



2019

Top Trends for Online Reputation and Customer Experience Management in 2019

Introduction

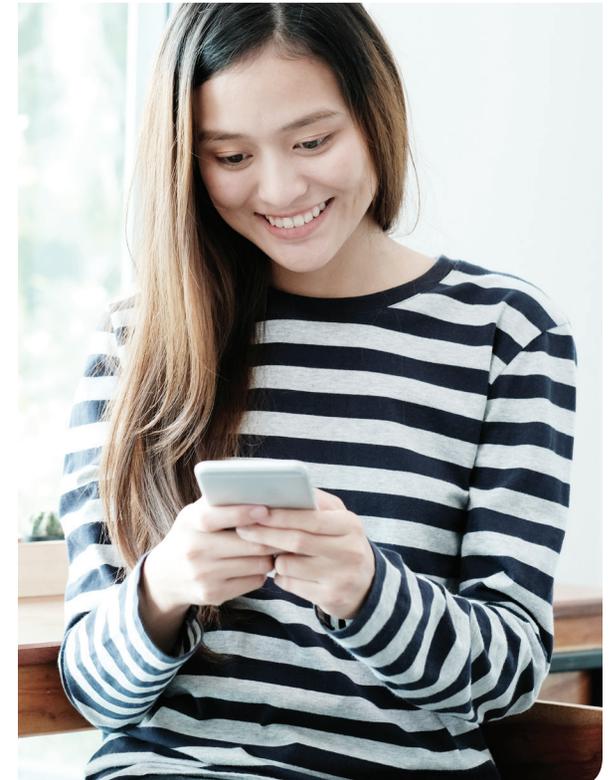
Online reputation management (ORM) has never been more critical to multi-location businesses. It's important to take inventory of what digital marketing and ORM trends gained momentum, and what to expect moving forward.

In 2018, Google maintained its dominance in online review volume and consumer exposure, eclipsing all other review sites. However, Facebook also rose in priority among businesses looking to expand their digital footprint and connect with consumers. As predicted, user-generated content is increasingly critical to SEO and weighs heavily in search rankings — and the voice of the customer is loud and clear across every channel.

As these trends continue to guide marketing leaders' strategies in the coming year, other emerging trends can mean boom or bust for multi-location businesses. In this eBook, we'll explore the five that we believe will have the biggest impact on your business in 2019:

1. Building trust with consumers will be more critical than ever, requiring increased brand transparency and proactive customer engagement at the local level.
2. Online reputation and CX management will merge, as a brand's reputation and the experience it provides to customers are inexorably linked.
3. Businesses will increasingly leverage AI and machine learning techniques to improve CX.
4. Consolidation of ORM and CX point solutions will reduce risk, cost and complexity.
5. Automation and mobile-first strategies will simplify ORM for businesses, enabling more immediate service recovery and customer engagement.

Most companies already know that review management, social media and customer surveys are critical to their business, and cannot be treated as isolated islands of data.



Trends With the Biggest Impact

1. Building trust with consumers will be more critical than ever, requiring increased brand transparency and proactive customer engagement at the local level.

The trust crash of 2018 has led to a need for increased brand transparency, making ORM an even more critical, indispensable business initiative for 2019 and beyond.

Why did consumer trust hit a low?

A growing distrust in media spurred by the current political climate — the “fake news” phenomenon — may have contributed to the trend, as did numerous high-profile breaches of trust on the part of Facebook, Panera, Under Armor and others. Consumers are rightfully suspicious, and it’s up to businesses to reestablish trust or lose consumer loyalty.

Importantly, the influence of younger consumers is increasing. Today, Millennials account for more than \$1 trillion in U.S. consumer spending — and they are a skeptical bunch. Even the impact of “influencer marketing” is waning as younger consumers grow wary of their credibility.

Today’s consumers crave authenticity. Eighty-six percent of people — from Millennials to Gen-Xers to Baby Boomers — say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support. Yet 57 percent think that less than half of the leading brands create authentic content.

Where does authentic content originate?

From consumers themselves — in reviews, social media and survey responses. To create authenticity and transparency that inspires consumer trust, businesses must focus less on flashy ad campaigns and more on building customer advocacy through online reputation and CX management.

83%

of consumers under age 35 don’t trust advertising, celebrity endorsements or any of the traditional communication strategies.

86%

of people say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support.

User-generated
content generates

6.9X

the engagement of
brand-generated
content.

SparkCentral

2. Online reputation and CX management will merge, as a brand's reputation and the experience it provides customers are inexorably linked.

Your brand's reputation is affected by the customer experience (CX) you deliver:

If the customer has a bad experience in-store or online, your reputation degrades — by word of mouth, social media posts and online reviews. But it's not a one-way street; with effective reputation management comes the ability to turn a negative experience around and recruit brand advocates.

