



4 Key Trends in Online Reputation Management for 2017

Overview

The new year is underway, but your organization's online reputation precedes you. It's time to take a look at what's influencing public perception to prepare for the year ahead.

In this report, we examine four key trends guiding the direction of Online Reputation Management strategies in 2017, and provide recommendations for capitalizing on those trends moving forward.

Trend 1: Review Sources Are Rapidly Proliferating and Changing

Trend 2: Consumers Are Growing Suspicious of Overly Positive Reviews

Trend 3: SEO and ORM Will Become More Intertwined

Trend 4: The Rise of the Chief Experience Officer



1 Review Sources Are Rapidly Proliferating and Changing

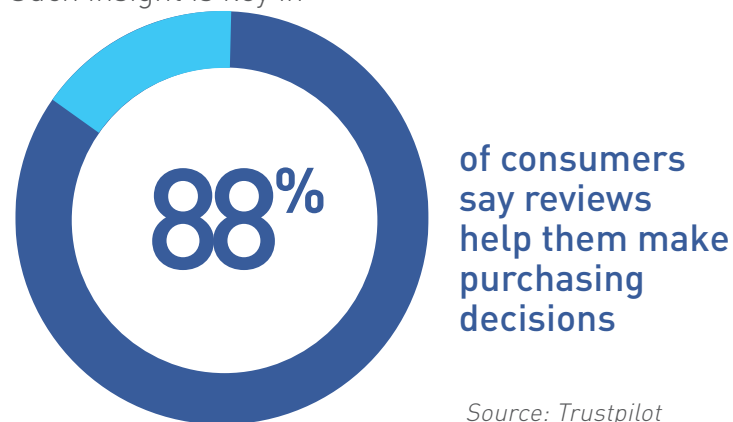
Word of mouth is no longer the preferred way for consumers to share their opinions about your businesses. They're flocking to online review sites as a way to share their opinions and inform purchasing decisions. Nearly [84 percent](#) of consumers read online review before making a purchasing decision.

With such intense consumer focus on online reviews, it's no wonder there's a proliferation of new online review sources. Sites not traditionally used as platforms for reviews are now becoming popular review sites — particularly Google and Facebook.

In fact, Facebook, the world's largest social networking site with 1.8 billion active monthly users, is a hotbed of online reviews and ratings. According to several published reports, Facebook outperforms other popular review sites, growing review volume at a pace four times faster.

To protect your brand, it's absolutely essential to monitor those social channels. One strategy is to link CRM systems to social media. This enables companies to track which employee was responsible for the interaction that resulted in the online review, either negative or positive. Such insight is key in determining staff training and making operational improvements.

Another complementary strategy is to adopt an Online Reputation Management (ORM) platform that automatically consolidates and monitors your reviews from Google and Facebook into one dashboard. Such a system gives you a complete view of what people are saying about your business locations and customer service. Your team can then respond to customers in real time from your desktop or smartphone, and quickly address negative online reviews or share positive ones to drive site traffic, increase social engagement and amplify awareness.



Ride the Wave of Online Reviews

Capitalize on this trend in 2017 with a solid ORM strategy that helps you drive social proof for your quality of service and improve star ratings.

Add Facebook location pages: An ORM dashboard makes it easy to add thousands of Facebook pages for your different locations. This enables you to capture ever-larger amounts of valuable customer feedback data for improving analytics and discoverability on the web.

Monitor customer sentiment: Consolidate online reviews from Google, Facebook and other major review sites. Monitor customer sentiment and share reviews with the marketplace that represent the truth about your business.

Boost positive reviews: Good news travels fast. Schedule the volume and cadence of posts in different geographies and time zones, and boost posts across all your Facebook location pages for maximum impact.

“Harness Facebook reviews in 2017 to improve marketing efforts and business results.”

Follow these steps to:

- Add Facebook location pages
- Monitor customer sentiment
- Share reviews in social media



2 Consumers Are Growing Suspicious of Overly Positive Reviews

More than [90 percent of Americans rely on reviews](#) when making purchasing decisions — but the same number of people are suspicious that reviews are fraudulent or not trustworthy. A [global study](#) by Cone Communications confirms consumers are more suspicious than ever, with 52 percent assuming companies are behaving badly.

It turns out their concerns are valid: One study found [a third of all online reviews](#) and user-generated content discussing a product were fake. *The Harvard Business Review* found [16 percent of restaurant reviews](#) on one popular review site weren't real, and Gartner reported up to [15 percent of all online reviews](#) are fraudulent.



Convincing Consumers They Can Trust You

Consumer suspicion is a prominent trend — one you must meet head-on. Here are some ways to inspire consumer trust:

Don't suppress bad reviews: As much as [95 percent of consumers](#) doubt the validity of reviews when they don't see any bad scores. Bad reviews make the good ones more compelling, helping to eliminate suspicion.

Never incentivize reviews: Doing so violates FTC guidelines, and you can face steep fines. Any incentive — discount, coupon or cash — distorts the review process, calling the accuracy of ratings, as well as your ethics, into question.

Commit to transparency: Build trust by responding promptly to all reviews. When consumers see you value customer feedback — good or bad — they appreciate it.

