

**By: Mark Jerram**

**[www.biha.org.uk](http://www.biha.org.uk)**

**British Inflatable Hirers Alliance (BIHA)**

\*\*\*Please note that some of the links in this guide only apply to the USA\*\*  
As the owner of an inflatable hire business, it is imperative that you pay attention to what people are saying about your business, products, and services online.

Approximately 97% of today's consumers go online to find local businesses that have what they're looking for.

If they find information that puts your business in a negative light, your ability to attract and retain customers will be seriously impacted.

Why?

- 90% of consumers say online reviews impact their buying decisions
- 79% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations
- 92% of consumers have more confidence in information that they found online than hearing it from a salesperson or any other source of information
- 80% of consumers have changed their minds about a business based on negative reviews
- Businesses can see an increase in sales of up to 58% thanks to good reviews
- On average, one negative review can cost you 30 customers

As you can see, if you don't control your online reputation, someone else will.

So it's important for you to listen to what people are saying about your company online so YOU can regain or maintain control of your company's image.

Unfortunately, there are many ways for customers, ex-employees, and competitors to post negative comments about your business. If you do not know what is being said, you have no chance of counteracting this activity to ensure your brand comes across in a positive light for potential customers.

In order to protect and defend your business, it is highly recommended that you implement strategies to consistently monitor and manage your online reputation. In fact, this is a must-have best practice for companies all across

the globe that want a fair chance of generating new leads and customers using the internet.

Trying to have negative comments about your brand removed is very difficult to do. In most cases, it's impossible. However, it's not the end of the world. There are ways to handle those situations, as well as ways to build positivity around them.

In order to start off on the right track, the first step is to do an assessment of your current online reputation.

- What do your potential customers see when they research your company online?
- Who is talking about your business?
- If there are negative mentions related to your brand, are there also some positive mentions to balance things out?
- Is there inaccurate information showing up?

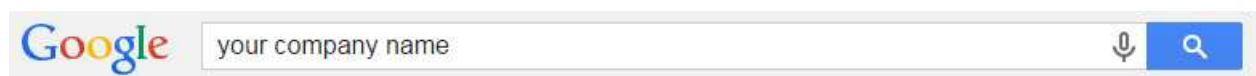
In this guide, we will show you how to check your current online reputation with just a few basic steps. Following these simple steps will help you discover how people see your brand so you can take any necessary actions to turn things around in your favor going forward.

## Step-by-Step Guide for Checking Your Online Reputation

1. The first thing to do is simply Google your business. Log out of Google services, such as Gmail, YouTube, or any other service you may be using. The reason this is so important is because you do not want any "personalized" search results to come up based on your browsing history, location, or other factors.

In order to get the most accurate results, be sure to log out of everything – or even use a completely different computer.

2. Go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) and start your search by simply entering your company's name.



Do Various Searches Such As:

- Search Your Company's Name
- Search With and Without Your City and State After the Name
- Search Your Personal Name (as the owner/CEO)
- Search the Names of Your Products and Services
- Search Your Employees' Names (in some cases depending on your business)
- Search Any Usernames You Use for Your Business on Certain Sites, Such as Social Media
- ... and any other keyword phrases that are closely related to your business

It may be easier to write down your list of search terms before you start searching so you can keep up.

3. Develop a list of additional search phrases by adding descriptive modifiers behind your company's name.

Some of the common terms that angry consumers use when talking about businesses online include:

- Rip Off
- Fraud
- Avoid
- Complaint
- Deceptive
- Unreliable
- Sucks
- Scam

Once you have this list ready, enter each phrase into the search engine, such as "your company name + rip off" to get a list of results.

4. For each keyword, scroll down the first page of the results and take note of what you see so you can quickly refer back to it as you implement an

online reputation management strategy. (Use our enclosed assessment worksheet to help you keep track.) Here's an example of what could searchers see when doing research on a business:

### Plumbers Plumbing Las Vegas

[www.plumbcrazy4plumbing.com/](http://www.plumbcrazy4plumbing.com/) ▾

**Las Vegas** Water Leak Repair Expert Plumbers Plumbing Las Vegas. .... **A Better Plumbing**, LLC is a BBB Accredited Plumber in **Las Vegas**, NV ...