Feedback about the customer experience can (and should) be collected at every touchpoint — before, during and after a customer interaction — to enable a data-driven, 360-degree view of customer sentiment. But most businesses do not have the technology in place to make this data actionable.



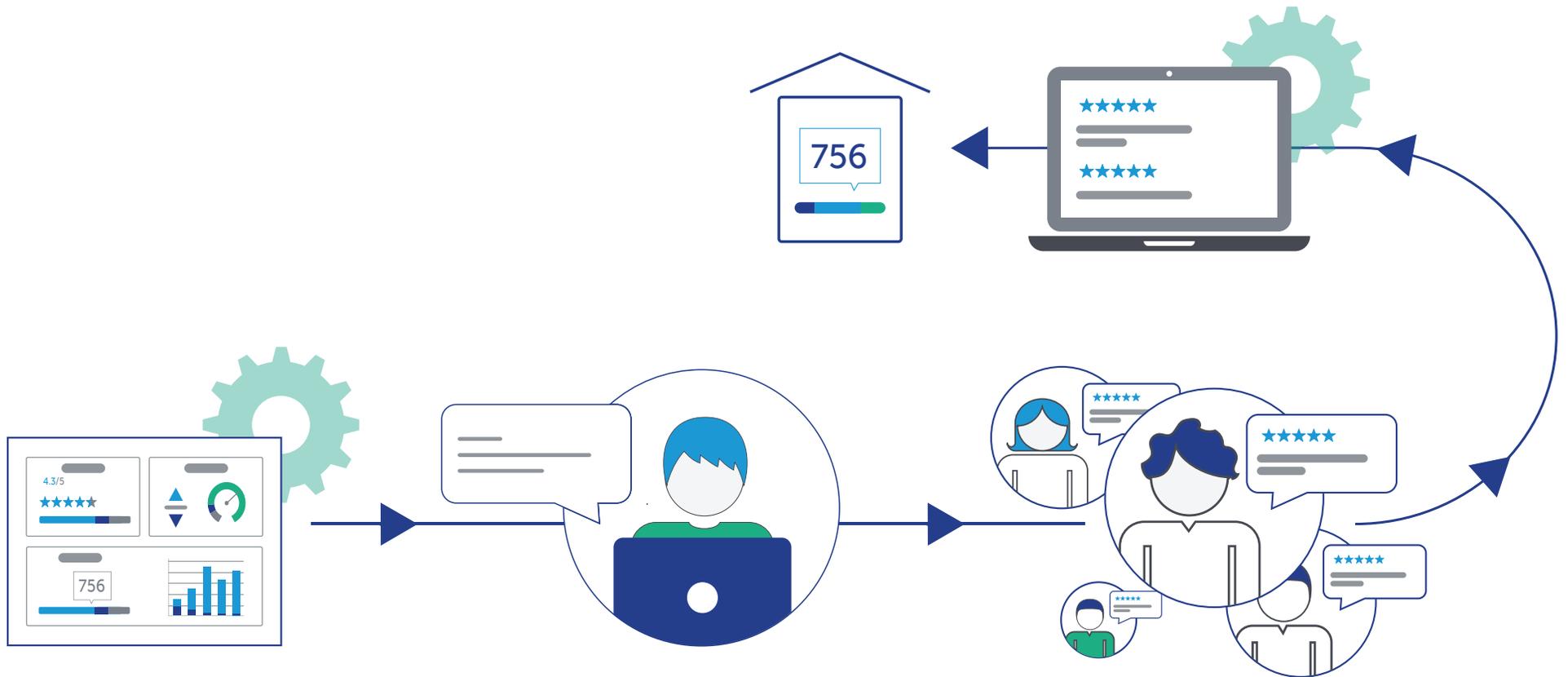
2019 TREND

In 2019, businesses will look at ORM and CX together, and shape their digital marketing strategies around the concept of the two practices merging.

ORM platforms collect and analyze feedback from customer surveys, reviews and social media posts, and in this way, help companies predict consumer behavior and improve sales and marketing techniques to increase conversions.

Behind the scenes, natural language processing and machine learning algorithms help make sense of unstructured data from those myriad sources. The resulting insights inform targeted operational and service improvements that result in better overall CX.

And that brings us to the next trend...



3. Businesses will increasingly leverage AI and machine learning techniques to improve CX.

Historically, CX management has been reactive — a problem arises and the business scrambles to fix it. We see that changing significantly in 2019. Companies are applying machine learning to existing and incoming CX data, to predict what customers need and want, and take actions to prevent problems before they arise.

