

17.8: Step-by-step guide for recovering from an online brand attack

These rules to recovery provide a practical approach for brands facing an online threat.

Step 1. Be prepared

No brand is immune from an online brand attack. The best brands have strategies in place to identify a reputation crisis immediately and respond to it quickly enough to stop the negative word of mouth from spreading.

Keep your brand in front of consumers by engaging in the conversation. This can be done by making use of blogs, communicating with customers, and being as open and honest as possible. Engaging in, and leading, the conversation allows you to build an authentic voice. If a crisis hits, you will be well placed to respond in a way that is authentic.

Step 2. Act immediately!

The easiest way to solve most brand attacks is to respond quickly. A brand that shows it is listening and does indeed care will go far when it comes to ensuring a solid online reputation. Acknowledge what has been said and react accordingly.

Step 3. If what they're saying is false

If the attack on your brand is factually incorrect, send the person evidence that they are wrong, and in a friendly tone, ask them to remove or retract the entry, and offer to keep them informed of future news. If the person doesn't react or respond, add a comment to the post that it has been addressed.

Note

Cultivating a loyal community of fans can help immensely when clearing up false information. You will look much more credible if your fans back up your statements.

Step 4. If what they're saying is true...

If the mention is negative but true, send your side of the story and try as hard as you can to take the conversation offline. If appropriate, apologise quickly and sincerely, and offer to make amends.

Step 5. Keep the negative pages out of the search engines

Keeping more users from reading negative things about your brand is imperative. Knock them off the first page of the results with basic SEO and some social media pages, such as Facebook, Twitter or blog posts. Keep adding pages and links until you've forced the offending pages out of sight.

Note

Read more about this in the [Search engine optimisation](#) chapter.

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