



Reputation Marketing made easy!



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INSIDE NEWS



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What is reputation marketing?



Reputation marketing is far more than making a lot of 'noise' and hoping that someone will hear. To run a really successful reputation marketing campaign you need a very clear focus.

Reputation is what people say about you – a good reputation marketing takes control of that and influences what people say.

In the short term this is really tough, but long term you'll find getting new business gets easier and easier and the clients get better and better.

There are so many online options to spend your time on that it's mind-boggling. Most people have heard of social media and online marketing, but many people think it's a time bandit and doesn't really work for small businesses.





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What reputation marketing can do for your business

If people don't know your business exists they can't give you work. Just consider the number of people who now use Google or one of the other search engines to find what they want – you're probably one yourself!

If you've heard of search engine optimisation you'll know that it's important to appear high in the rankings for your keyword. It's also important that when people search for you by name or by business name you figure high in the listings too.

The more information you have on the world wide web, the better the chance there is of people finding you. This includes content on other websites besides your own. If you've got a some articles on LinkedIn, a business page on Facebook, a few tips on Twitter and articles demonstrating your knowledge and specialism in online publications you're already ahead of most of your local competitors. If you're not there yet – don't worry this report will help you to get started.

If you use your internet connections to raise your profile and build your list of interested people you're much more likely to be in your potential customer's consciousness when they need what you're offering.

Reputation is developed by influencing what people say about you.

Traditional marketing v. online marketing

Traditional marketing methods include advertising in the press, on local radio and at exhibitions and other events. They all cost money, both for the placement of your advertising material and for creating that material in the first place.

This is true even for producing marketing material in the form of flyers, postcards, direct marketing letters or pull up banners to take with you when you visit networking events. You are also limited by the demographics of your chosen media as to who sees your message.

Printed material gets thrown out, newspapers rarely last more than a few days, exhibition material is only seen by those people who attend for a day or two and radio advertising is heard by the small percentage of your target market who happen to be listening to that particular station, at the right time. ***In most cases, a week after your message is printed or aired it's forgotten!***





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Online your reach stretches much further with a potentially international audience and the viral nature of web content can mean that your message is passed on to people who you have never had any contact with.

You can repeat the same message in many places and the build-up of information about you on the web stays around for a long time.

The cost of online marketing is only your time! Create a web page for a particular offer or service and then promote it in many places – as many times as you want to. It can appear on your blog, through Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and on other social media. If you use these media well people will be interested in your promotions – as long as you don't use them solely to sell.

Advertising online costs money, but with the right ad and placement it can earn much more than the ad costs. Google Adwords and Facebook ads can be very effective – but can also be a quick way to spend a lot of money with little return. My advice is to get an expert with a proven track record to give you a much better chance of success.

Of course, knowing how to use the various media and understanding what you want to get from them is essential before you get started.

You're aiming to tick the four RAVE boxes:

- R Reputation – you're controlling it**
- A Authority – the go-to person in your industry**
- V Visibility – so people don't forget you if you have a busy period**
- E Expertise – demonstrating that you 'know your stuff'.**

This report has models and worksheets to help you get focused and get started, regardless of the size of your business.

Step 0: Where are you going?

Before you start thinking about how you connect with potential clients, you should have invested some time in thinking about your business's path.

Where are you going?

What does success look like?

Where do you want to be in 6 month - a year - 3 years - 5 years - 10 years? Not just the business, but you personally?

If you haven't done your personal goals, now would be a good time to invest at least half a day in thinking about these. Most people struggle with a blank sheet of paper, so here are some headings to help you to focus.

You may have many or no goals under each heading. The best way to do this is to find a space where you'll be uninterrupted, gather paper, pens, pencils, coloured highlighters and sticky notes.



Explore:

- Financial goals (for yourself and your family) - what do you want your monthly income to be?

