

## BUSINESS

# Your Online Reputation: Handle With Care

NewsUSA

(NU) - Maintaining a positive reputation online is indispensable in today's digital age. It's time to take a long, honest look at how you manage your online reputation.

Consider these statistics: According to 2011 Cone Online Influence Trend Tracker survey, 87 percent of consumers said positive information they've read online reinforced their decision to purchase a recommended product or service. (This figure is up from 67 percent in 2010.) The 2010 Microsoft Cross-Tab survey found similar results, with 85 percent of recruiters and human resources professionals saying that a positive online reputation influences their decision-making.

With something as fragile as a reputation, how do you begin to protect it? After all, just one bad Facebook photo, and you may not get a call for an interview. Just one bad review or news article, and your company loses phone calls and customers.

"We don't have a lot of control about what others say about us, but we have a lot of control about what we say about ourselves and our company," says Todd William, CEO of Reputation Rhino, an online reputation management company in New York. "I strongly encourage individuals and companies to actively engage in social media, blogging and proactive public relations like press releases, networking and charitable activities."

Don't know where to start? Here's a list:

- Google your name to see where you stand.
- Create a complete profile on



### How are you managing your online reputation?

popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

- Participate actively in online communities.
- Publish positive reviews of satisfied clients or customers.
- Monitor social media mentions for your name or business.
- Update your blog regularly.
- Use SEO (search engine optimization) to make sure positive content comes up first for your name or business.

Unfortunately, reputation management can be a great deal of work and worry. Do you have the time or necessary expertise?

If you answered "No" to this question, don't fret. Today's businesses and busy professionals are turning to online reputation management companies.

"Online reputation management is the art and science of creating a positive first impression when someone is looking for you or your company online," says William. "Online reputation management can remove or suppress negative search results, optimize positive online content, outrank complaint and review sites and fight libel and online defamation."

For more information, visit [www.reputationrhino.com](http://www.reputationrhino.com).