

WHY THE WORLD IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER

FOR BRANDS, BUSINESSES
AND REPUTATIONS



RED BANYAN

redbanyan.com

954.379.2115

info@redbanyan.com



If you are a business owner who provides goods or services, you already know how quickly a negative review or an unfavorable social media post can tarnish a company's good name. The ensuing damage can be long-lasting and hard to reverse.

In a world where words have become weapons and reputation, brands, and business intersect, planning is paramount to surviving an unexpected attack. Social media amplifies the power of the pen with information transmitted in seconds, putting your reputation, your brand, and your business at constant risk.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The newest threat, Artificial intelligence (AI), has provided cutting-edge technology that streamlines rote tasks and simplifies complicated research, but it also comes with significant risks that we cannot ignore.

"Machine learning" is proliferating ethnic stereotypes, promoting workplace bias, and

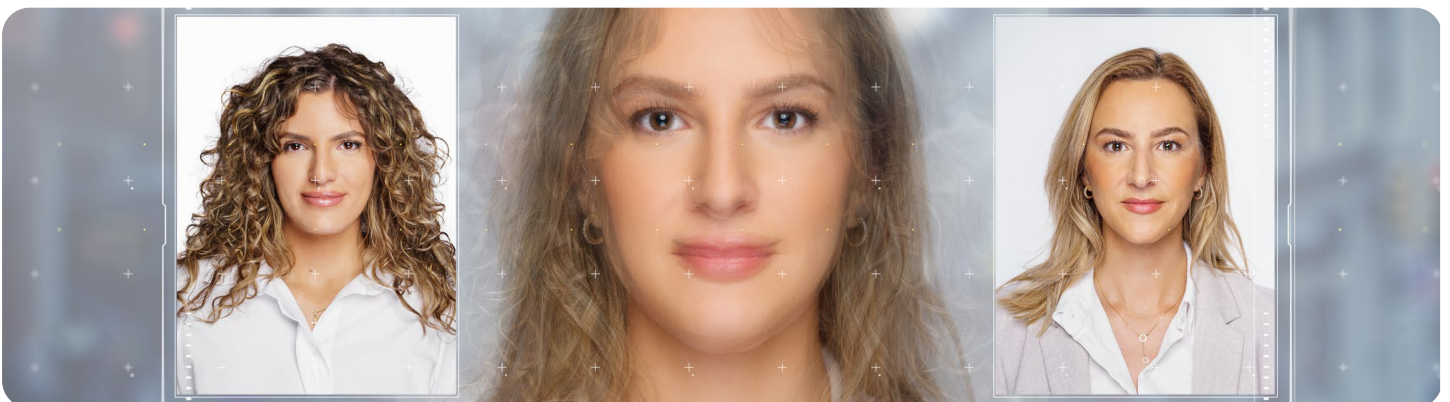
sharing racist or fake imagery with searchers. Businesses are at risk from "deepfakes," or AI-generated content that is wholly fabricated. AI technology produces deepfake video, audio, and images depicting events and actions that never actually happened and therefore can warp consumer's perception of reality.

Monitoring the web and social media channels for manufactured content detrimental to your brand or business will become a required business best practice in the future.

AI and deepfakes are evolving quickly, so keeping abreast of the latest technology is essential. Understanding how deepfakes work and how to detect them are crucial to surviving this sophisticated new technology and knowing when to cry foul. AI "learns" by skimming information from the internet and adjusting its functions and algorithms. It can recognize

behavior patterns and errors but does not have the critical thinking skills unique to humans.

Deepfakes make it challenging to separate fact from fiction, so protecting your brand name and company reputation will be an even bigger challenge as this technology becomes more widespread.



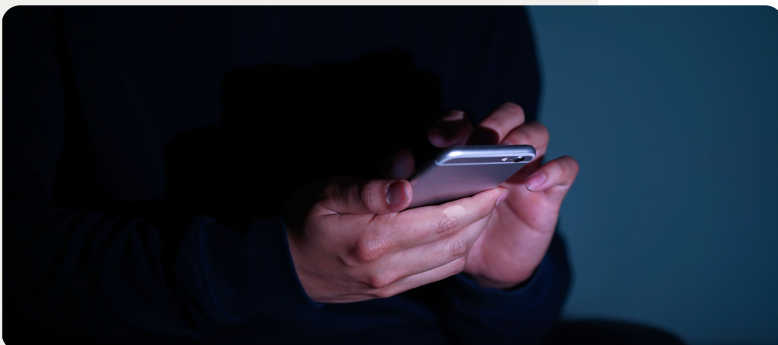
CANCEL CULTURE

Add to that the threat of cancel culture, and today's business environment is even more precarious.