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- Education goals - what do you want to learn about (business and personal)? What courses do you want to attend? Where do you find the learning you want?
- Personal goals - where do you want to travel to? What lifestyle changes would you like to make? What relationships do you want to develop, nurture or improve?
- Health - what level of fitness do you want to achieve or maintain? What do you want to improve in what and how you eat? What checks do you want to have in place?
- Domestic - what changes do you want to make to your home, garden or living situation?
- Material - this is your shopping list, from new clothes to a new car and anything else you think you want. Don't hold back!
- Career - whether you're self-employed, a director of your own business or an employee, this is where you take a look at what path you see your career taking. Do you want to be a bigger boss, have a team of staff working for you or work a 16 hour week?
- Business - last, but not least! This is your picture of what your business will become over the next few months - and perhaps longer term too.

I revisit my goals every 3-4 months, to take into account changing circumstances, things that have been achieved, things I want to add, things that I realise aren't as important as I'd thought, etc.

I love a keyboard, but I prefer to use pen and paper for this exercise. You're using your creative brain more when you're writing than when you're typing.



I head one sheet of paper with each of the above headings and write everything down I can think of, even if I don't think it's critically important, just get it all down. When I can't think of anything else, I get a cup of coffee and come back to go through my lists. Quite often something else will have popped up by now - and I just add those things onto the relevant lists.

Now get out your coloured highlighters and assign a colour to **TOP PRIORITY**, another colour for **mid-range goals** and yet another colour for **'nice, but not necessary'**. Now go through your lists and highlight EVERY item according to these three categories.

There is no need to have some of every level on every page, you may have some pages with no top priority goals and some where nearly all are top priority.



When you're finished assigning categories to everything on your lists, take all the Top Priority goals and rank them in order. I use sticky notes to do this on a wall or notice board as it makes sorting out the order easy, as you take each one and decide if it's more or less important than the one at the top and work down until you find the right place in the list. Sticky notes make moving the order around easy.

When you have a ranked order, it's time to turn each goal in to an action plan.

You can't do a goal, but you can do the activities that move you towards its achievement.

Every activity needs a deadline. Then you can assign tasks to time slots in your diary, so they get done. Using this approach will make achieving goals almost effortless. Do the small things, the phone call, the checking information online, the email - and you'll achieve far more than you ever thought possible in just a few weeks!

Now let's move on to the reputation marketing part, where we get more specific.

Step 1: Focus

There's a well-known cliché 'If you don't know where you're going, any road will get you there'. This is the danger of social media – a lack of focus can result in you putting in quite a bit of effort and getting little or no results. This is why so many people think it's waste of time.

Know your ideal client

For each product or service you offer you need to know exactly what your dream client or customer looks like.

If this is a challenge then think of the best client you've ever had and describe:

- Type of industry (e.g. accountancy, logistics, HR consultancy, coach):
- Style of owner/decision maker (e.g. outgoing entrepreneur, financial genius, specialist, geek):
- Number of staff:
- Approximate annual turnover:
- Geographic location:
- Number of premises:



Depending on the products or services you offer you may have more things you can add to this list.

Then you also need to describe:

The biggest problems this owner/decision maker suffers from – what irritates them, frustrates them, keeps them awake at night in relation to your products or services?

With this information you are well armed to start planning your marketing campaign.

You can download the free worksheet *7 simple steps to attract lots of lovely new customers* from [the Treasure Chest](#)

What happens if I have more than one ideal client?

Do the exercise for EACH of them!

Sorry, nobody said creating a successful business would be easy!!

Download the worksheet document to ensure you have all the information you will need.

DON'T DO THIS IN YOUR HEAD – WRITE IT DOWN!

