



# **PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**

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Imagine that you are the owner of a small or medium-sized business. As your brand presence increases and you begin to serve a larger client base, you plan to scale your operations upward by hiring new staff. Unfortunately, a disgruntled ex-employee has written negative reviews about you and your company across several business review websites. In turn, this adversely affects the quality of your candidate pool.

Considering the immense value of expressing brand values and personal beliefs through digital channels, it's reasonable that 97% of business owners consider reputation management vital to their success. However, just as digital allows a C-Suite to quickly build a stage, this fast-paced world also brings more scrutiny than ever before. Every move an executive makes, both professional and personal, is subject to close examination by customers, investors, and employees. C-suite leaders must be willing to act as exceptional brand ambassadors and be in sync with the enterprise goals to help their businesses thrive.

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# DEFINING REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

## *Defining Reputation Management*

**Reputation management** is the execution of strategies used for monitoring and influencing your reputation across channels. Today, these strategies are primarily digital and pertain to interactions in blogs, online publications, reviews, and social media posts. In terms of business structure, this responsibility often falls under the purview of Corporate Communications, Public Relations, Investor Relations, or Marketing.

The concept of reputation management can refer to both companies and individuals. An organization's brand serves as an umbrella that encompasses the many priorities of the enterprise such as its values, key initiatives, thought leadership, etc. The reputation management strategy for individuals is very similar but allows their personality to shine as well. If these initiatives are aligned it creates a brand tapestry that is culturally unique due to the positive impact of their staff's messaging.

## *Relevant Terms*

**Personal Reputation Management (PRM):** This strategy revolves around a single C-suite leader within your organization.

**Enterprise Brand Management (EBM):** This strategy speaks to the reputation of an entire company. EBM is often synonymous with public relations, marketing, and advertising.

New businesses may wish to use reputation management to build their brand and establish themselves among their prospects. Others might use reputation management to share exciting or culturally relevant messages to connect with their audience. Later on, we will further examine the many use cases of reputation management — for now, the takeaway here is that it provides the foundations necessary to sway public opinion and establish a brand.

## THIS WHITEPAPER WILL PROVIDE A FULL ROADMAP OF THE FOLLOWING:

- XX The importance of personal reputation management
- XX The history of the development of personal reputation management
- XX Determining the need for personal reputation management
- XX Variables that impact your choice of personal reputation management
- XX Steps for implementing new personal reputation management
- XX Case studies on the effective use of personal reputation management



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Successful companies combine PRM and EBM strategies to make a positive impact on their public appeal. Though both strategies are essential, this document will focus on personal reputation management.

**As previously mentioned, a CEO's reputation can impact virtually every aspect of their enterprise. Eye-catching advertisements and effective branding may be enough to draw in prospects. However, consumers want to know who they are buying from, and employees want to know what their leaders stand for.**

**76%** of employees believe their CEOs should take the lead on positive change.

**Two in three** customers state that their perception of a CEO affects their opinion of their company.

In some cases, a CEO's brand can eclipse their company's brand. One such example is Microsoft founder Bill Gates. Today, when we think of Microsoft, we often think of Gates and his appealing qualities. He is a long-established authority in his industry that has donated a reported \$50 billion to charity throughout his life. Gates and current Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella are key reasons why the company continues to garner trust as other tech companies struggle to produce the same customer connections. However, when Gates was running the company and facing antitrust lawsuits his personality worked against him and the organization.

PRM isn't just for large-scale corporations. Small and mid-sized companies can also benefit. CEO Gary Vaynerchuk was able to utilize his humble beginnings in Edison, New Jersey, to draw attention to the work he was doing with his father's local liquor store. Vaynerchuk transitioned the store into one of the country's first-ever alcohol e-commerce platforms. He began a Youtube channel to share more about himself and connect to new audience members. His dedication to community engagement is what helped him turn a modest business into a \$60 million operation. Today, Vaynerchuk oversees several successful endeavors and continues to prove himself as a thought leader in his niche.

