Online Reputation Management: Strategies for Building and Protecting Brand Image

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Abstract

In the contemporary digital era, the management of one's online reputation, commonly referred to as Online Reputation Management (ORM), holds significant importance for both individuals and corporations. The establishment and safeguarding of a favorable brand image can exert a substantial influence on one's level of achievement. In the present day, characterized by digital advancements, where information dissemination occurs rapidly through the expansive realm of the internet, the perception of a brand holds significant importance as it may either serve as a beneficial resource or a substantial detriment. The profession of Online Reputation Management (ORM) has become more important for both individuals and corporations, since it has the potential to significantly impact their perceived credibility and trustworthiness among their target audiences. Similar to how a well-constructed brand identity can contribute to achieving favorable outcomes, a compromised online reputation has the potential to result in substantial harm. This article explores the methodologies for constructing and protecting a favorable brand reputation through Online Reputation Management (ORM). It emphasizes the significance of vigilant monitoring, content generation, engagement on social media platforms, and other essential practices in a context where brands' digital footprints are consistently scrutinized and susceptible to alteration.

Keywords: Online Reputation Management (ORM), Protecting Brand, Brand Image, Digital

Introduction

The public's impression of a brand is crucial in the modern era of rapid information distribution thanks to the worldwide web, where it can be both an invaluable asset and a devastating liability. Since a person's or a company's online reputation can have a major impact on their credibility and trustworthiness among their intended audiences, ORM has become an increasingly essential field. In the same way that a solid brand identity can help you succeed, a damaged internet reputation can cause you serious problems. This article delves into Online Reputation Management (ORM) strategies for fostering and guarding a positive brand image (Tyagi, et.al., 2022). Given the constant scrutiny and malleability of brands' digital footprints, it stresses the importance of diligent monitoring, content production, involvement on social media platforms, and other vital practices. Management of one's online reputation, also known as Online Reputation Management (ORM), is of paramount
importance in today's digital age, for both individuals and businesses. Establishing and maintaining a positive reputation can have a significant impact on one's success.

Online Reputation Management

The term "online reputation management" (ORM) refers to the process of managing and influencing one's online reputation. A person's or a business's internet reputation is extremely important in the modern period, as it can have a major effect on their reliability, trustworthiness, and overall impression (Prasanth, et.al., 2018). Online reputation management (ORM) is the process of keeping tabs on and shaping the conversation about a company or person on the web.

Figure 1: Major features of Online Reputation Management

Key elements of managing online reputation include:

- The initial stage in the process of ORM is represented by this step. The process entails monitoring and analyzing the discourse surrounding an individual, company, or entity across several internet channels, encompassing social media platforms, review websites, news publications, and blogs. Various tools and services are accessible to facilitate the automation of this monitoring procedure.
- Following the process of monitoring, it is imperative to do an evaluation of the data that has been collected. This encompasses the examination of sentiment expressed in mentions, the identification of prevailing patterns, and the comprehension of the primary factors influencing the online reputation (Shrestha, S. K., 2018).
- The act of generating and disseminating constructive, valuable, and pertinent information constitutes an essential component of online reputation management (ORM). This may encompass the dissemination of blog articles, social media updates, films, and various other forms of information that aim to portray the individual or brand in a favorable manner. Through the process of generating and endorsing material, it is possible to diminish the visibility and prominence of unfavorable or inconsequential search outcomes.
The effective management and consistent maintenance of a robust presence on various social media platforms is of utmost importance. Building a positive online reputation can be facilitated through the active response to comments, engagement with followers, and timely handling of problems.

The implementation of appropriate search engine optimization (SEO) strategies can effectively manage the search results that individuals or brands generate while they are being searched for. By using strategies to enhance the visibility of material on search engines, one can effectively prioritize the prominence of positive and pertinent information in search rankings.

In the event of the presence of unfavorable content or critical evaluations, the practice of online reputation management (ORM) may encompass the implementation of various techniques aimed at alleviating or rectifying the resultant harm. This is the act of responding to consumer grievances, requesting the elimination of inaccurate or damaging material, or offering clarifications and remedies.

