



Managing your online reputation

FOR FINANCIAL ADVISERS

For financial advisers today, it is fair to assume that the Internet – and in particular Google search pages - is your new shop window. It is where your potential customers go to find out about you and your services. It's where they discover what other customers think about you and seek reassurance that they're making the right decision to do business with you.

Ensuring you present those customers with a positive first impression isn't optional anymore. If your online presence is not positive, current, accurate and easy for customers to find then your company will be losing business.

Adviser firms can't simply rely on word of mouth and networking to attract new business, while ignoring anything negative that is said about them online. While personal recommendations remain very important, much of this now happens digitally, so a successful customer acquisition strategy must have at its heart a consistent and positive online presence.



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What is online reputation management?

Overview

Online reputation management means shaping and maintaining the consumer's perception of your brand on the internet. It covers how your business appears on:

- your website
- social media channels
- search engines
- external review sites
- business listings standard

In this guide we are going to take you through some practical steps that you can implement today to support your business, boost your online reputation and manage and encourage reviews.



ways to improve your search engine results

- 1** Claim your business profile with Google My Business
- 2** Use paid Google Ads
- 3** Improve your website's SEO
- 4** Create Social Media channels
- 5** List yourself on well-regarded sites like Wikipedia
- 6** List your business on directories
- 7** List your business on comparison sites

How easy is it for customers to find you online? Most web users don't go past the second page of a Google search, making it crucial that your business appears in various ways across these first 2 pages.

Take a look at this Google screen shot below for the search term "RL360". We will then walk you through the steps to take to mirror this page brand dominance for your own business.

Google

About 113,000 results (0.57 seconds)

2 Ad • <https://www.rl360.com/savings/investments> ▾
RL360 Financial Solutions - RL360 Isle of Man
 With a head office in Isle of Man, our Policyholders have security and peace of mind. We aim to deliver exceptional financial solutions to our customers around the world. Saving Plans for Expats. Offshore Advantage. Global Presence. Isle of Man Location. Expat Finances.

3 <https://www.rl360.com> ▾
RL360: International Life Assurance Company
 RL360 is an international life assurance company providing life assurance, offshore savings and offshore investment products to expats & high net worth ...

4 <https://www.facebook.com> ▾
RL360 - Home | Facebook
 RL360° is one of the fastest growing international life companies, with offices around the globe and policyholders residing in 170 countries at all points of the ...

5 <https://en.wikipedia.org> ▾
RL360° - Wikipedia
 RL360 Insurance Company Limited (RL360°) is an international offshore savings, protection and investment provider, headquartered in the Isle of Man serving ...

Related searches

Goooooogole >
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Next

1

RL360
 Website Directions Save Call
 4.0 ★★★★★ 34 Google reviews
 Insurance company in Douglas

Address: International House, Cooil Road Douglas IM, IM2 2SP
Hours: Open · Closes 5PM ▾
Phone: 01624 681682

Suggest an edit · Own this business?

Know this place? Share the latest info

Questions & answers
 Be the first to ask a question

Send to your phone

Reviews
 34 Google reviews

People also search for

Platinum Insurance (Isle of M... Insurance broker
 Kestrel Insurance Insurance broker
 Zurich Internatio... Insurance company
 Isle of Man Assurance Limited Insurance agency
 NFU Mutual Isle of Man Home insurance agency

About this data

See results about

RL360 RL360°
 RL360 Insurance Company Limited is an international offshore savings, protection ...

1 Claim your business profile with Google My Business



Customers expect you to have an online presence beyond your own website. Whenever anyone searches for your company on Google, invariably your Google My Business (GMB) listing is the first thing they will see. This panel is also known as Google Knowledge and can appear at the top of the page or to the right-hand side of other organic search results. If Google search is your shop window, then this is your awning. It provides a chance to make a great first impression.

We encourage you to own your GMB listing and add photos and a link to your website, update your business hours and vital business information such as what services you offer. These listings serve as a virtual billboard for prospective customers who want to find you quickly and easily.

If your business has multiple physical locations, you will want to claim each one separately.

How?