Personal reputation management can also serve as a more appealing way to showcase new company endeavors or significant changes. In contrast to conventional marketing efforts, a CEO can use their platform to communicate with consumers directly, providing them with a more authentic brand experience.



# THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Branding has come a long way since the 1700s, and has expanded to various aspects of life over the past couple of centuries. As numerous people began to display their name in the market, business guru Tom Peters began to ask questions regarding personal branding that forever changed the way marketers and companies view their brands. Since then, companies have utilized different mediums to build their personal brand including public relations, community outreach, digital tools, and most recently, social media platforms.

## ***Marketer Influencing***

At its core, PRM has strong relations with influencer marketing; a brand marketing strategy used as far back as the mid-1700s. As the name would suggest, brands utilized influential people to sway the buying decisions of their consumers. This marketing strategy continued to be relevant today – companies around the world rely on celebrities and mascots to help spark brand appeal and a sense of personal connection in their audiences.

## ***Personal Branding***

As the market became saturated with mascots and celebrities all trying to push products into the eyes of consumers, business guru [Tom Peters](#) began to ask two fundamental questions: What makes you different? What personal qualities can you infuse into your brand to enhance it? So began the personal brand movement – the realization that we as creators are inseparable from the brands we create. CEOs embraced this idea and began to mold their brands to their interests and aesthetics. For example, Apple's co-founder and first CEO, [Steve Jobs](#), designed his brand to be simple and modern, much like his personal aesthetic. Today, we easily associate the brand with Jobs and his famous turtleneck sweater.

## ***Brands as Publishers***

Reputation management consisted mainly of offline activities in the form of public relations. Companies sought out journalists, social events, and other networking opportunities with the simple goal of building a positive reputation. During this time, before we could conduct an instant search with our smartphones, word of mouth was the best way for potential customers to learn more about a company. Positive branded media also inspired [peer-to-peer](#) recommendations, which continue to be critical for businesses.

As social media rose to relevancy in the mid-2000s, brands began to realize that they no longer had to rely solely on traditional PR to get their message across to consumers. Companies could be their [publishers](#) in all forms of digital media. Newly accessible digital tools enabled leaders and their marketing teams to control their narrative while measuring which content is most effective. This sparked the beginning of modern-day reputation management.



# THE HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT CONTINUED

## *PRM Today*

Today, most relationship management is digital; brands interact with their audiences on review websites, in comments sections, and on social media platforms. As a result, companies must seek new ways to track and manage their reputation.

Social media is one such tool, as today's channels offer brands easy opportunities for networking and content virality. Sites like Facebook and Instagram provide the algorithms necessary to accomplish these tasks with minimal effort.

When we hear the term "social media," we only think of conventional social platforms like Facebook or Twitter even though this section also refers to any page on which users can share their thoughts. These include review websites, blogs, and forums.

## NOTES:

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# DETERMINING THE NEED FOR PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

There are several reasons why companies should invest in personal reputation management. With PRM, C-suite leaders can leverage their platforms to:

- **Increase Company Brand Awareness**  
Through social media, publishing, and speaking engagements, C-suite leaders can introduce and reinforce their company brand to their established audience.
- **Maximize Online Presence**  
Leaders can increase authority in their digital ecosystems by utilizing practical search engine optimization (SEO) techniques like keyword phrasing, strategic backlinks, content updating, and more. Combined, these SEO techniques will help C-suite leaders get their preferred content to the top of the search engine response pages (SERPs).
- **Thought Leadership**  
C-suite leaders can gain influence and visibility by establishing themselves as [thought leaders](#). They provide knowledge and guidance in the form of blogs, articles, interviews, and social media posts. Becoming recognized as a thought leader positions the executive as a resource for being interviewed or quoted by relevant media entities, writers, bloggers, broadcasters, etc.
- **Stimulate Business Development**  
Sales-oriented C-suite executives can use PRM communication techniques to introduce new concepts to staff and customers. This also shows a commitment to products and services that inspires confidence in their stakeholders.
- **Establish a Positive Company Culture**  
Leaders can engage in meaningful interactions with staff, clients, and partners with what is referred to as Business-to-Employee or Business-to-Enterprise (B2E) communications. Instead of just reciting the company values, this allows the organization to hear the executive consistently reinforce those values.
- **Promote Your Passions**  
Just as individuals are more interesting if they have layers to them, so are brands. People in the organization are what create those layers. If an organization states it believes in giving back to its community, that matters. Yet, if a CEO talks about their involvement in a charity they have supported for ten years, that matters a great deal more. PRM strategies enable leaders to share these personal stories and beliefs and establish depth in the brand.
- **Optimize Recruiting**  
A good personal reputation can encourage your top job candidates to accept a position working under your leadership. The executive's work they've done in social over time also creates a persona that should be a model for those interested in joining the organization.





