Your reputation is already online: What it’s saying about you (and what you can do about it)  
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You’re doing the work. You treat customers right, honor your word, and take pride in a job well done. However, if that effort isn’t reflected online (through websites, business profiles, reviews, and social media), you may be getting overlooked by the very customers you’re trying to reach.

Today, trust is built long before someone picks up the phone. It's built during that quick scroll through search results, your most recent reviews, and the first impressions customers gather online. Is what they find accurate? Does it reflect the business you’ve worked hard to build?

A strong online reputation doesn’t just happen. It’s built with intention, and it’s becoming one of your most valuable assets. To help you improve yours, we’re exploring some insights and **practical tips** you can use to make sure your digital presence reflects your real-world trustworthiness.

## The research is clear: Trust drives action

For more than a century, Better Business Bureau has been helping businesses earn trust, and more recently, helping them *show it*. In a recent study, we asked consumers what made them feel confident choosing one business over another. The top answer? A trustworthy online presence.

Not flashy branding. Not clever ads. **Just Trust.**

Most notably:

* **84%** of people said they research businesses online before making a decision.
* **70%** said they look for **evidence of honesty and transparency**.
* **Most said they’d pay more** to work with a business they trust.

This all adds up to the fact that people don’t just buy what you sell, they buy because they’re *confident* in choosing you. That **initial** confidence is shaped online.

## Accolades matter, but it’s still your story to tell

Third-party signals of trust, like positive reviews, awards, and merit-based memberships, are all important elements that help provide valuable external credibility to your business’s reputation. They also make it easy and quick for consumers to get a general idea of a brand's trustworthiness.

However, trust signals alone can’t tell your entire story; that part is still up to you. For example, BBB Accreditation signals that your business meets high standards, but it is up to you to display your Accreditation and maintain your BBB profile to ensure your story is being seen.

**Practical Tip 1: Build online profiles** on platforms that help reinforce your commitment to trust (BBB, Google, social media, and industry-specific sites), in order to communicate your credibility.

## Are you responsive and consistent?

When customers search your name, they’re not just looking at one five-star review; they’re **looking for patterns**.

Do your profiles match across platforms? Are you responsive to comments, especially when something goes wrong? Can customers find real, consistent signals that say, “*This is a business that takes care of people*?”

If your online presence is a hodgepodge of outdated, unanswered reviews or an old website, you may be losing customers before you even get a chance to earn them.

**Practical Tip 2:** Audit your online presence; set aside just 20 to 30 minutes every month to keep your most visible profiles accurate and active.

When doing so, look at your business like a new customer would. Is the story clear, is it consistent, and does it reflect the kind of business you really are? Online trust monitors and reputation measurement tools can help make this self-auditing process quick, simple, and routine.

## Make (your) trust visible

In today’s marketplace, being great at what you do isn’t always enough. It’s only the start. The key is in making your business's greatness easy to see. That’s what your online reputation does; it acts as a spotlight, guiding customers toward the businesses they feel they can rely on.

Your reputation is already online. It’s already shaping decisions.

The good news? You still have the power to shape it.

***Practical Tip 3:*** Start by showing up where trust is earned, on platforms like BBB.org. Stay consistent. Stay engaged. And make sure your story is one worth finding.

Learn more at BBB.org.