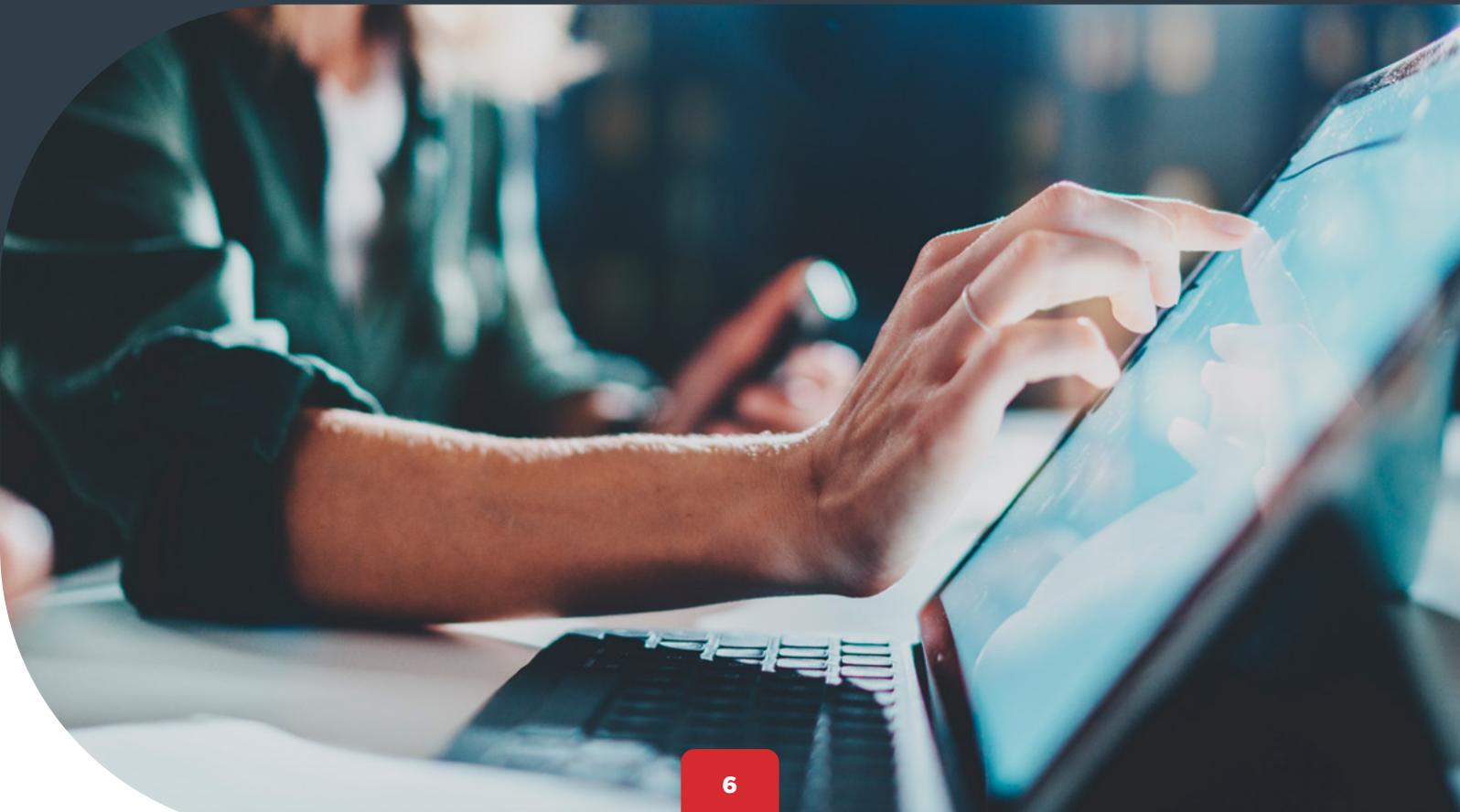
An easy way to claim your business is to go to Google Maps and find your physical location. Right click on the address and select “Add your business”. From there you will be instructed to provide further information and set up a GMB profile.

When the listing is verified, you can then add all the details specific to your company. Viola!

2 Use paid Google Ads

Paid Google Ads provide a fast way to dominate the top of the search engine page and give you control over how your brand appears to customers. However, it is easy to waste money if you don't know what you are doing so it's worth getting some professional advice to make the most of the opportunity.

Google Ads are bought on a pay per click model. To participate you will enter a live auction to bid against other companies wanting to appear at the top of Google for any given key word. Paying for your company's brand name should be relatively affordable - however paying for a term like 'financial adviser' will cost a lot more. Clicks can cost from as little as £0.20 up to £10.