4.7 ★★★★★ 35 Google reviews · Write a review · Google+ page

● Las Vegas, NV  
(702) 813-4236

### A Better Plumbing Company - Eastside - Las Vegas, NV | Yelp

[www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com) › Home Services › Plumbing ▾ Yelp ▾

★★★★★ Rating: 4 - 18 reviews

**A Better Plumbing** Company - This is before - **Las Vegas**, NV, United States · Cassie R. This is before by Cassie R. **A Better Plumbing** Company - Clearing main ...

### A Better Plumbing, LLC Business Review in Las Vegas, NV ...

[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) › ... › Plumbers › Las Vegas, NV ▾ Better Business Bureau ▾

BBB's Business Review for **A Better Plumbing**, LLC, Business Reviews and Ratings for **A Better Plumbing**, LLC in **Las Vegas**, NV.

### A Better Plumbing Las Vegas, NV, 89121 - YP.com

[www.yellowpages.com/las-vegas.../a-better-plumbing-...](http://www.yellowpages.com/las-vegas.../a-better-plumbing-...) ▾ Yellowpages.com ▾

★★★★★ Rating: 5 - 52 reviews

Get reviews, hours, directions, coupons and more for **A Better Plumbing** at 4533 Balfour Drive, **Las Vegas**, NV. Search for other Plumbing-Drain & Sewer ...

### A Better Plumbing - Las Vegas - Plumber, Contractor ...

<https://www.facebook.com/plumbinglasvegas> ▾

**A Better Plumbing**, **Las Vegas**. 316 likes · 2 talking about this. Licensed Plumbing Contractor Plumbing Las Vegas for over 14 years. Better Business Honor...

### A Better Plumbing, LLC | Las Vegas, NV 89121 | Angies List

[www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com) › Local Reviews › Las-vegas ▾ Angie's List ▾

Reviews you can trust on **A Better Plumbing**, LLC from Angie's List members | 4533 Balfour Dr. **Las Vegas**, NV.

### Las Vegas Plumbers Recommendations - Las Vegas ...

[www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com) › Local Reviews › NV › Las Vegas ▾ Angie's List ▾

Find Plumbers in **Las Vegas**. Read Ratings and Reviews on **Las Vegas** Plumbers on Angie's List so you can pick the right Plumber the ... **A Better Plumbing**, LLC.

5. Pay attention to the related searches at the bottom of the search results page. This could alert you to some specific keyword terms people are using to find your business. The sample below shows some potentially hurtful keywords, so this is something that you want to take note of if yours shows up with something similar.

#### Searches related to pars cars

pars cars **memorial drive**    pars cars **duluth**  
**pars cars rip off**            pars cars **satellite blvd**  
**pars cars complaints**      pars cars **ripcoff**  
pars cars **review**            pars cars **complaints used cars**



6. Although many consumers never scroll past the first page of the results, be sure to at least scan the first 5 pages of results. In cases where a consumer may be doing deep research, they are likely to go past page 1. Just click on "Next" at the bottom of the page to move to the next page.

#### Searches related to calm dental los angeles ca

calm dental **reviews**  
**western** dental los angeles ca  
dental **insurance** los angeles ca  
**crystal** dental los angeles ca



7. Search additional search engines, such as Bing ([www.bing.com](http://www.bing.com)) Yahoo ([www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)) and others following the same steps as noted above for Google. While Google is the top search engine, it is not the ONLY one being used. So you want to search other ones as well. Again, if you are signed in under either service, log out before performing your searches.



8. Search Local Listings & Review Sites

Pay special attention to the “Local Listings” that come up for each search engine. This is where your customers leave their reviews. If you have not claimed, verified, and optimized your local listings, you should make that a priority so you have control over your listings.

Some of these may show up in the main search engine results that you researched in previous steps; but some may not. So it’s a good idea to check these out individually as well.

Two sites you should definitely check out are your Google My Business and Yelp listings.

### **Google My Business**



Google My Business is Google’s latest local business listing directory / review site. It replaces Google+ Local and Google Places, if you’re familiar with those platforms.

