



## COMPREHENSIVE CRISIS PLANNING

### ARE YOU PREPARED TO ESCAPE?

- Crisis Mindset
- Core Values
- Trust
- Mission Statements
- Emergency Plan
- Messages
- Media
- Victim Assistance

## **REPUTATION MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN A SOCIAL NETWORKING WORLD**

### **INTERNET ATTACKS**

Smear campaigns work a lot faster these days through cyber-bullying. The American Bar Association Journal shares how the Communications Decency Act of 1996 protects the web platforms from liability when someone decides to make derogatory remarks. The article entitled, *When Web Attacks Can Diminish Your Good Name* written by Barbara Rose defines section 230 of the Communications Decency Act and how websites like AVVO or Yelp are protected through the first amendment. Social networking sites like these have the license to act irresponsibly through the principals of free speech.

This is precisely why we strongly suggest searching Google for your name and/or your company on a regular basis. Both the ABA Journal and Jonathan Fitzgarrald suggest the following tips for easy online reputation management:

- Search your name and know what is said about you. Google ranks its results based on how many sites link to a page where your name occurs. If you opt out, you are allowing someone else define your reputation, says Andy Beal, co-author of *Radically Transparent: Monitoring and Managing Reputations Online*.
- Make yourself the best source of information about you. Post online resumes with a photo on sites like AVVO and LinkedIn. If you are time challenged, hire an intern or an assistant. You can also ask your kids to help—they know how.
- Decide how you want to interact with clients. Social media sites are great marketing tools. If you lack the passion or talent for blogging, hire someone to do it for you.
- If you want full control, focus on your own website. If the site doesn't show up as the first result on your name search, you've failed.
- Join the conversation. Even if you don't tweet or blog, be ready to respond to anything negative or capitalize on the positive. Don't panic or overreact if you discover a negative post. As a first resort, get bad information corrected or taken down.
- Get people to recommend you. One negative post won't hurt you if you have 51 favorable recommendations on LinkedIn. More importantly, the more you add

favorable content in any shape or form, the more likely that something rare and unfavorable can be pushed down to the very end of your Google listings.

- Provide context. You can immunize yourself from the potential harm of a piece of stand-alone negativity. Make sure to present your full career of success and achievement.
- Develop a thick skin. The time may soon come, when so much about our lives is online that a lack of criticism will cause readers to wonder if you have anything to hide.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS**

Veteran business people know that the path to success is through people connections. In the 1980s, the desk rolodex, a telephone, and the first phases of basic email were the conventional ways that business people stayed in contact with their constituents. Desktop software soon made the desk rolodex obsolete with the V-card. Today, social media has allowed executives to have no limitations in their ability to meet people globally. An executive no longer has to “pound the pavement” to make a sales call—they just have to “pound their keyboard.”

### **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn in its simplest form is a “people bank”. When you first begin to use the platform: import your contacts from your email service center (Outlook, AOL, Yahoo etc.). Then post your profile.

#### **Create a good profile**

Fill in the information and LinkedIn displays when you have accomplished 100% of your profile information.

The end goal is that you want to people to find you. You want to be “link bait”. You won’t catch a lot of fish through color commentary, but using specific words in your experience and unique skills certainly will. For example, consider these keywords on a Marriage and Family Therapist’s profile page: professional ethics, depression statistics, inspirational quotes, self fulfillment, psychology today and childcare disputes. Key words for attorneys will depend on their area of practice. It is of utmost importance to use words that highlight the type of products and legal services that potential clients will need. Make sure you input your history thoroughly. For example, a CEO may contact you because you both graduated from John Bowne High School.

### **Groups**

LinkedIn takes prospecting to a new level. The platform makes it easy to fish where the fish are. For example, Personal Injury attorneys may want to focus in on an a recent natural disaster area, where their services are required. View the profiles of decision makers in these industries and explore their groups. These would be logical groups to join.

### Companies

LinkedIn provides the most detailed information about companies in any industry. This function provides you with a virtual room where you can go in and shake hands with people! For example, if you are a family lawyer looking to do business with social worker service companies, you see a list of all the names and titles of all employees' in one click. These service companies may have over 200 employees and you will be able to check employees that are in your LinkedIn network. You can ask anyone in your direct network to make an introduction to someone in a removed network.

### People

Use the “people” tab to find new contacts through search variables such as name, company, city, title, school, groups, industry, keywords and interests. You can input a combination of these variables. For example, you can find the “interests” tab when you use the advanced search tool in your “profile field”. If you input the words “People who love Yosemite”, 1300 people will come up. This is an easy way to develop peer-to-peer business contacts.

### Answering a question

The easiest way to position yourself as a leader and an expert in your profession is through answering questions on LinkedIn. In addition to updating your profile or your status, it keeps you in front of your network connections on a regular basis.

### Facebook

A common question from service professionals is, “We see our kids use Facebook all the time; can we really use this sophomoric platform to generate business?” The answer is “yes”, but you will be doing business in a more relaxed environment. It is similar to playing golf or attending a business related cocktail party.