3 Improve your website's SEO

The way your website is constructed can make a big difference to how easily your business will be found by search engines. The steps you can take to make your site more visible to search engines like Google is called Search Engine Optimisation (SEO).

Begin by ensuring your website is secure (https not http) and accessible, is mobile friendly and will load quickly.

Create a list of keywords (or key phrases) that you want your business to be known for. These keywords should be prominent in your website, in your page headings and in your content and copy. You will need to optimise your title tags, alt image text and meta descriptions.

Create a list of companies you partner with and consider whether you could ask them to have a link on their site that will connect to yours (a backlink). Backlinks are like a vote of confidence for your website, especially if they come from websites with a lot of traffic and relevance to your business.

Ask your developer to expand out your website site links. RL360 benefits from having expanded Google sitelinks on their main business website listing (see number 3 on the image on page 4).

Finally, make sure your website is easy to use for those who don't work at your company. Ideally, ask a customer to test your menu navigation and see if they can find information easily. Pay particular focus on how customers can get in touch if they have a query. This should be as easy as 2 to 3 clicks at the most.



4 Create Social Media channels



If you have not created social media profiles for your brand yet, you are missing out on a lot of exposure, because social profiles rank well on search engine results.



Remember when a potential customer searches for your business name, you want to take up as much of the 'real estate' on that front page of Google results as possible. In RL360's case, we have created social profiles on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn.



It's important for you to be in control of these channels, monitor what is being said about you and steer the conversations in positive directions.

Recognise though that once you have created a social media channel you will need to post relevant content on a regular basis. It is an ongoing commitment.



If you wanted to get started with just one channel, then think about where your customers spend most their social media time and whether this environment is the right spot to be talking about your business.

Create a social media calendar to plan and schedule new and interesting content. This content can sit in various forms across social channels and link through to your website.

5 List yourself on well-regarded sites like Wikipedia

Listing your business on a well-regarded, high traffic sites like Wikipedia will build a high Domain Authority (DA) for your website which is a very good thing. DA is a ranking metric that shows your website's expertise about a particular topic.

Extremely popular and reputable websites – such as the BBC or Financial Times – carry a very high DA and these sites therefore rank highly.

To list your business on Wikipedia you will need to first create an account. There are companies who can help you create a Wikipedia page.



Remember that Wikipedia doesn't allow opinion-based writing and marketing is prohibited, so when writing for this channel stick to the facts and strive to be informative.

6 List your business on directories

If you can identify local listings and/or directories you may be able to build links to your own website. It is an inexpensive way to enhance your reputation, gain more website traffic, get more phone calls and build consistent contact information.

There are various sites where you can list your business for free. These differ by country.

7 List your business on comparison sites

In every country there are comparison sites already created that you can tap into and benefit from their established traffic levels.

Some sites may charge you to list your business and take a cut from the leads that they send in your direction.

However, remember if you don't participate, there is every chance that your competitors will.

It is worth taking a look at how your competitors have presented themselves, what services they are publicly offering and how you could stand out if compared side by side on a computer screen.

Online

customer

reviews



Whether we like it or not, blogs and online reviews of businesses, products and services are a fact of life. Customers have a wide choice of sites where they can leave their opinion on the service they have received.

Reviews posted on sites like Google, Facebook and Trustpilot play an important role in consumers' purchase decisions. Positive online reviews help consumers trust a business, influence their opinions, and lead many to make decisions on whether to use or avoid a business before ever getting in touch with them.

People have always talked about brands, whether that be exchanging recommendations, talking about TV adverts, or mentioning their own experience of a brand. Today many of these discussions happen – publicly – online and on social media. You now have a chance to monitor, understand and influence these conversations.

Look out for mentions, tags, comments, and direct messages about your brand and respond to them promptly.

Set up 'Google alerts' to discover your brand mentions in real time. Or you can even use paid media monitoring services, which will send you alerts when your brand is mentioned online or on social media.

The key is to be aware of what is being said about you, allowing you the opportunity to respond quickly. This is particularly important if the mention of your brand is negative or potentially damaging.

Of course, being aware of what's being said about you is only one part of the solution. Knowing how to respond to these mentions is even more important.



Do online reviews matter?

Yes: online reviews do not get lost in all the Internet noise. According to the Local Consumer Review Survey from BrightLocal (Murphy, 2020), 91% of people read online reviews, and 84% trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.