Google My Business is a combination of the two and is now the dashboard you will access to check and respond to customer reviews. Since Google is the top search engine worldwide, this is where most of your customers are likely to leave reviews.

When performing a regular Google search for your company's name, you may see your listing show up in the search results you did in step 2 if it's ranking highly.

If not, you can login to your Google My Business account and check your customer reviews there.

Still haven't claimed your Google My Business listing?

Go to: <http://www.google.com/business/> and follow the steps. This tool allows you to list and manage your business on Google Search, Maps, and Google+ from one location.

## **Yelp**



After Google, Yelp.com is the next most important site for small businesses to monitor what is being said about them. This is where many local consumers go to find products, services, and businesses in their area.

More importantly, many of them leave reviews on Yelp about local companies; and many of them go to Yelp to read reviews about companies they're considering doing business with.

The review feature is the most popular feature of this site.



In case you didn't see your company's Yelp listing show up in the regular search, go to Yelp.com and simply enter your company's name and location in the search boxes at the top. You should then see your company's listing show up along with reviews.

Still haven't claimed your Yelp.com listing?

Go to: <https://biz.yelp.com/> and enter your company's name/city/state.

A list will come up – once you locate your business, click on the "Claim This Business" link to the right and follow the steps to completion.

You should also check reviews (and claim your listings if applicable) on other local review sites such as:

- Yahoo Local (<https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/local-listings>)
- Bing Local (<https://www.bingplaces.com/>)
- CitySearch ([www.citysearch.com/](http://www.citysearch.com/))
- TripAdvisor ([www.tripadvisor.com/](http://www.tripadvisor.com/))
- Angieslist ([www.angieslist.com](http://www.angieslist.com))
- FourSquare (<http://business.foursquare.com/>)
- YellowPages ([www.yellowpages.com](http://www.yellowpages.com))

## 9. Search the Better Business Bureau Website



[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

You may have seen your Better Business Bureau page show up while Googling your business; which means your potential customers will see it

too. Consumers are quick to flock to BBB.com to check out companies they are considering doing business with.

Therefore, you want to know what your rating is and to see any complaints so you are equipped to address them should potential customers ask.

Go to BBB.com and enter your city and state so you can be directed to your local BBB site.

Then, enter your company's name to see your rating and other information, such as reasons for the ratings and customer complaints summary.

You can also go to Google and enter "your company name + bbb" and it should show in the results.

#### 10. Search Complaint Websites

"Complaint" websites are those that were created specifically to give consumers a place to vent and express their feelings when they feel like they've been defrauded, scammed, etc. (whether it's true or not).

Again, if you have any complaints on these sites, they may have shown up in your regular search engine results. If not, visit the following sites individually to see if your business has some unflattering comments lingering.

Simply enter your company's name in the search boxes on each of their home pages.

**Complaints.com**  
[www.complaints.com](http://www.complaints.com)



**RipOffReport.com**  
[www.ripoffreport.com](http://www.ripoffreport.com)

By consumers, for consumers...

# Ripoff Report

Don't let them get away with it.® Let the truth be known!™



Home Help

Register to File a Report Login

Total Visits since 1998: 8,891,880,993 Estimated money Consumers saved since 1998: \$15,560,791,737.75 Reports filed: 1,887,336

FILE A REPORT Update a Report Latest Reports Consumer Resources Consumers Say Thank You Legal Directory Repair your reputation the right way Corporate Advocacy Company Name or Report # SEARCH

**ComplaintsBoard.com**  
[www.complaintsboard.com](http://www.complaintsboard.com)

COMPLAINTS BOARD The most trusted and popular consumer complaints website Made by the people for the people Company or Product Name Everything SEARCH