## DETERMINING THE NEED FOR PERSONAL REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

By monitoring personal reputation, CEOs can gain valuable insights on where they can improve as leaders. The use of alerts and content monitoring can also help an executive stay up to speed on what's happening in the industry, relevant best practices, and how their customers are feeling..

A new executive might require a strategy for personal reputation management after their predecessor steps down from the role. PRM can help new leaders introduce themselves in a positive light, which can quickly help cultivate trust from employees, consumers, and investors.

**7 in 10 leaders** report having experienced at least one crisis in the last five years. 95% of leaders expect to be impacted by one in the future. No one is immune to setbacks, but a proper PRM strategy can help CEOs establish themselves in industry leadership roles. In times of volatility, trustworthy leadership can make all the difference in ensuring that a company survives.

One mistake could mean a sizable paper trail of negative media coverage — but that shouldn't keep dedicated leaders from moving forward. By optimizing new, preferred content and using tactical SEO to suppress negative search results, leaders can breathe easier knowing they're on the path to a fresh start.

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Determining investment in an executive's reputation management strategy is based on the following:

☐ **Projected Timing**

How long will it take to achieve the client's goals? Most projects require a minimum three-month start to allow PRM teams the chance to create evergreen content that truly drives results.

☐ **Stakeholder Involvement**

How many hours can the client dedicate to their reputation management? Early strategy stages may require a more collaborative effort. Less available executives may benefit from a more robust team.

☐ **Related Tools**

What technology must be implemented to optimize the process? Automated tools for monitoring and measurement are essential for tracking progress towards C-suite goals.

☐ **Specialist Requirements**

Who might you need to bring onto your team to aid in your PRM strategy? Smaller marketing teams might benefit from commissioning third-party writing or social media management services.

☐ **Projected ROI**

What does the client wish to accomplish? Common PRM goals include improving SERP results, boosting follower count, and more (see ROI section).

## NOTES:

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# RETURN ON INVESTMENT

With these points in mind, how can we ensure PRM initiatives offer a substantial ROI?

There are many different ways to measure ROI. In PR and social media marketing, teams tend to measure their ROI success with the following formula:

$$ROI = [(Financial\ value - Project\ cost) / Project\ cost] \times 100$$

It's a simple formula, but there's more to consider than meets the eye. In your investment costs, you must consider costs for:

- Labor
- Training
- Software services (subscriptions, use fees, etc.)
- Social media advertising
- Submission fees for networking opportunities (public speaking, industry events)

Let's say your company made \$2500 during your \$1000 PRM campaign. With your profit being \$1500 (profit = revenue - investment), you can determine your return on investment:

$$\$1500\ profit / \$1000\ PRM\ campaign \times 100 = 150\% ROI$$

ROI isn't just a financial measurement — it also describes the ability of a PRM strategy to accomplish a client's goals. These may include:

- Boosting business conversions
- Increasing brand awareness
- Increasing social media following
- Improving the quality of the brand's available online content
- Finding insights for improving customer experience
- Increasing media placements
- Crisis control and/or risk mitigation

Accomplishing these goals within a specified budget and timeline can also count toward a substantial ROI.