According to Aberdeen Group, companies using predictive analytics will be nearly twice as likely to generate year-over-year growth in customer lifetime value. Plus, the ability to understand and predict how consumers perceive a brand versus competitors' brands will help businesses be more competitive. In 2019, leading businesses will use machine learning to anticipate what customers expect and what they value — and to mitigate customer service issues before they go viral and impact reputation.



2019 TREND

Natural Language Processing

Natural Language Processing (NLP) is the ability to understand unstructured verbal and digital content in a way that a human would understand it, but the output is in a format that can be analyzed digitally.

Machine Learning

Machine Learning (ML) algorithms detect patterns and “learn” how to make predictions and prescribe solutions by processing data (such as experiences) and creating a model. The model becomes more accurate over time as it ingests new data.

A photograph of two women in an office setting. The woman on the left has long brown hair, wears glasses, and a plaid shirt. She is looking intently at a computer monitor. The woman on the right has dark hair, wears glasses, and a light blue button-down shirt. She is holding a white document and looking towards the right. In the background, another person is visible working at a desk. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

64%

of marketers intend to increase the use of AI in marketing campaigns in 2019.

4. Consolidation of ORM and CX point solutions will reduce risk, cost and complexity.

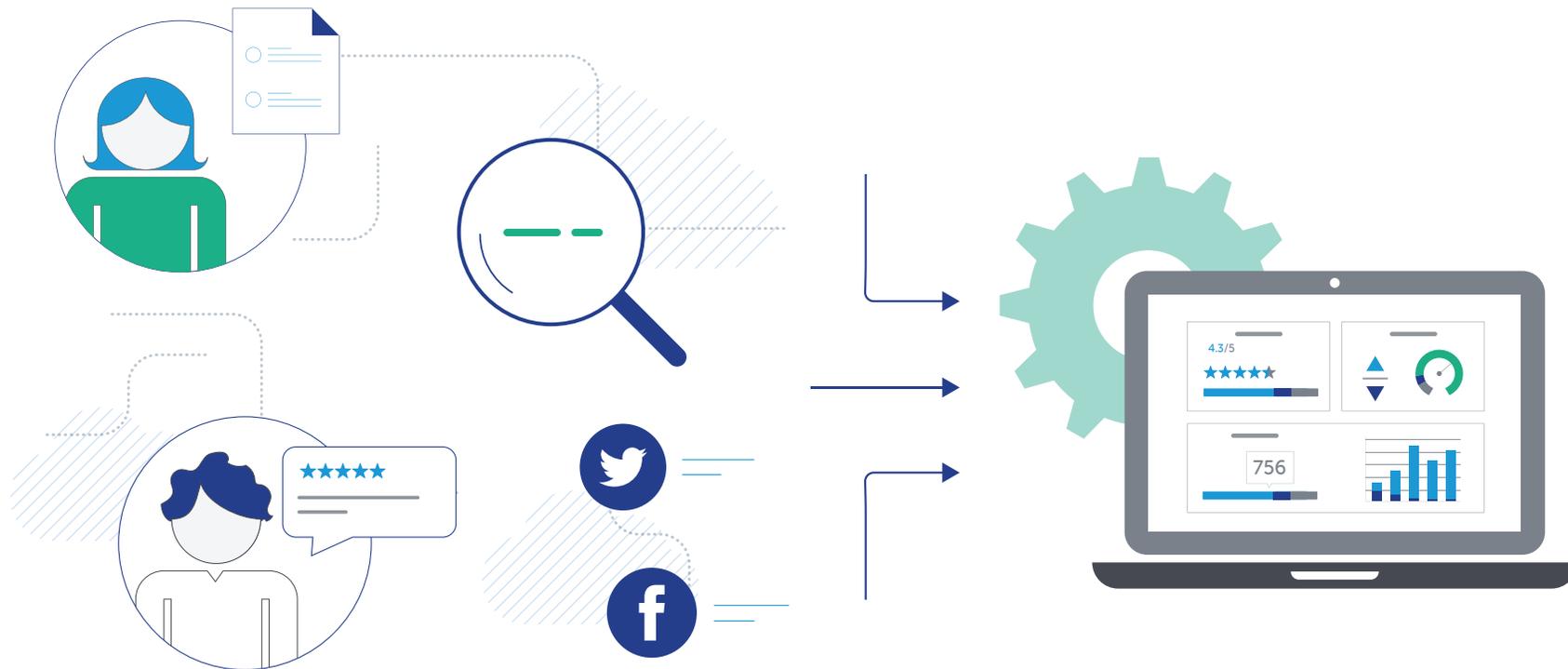
Managing your brand reputation today involves numerous point solutions that specialize in one aspect of the digital marketing landscape — for example, social media listening and publishing, online reviews management or surveys.