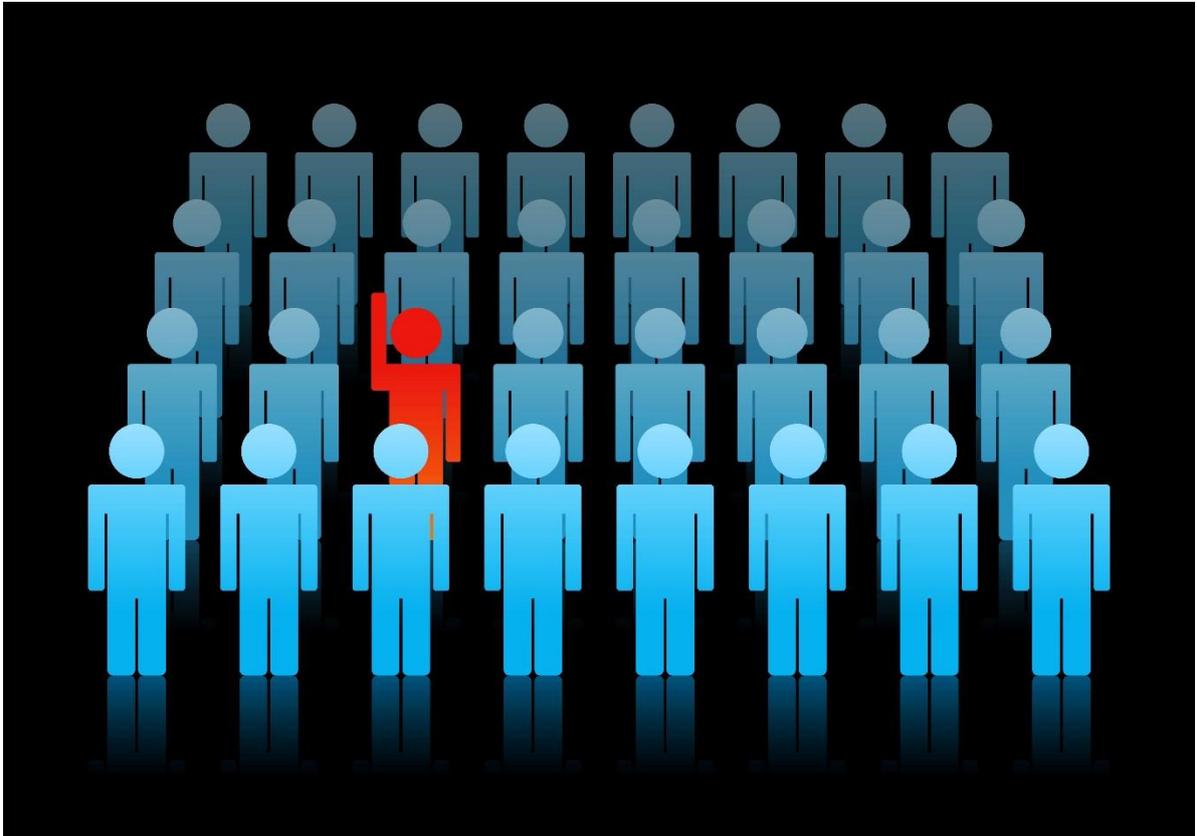
Once you've identified your target audience work around this model for each product or service you deliver. You may be able to apply this to groups of products/services – only you can decide; just remember that shortcuts know will result in poor results later.





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Step 2: Why you?



Be clear about what you can offer that is different or better than your competitors. We all have a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) – what is yours? If you're not sure ask your existing and former customers why they like what you offer so much.

Sometimes it's YOU – people like the way you handle things making you your own USP. Beware of this if you are trying to grow into a larger organisation with a team as this can make it tougher as customers don't want to deal with anyone else – but it can be got over with a little creativity.

If you look at the model on the previous page you need to be clear on:

3. Their problems
4. Your solutions
5. The benefits of your solutions.



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If you know how to solve a potential clients problem and can demonstrate you understand the problem thoroughly and know how to deliver some positive advantages by solving the problem, why NOT you?

That's why you need to ensure that part of your online plan to market your reputation includes evidence that you understand a range of problems that are causing your client stress, frustration and headaches – and know how to solve them.

Step 3: Track down your prospects

Once you know who you're looking for you'll need to think about where to find them. Think about:

- Where they network offline? Look at
 - Professional bodies and associations
 - Groups that cater for companies with exactly this kind of profile.
- Where they're active online?
 - Which social media platforms are they on?
 - What kind of blogs do they read?
 - Which groups are they members of?
 - Which forums are they active in?



