

WHY BRIAN WILLIAMS NEEDS REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

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Brian Williams—the suave face of *NBC Nightly News* and one of the nation’s favorite reporters (until now) was recently suspended from NBC for 6 months without pay. This occurred after [he falsely reported coming under fire in a US military helicopter](#) during the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Williams earnestly recanted his story, but the damage was done. After more than 22 years of praise for his high levels of journalistic excellence, his reputation has crumbled. Here’s a closer look as to why Williams could benefit from some reputation management.



Brian Williams, the anchor and managing editor of NBC Nightly News, faces 6 months of suspension.

What Is Reputation Management?

Reputation management is the influencing and control of an individual's or business's reputation in the public eye. This was originally meant to be a public relations term, but now falls almost entirely under the Internet and social media umbrella, and is referred to as online reputation management

(ORM). As the Internet has become more popular, ORM has shifted towards online search results, review sites, and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

What Folks Are Finding on Google

Take a closer look at Williams's online reputation. Try a Google search for "Brian Williams." As of now, the entire first page of results are dedicated entirely to the current scandal. The overwhelming negative search results continue on to the second page, third page, fourth page, and beyond.

Wow. That's a lot of bad press Mr. Williams!

It's the same with any business. When a consumer types in the business's name, what search results will they find? Will it be the business's website, or will it be a bitter customer complaint posted on a popular review site?

With the rise of blogging, it is only too easy for any disgruntled individual to tarnish a business or product's good name. In fact, it's not unheard of for a group of individuals with a vendetta to band together with a mission to destroy a company's reputation online in order to profit from the company's shorted stock.

It's a frightening truth, but a solid reputation that took years to build can literally be destroyed in mere seconds—just as Williams discovered.



What do consumers find when they search for your business or name online?

Negative Reputation: A Domino Effect

According to a [Rasmussen Reports Survey](#), 40% of Americans think Williams should step down from his role as star anchor and managing editor at *Nightly News*. 800 adults took place in the survey, which was conducted in early February. 35% of those surveyed disagreed, leaving 25% who were unsure.

For years, Williams has been the most watched news anchor in the U.S. His fall from grace has been jarring. To put it simply, one slip-up was like the tipping of a domino—to the point where Williams's career and reputation has fallen into serious jeopardy.

It's the same with any brand. Consumers spend a significant amount of time researching a product online before buying. Even if the product is superb, it only takes 1 harsh review to change a consumer's mind. Oftentimes, negative reviews create a more powerful impact than positive ones. Negative feedback can, *and most certainly will*, lead to loss of revenue.

Avoid the domino effect with the help of an ORM specialist.



What Does an ORM Specialist Do?

An ORM specialist does everything in their power to gain the maximum control possible for their client. In essence, they work to improve what others see about the client online. Specialists use a number of different techniques to shove negative content down into the dark recesses of search engine results. These techniques could include social media intervention, microsites, [mobile feedback and reviews](#), press releases, and more. The end goal is to ensure that the public's opinion is in line with their client's goals.

With [ORM](#), careful steps are taken to identify what people are saying or expressing about an individual or business. Whenever a nasty review or blog crops up online, they catch it right away. This allows the client to reach out and address the concern with consumers, so they can salvage and improve relationships. Negative reviews can be damaging, but proper steps can be taken to keep them from snowballing into something worse.

There's a pretty good chance that Williams's new bff is an ORM specialist.

Why Reputation Management Is Crucial

ORM is crucial for any business or name that relies heavily on their online presence. Take a business owner for example. Many SMBs don't even realize that they need to be concerned with their online reputation until they begin finding a string of bad customer reviews or complaints across social media. Constructive criticism can be a good thing—it can help a business to measure where they're at and make changes to get themselves on the right path—but when this turns to defamatory remarks or slanderous accusations, a business's strong brand can be severely compromised.