The practice of having someone denounce you or your brand because you disagree with their beliefs can be devastating, thanks to social media. Words and actions can become larger than life after someone hits "post," and the message spirals out of control on the internet.



Cancel culture creates a harmful environment because it targets indiscriminately and can cause lasting damage, even if the claims are proven false. With social media as its megaphone, this phenomenon has the power to destroy innocent lives and livelihoods.



Monitoring social media and aggressively telling your story is the best way to counter the "cancel culture vultures." Using a crisis communications firm is highly recommended to prevent the situation from spiraling out of hand.

REVIEWS CAN BE FRIEND OR FOE

The internet makes it easy to see how your company measures up to others that are similar. Potential customers can find out just about anything they want with a click or a swipe, more reason to be mindful of your business's online profile.

Reviews establish credibility, improve rankings, and give consumers a voice. Paying attention to reviews will help you better understand customers and improve customer service. According to the Pew Research Center, 82 percent of U.S. adults say they at least read

some online customer ratings or reviews before purchasing something for the first time, including 40 percent who say they always or almost always read online customer ratings.

Potential customers scan the internet to find out as much as they can before opening their wallets. Online reviews help consumers decide whether your business is worth exploring. Customers can easily see what others are saying and determine what their experience might look like if they purchase your product or service.



DO YOU KNOW HOW YOUR BUSINESS PROFILE LOOKS TO OTHERS?

Companies that don't pay attention and don't respond to reviews could see the business decline without knowing why.

POSITIVE REVIEWS CAN DRIVE SUCCESS

When actively monitoring and responding to reviews, you can thank people for compliments and address negative comments and ratings promptly and with a sincere desire to make it right. The old saying, it's not that you have a problem, it's how you address it, applies online as well.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is an excellent venue for marketing your business or brand, but it's also a perfect place for online attackers to denounce your brand from the anonymity of the internet.



Social media meltdowns can be devastating, whether it's a dreaded Tweetstorm or an Instagram attack. **Hard-won reputations are quickly tarnished, and repairs can be hard to make.** Knowing what to do if this happens can determine whether the effects are short or long-term. A social media policy can help prevent you from acting impulsively and responding with a post that causes more harm than good.

Social media clearly has value. It is a way to share messaging, engage with customers, get fast input, and convey changes or improvements to goods and services but can be used to damage reputations. Social listening is the best way to monitor what is going on with your industry, your brand, and your company.

Companies that are engaged and responsive to online input are more likely to build a favorable online reputation, even if some of the commentary is negative.

WORKPLACE HARASSMENT



Workplace harassment can include everything from offensive jokes and unwanted touching to sexually oriented comments, racial slurs, ethnic insults, and inappropriate emails. Most businesses have hundreds or even thousands of employees, so the risk is not insignificant.

Having policies in place and educating your employees on what is acceptable and what is not is a first step towards protection.

Here are some questions to consider as you think about your workplace policies

- Do you have a grievance process that's been publicized throughout the company?
- Do you have a published social media policy?
- Do you have known policies around employee dating and fraternization?

A business that makes policy communication and training a part of its culture is creating a solid baseline for informing and advising every employee of employee expectations and setting the foundation for holding them accountable should a violation occur.



DATA BREACHES

Data breach is a term no company wants to be associated with their good name. Unfortunately, data breaches are a reality that businesses must address promptly once they occur.



Businesses can protect against data breaches by creating a step-by-step communications plan that defines a specific plan of action.

Knowing what questions to ask and what to do in the wake of a data breach, will protect your company, your customers, and your reputation.

In the case of a data breach, businesses should consider bringing on help. Specialists can create a data breach communications plan for your organization to use as a guide if an emergency occurs.

ACT NOW

Knowing what to do when a crisis strikes and how quickly you respond will determine whether the outcome is positive or negative. Having a crisis response plan in place is one of the best ways to plan for the worst. Knowing what you need ahead of time will help ensure success.



Crises don't wait.

HERE ARE FIVE REASONS TO ACT FAST

1

Control

Tell your side of the story first so you don't have to respond to others' versions of the facts.

2

Accuracy

Prevent conflicting narratives by reacting fast and controlling the release of information.

3

Consistency

Define your core messaging and regularly deliver accurate and comprehensive messages to stakeholders.

4

Damages

Minimize harm by taking control and initiating the appropriate reparations.

5

Communication

Provide regular updates to instill confidence and establish authority.

Our public relations and crisis experts are fast, focused, and thorough.
Contact Red Banyan and safeguard your business, reputation, and brand.

We're available by email, phone and at redbanyan.com.