For many organizations this has resulted in unnecessary risk, cost and complexity. Many point solutions claim to be (but aren't really) "enterprise ready," and are unable to meet the changing needs of growing businesses. Beyond software license or service fees, human capital and integration expenses can tax budgets and limit scalability. Worse, the data is scattered and cannot be analyzed in unison for maximum impact and insight.

83%

of all cloud applications used in business were not "enterprise ready."

Netskope



5. Automation and mobile-first strategies will simplify ORM for businesses, enabling more immediate service recovery and customer engagement.

2018 was the year many businesses adopted ORM strategies. Now that technologies are in place, administrators in 2019 will look for mobile access and automation as enabling features in their ORM platforms.

Platforms that push real-time alerts and notifications on social and survey responses will help businesses accelerate response times. Not only is a quick response good for customers (their issues are resolved faster), it's good for businesses. The faster a business can resolve an issue, the less likely a customer is to complain about it on social media or review sites.

Additionally, a mobile-first approach is essential for meeting the needs of today's always on-the-go workforce, whether that's an individual salesperson, a store manager or a customer experience specialist.

Our clients expect full mobile access to the platform and especially to their dashboard where they can assess overall performance at a glance. This trend will accelerate in 2019, and continue to drive development efforts for our (and other vendors') ORM solutions.

A mobile-first mindset goes beyond being findable in mobile search. It means employing mobile-first design best practices, such as streamlined checkout and navigation, and removing friction between online search and offline purchases. Making the mobile experience easy and satisfying will play heavily into shaping a brand's reputation in the year to come.

42%

of consumers expect an answer to a social post within just 60 minutes.



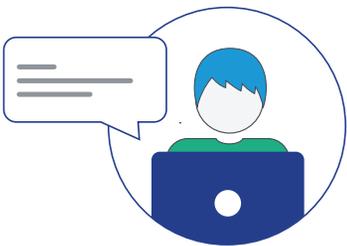
Capitalize on the Trends

You can't change what's trending, but you can make the most of ORM trends in 2019 by following these best practices:



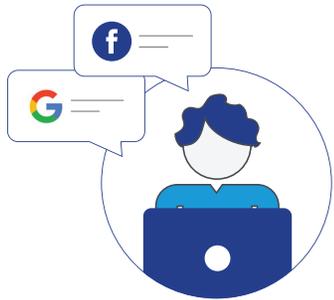
Accumulate user-generated content your audience will trust.

Millennials — and increasingly everyone else — rely on the recommendations of friends and online customer reviews more than traditional forms of advertising or celebrity endorsements, when evaluating products and services. Consumers will have more trust in a business that has a high volume of recent reviews left by real customers, containing information that matches your brand promise.



Use technology to monitor, collect and respond to customer feedback.

Timing is of the essence. For large enterprises with multiple locations, the only way to achieve the expected level of responsiveness is by constantly monitoring consumer interaction across the web and using push notifications to alert location managers of mentions and posts. Ticketing solutions will also help track and accelerate service recovery.



Actively engage with local communities on social channels, especially Google and Facebook.

Demonstrate that you're listening and want to have a dialogue — and stay involved in the conversations about your brand. If you're not part of the conversation, you won't have a voice. Monitoring and responding to every digital conversation is essential — and impossible to do manually. Online reputation management solutions provide the automation necessary to scale your listening and engage in meaningful ways with every conversation.



Consider the platform approach to ORM.

If your organization requires that you engage with a large audience of consumers across many locations, scalability will be critical as you develop and execute your online reputation management strategy. Rather than cobbling together multiple point solutions over time, start with a modular platform that has everything you'll need and is built to scale. Choose an ORM technology partner that offers integrated solutions for listings and directory management, reviews, ticketing, surveys, social media, and analytics and reporting and can grow along with your organization.



Think about your users, and how to best meet their needs.

Your users are on the go and busy with many activities. Make it easy for them to contribute in your organization's ORM efforts with solutions that are accessible on mobile and automate routine tasks and alerts. The easier it is for your users to employ the technology, the more likely they are to actively use it — and the better results you'll have.

About Reputation.com

Reputation.com delivers the category-leading online reputation management (ORM) platform for large, multi-location enterprises. We help companies monitor and improve online ratings and reviews, improve customer experience, and drive traffic, visits and revenue.

To learn more, contact us at sales@reputation.com or visit us at www.reputation.com

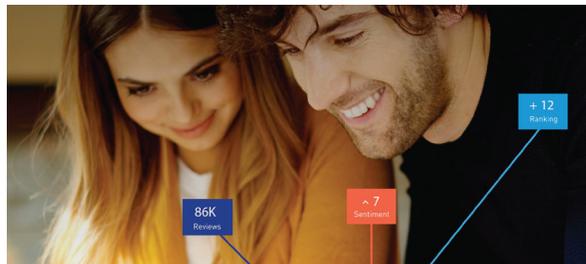


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