**PissedConsumer.com**  
[www.pissedconsumer.com](http://www.pissedconsumer.com)

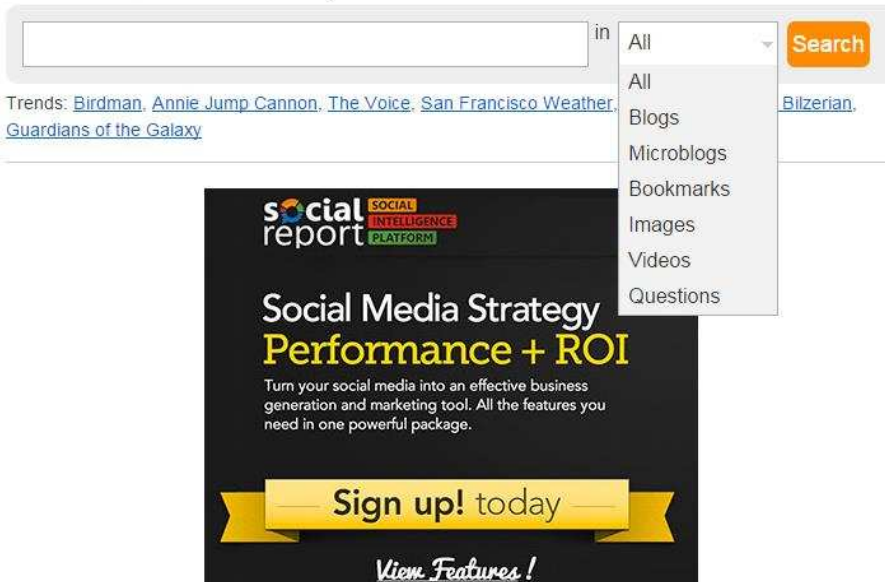
Pissed Consumer Complaints Categories For Business Submit Complaint Company or keyword

## 11. Search Social Media Sites

Social media is a popular place for consumers to generate buzz about businesses they like and don't like.

Whatever they have to say will be seen by their entire social networks, so it is important that you keep an eye on social media even if you're not actively using it to market your brand.

Of course, you can monitor what is being said with built-in tools for each site individually, but there are also tools that allow you to do this more efficiently – such as Social Mention ([www.socialmention.com](http://www.socialmention.com)).



Social mention is a free online monitoring tool that shows mentions of your brand on social media networks. It searches the top social sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as smaller ones you may not know about.

Simply enter your company's name in the search box and choose a filter from the drop down to pull from specific platforms and other criteria.

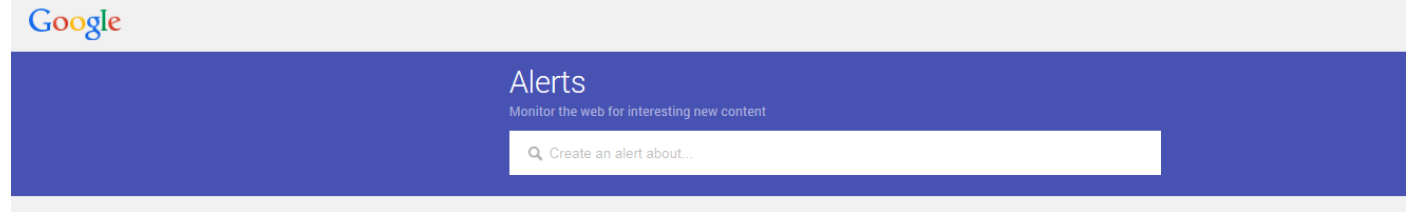
When the results come up, the overall mentions will be graded on sentiment – being positive, neutral, or negative – along with other types of data.

## ***Prepare for Ongoing Monitoring & Management***

Once you've done a little research to see how your online reputation is looking in the eyes of potential customers, partners, and other parties, don't stop there. Implement ways to keep an eye on your reputation going forward. This is the only way for you to know when to take action.

There are many tools available that make this process easier.

## Google Alerts



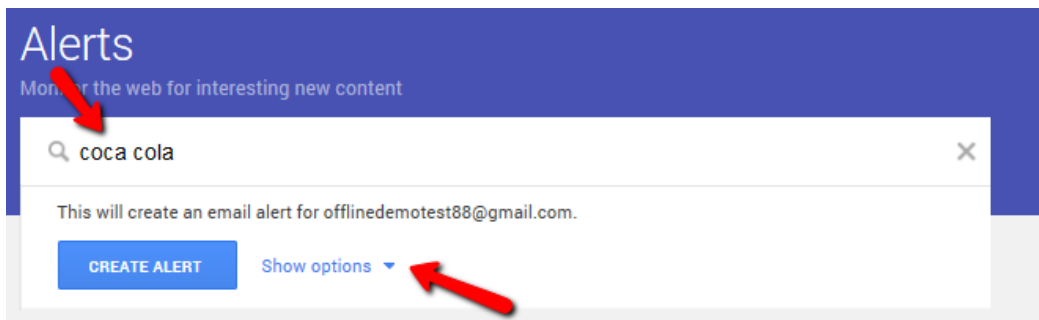
Google Alerts is a great free tool that allows you to receive email notifications whenever content is posted online that is related to the keywords you set up.

