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How to manage bad online reviews written by unhappy employees

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The influx of unmoderated online platforms where current and former employees review companies and management is not only causing reputational damage to companies, but has also led to loss of business prospects for some.

Companies have constantly come under severe and sometimes undue criticism or even been denied business opportunities by prospective partners because of bad online reviews written mostly by disgruntled employees.

Presently, there are numerous websites and social media platforms where current and former employees can review companies and their management. In many cases, the reviews are very harsh toward the target companies, because the reviewer may have a personal problem with the company or may simply want to display their personal anger at management for unknown reasons. There are also several cases where unscrupulous companies engage dodgy entities to write bad reviews on their competitors simply because they cannot withstand competition.

Although some websites have an option that allows the affected entities the right to reply, responses from affected organizations are less likely to be taken well by the public. This is because readers mostly regard any positive responses from the affected organizations as a damage control public relations effort aimed at mending a ruined or a potentially ruined reputation.

It goes without saying that prospective employees and potential business partners constantly rely on such bad reviews and ratings before they decide to engage in business dealings with an organization. Additionally, reviewing adverse content on and offline is part of a basic standard due diligence process. Therefore, if an organization is interested in doing business with another, its team will consider such online reviews before engaging in any business dealings. Similarly, if a potential employee is prospecting for a job, they look through the organization's online reviews on certain websites before they decide to join an organization. Relying solely on an organization's online reviews and ratings is a big mistake that most prospects make, because they end up making misinformed decisions based on what they read on unmoderated websites.

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