



Social media made simple
for YOUR business!

The following originally was written as a guest blog for another site.

Eight Steps to Turn Around a Negative Online Image

I was recently hired by a company to establish their social media platforms and teach them how to maintain their accounts and leverage social media into their overall marketing campaign. Before heading to my client's office, I did a quick internet search for any information on their business, social platforms they might already be involved in and to see if they had any online reputation. Boy, did they!

During the course of my discussions with my clients, I learned a lot about their background. Their place of business is gorgeous and it's obvious they put a lot of money, time and extreme effort into their passion. But their online reputation creams them! Criticism of their establishment ranges from being overpriced to putting out an inferior product. On one site, their overall rating is a 67 percent. Ouch! Although the overall comments about their staff and their physical location border on rave reviews, the negativity stops many folks from even walking in the door. They are losing customers before they even step in the door.

If we remember that over 85 million people have smart phones and that our social media reputations are transparent, then we can all agree that something has to be done to help this business or they simply won't make it. They simply won't be even given a second glance. So, here's how I started.

1. Take steps to improve and solve the problems in the business.



No matter how hard we work on our social media presence, if the underlying problems continue, so will the negative comments. The underlying problems have to be fixed before we can continue. If the problem is inconsistent food, for example, then we must work diligently on consistency. If the problem is customer service, get busy training the staff and take control.

2. Respond promptly and courteously to all comments and complaints.

Interact with your clients/customers showing them you value their opinions and that they individually matter. Offer to fix things where you can and let them know you hear them and are taking corrective actions.

3. Begin doing some community good and capitalize on any and all publicity.

It's easy to do a donation to a domestic violence center of old clothes or toys for children, or to a soup kitchen who may be low on volunteers and supplies. Donate some gift certificates to the local elementary schools and see what those parents do to support their kids. Put your name out there doing good for the community and people will start talking. Contact the local newspapers and let them know of the good community will.



4.Create Press Releases of great things in your company.

Let the world know if Betty Smith made manager or you hired Joe from Seattle for your new customer service manager. Put these press releases out to local newspapers and online sites such as i-newswire.com and pr.com.

5.Put on your Polyanna glasses and flood those social media platforms with good.

Polyanna is a movie about a young girl who had a positive take on everything around her. Spin anything into a positive light. Use Facebook, Twitter, Google Places and niche related sites for the written word. Make short videos of any of your great things, including some customer promotions, and place them on youtube or vimeo.



5.Create a small well done (preferably professional) postcard-sized or baseball card asking your best customers/clients to comment about you on social platforms.

Don't put all of your platforms on one card. Maybe one or two of the sites most needing your attention. Until you are confident that you are on the road to improving your reputation, be picky about who you hand these out too.

6.Review your progress frequently and make adjustments to your plan of action.



Any plan of action will take tweaking as the plan unfolds. Be ready to see and acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses and take action when it's needed or called for. Set up a google alert page letting you know when comments are being made on the internet about you or your company.

7.Be teachable and consult with other professionals.

Networking with like-minded folks is a great thing. It may help you to see things you never thought of. Keep an open mind and be willing to take direction.

Keep in mind these are not quick fixes, but will take a little bit of time. It doesn't take long to fall into the bad reputation pit. It takes longer to dig out of that pit. But any action is better than no action.

Kim Tranter is a Non-Credit Social Media Instructor at Herkimer County Community College. Kim teaches Social Media in private seminars from Central New York to Los Angeles to small business owners and entrepreneurs. Kim not only teaches how to implement a successful social media campaign, but she uses these same successful tools in her physical brick and mortar business. Along with her husband, she has owned and operated a successful chain of restaurants for over 20 years and knows first-hand what works and what doesn't. She authored and published the "The Social Media Ultimate Success Guide" which is available on Amazon. You can connect with Kim on LinkedIn and Twitter @ULrnSocialMedia. Please visit her website at www.ULearnSocialMedia.com