It is imperative for businesses to actively promote favorable ratings and effectively manage negative ones. Crafting professional and constructive responses to bad evaluations has the potential to enhance the overall brand perception.

In instances where there is a significant online reputation crisis, the implementation of a thoroughly planned online reputation management (ORM) strategy can effectively minimize the negative impact and facilitate the restoration of confidence. This may entail strategic public relations initiatives and synchronized communication strategies.

In certain instances of utmost severity, resorting to legal measures may become imperative in order to rectify the dissemination of inaccurate or defamatory material that poses harm to one's online standing.

Ensuring the preservation of a cohesive image and message across many web platforms is of paramount importance. Inconsistencies have the ability to cause confusion and potentially harm an individual's online reputation (Neema, et.al., 2017).

Review Literature

According to Alba et al. (1997), brand image holds significant importance in the field of marketing and business as it has the ability to shape consumer views, impact purchasing choices, and ultimately contribute to overall organizational performance. The establishment of a robust brand image has the potential to result in heightened levels of client loyalty and market dominance. The model proposed by Aaker (1996) places emphasis on the elements of brand identity, brand meaning, and brand responses. This statement underscores the need of effectively managing brand associations and cultivating a favorable brand image. The model proposed by Keller (1993) introduces the notion of brand resonance, highlighting the significance of the emotional bond established between consumers and companies. This statement underscores the importance of brand imagery and brand judgments in the establishment and reinforcement of robust brand equity. The objective of this research is to examine the influence of social media marketing on the perception of luxury brand image and the value of customer equity. This statement underscores the significance of a favorable online brand image in shaping consumer behavior. Yoo, et.al. (2001) present a comprehensive framework for assessing consumer-based brand equity, with a particular focus on the significance of brand trust within the brand's overall image. This article examines the influence of social media on the formation of online brand image and explores strategies for organizations to proficiently handle their online reputation through the practice of online reputation management (ORM). This study investigates the influence of e-commerce platforms' online brand image on consumer purchasing behavior and discusses the motivations for consumers and businesses to engage in electronic marketplaces. The article by Coombs (2007) examines strategies for firms to effectively handle and restore their online brand reputation in the face of crises, including incidents that may have a detrimental impact on their reputation. The aforementioned studies and models offer significant contributions to the understanding of the complex characteristics of online brand image and its influence on customer behavior, trust, and total brand equity. The aforementioned statement underscores the importance of effectively managing and nurturing a favorable online brand image within the context of the contemporary digital era.

Objectives of the study
To understand the strategies for building and protecting brand image for the sampled companies dealing online.

To explore quantitively the strategies which influences & supports in building and protecting brand image for the sampled companies dealing online.

**Hypothesis of the study**

**H01:** There is no significant relation between online reputation management & brand image of the sampled companies.

**Ha1:** There is significant relation between online reputation management & brand image of the sampled companies.

**Research Methodology**

The existing study is both secondary & primary. The observed results collected through 90 respondents from companies’ executives & top management professionals. For the sake of research, researcher approached 02 small segment companies which deals products online. The study is aiming to understand and explore the strategies for building and protecting brand image for the sampled companies dealing online. The current research has used SPSS to analyse the results. The secondary data captured from various online resources such as journals, thesis, websites etc.

**Results & Discussion**

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reliability Statistics</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.914</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 presents the results of the study’s reliability analysis, documenting a Cronbach Alpha of .914 (N=8). There is a discrepancy between the projected value and the maximum value of .60. This allows for the use of statistical methods.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Listening</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create High-Quality Content</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>.235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Media Engagement</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>.707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search Engine Optimization (SEO)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Review Management</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>.209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for various aspects of online reputation management & building brand image. The average rating is displayed in the "Mean" column, while the standard deviation is shown in the "Std. Deviation" column. "Monitoring and Listening" has a mean score of 3.76 with a standard deviation of 0.407. This means that, on average, the level of monitoring and listening is around 3.76, and the scores are relatively close to this average, with a low amount of variability. On the other hand, "Online Review Management" has a higher mean score of 5.63, indicating a higher level of online review management, and a very low standard deviation of 0.209, suggesting that the scores are tightly clustered around the mean, indicating a high level of consistency in online review management. In summary, the standard deviation numbers reveal the distribution of scores around the mean, revealing information about the consistency or unpredictability of the data, while the mean values offer an average evaluation of each component.

