MANAGING YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

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These days, you never get a _**first**_ chance to make a first impression...

Like so much these days - the internet has changed the validity of the above maxim. The most fundamental question people ask on this issue is how and why this process is a business priority, or even a personal priority? The answer is again a sign of the times. Before you meet a potential client or go to interview with a prospective employer, your whole digital life is examined. You're being searched on Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and the whole gamut of social media portals, your past employment, personal life, and sometimes even your extended contacts are being rifled through and considered as a reflection on what it'd be like to hire you. You can therefore understand why this has a significant impact on your future potential career.

Let's repeat it - These days, you never get a _first_ chance to make a first impression.

Digital presence can include bios and other material from your company, social network profiles, speaking engagements, media mentions, press releases, articles you have written, comments about you from people outside the company, or anything else that comes up when you search for your name. You have a digital profile even if you aren't active on social media, a prominent public figure or are in online related employment. Many executives believe that they aren't active in online communication and thus don't have a profile to manage. But of course any public appearance you make, article you're quoted in, or other public mention of you may be shared online, meaning that you do, in fact, have a profile that's available to anyone who types your name into a search engine, whether you've actively managed it or not.

A compelling online presence includes materials that demonstrate your expertise, passion, vision, and leadership. Executives who take the fullest advantage of their digital profile infuse some of their personality into what you find about them online as well. For customers and recruits to believe in you and therefore by extension; your company, that presence is much more authentic and telling, as well as cost-effective, than scores of traditional marketing materials that try to tell people who you are. Having a strong online profile is about reputation, not vanity. Without management your online profile can be confusing, mis-leading, outdated and paint a less than positive picture of you. You want to be able to show and demonstrate, rather than tell your online audience (be they customers or potential employers or even employee's) about your ability, your passion, your leadership.

Fortunately, you can take steps and take back control of what people see when they search your online presence. If you can invest a few hours working on your digital presence you can build a platform that gives a positive impression every time your name is typed into search engines.

Here are some helpful tips:

Find Out Where You Stand (and Erase Negative Comments and Embarrassments) – it's a good idea to see what others see when they search for you. Take a browse through Google, Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter, Youtube, Tumblr, Myspace, Reddit and systematically delete anything negative or 'none-professional'

Clean Up Any Results You Don't Like – either change them, amend them, improve them, tidy them. If you are apply for a job, its not the best impression having pictures of you plastered all over the internet being "plastered".

Beef Up Your Online Presence with Better Profiles – simple.

Upload a good-looking profile photo - Facebook, Twitter, and Google profiles – the sad fact is – the better you look, the better your chances.

Keep an eye on the results. For people who just want a good face and impression, you can stop here. For others who enjoy analysing how people find them then monitor responses, comments and chats and then amend your profile accordingly.

And finally, KEEP YOUR BEST FOOT FORWARD - You've done your homework, found out what other people find when they look for you, cleaned up your profiles, and added content to the web that you control so people only see what you want them to learn about you. As you go forward with your new improved , professional online persona, make sure to keep it clean by following the fundamental rule of sharing on the internet: _don't post it if you don't want it to be public_. The internet is a big place with a long and unfortunately VERY VERY GOOD MEMORY.