For instance, you can setup keywords with variations of your company name, your personal name, your products/services, etc. You will be notified whenever someone posts content about your brand.

This tool is also useful in many other ways, such as monitoring your competitors, monitoring industry news and trends, and any other content monitoring you want.

How do you use it?

1. First, sign in to your Google account (this is a requirement to use this service). If you don't have a Google account, you can create one here for free: <https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>
2. Go to the Google Alerts page here: [www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)
3. Enter the keyword you want to be notified of in the "Create an alert about" search box.
4. Click on the "Show Options" drop-down to customize your settings.



This is where you will select your preferences, such as:

**How Often** – Select once per day, once per week, or as-it-happens. Select the option that works best for you. Remember, these alerts will be coming into the Google email account connected with your Alerts.

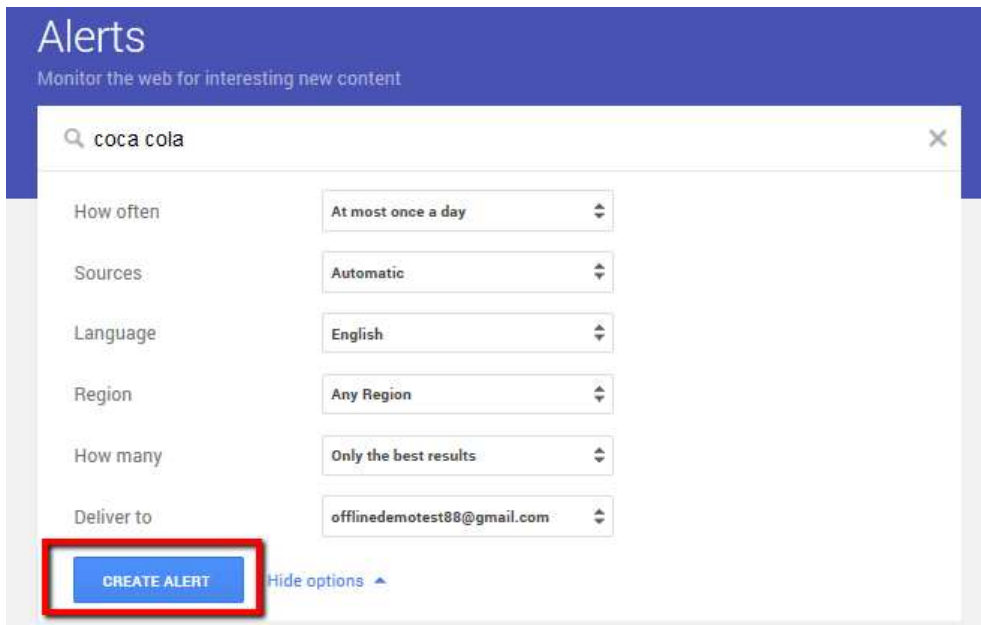
**Sources** – Select the types of sources you want to be alerted about, such as news, blogs, videos, etc. The “Automatic” option is recommended so you can be notified on everything.

**Language and Region** – These are pretty self-explanatory. Enter the preferred language and region for your alert.

**How Many** – Choose “Only the best results” if you only want high quality, relevant terms. Choose “All results” if you want all results including low quality ones.

**Deliver To** – Choose to view your alerts via RSS feed or choose your connected Google email account.

Once you’ve chosen all of your preferences, click on the “Create Alert” button at the bottom.



