

## Barcelona Treball

### Summary of sector trends: Advertising, PR and marketing

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# Managing the online reputation of the company

According to the expert Javier Leyra, online reputation is a result of the sum of all the messages that are issued on a person or a company in the network. The company issues its messages on the Internet but others can do so too. When someone gets all these inputs forms an impression of the company, which is its reputation on-line.

The omnipresent nature of the Internet, which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, allows for dumping a lot of information on the web: opinions about people, companies, products, services, etc. Any message about a company can have a global reach in just a few hours.

This reality forces companies to work proactively to build and manage their reputation in the network. Thus, the conjunction of knowledge, monitoring and control of the network information that particularly affects a company is called online reputation management.

Managing online reputation is not just picking up and following the opinions running through the network, to know whether they affect positively or negatively the image of the company; it also consists of applying techniques to maintaining a good reputation.

Companies should **be aware of the power and influence of the consumer in the network** (social networking platforms, forums, blogs, etc.). In fact, there are concepts that define this new Anglo-Saxon phenomenon. For example, libel, which refers to the action of defamation through harmful written publications for a brand, and Cyberstalking, which are actions of harassment, intended to harm a person or its image through the network.

Building a brand involves substantial expenditure on advertising and marketing, designing communication campaigns in different media, and many efforts of people working in the company. The fact that the Internet is a platform

where opinions can be expressed freely and without limit has generated some concern in businesses. Opinions are a very powerful tools for business promotion when being positive, but harmful when being negative. So, if they are negative, companies must act as quickly and efficiently as possible to mitigate the potential effects. This means publishing communiqués and press releases, improving the service, generating positive perceptions and ensuring that the negative views do not occupy important positions in the search engines. If they are positive, they should be exploited. To do so, they should maximize dissemination or use them as a source for new advertising campaigns to attract new customers.

In this sense, **the management of reputation in the network has become an essential tool for business promotion. Companies see how their sales and brand reputation are collapsed or are multiplied according to the views of consumers.** In fact, over 80% of people look for information on the Internet about a product before buying it<sup>1</sup>.

However, companies must start to manage their offline image (or outside the network, in the real world) to optimize their online reputation. In this sense we must take into account that it is no use investing in cleaning up the company image in the network if their actions or behaviours don't generate a good reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Community manager. Management of virtual communities. Cap. 6. ORM. Reputation Management. Different authors. AERCO PSM. 2012.

## Impact on the sector

The existence of many network tools to post reviews and comments about companies, products and services, has generated the need to invest in managing their reputation. For example, today, and after many years, the publication of the video on YouTube that damaged the image of the Kit Kat Nestlé product, still appears on the first page of Google when you enter the product name in the search machine.

**Large companies already own or have professional teams who are responsible for managing the company's reputation and try to maintain a good image of the brand.**

**SMEs** with less ability to incorporate stably staff in the workforce often **hire specialists in reputation management for hours or outsource services to specialized companies.**

These companies advise or train on online reputation and also offer strategic services to position the company in the network. Specifically, some of the **services that have been generated as a result of the need to manage the reputation** are:

- To diagnose the company's reputation online.
- To develop and implement a strategy to be present in the network and to promote online participation.
- To train the staff dedicated to marketing or business to be able to manage autonomously the company's reputation.
- To advise on the most appropriate tools for reputation management and network presence (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, RSS, social bookmarking, specialized portals, etc.).

- To develop content to mitigate the effects of the negative messages and generate positive perceptions (press releases, news, campaigns, etc.).
- To reposition the brand, company, product or service. This can be done, for example, through advertising campaigns or participation in educational and environmental activities.

In addition, the management of reputation has forced a **large network operators (Google, Yahoo, Facebook) and other companies implement technological solutions to learn and manage information that is published on the network**, for example: googlealerts.com, collecta.com, Topsy, socialmetion.com, etc. They have also developed tools to energize an area of promotion and dissemination of products and services through the Internet, such as Radian 6, Quor 2.0, ASOMO, etc.

Moreover, **the reiteration of the ads has generated some scepticism among consumers.** The repetition of an ad is no longer as effective as it was. **Buzz marketing** appeared in this context, **a technique of spreading and promoting based on person to person exchanging of information, which has found a powerful ally in the network.** Technologies applied to the Buzz marketing can be found, for example, in unofficial web pages of a product, in forums sharing positive opinions about a service or expert blogs capable of generating opinion<sup>2</sup>.

**According to the 2011 Survey of the INE (National Statistics Institute) on domestic equipment and use of information and communication technology, 71.4% of the Spanish population is connected to the Internet every day or 5 days a week. The main service used is find information on goods and services (70.6%).**

**52.3% of Internet users participate in social networks like Facebook or Twitter, creating a user profile, sending messages or making other contributions (making recommendations, giving scores, or formulating opinions).**

## Impact on professional profiles

**The continuously emerging Internet platforms with different features have a high impact on professional profiles managing information online. This requires the continuous training of professionals from different backgrounds and from traditional education, such as journalists or marketing experts, to be aware of new technologies of information management that could impact positively on the reputation of a brand.**

**Communication, teamwork ability, flexibility and negotiation skills are required for these professional profiles.**

Large companies and multinationals have professional teams performing tasks such as the dissemination of the company on the Internet and social networks, and dynamic tracking and image control in the network. These teams consist of community managers, experts on marketing and viral marketing, reputation managers, etc. These profiles are relatively new and, in general, are covered by traditional marketing professionals from the communications sector, public relations or journalism, who have specialized in managing online reputation and related areas. However, there are also professionals trained in the new technologies that have evolved into this new field of activity, based on their specialization.

SMEs, which have less ability to hire, require professionals by hours or specific services to perform these tasks in an integrated manner. Therefore, experts in the management of reputation willing to work in an SME **should be more versatile and have knowledge beyond the management of reputation.** They should supplement their activities with others, for example, traditional marketing, or partial business management, so they must have knowledge on business management.

Thus, in many cases, online reputation management professionals are consultants or community managers who have specialize in data monitoring to acquire information about the company's image in the network. In addition, these professionals need knowledge about web positioning (SEO).

The **online reputation manager is usually a self-employed professional or employee working in a company, specialized in energizing, positioning and managing the brand image in the network, who dominates different data analysis techniques.** Specifically, this professional should be able to get a global and complementary view of the company image on the Internet, to position it in search engines, to interact and participate in networks to generate a

positive perception, and to design online marketing strategies. Also, and more specifically in the field of reputation management, it is necessary to know whose are the key opinion leaders and try to ally with them.

These professionals come from the branches of knowledge of communication, marketing and public relations, and generally have higher qualifications, degrees or diplomas, such as administration and business management or journalism. Thus, reputation management in the network has and will have a significant impact on many of the professional profiles of advertising, public relations and marketing.

Moreover, the reputation management has generated business opportunities in leading technology companies that have developed specific applications to allow for information management. To this end, these professionals require computer skills: they are programmers, software designers or web analysts.

**7.7% of the job vacancies in Infojobs or Infoempleo, in June, July and August of 2012, correspond to the sector of advertising, marketing and public relations. 23.1% of these are vacancies that require professionals capable of performing some of the tasks carried out by the reputation manager.** For example, community managers, web analysts, online media traders, data analysts or SEO analysts, among others.

**More information about the industry is available on the Barcelona Treball website**

Market > Industries > Business services  
[Advertising, PR and marketing](#)

This section of the website contains a report on the industry covering employment aspects, where you can see job files for various job profiles and find out the main resources you need to find work in the industry.

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