If you are selling direct to other businesses (B2B) you'll probably find more of your ideal clients on professional platforms like LinkedIn.

If you're selling directly to the consumer (B2C) you're more likely to find an eager audience on Facebook.

This doesn't mean you should ignore any platform, but explore the ones that are a better source of potential customers and focus on them first. A good place to start are the most popular social media platforms (see page 6).

What groups are your target audience active in on LinkedIn? How can you add value for them?



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Which pages have a community of potential customers on Facebook (besides your own page)? How can you be a valuable part of that community?

Eventually you'll want to have your own community, but if you're just getting started there are plenty of opportunities to join an existing one and show off your knowledge.

WARNING! This does not mean you can SELL at them – but the more help you offer, the higher your status as an expert will rise.

Step 4: Develop your strategy

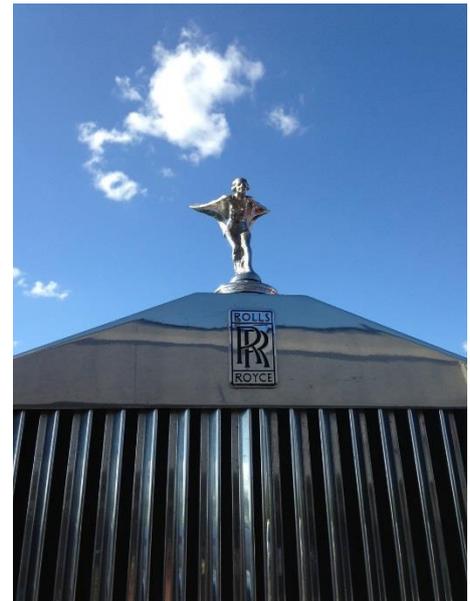
Prepare your 'shop front'

It doesn't matter if this is a real shop or a metaphorical one, you need to be ready to be seen by potential customers so you will need:

- A brand and identity
- Appropriate good quality business stationery
- A website

You won't get the instant recognition the Rolls Royce logo gets, but if you're consistent, people will start to recognise your brand and the look and feel of your business.

These need to be all ready to go BEFORE you start marketing or you could find all your marketing effort is wasted if people are underwhelmed by your visible identity.



Understand the options

There's so many things that you *could* do that it would be very easy to spend several hours a day doing online marketing. You need to decide what will work best for you, what you feel able to maintain and the time investment and skill base you'll need to do it.

Before you jump in you will need to know what all the online 'tools' can do and what their reach and lifespan is likely to be.

Some of your options are:

- **Twitter**
- **A Facebook Page**
- **Instagram**
- **LinkedIn**
- **Pinterest**
- **Blogging**

- **Article marketing**
- **Email marketing**
- **Newsletters**
- **Squeeze pages on your website**

... and there are many more!

Don't do something just because someone has said you should. Try to understand each tool first and then decide whether it will work for you.

Establishing goals

What would you like your online marketing to generate for you? If you haven't established the goals it's going to be hard to work out what you need to do to achieve them.

At this stage – without a clear understanding of all the tools – it's going to be hard to work out how to achieve them, but as a business you should know roughly how many sales you need to make each month and what your typical conversation rate is.

If, for example, you need to sell 100 units (or hours of time as a service) and your usual conversion rate is 1 sale from every 5 enquiries, then you need to have 500 enquiries a month. These may come from a variety of sources – and, of course, you know where they come from currently (if you don't it's a good habit to get into to track where your business comes from). This will give you your return on investment figures for your current marketing methods.

You'll need to do the same for your online marketing – if you are spending 3 hours a week and an hour of your time is worth £100, you'll need to make about £1200 a month from sales to cover your investment – anything more than that is a bonus.

Remember that marketing is not sales. Marketing is about raising your profile, educating your target market, developing your brand, creating awareness of your expertise and making the right connections. That doesn't mean you won't make sales, but it shouldn't be your primary focus.

