



# ORM Starter Series, Part 1: Getting Started with Online Reputation Management

# Introduction

There's no getting around it: Managing your online reputation is critical to a successful marketing strategy, as well as to the health and continued growth of your business.

According to recent research, **87 percent of Americans** say they trust online reviews to help them choose which local businesses or services will receive their hard-earned dollars<sup>1</sup>. What's more, eCommerce agency Corra found **88 percent of consumers** have avoided a company because of a bad review.<sup>2</sup>

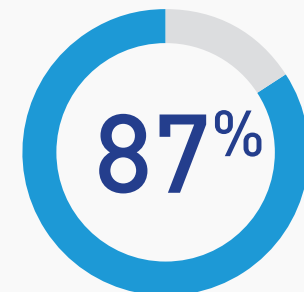
As consumers increasingly rely on online reviews, businesses that leave their online reputation to chance are at a severe disadvantage versus those with solid Online Reputation Management (ORM) programs in place. But where do you start?

## What You'll Learn in This Guide

Online Reputation Management is a discipline that you can take on easily — step by step. This guide will take you through the basics of launching an ORM program in your organization.

### You'll learn about:

- Defining your goals
- Where to focus your efforts
- How to secure executive buy-in



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1 [Findlaw](#)

2 [Corra](#)

# Online Reviews Are Important. Now What?

## First, Define Your Goals

Your goals for your ORM program will depend on the current state of your online reputation. For example, if you have very few or no online reviews, either because your organization is new or you haven't been requesting reviews, you'll need to build review volume. Or, if you have hundreds or thousands of locations, you may decide to start auditing your business listings to make sure customers can find you.

**Here are some questions to ask as you define your goals for improving your online reputation:**

- 1) Is the business receiving a healthy volume of online reviews? Are they stale or fresh?
- 2) What is the average star rating for the overall business? For individual locations?
- 3) How do we raise visibility in local search to attract customers?
- 4) How do we raise brand awareness at the local level?
- 5) Are all business listings associated with my organization up to date and accurate?
- 6) Do we actively capture feedback from customers through online reviews and surveys?  
How can we capture and apply that feedback to optimize the customer experience?
- 7) Are we actively engaging buyers to build community on social media? What sites are our customers using, and are we posting regularly to those sites?
- 8) Do I need help synthesizing and reporting on the data and text from reviews and comments?
- 9) Would it make sense to outsource this, or can we manage it in-house?

Thinking through these questions will help you focus your efforts on the areas that yield maximum return.

**An ORM platform vendor can help you determine the current state of your online reputation through audits and in-depth analysis, to help you decide where to focus your efforts.**



## Next, Strategize

Now that you know your goals, it's time to decide how to achieve them. Here's a quick summary of key areas to focus on:

- **Online Reviews:** Online reviews are the cornerstone of any ORM program. Your star ratings and search rankings depend on them. ORM platforms help companies actively request, monitor and respond to online reviews using various methods, such as email, kiosks and text messaging. Unified dashboards can provide at-a-glance insight to all reviews, automatic alerts when reviews come in, and templates for responding in ways that are compliant with company policies and industry regulations.
- **Business Listings:** Accurate, consistent business listings help your locations rank high in local search, and help customers find you instead of the competition. An ORM provider can help you audit your organization's business listings and fix inaccuracies and inconsistencies across the web.



- **Social Media:** According to Gartner, not answering customers on social channels can lead to a 15-percent increase in the churn rate for existing customers.<sup>1</sup> ORM platforms can help you engage with your buyer community online on all key sites, such as Facebook and Google with community-building activities — scheduled posting, online advertising and content syndication.
- **Surveys:** Tuning into the voice of the customer is essential. Surveys help you pinpoint and address problem areas early, before negative reviews start coming in. They shed light on what you're doing well, so you can standardize what's working across your organization. ORM providers can help you construct and administer surveys that gather actionable insight.
- **Reporting and Analytics:** Unstructured data from reviews and social comments can be difficult to analyze and report on. Advanced ORM platforms offer intuitive tools that simplify analysis and enable you to share findings with stakeholders to set change in motion.

Depending on your needs and budget, you may decide to start with one, several, or all of these initiatives. Serious ORM platforms offer a modular approach that lets you start with what's most critical, then build out your strategy over time



# Finally, Get Everyone Onboard with ORM

Effective ORM is a cross-functional endeavor. To get rolling, executive buy-in, as well as support for all the teams involved, will be essential for success.

## Establish Key Partnerships

Setting up key internal partnerships helps ORM implementation go smoothly. What partnerships you establish will depend on what aspects of Online Reputation Management you start with. Here are some that may be essential:

- **An Executive Champion:** An executive champion serves as an advocate among board members and E-staff. This individual should be a respected leader who understands the importance of what you're trying to do. Such a supporter can help ease confusion and knock down barriers to a successful roll-out.
- **Customer Experience:** Operations leaders are the guardians of customer experience — they have close working relationships with frontline staff. ORM helps identify trends and recurring customer service issues, as well as what's working that can be standardized across all locations. Handing off this information to customer experience teams initiates discussions around operational improvements that impact all customer interactions, and help the business run better.
- **Legal/Compliance:** Robust ORM platforms provide templates for responding to reviews. These can easily be customized for various scenarios based on company policies or industry regulations. Be sure to involve legal and compliance teams in creating or reviewing those templates.



# Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Once you have identified and established key partnerships, determine the following:

- **Who is responsible for which aspect of review monitoring and responding?**
- **Who will take the lead on using customer feedback to make operational improvements?**
- **Who will report on progress and findings to key stakeholders?**



## Need Help? Managed Services May Be the Answer

If you have a small team or one that's really busy, you can outsource the ORM work to a provider. Doing so can save you time and headaches, while providing peace of mind that your reputation is in capable hands.

### Choosing the Right ORM Platform: What to Look For

Not all ORM solutions are equal. To maximize your investment, you should qualify your options carefully and consider the following attributes:

- A comprehensive solution with integrated capabilities that span all aspects of ORM
- An automated platform that scales reliably across thousands of locations
- Intuitive dashboards that provide at-a-glance insight
- Analysis and reporting tools that provide actionable insights to improve customer experience





## About Reputation.com

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Reputation.com delivers the category-leading Online Reputation Management platform for leading organizations with thousands of locations.

We help companies monitor review sites, generate more representative ratings, gain insights to improve operations, and drive loyalty and revenue.

For more information, visit us at [reputation.com](https://reputation.com) or contact us at [sales@reputation.com](mailto:sales@reputation.com).