Receiving the occasional negative review is a fact of life for every company - sometimes things go wrong, or a customer may have unrealistic expectations of what they have chosen to invest in. Prospective customers won't be too concerned if they see an overall 4 stars out of 5 review score for your brand on Google or Trustpilot. However, their alarm bells

Alarm bells will be ringing if your company has an average review score of 1.5 or 2 out of 5.

will be ringing if your company has an average review score of 1.5 or 2 out of 5. It's therefore vital to include online review management as part of your overall marketing strategy.



ways to influence customer reviews:

1 Respond to positive reviews and comments

Replying to reviews and comments helps build trust and leaves a good impression, so it's a good practice to always respond to reviews.

According to BrightLocal, 89% of consumers read businesses' responses to reviews, so platforms like Trustpilot, Yelp, Facebook and Google are an essential avenue for cementing your brand identity and forging connections to your customers.

Responding to a positive review is straight-forward - a short, polite acknowledgement thanking them for their review is all you need to do.

2 View negative comments as an opportunity

Try to view negative reviews as an opportunity, not a problem. It may be a chance to quickly right a wrong, or it may highlight at an early stage a wider problem that may be affecting a larger number of customers. Responding quickly and resolving these issues efficiently can often turn a negative into a positive.

Don't ignore a negative review

Nothing frustrates an angry customer more than being ignored. Responding to it quickly, ideally through awesome customer service and taking the conversation off-line.

Responding promptly shows customers you're attentive and lets others know you care about their experience with your business.

How to respond

If it's a genuine query or concern, let them know that their complaint has been heard and you're going to do something about it, even if it's as simple as, "We're going to talk to the people involved and take a closer look at our policies around XYZ."

Listen, ask questions, and then validate the customer's feelings. Say, for example, "It must have been frustrating for you to not be able to...". Once the customer is happy, you can then politely ask them to edit their rating.

A key objective is to move the conversation offline, away from the public gaze. Ask the customer to respond to your Customer Service email address or in a private message, rather than continuing the conversation in public view.

Decide how to deal with toxic or defamatory posts

While we advise you to reply to all legitimate and genuine negative reviews, there is an exception that proves the rule.

If a review includes derogatory or degrading comments and the language and opinions are irrational, then however you reply you are likely to further fan the flames.

In these situations, it may be advisable not to respond. In extreme cases, where a review may be libellous, it may be worth seeking legal advice to take steps to get the post removed.



3 Encourage positive reviews

We must start by acknowledging the elephant in the room - customers are more motivated to post a review if they have received poor service than if they receive good service.

This can be very frustrating for companies who have an overwhelming (but silent) majority of happy customers, and a very small, but vocal group of unhappy customers. So how can we encourage happy customers to provide a positive review?

First, you need to make it easy for them to do so. Provide links to your review sites.

Identify customers who have expressed satisfaction or have received particularly excellent customer service from you. Ask them for a review in a timely manner soon after they receive the good service.

Consider incentivising customers too – perhaps through a competition which is entered simply by leaving a review. Think about approaching business partners and staff to leave a review where it's appropriate to do so.

As much as 70% of reviews come from post-transactional review requests, as opposed to purely organic, uninvited reviews. There are many methods you can use to encourage reviews when there has been a successful interaction with customers:

- In an email (with links to the appropriate review site helpfully included). You can also create email signatures with links to social media channels and review pages
- In person at the point of sale
- Through social media
- Over the phone
- In an SMS message
- You can also advertise your review channels:
 - On a business card and other company literature
 - On signage in the business location, particularly your Reception area
 - On your company website. Embed a 'Review us now' button on your website that takes customers directly to the review site
 - Print review flyers and collate those with letters you send to your clients.

Remember too that you can regularly give customers new reasons to review your business (for example when you introduce new offers, products or incentives).

The key here is to balance (and bury) negative posts beneath a greater number of positive reviews. Once you have a positive overall rating you can promote this high level of customer satisfaction in your Marketing materials and pre-sales activity.

Conclusion



We live in the Information Age (or Digital Age) and whether you like it or not, your customers are researching you and your business online. You can positively direct and influence the impression that customers take away if you embrace the techniques discussed in this guide.

So start today by taking control and create a positive online reputation that will become a powerful weapon for customer acquisition and retention.