Dig deeper with semantic analysis: Analyzing the semantics of social posts and online reviews provides insight into how consumers feel about your organization, helping you understand what you need to work on operationally to build trust in your brand.

Continue to leverage user-generated content: Customers who view user-generated content show a 133 percent higher conversion rate. As you build trust with your audience, user-generated content will continue to carry the most weight and can help solidify your credibility.

“Consumer suspicion is a prominent trend — one you must meet head-on.”

Respond to all reviews — even the bad ones

- Ask for honest feedback, but never pay for it
- Commit to transparency to build trust
- Gain insight with semantic analysis
- Leverage user-generated content

3 SEO and ORM Will Become More Intertwined

As star ratings, online reviews and social posts continue to proliferate, the link between Online Reputation Management (ORM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) will become tighter than ever.

ORM enables you to proactively influence how people perceive your brand online, as well as what they say about you and who says it. Of the six pillars of ORM, three are critical for capitalizing on this trend: Online Reviews, Business Listings and Surveys.



Online Reviews and Power SEO

Review volume improves your locations' search results. This is important, because our research shows that the first 10 reviews can move a business from the second page of search results to the first page. What's more, just 50 reviews result in a nearly 266 percent increase in click-through rate.

You can increase review volume by proactively requesting them of all customers, increasing the likelihood you'll show up in search. ORM platforms can offer pre-configured templates help to automate and accelerate the review request process. You can leverage mobile technologies such as SMS to request reviews at scale.

Review Signals & Search Rankings

According to a Moz report on [local search ranking factors](#), “review signals” are fifth among the most important search-engine ranking factors. Among other metrics, review signals include:

- Review quantity, velocity and diversity
- Volume of testimonials within reviews
- Quantity of third-party traditional reviews
- Authority of third-party sites on which reviews are present

4 The Rise of the Chief Experience Officer

The role of today's modern marketing executive is changing fast. It requires an almost super-human blend of marketing strategist, creative genius and technology guru to support the expanded focus on digital technologies that companies are scrambling to adopt. Providing superior customer experience is the Holy Grail — and to get there, marketers must make sense of new digital trends and strategies, while keeping a pulse on customer sentiment and ensuring consistent, positive experiences across multiple touchpoints.

Optimizing the Customer Experience

Recent stats on corporate investments and initiatives reflect the growing emphasis on customer experience:

This year, 50 percent of consumer product investments will be redirected to customer experience innovations, according to Gartner.

75 percent of employees at companies with strong customer experience results are highly or moderately engaged, compared to only 49 percent at companies with weak customer experience.

By 2020, customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.

Innovation in leading companies is now focused on optimizing customer experience, and this trend has given rise to a new title: chief experience officer (CXO).

What is the CXO?

A chief experience officer (CXO) works cross-functionally with many business units to ensure positive and consistent interactions with customers from engagement to end-of-business. CXOs are focused entirely on customer interactions, the culture of an organization and the perceptions of its customers (or in healthcare, its patients). They also work with operations and HR to incorporate customer experience training into onboarding and employee development programs.

What's it Means for Marketing

As marketing teams increase their focus on omni-channel strategies, the CXO will play an essential role in unifying an ever-growing number customer touchpoints. ORM will fall squarely on the CXO's shoulders, who will need to analyze and share critical data from marketing automation and ORM platforms to provide actionable insights, helping marketing refine messaging and enabling company-wide operational improvements. A comprehensive ORM platform that provides detailed and customizable reporting and analytics will be the CXO's best friend

“Enlightened companies must view the customer experience as a strategic, C-level initiative. And, in the future, the responsibility of a chief customer champion’ will become more common, serving one purpose — to create an unrelenting focus on the customer throughout the enterprise.”

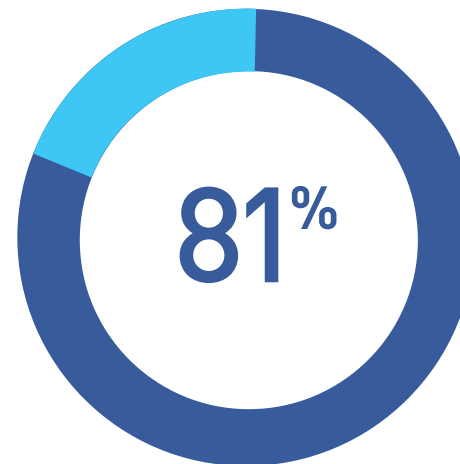
~ Walker Information



Future-Proof ORM, Starting Now

Managing your online reputation demands that you keep a close eye on the ways in which your target audience consumes information and ensure you're communicating the right messages effectively through those channels. Keeping your finger on the pulse of public sentiment and purchasing behavior requires an effective ORM platform that covers the six pillars of reputation management: reviews, surveys, business listings, social media, analytics and reporting.

Don't leave your brand to chance. [Find out more](#) about how Reputation.com can help you take control and optimize your online reputation in 2017 and beyond.



of companies with revenue exceeding \$500 million have a Chief Marketing Technologist.

~ Gartner Research



About Reputation.com

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

We help companies monitor review sites, generate more representative ratings, and drive recurring visits, foot traffic and revenue.

For more information, visit us at reputation.com or contact us at sales@reputation.com.

¹ Ericsson ConsumerLab