In the public relations business, journalists now prefer to correspond with their contacts mostly through Facebook. Just like LinkedIn, you cannot become someone’s friend on Facebook unless the recipient accepts your request. Consider these statistics about the power of Facebook:

800 million users by 2012  
4th most trafficked website  
50 million photos shared each day  
Fastest growth among educated professionals in the 30+ age group

A wonderful Facebook feature is that you can set your privacy settings before you start building your network and decide whether you want to display a full profile, a semi-limited profile or a limited profile. You can check what others can see by inputting a friend or colleague's name revealing what they are seeing about you. This feature allows you to decide whether you want to use Facebook for personal, professional or hybrid communications. Many attorneys prefer using Facebook on a professional basis. The profile picture can be the company logo. The profile page would provide the latest information about the legal practice. The "LIKES" (formerly known as fans) are endorsements from friends, colleagues and satisfied customers. The professional Facebook page can include a company website. Check asset protection firm, Klueger and Stein's website on Facebook for further reference. Also, search for The Emergency PR Network on Facebook and join the conversation.

Although there are privacy settings, it is extremely important to keep in mind that every word written and every photo posted on a social networking site is public information. Don't say or display content on any of these platforms that you wouldn't say or display when you are public speaking.

### **Twitter**

Twitter has become the buzzword du jour in both the virtual and physical worlds. The platform is slick, sexy, speedy and celebrity endorsed. Television news anchors are soliciting viewers to follow them for bragging rights about how many followers they have.

Twitter has taken the ability to network in the virtual world to new levels. For those businesses who like LinkedIn—Twitter works similarly to that service as if it were on steroids. There is no social networking service in existence that has the reach and the immediacy provided by Twitter's highly advanced search function. There isn't a search engine in existence that provides Twitter's real-time updates for world events or the latest thoughts on topics.

Setting up an account and beginning to "tweet" is very simple once you learn the lingo and preliminary tips.

### **FIRST LEARN TWITTER SPEAK**

#### **Username**

Use this to brand yourself. If you are not a recognizable public figure, choose a username that is short and identifies what you do. Please follow me @brandmouth

### Follow

Facebook has friends and likes, LinkedIn has connections and Twitter has followers. The general rule of thumb is that if you follow someone on Twitter, there is a 50% chance that they will follow you back. Obviously, if you already have a relationship with someone they will most likely follow you back once you follow them.

### Public contact symbol “@”

This is your public connection tool. When you use @anyone, you are sending a public message.

### Direct messaging

(DM) sends private messages between Twitter users who are following each other.

### Retweet

RT stands for Retweet. This is how people forward Twitter posts they see from someone on Twitter to their own network of friends on Twitter.

### Hashtags

# is the sign for “hashtag.” This is a way for users to categorize their posts for others to view. For example, if you want to connect with people who like Showtime’s Dexter, use #Dexter in your posts. The hashtag is a signal that something is searchable by third parties. Click on the hash tagged phrase and it opens a browser using the search.twitter.com tool to search the hashed phrase.

### Link Shortening

Twitter posts are so brief (limited to 140 characters) limiting the ability to use conventional website addresses. People can use link shorteners like TinyURL or Bit.ly to abbreviate links. Sharing links is a great way to increase your followers and engage them.

### Now you are Ready to Begin

Many business leaders purchase mailing lists to promote their business and increase their active customer base. These lists, referred to as leads, are becoming increasingly obsolete because social media allows you to develop your own loyal customers and associates through personal relationship development.

#### 1) Use an application

Twitter.com is just one way to access Twitter updates. Applications, like Twhirl, Tweetdeck and Twiterriffic give you a lot more control over what you see on the screen it keeps your contacts and topics organized and characterized. It will make it faster and easier to post your own items as @replies, direct messages, and web links. It is very efficient to link your Twitter account with other social networking pages like Facebook.

## 2) Get followers through common interests or industries

During signup, Twitter will let you scan your e-mail address books to see which of your friends are using the service. Since the key to having a good experience is following the updates from people you care about, this is a vital step to getting started. Pay attention when Twitter suggests following several popular celebrities—you might not want to hear all of their tweets. You can find followers related to your business and special interests through Twellow.com, TweetFind.com, and search.twitter.com. For example, a publicist who is a beginner can engage in conversations through #journchat virtual gatherings.

## 3) Very important—breakthrough the clutter and make yourself attractive

When you engage, comment, retweet and share links you become more memorable than handing out your business card. The key is to build quality lists of business contacts who are trusted advisors and potentially a source of business referrals.

## 4) Three-Three-Three Rule (33.3 %)

- a) Only one third of your tweets should include entertaining status information and a little self-promotion
- b) One third should be sharing articles and industry news through Retweets
- c) One third should be dedicated to engaging in conversation with other tweeters

Be sure to acknowledge your favorite tweeters on Fridays by using the #followfriday hashtag.

## 5) Beware of Privacy issues and public disclosure

It is urgent to remember that Twitter is an open forum: Everything you type is public to anyone who follows you, and by default anyone who wants to follow you. Your tweets can appear on Google. You can, however control access to your updates:

If you want to block random users from following you, you can set your account to “protected.” Then when users want to follow you, they will need your approval.

Remember the difference between a direct message and a public message.

Now you are ready to begin. Many new users report that tweeting is similar to learning how to ride a bicycle or learning how to speak a new language. It can seem intimidating when you first begin—but it is important to stick with it and practice. Once you commit to allocating ten minutes of your day to Twitter, it will become a part of your daily routine.

