



# Five tips for protecting your reputation online

Insights Paper  
Reputation  
Management  
2018

With the popularity of social media, reputation damage online can be swift and fierce. Something as simple as a mismanaged response to a tweet or a Facebook criticism can quickly snowball into an online reputation crisis within a matter of minutes. Five tips that will help protect your company's reputation online are:

## 1. Audit your company's online vulnerability

Know your current vulnerabilities and address them early to reduce the risk of any negative impact on your company's reputation. A vulnerability audit will identify your existing risks, both online and offline.

### *During an audit:*

- Consider the risks that could impact your brand reputation, online security, crisis response and social media governance
- Rank each risk by likelihood and consequence and identify control measures
- Determine the daily operational

procedures for your social media platforms

- Review your social media policy processes and responsibilities
- Review your existing crisis management plans and training schedule to ensure social media is an essential element.

It is important your company is able to identify the early signs and has the correct procedures and competencies in place to handle all matters.

## 2. Monitor, follow and analyse the conversation

When your customers, competitors or stakeholders are talking about your company, you need to know about it. Ensure your online monitoring is capturing mentions of your company's name, product or service name, industry, your own personal name, names of key employees and your competitors. Analyse your monitored results to determine which social media platforms your customers prefer, how these customers engage with your



brand, what the regular complaints are, and how to leverage positive posts.

### 3. Train and enforce a company-wide social media policy

Does your company have a social media policy? Do your employees understand how it applies to them in and out of the workplace?

A comprehensive policy outlining the company's expectations on the use of social media is imperative to ensure all employees understand their responsibilities and accountabilities.

### 4. Undertake social media crisis planning and training

Establish a team that knows how to respond quickly and effectively to criticisms, complaints and larger social media issues.

#### *Consider:*

- Any current known risks and how you want to address them
- Who will be part of your social media crisis team and what their roles will be
- How to use your website, Facebook and Twitter accounts to communicate with your audiences
- How to communicate with various stakeholders, including board members and customers
- Preparing pre-written templates or messages
- The structure of the approval chain in a time-poor environment
- Who will be your nominated spokesperson
- Logistics for monitoring social media around the clock.

### 5. Reputation management begins offline

Focus on your employees, customers and clients to gauge their perceptions of your company and how you can improve. Conduct employee and customer research to elicit views on your company, its current reputation, performance and future.

Compare the findings with your views on how you want the company to be perceived and address any procedures or performance concerns as necessary.

Phillips Group's services include social media auditing, digital and online strategy development, content development and enrichment, search engine optimisation and specialist research and monitoring to manage your online reputation.

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