When companies implement PRM strategies effectively, they experience higher rates of positive interaction altogether. Eventually, these positive interactions turn into lucrative gains. Consider the following statistics:

- **95%** of financial and industry analysts claim they would purchase stock based on a CEO's reputation.
- Nearly **75%** of consumers trust companies more if they have positive reviews.
- **30%** of job seekers would reject a job offer from a company with a bad reputation, even after they are offered a **100%** increase in compensation.

So, if a CEO uses PRM to improve brand reputation, they can expect to see:

- Improved brand loyalty across shareholder, customer, and staff groups
- Customer base growth and higher rates of repeat business
- More satisfied staff and higher rates of employee retention



### ***Proxxy Methodology:***

At Proxxy, we determine reputation management strategies for executive leaders using a two-phase program. Our methodology revolves around gaining a comprehensive understanding of you and your organization through our prerequisites and staging of our reputation management strategy.

### ***Quick Overview:***

#### **Phase 1: Prerequisite**

Company vision alignment, creating an executive persona, managing personal content and interests mapping

#### **Phase 2: Staging**

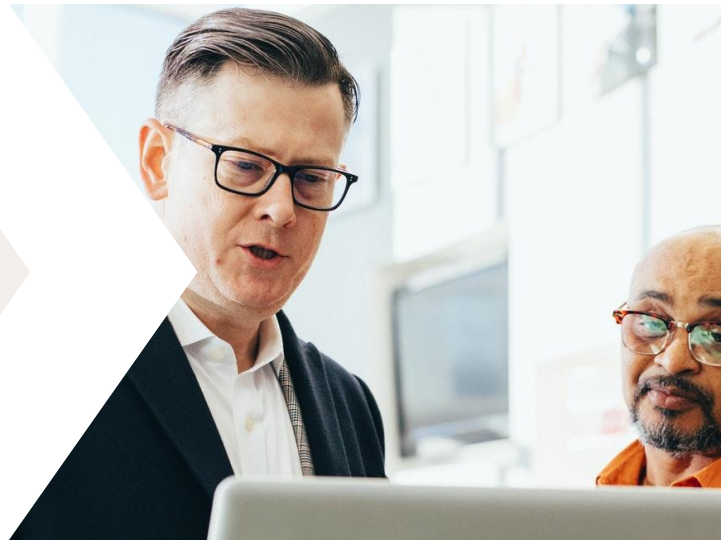
Tracking your content and determining your plan of action



# PHASE 1: PREREQUISITE

## ***Complete Phase 1:***

- ☐ Company Vision Alignment
- ☐ Executive Persona
- ☐ Personal Content/ Interests Mapping



### ***Company Vision Alignment***

In essence, company vision alignment is about closing the gap between how you see your team and how the public sees your team. During this step, we ensure that the content you put out is in line with your company's vision. You want to make sure your executives are presenting themselves in ways that are consistent with your overall brand.

### ***Executive Persona***

What type of image do you want to create for your executives? Formal or casual? By the numbers, or optimistic? There's no right or wrong answer here — you can choose whatever fits your niche and the individuals on your team.

### ***Personal Content/ Interests Mapping***

When managing your online reputation, consistency is key. There's no need to bolster your online persona with content you think is relatable. We help C-suite leaders leverage their interests to make a positive impression. Including relevant personal interests in your content and communications helps add an authentic touch with which your audience can connect.



## PHASE 2: STAGING

### *Complete Phase 2:*

- ☐ Content Tracking
- ☐ Action Plan



### *Content Tracking*

Along with creating content of your own, sharing and interacting with content by other experts within your niche is vital. The simplest way to do this is to set up notification tools that automatically provide timely, industry-relevant topics.