Bear in mind that this is not a quick fix – establishing your online profile will take time and will pay off better the longer you work at it.





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Measuring results

Remember a good goal is not just an outcome, it includes a deadline and some indication of the means of achievement (i.e. tools, people, resources). There's more about this in Step 5!

How will you measure the results from the activities that you've chosen? How much time are you prepared to give the activity to 'work'?

Activity	Measurement	Frequency	Deadline for achievement of goal

When you've done these exercises your strategy is in place. Now you've just got to make it work!

Step 5: Put your plan together

This is where you decide the best ways to reach your ideal audience. This might be a combination of things and could include any combination of the items in the model on the next page.

When you choose which activities you intend to include in your plan keep in mind what you've already found out about your audience – make sure you are active in the right places and are approaching them in a way that they're comfortable with.

The tools of your campaign

You'll need a website because that's usually where most people go to check you out and will need to select the most appropriate **for your audience** of these marketing activities:





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If you've worked through the first four steps you should have a clear picture of:

- What outcomes you want to achieve
- What online activities you want to do
- Where to find your ideal clients gathered
- How you'll track progress
- How often you'll review the activities and outcomes

It's time to get started!

The next step is to explore how you'll deliver to meet your targets.

- How much time each requires to set up
- How much time it will take daily, weekly and monthly to maintain
- Who will be responsible for day to day activity
- How your own input will be managed

Now you need to work out what sort of small chunks you can split the setting up, one-off tasks into and when you'll do them. You need to decide who will be responsible for managing your online marketing, but that doesn't mean that they will end up doing it all.

The time investment



All marketing has a time element involved. When you are learning how to use some of these tools and starting to get comfortable with how they work you'll probably need to make a one-off investment of time to go through the initial learning curve.

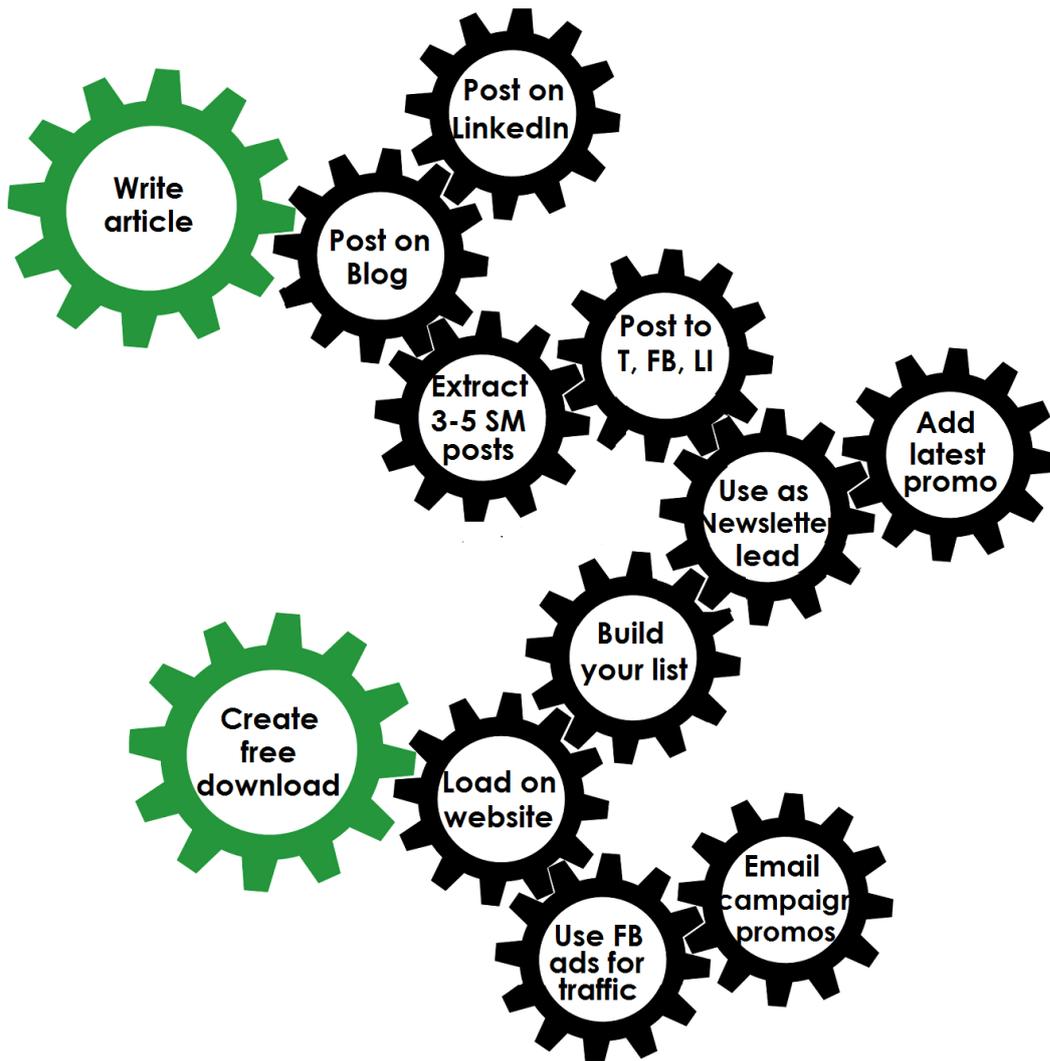
Once you know your way around you'll find it all much quicker. You'll also establish systems and processes for your online marketing. For instance, I have a spreadsheet with all the posting dates of my existing tips. I post 7 tips a day Monday to Thursday and a blog on Monday morning. This all takes me about an hour to post and schedule first thing on a Monday then I can focus my daily activities on review and response.

