clients, then follow up with links that point to online connections.

Real-World Online Reputation Tips

Here is a list of real-world web management actions. These tasks, tips, and platforms must build or repair a web presence to draw in new clients. Based on actual experiences, following these

steps should lead to reputation improvement. So, essentially, here is how to use online reputation management to get more work.

Summarized Monthly Actions

Although many online platforms and links can show up quickly in Google searches, building a solid online reputation takes about **six** months or more. This general overview lays out reputation-based actions necessary to help connect with prospects.

During the first month, research and build a custom and effective strategy. Then, based on this plan, develop appropriate content-related topics that will drive most social media sharing and content creation throughout the project. Additionally, create and update websites.

The second month focuses on critical platform development. Create or update LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, YouTube, Medium--as well as ones. Start writing well-made blog articles.

During month three, share content across all the updated social media sites, engage with identified influencers; and continue generating articles, presentations, etc.

For months four, five, and six: repeat. Continually write, share, and connect. Search Google to review success and constantly tweak. Always look for ways to build trust online and connect with prospects.

Summarized Daily Actions

Besides continuing to craft excellent blog posts, do these activities daily:

Daily Twitter actions:
- Follow several vital influencers.
- Tweet on critical topics.
- Share one tweet from Followers.

Daily LinkedIn actions:

- Request a Connection to several vital influencers.
- Share and Like a few posts.
- Make a Comment.

Daily Facebook actions:
- Follow several key influencers or Groups.
- Share a few posts.
- Like several articles and Posts.

Summarized Weekly Actions

Drilling down more, there is an online reputation building task you should do every few days or weekly, roughly in order of importance:
- **Instagram**: Upload images; Like and Follow others.
- **Pinterest**: Pin images; create one new Board.
- **YouTube**: Follow related videos; create a new Playlist.
- **Wikipedia:** Attempt to update related Articles.
- **School Alumni Site**: update and find others.
- **Medium**: Follow and Comment on a related Article; Follow authors.
- **Academia**: Search for critical articles; save and share.
- **Scribd**: Search for crucial publications; save and share.
- **Google My Business Site**: write one local review.
- **Crunchbase**: Follow Business; add a link to newly written articles.
- **Quora**: Search topics and Follow; Share.
- **Reddit**: Upvote and Comment on related posts.
- **TikTok:** Create video; share.
- **Snapchat:** Add new posts; Follow others.
- **Vimeo**: Follow others.
- **Yelp**: Write one review; Follow other Authors.
- **Soundcloud**: Search for critical posts; Like, Repost, Share; Follow People.
- **Patch**: Like and comment on a related article.

- **Behance**: Search People and Projects and Follow and Save; Upload one image.

- **Google Books**: Search topics and Follow; Share.

- **SlideShare**: Follow an Author; Like crucial presentations.

- **Tumblr**: Follow and Comment on related Sites.

- **Flickr**: Search People and Projects and Follow and Save; Upload one image.

- **MyHeritage**: Add photo; find others.

Note that the type of business determines the priority and types of platforms. For example, a financial-related or professional company would focus on LinkedIn, Twitter, Wikipedia, Medium, Crunchbase, and others; a creative business or individual might instead center on Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo, etc.

Improve Skills

Focus on things you genuinely enjoy. Let go of tasks you are average at and improve things you love. Prospective customers will respect that you're not satisfied with the status quo and are constantly looking to improve. In addition, knowing your drive to stay on top of industry trends and moving forward with the latest technology builds trust with your clients and helps retain them over time.