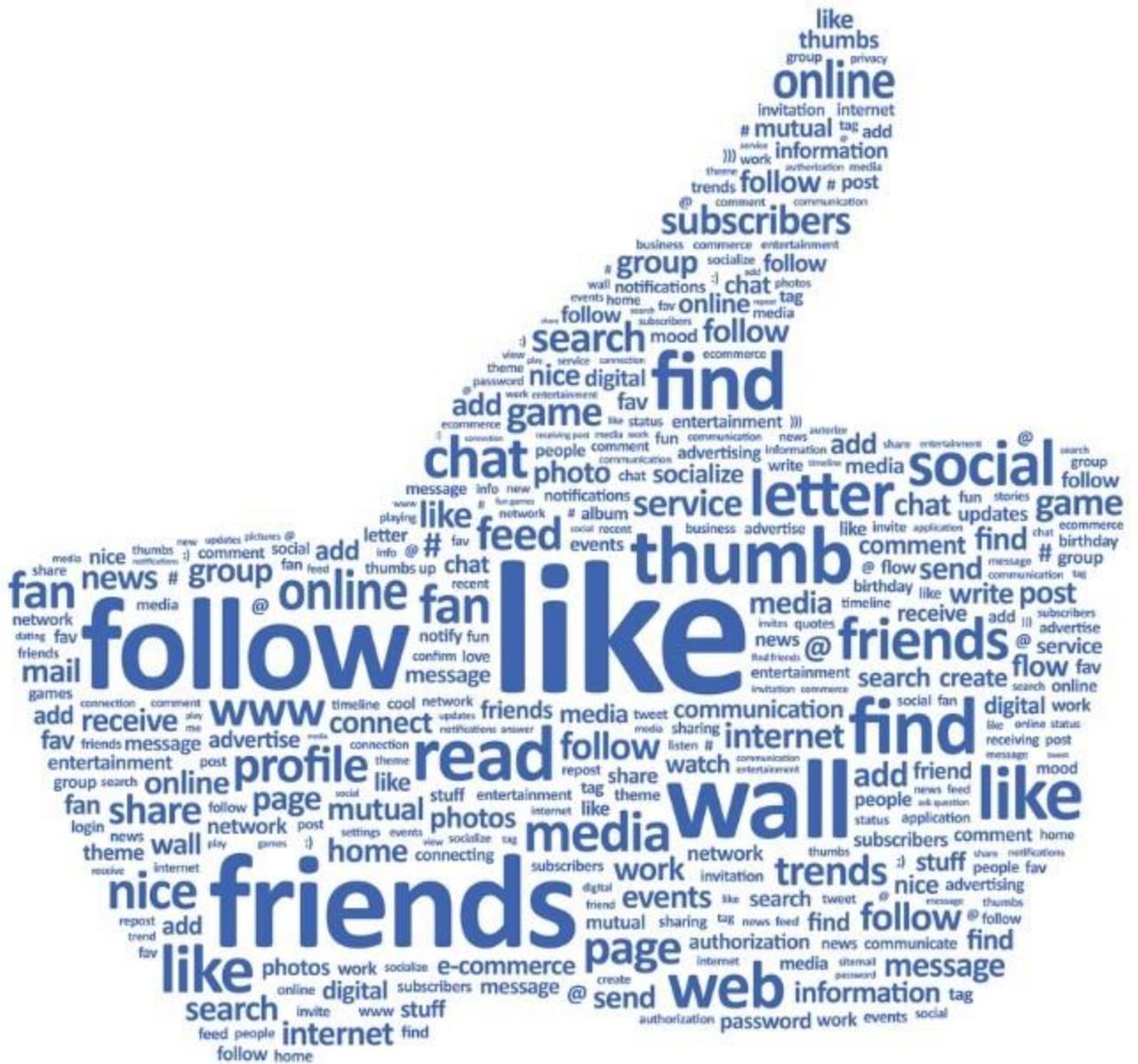
What's worse, negative reviews and feedback are oftentimes found on websites, like Angie's List and Yelp, which tend to rank well in search results. Anyone doing a search for the business will inevitably stumble across the negative reviews, even if they are false. ORM can help businesses to avoid the pitfalls associated with this.



An ORM specialist works to improve their client's online image.

The Benefits of Reputation Management

ORM not only works to minimize the negative, but a strategist will also highlight the good about your name or brand. [Word-of-mouth-marketing](#) is one of the most effective sources of marketing out there. You know your customers are talking about your products or services online. When you have happy customers, your ORM strategist will celebrate your success stories online. As more and more customers discover that they can rely on your products or services, they'll continue to [spread the good word](#). An ORM specialist will capitalize and build on the positive. This will lead to increased conversion and customer retention. Moving a brand from the shadows of a negative light into a positive one is truly priceless.



ORM specialists are pros when it comes to fortifying their client's impressive reputation.

Just because Brian William's online reputation looks like a train wreck, doesn't mean yours has to. Give us a buzz at OrangeSoda to enlist the help of our reputation management specialists today.