The easiest way to remember your new marketing habits is to attach them to your existing email 'habit'. When you do your email, check your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn traffic. There are tools to make all this easy – it's just a case of remembering to do it.

Get proficient with your smartphone and use that when you're on the train, waiting to meet someone or have a break and a coffee.

Leverage your time

Don't reinvent the wheel, use piece of content and reuse it in several ways. This diagram will outline one system that has only two inputs (the green cogs), with lots of potential outputs.





Setting things up

Activity	When?	How long?	Who?

Managing and maintaining

Regular tasks	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Day/date/time
Total time investment				



Who is responsible?

If it's your business, the buck stops with you so it is your responsibility to establish the strategy and do the planning, but that doesn't mean you have to do it all yourself.

Yes, you can delegate some of this! If you have a member of staff, a marketing service or a specialised social media service they can help you to plan and will manage some of it. However, they can't BE you. Sometimes you will need to be prepared to get involved and respond to people who are asking questions that only you can answer. You'll need a strategy for this too.

Information that is going out can be managed by someone else in your organisation, a virtual assistant or a social media service. The challenge is that all these media tend to revolve around a *personal* profile and that means that people who know you expect YOU to respond to them. This means that you need to have a system that allows you to be involved in the review and response part of the process.

If you engage someone else to manage your online marketing it's important that you give them a very clear brief as to what you are expecting them to do and to achieve. There have been many people who have invested considerable time and money in trying to promote their businesses online, but they've virtually abdicated all responsibility to the person doing the job – simply because they don't really understand what it's all about.



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Finally ...

Don't get overwhelmed – it's a new way of doing business and it's going to be around for quite a while. If you get involved now and master it, you'll be ahead of the crowd and be ready for the next phase when online marketing leaps up another level.

The secrets of success are:

- Knowing what you're aiming to achieve.
- Having a plan to get you there.
- Being consistent and sticking at it.

Follow these steps and you'll create a marketing plan that works for you, without spending all day, every day on it.

Good luck!

Lesley Morrissey runs Inside News, a boutique agency specialising in reputation marketing. The team focuses generating content to:

*Take control of your **Reputation***

*Become the **Authority** in your field*

*Maintain your **Visibility***

*Demonstrate your **Expertise***

She is a copywriter and an expert in readability. She helps business owners to develop websites that engage, inform and persuade.



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