The screenshot shows the Google Alerts interface. At the top, there's a blue header with the word "Alerts" and the subtitle "Monitor the web for interesting new content". Below this is a search bar containing the text "coca cola". The main area contains several settings, each with a dropdown menu:

- How often:** At most once a day
- Sources:** Automatic
- Language:** English
- Region:** Any Region
- How many:** Only the best results
- Deliver to:** offlinedemotest88@gmail.com

At the bottom left, there is a blue button labeled "CREATE ALERT" which is highlighted with a red rectangular box. To the right of this button is a link that says "Hide options" with a small upward-pointing triangle.

Tips:

- Keep search terms detailed so you get highly relevant alerts.
- Use quotes around words that you want to be found together, such as "Chevrolet Recalls" if you only want to get recall information on Chevrolets.
- You can create a total of up to 1,000 alerts, but it is recommended to start with a few and then build from there.

Your alerts will be listed under the "My alerts" section on the main page. Next to them, you will see a pencil, which you can click on to edit them – and a trash can, which you can click on to delete them.

Under the "Alert suggestions" section, you will also see other alerts Google suggests for you. If you like them, simply click on the "+" next to them and they will be added to your alert list.

## **Social Media Monitoring Tools**

In addition to Social Mention, which we talked about earlier, there are many other social media monitoring tools you can use to follow what others are saying about your company, products, and services on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

But most of them contain features that go way beyond that, such as allowing you to post, share, respond, and engage with your followers on all of your social media sites right from within one platform; helping you stay organized when it comes to managing your online reputation. Some of them even have built-in tracking tools to help you take things even further.

Some of these have a free and paid option, so check them out to see a full list of features and pricing options.

**Hootsuite** ([www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com))

**Brandwatch** ([www.brandwatch.com](http://www.brandwatch.com))

**Mention** ([www.mention.com](http://www.mention.com))

**Trackur** ([www.trackur.com](http://www.trackur.com))

**Tweetdeck** ([www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com))

**Ice Rocket** ([www.icerocket.com](http://www.icerocket.com))

**NetVibes** ([www.netvibes.com/en](http://www.netvibes.com/en))

**Twazzup** ([www.twazzup.com](http://www.twazzup.com))

## ***Taking Action on What You Find***

After completing your research, you can use the results to develop a strategy for monitoring, building and managing your online reputation.

### **Acting on Negative Content**

Unfortunately, you won't be able to get rid of most of the negative comments out there surrounding your business. However, what you can do is respond and try to resolve any negative issues as soon as possible.

If there is negative content out there that is not true, you can always ask the poster to remove it, but there's no guarantee that will happen. Instead, focus on generating great content that is associated with your brand to help alleviate any damage from the negativity.

Furthermore, implement a solid strategy that encourages your customers to leave more reviews; every business can expect to have something negative posted about them online. However, positive customer reviews can seriously lessen their impact.

### **Acting on Positive Content**

If you found a lot of positive content about your business while doing your research, this is a good thing. However, there's always the potential for problems to creep up. So focus on figuring out how to shed more light on the positivity.

For instance, if you found good content that you control on page 3 of the search results, develop a plan to better optimize it so that it is moved up the first page. If you continue to optimize and post content regularly, you can actually dominate the first pages for some of your best keyword terms.



## **Acting on Inaccurate Content**

Again, having inaccurate content removed can be difficult, but it can be accomplished in some cases. For instance, if you stumble upon a duplicate local listing that is not yours, try having it removed.

If you've found sources where your business is mentioned, but your contact details are incorrect, reach out to the site owners to have it corrected.

Take each of these situations case by case and do what you can to have the information corrected or deleted if possible.

## **Reputation Best Practices**

Going forward, take your online reputation into your own hands. You can publish more content online that is likely to show up in the search engines – pushing down any negativity that may be out there.

Good, positive content includes:

- Having your own company website that is search engine optimized
- Blog posts and articles
- Social media posts
- Videos
- Podcasts
- Claimed and Optimized Local Listings
- Press Releases

Your online reputation cannot afford to take a hit in a time when consumers heavily rely on the internet to decide whether or not to do business with you.

If you've ignored your online reputation up until this point, I hope you've found this guide useful in helping you take that first step towards a solid reputation you will be proud of.

It all starts with getting a clear picture of what your company looks like in the eyes of online consumers. Once you've seen this, you can take educated steps towards improving it over time.