Table 3: ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>67.103</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.341</td>
<td>29.234</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>628.141</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>695.244</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create High-Quality Content</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>80.258</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.432</td>
<td>42.117</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>764.215</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>844.473</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Media Engagement</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>48.717</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.876</td>
<td>32.564</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>498.643</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.45</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>547.36</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Search Engine Optimization (SEO)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>82.654</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21.675</td>
<td>23.876</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>895.452</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>978.106</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Review Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>53.793</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.213</td>
<td>61.235</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 presents the results of the ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) for different aspects of online reputation management & building brand image. The ANOVA test determines whether there are statistically significant differences between the means of three or more groups. Finding out if there are statistically significant variations between the means of different groups in each aspect of digital marketing and management is made easier by the ANOVA results. The "F" statistic and its associated p-value (Sig.) are used to reach this conclusion. A low p-value (typically less than 0.05) suggests that there are significant differences between the means of the groups. Table 3 summarizes the ANOVA results, which are used to determine the significance of differences between groups for each component of digital marketing and management. Therefore the alternative hypothesis accepted, “there is significant relation between online reputation management & brand image of the sampled companies” & null hypothesis rejected.

**Findings of the study**

- Regular online presence monitoring is the foundation of ORM. It lets you monitor brand mentions. Google Alerts, Social Mention, and Brandwatch track web mentions and sentiment.
- Create and share valuable material to demonstrate your expertise and reduce unfavorable search results. This is content suppression. Blog postings, videos, infographics, and social media updates are valuable material. It should fit your audience. "Content marketing is a crucial element of online reputation management," argues Neil Patel's ORM book
- Actively engaging on social media lets you connect with your audience. Responding quickly to comments, inquiries, and concerns is crucial. "Engagement builds trust and credibility," says Hootsuite.
- Search results for your brand can be controlled with SEO. Keyword-optimized content is crucial. This boosts positive, useful content rankings. Famous SEO resource Moz provides a detailed SEO tutorial.
- Encourage happy customers to post Google My Business, Yelp, or TripAdvisor reviews. Respond to unfavorable reviews professionally and constructively. According to Harvard Business Review, responding to bad reviews and fixing flaws can boost your brand's image
- Prepare for internet reputation issues. A well-planned crisis management plan can reduce harm and regain confidence. PR pros often help here. "Crisis communication and management are critical elements of online reputation management," says IPR.
- Brand consistency across online channels is crucial. Inconsistencies confuse customers and undermine your reputation. Nielsen Norman Group stresses consistent user experiences.
Legal action may be needed for serious defamation. Discuss your choices with an internet law attorney. "Online defamation laws vary by jurisdiction," says ILC.

Make sure your staff understands ORM and how their activities affect the brand. Good training can prevent reputation-damaging situations. According to a research in the International Journal of Business Communication, employees affect brand reputation.

A good reputation takes time. Actively seek favorable exposure, accolades, and endorsements. This boosts brand image.

Conclusion

It is imperative to acknowledge that the maintenance of one's internet reputation is a continuous and perpetual endeavor. Due to the widespread availability of internet platforms and the continuous influx of information, reputations have the potential to undergo rapid transformations. Achieving effective online reputation management (ORM) necessitates a proactive and watchful approach to upholding a favorable digital image, while promptly addressing any arising concerns. Upon examining these aims, it becomes apparent that online enterprises acknowledge the utmost significance of fostering a favorable brand image within the digital realm. Through the implementation of efficient methods and the quantitative assessment of their effects, businesses have the ability to strengthen their online presence and foster increased trust and loyalty among their target audience. The aforementioned findings highlight the ongoing significance of brand management inside the digital realm, where the perception of a brand has a crucial position in determining the achievements of organizations.

References