### *Assess Investment Requirements*

After determining your goals and areas for improvement, we determine the best strategies for achieving those goals with the client's budget in mind. Generally, our digital method focuses on four main points, tiered by the amount of active work that goes into each:

- **Responding:** While monitoring interactions across channels, we coach executives on how to interact productively with their audience, both on social media pages, and in comments sections. In some cases, this becomes a managed service.
- **Outreach:** we facilitate the building of strong professional relationships with other thought leaders in your niche. This is sometimes done by monitoring and engaging with thought leadership content and sometimes a direct connection strategy. Not only does this make way for improved recognition and access to their networks, but it also increases the potential for new thought leadership opportunities for executives to participate in.
- **Sharing:** Sharing relevant third-party content allows for your executives to be seen as industry experts, and reliable sources for industry information.
- **Content Creation:** Your original content should be focused on relevant industry topics and held to a rigid content calendar. The goal here is to showcase your leader as someone that people can follow and reach out to for important information.

Each step along the way, we provide regular KPI evaluations to determine whether the strategy in place is helping our clients meet their goals. KPI cycling grants us the insights needed to make tweaks and adjustments along our client's journey.



# EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

Personal reputation management has helped countless C-suite leaders across a variety of industries, from retail to technology, to politics, to finance, to manufacturing — just to name a few.

Let's take a look at a few real-world problems that have been solved with PRM.

## Case Study 1:

A notable member of the New York financial community plans to run for political office. Negative press involving his previous employer impacted his personal reputation. To make things worse, bloggers caught wind of the smear campaign and began to post negative reviews online, further worsening his reputation. In response, his team of PRM strategists created a plan:

- Remove as much negative content as possible from the SERP results
- Provide a counter-narrative to the story involving the client's old company ties
- Dilute the SERPs with honest and relevant stories
- Suppress any remaining negative search results

After deciding that taking legal action would be too costly, the client's team decided to utilize a combination of SEO strategies. These included:

- Commissioning writers from esteemed publications to create content that improved the client's online reputation
- Comparing the client's search results to those of similar individuals within the financial community, and using them to help craft a better narrative
- Further improving the first SERP page by engineering a [Google Knowledge panel](#) for the client
- Refreshing social media profiles to increase overall relevance

## *Findings*

XX At the end of the PRM campaign, all negative reports about the client were suppressed, and the client now controls 70% of the first 20 results. Now, negative search results are only seen by 5% of searchers, rather than the initial 100%.



## EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 2:

A successful middle-aged CEO couldn't get a new job, despite having a highly successful career in several different branches of entertainment. At every new company he interviewed for, headhunters and CEOs would notice an issue in their background check — a two-decade-old issue from a holiday party showed up online, rendering him unhirable. He sought out a team of PRM experts to help improve his negative reputation. After speaking to their client, the strategists came up with a solution:

- Create strong profiles on key media-related platforms (IMDB, Instagram, Youtube, Vimeo, etc.)
- Promote old high-level articles in which the client's name was prominently featured
- Frequently share this promoted content to all business-related sites
- Build positive relationships with key online influencers

### *Findings*

**XX** In three months, the client's negative press was suppressed and he was hired almost immediately after his reputation was repaired.





## EXAMPLES & CASE STUDIES

### **Case Study 3:**

The marketing VP of a non-profit hospital network struggled to find new effective strategies for attracting patients to their locations. Despite being a large network of 16 hospitals and 33,000 staff, they struggled to reach their goals in their highly competitive region. He turned to an expert in relationship management for help. The VP's goals were to:

- Ensure complete and accurate business listings on all search engines and review sites
- Boost patient engagement online and review volumes
- Use reviews and experience surveys to address issues experienced by patients

In response to these goals, the network's reputation management team devised a plan:

- Use best SEO writing practices to polish and simplify physician data and business listings on the network's Find-A-Doctor web tool. This better maintains user attention and ensures higher rankings on SERPs.
- Utilize technology to request patient reviews and respond to negative ones to maintain positive patient relations.
- Create a culture of transparency by giving healthcare workers their PRM dashboards. This allows them to become more invested in their reputation management, and respond to negative reviews pertaining specifically to them.

### **Findings**

**XX** In five months time, the hospital network doubled its website traffic and increased its review volume by 170%. Additionally, its average rating rose from 3.9 to 4.4 stars.



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