

7 Secrets Reputation Companies Refuse to Tell You [+ a Bonus Tip!]

Reputation companies are secretive with their processes and strategies. They fear their strategies will be stolen or copied and they don't want their clients to know what happens behind the scenes.

As the founder and President of DiamondLinks, I'm sharing almost 15 years of reputation management secrets that reputation companies *won't* tell you. Here are the 7 things they want to keep secret:

1. DIY reputation management can be effective

The reason this is a secret is that reputation companies obviously don't make ANY money if you can DIY and hack your way to a clean reputation. Here are a couple of tips to make that happen:

- I. Plan to spend significant time writing and publishing content. For an average client, we might publish 10 pieces of content each month. Through a writing service, you can expect to pay about \$500 in content costs alone. You can cut down that number if you write all of the content yourself.
- II. You will need to send about 100 emails and make around 10-25 phone calls per month. These emails and calls will be for outreach with the goal of publishing your articles. You'll need to tailor each article to fit the context and content of the website on which you're trying to publish each article. If you're reaching out to a local non-profit, you might ask to submit an article titled, "11 Ways to Support Your Local Non-Profit Organization". If they reject your article, you'll need to keep emailing and calling to get someone to publish your article.
- III. Register all 4 of your exact match domains (YourName.com, .net, .org., .info). Create a different website (content, style, etc.) for all 4 websites. Additionally, use a different shared hosting company for each one (Namecheap, HostGator, GoDaddy, BlueHost, whoever is the most affordable).
- IV. Register all social media accounts. Set-up each account with your name and details. Each social media account needs to have followers, connections, likes, or whatever metric it uses. This establishes the legitimacy of your accounts. Facebook should have 250+ friends. LinkedIn should have 500+ connections. Twitter should have 100+ followers. Instagram should have 200+ followers. Each social media account should have at least 10 posts and then one or more per week.
- V. If you're an expert in an industry, offer your expertise in the form of content. This could be an interview, webinar, guest post, video training, etc.

2. Testing strategies and methods should happen more often

Many reputation companies avoid testing new strategies because they cost money. That cost is not easily recoupable since many tests will be failures. I prefer to test as many strategies as possible since it gives us new methods to help clients achieve a clean online presence.

On average, we test 3-5 new strategies each month. And we have 10+ tests in one stage of our testing process at any given time.

We utilize a three-phase approach to testing.

- **Phase 1** - Test strategy on an easy keyword. Almost every strategy passes this stage. The bar is set extremely low. We might take an extremely rare name, or even make up a fake name such as “Johnsulo Erickson”. Now that we have a test subject, we implement the testing parameters. Within 1-3 months we should know if the test passes Phase 1.
- **Phase 2** - Test strategy on a medium difficulty keyword. The expectation of this test is that we will see our article ranking on pages 1-3, or our link building strategy will push up the keyword at least one page. To implement this test, we identify a different keyword and then either a.) publish a new article or b.) find one ranking on page 3 that we can attempt to push-up in the search engine ranking results. To be successful in this phase, within 1 month, the article should either rank (for newly published articles), or the link building strategy should have pushed up the existing article in the search results.
- **Phase 3** - Test strategy on a difficult keyword. Since we’re dealing with a difficult keyword, our expectations are low. We pass this phase, new articles must rank within the first 7 pages or existing articles must be pushed up at least 3 positions without any other efforts.

If the new strategy passes all three testing phases, we begin to roll it out across our active clients.

Without testing, a reputation company will never develop new strategies and will quickly fall behind. If they fall too far behind, they won’t be able to influence the search engine rankings.

3. Research is hoping to stumble across another reputation company

Rather than testing, many reputation companies hope to find out what a competitor is doing. They believe this will be a shortcut and remove the need for testing. Trying to find an effective strategy that your competitor is using means two things.

First, you're always a step behind. Second, you'll never know what else they're doing to influence that search result. It would be like looking at one piece of a puzzle and trying to guess what the final image looks like. Research can help, but only to identify a strategy. The strategy still needs to be tested.

4. Expenses are good if they create positive results

Some expenses are just a waste of money. This typically happens with new reputation companies. They don't yet know what they're doing. They don't have good strategies and methods, so they use you the client as the test subject. You're the rat in the cage and they're watching you to see what happens. Your reputation should be more valuable than a caged rat and you shouldn't have to pay for their tests.

Expenses at DiamondLinks typically fit within a few categories:

Content costs. We write and publish a lot of content. We believe great content, published on great sites, leads to great results. This is both for ranking as well as promoting existing assets. Most of our content costs \$35-75 per article, depending on the needs and length.

Publication fees. Once we have an article written, we need to find a site that will publish the article. This is where our network of contacts comes into play. During an average month, we send 75,000 emails trying to establish partnerships with websites, editors, and publishers. After contact is established, we begin to negotiate the publication fee(s). Rarely is publication free. Typical publication fees range from \$150-600 per article.

Link building. After the article is written and published, we need to push it up in the search results. For example, a newly published article might initially land at the bottom of page 2. That won't help suppress a negative article on page 1, so we begin the process of link building which helps push up the positive article so it will move ahead of the negative article thereby pushing down the negative article.

5. There are no guarantees

A reputation management company that offers a guarantee typically falls into one of three categories:

- They hope to get lucky and find success. They will spend the bare minimum on your campaign because they don't want to lose money if they're not successful.

- They'll be gone by the time your contract ends. Reputation companies open and close with regularity; all it takes is a domain name and a credit card processor and they can take your money. After your 6 or 12-month contract ends they will ask for an extension. You'll hear, "we're making progress," or "we only need 3 more months, but it won't cost you anything." These are stall tactics. When you demand a refund, you'll be met with excuses. Eventually, they will no longer respond to emails and at this point, their phone number is typically disconnected.
- Their contract is strong and extremely specific. I've seen a "reputation guarantee" that was not a money-back guarantee, but rather it merely guaranteed the company would continue working on the client campaign as long as it took to get results. Effectively, this means they will never refund your money because they can "work on your campaign" for the next 30 years.

6. Individual reputation providers are at a disadvantage

Reputation management requires at least a few employees.

Be careful with good salespeople. A good salesperson will promise the moon and then try to hire someone who can do the work they just sold! I know reputation companies that have a single employee, and every part of the work is subcontracted to overseas companies. The reputation company is literally, one guy, sitting in his living room. However, unfortunately for those clients, they are sucked in through great salespeople.

The disadvantage to a one-man show is sustainable results for the clients. When an individual has no company infrastructure, he can't test every idea and he has no support. When he goes on vacation, nobody answers the phone, and nothing gets done.

7. Large companies are also at a disadvantage

As a company grows, it often requires the back-office staff to grow. With less than 50 employees, you don't need a full C-Suite (CEO, CFO, CMO, CIO, COO, etc.). Once you grow beyond 50 employees, the back office grows.

When you're working with a large company, you're paying for each of those C-level executives and less of your money is going to your actual reputation work and expenses. A percentage is going to the corporate structure, expensive office leases, corporate jets, and other wasteful expenses. Your money is paying for those expenses.

Bonus Tip: *There are no secrets with DiamondLinks!*

We don't have a "secret sauce" that we're too scared share. We have a simple belief - great content, placed on great sites, leads to great results.

For nearly 15 years we have held that belief, it's why we have a database of partners we can work with. We want to publish our great content on their great websites!

If you're unsure about how something works, or how it *should* work, just let us know. We're a phone call or email away.

About the Author



Brandon Hopkins

FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

"Link building doesn't have to be expensive to be effective. We've been refining our processes since 2004, we won't be 'hoping and guessing' our link building will work, we've tested everything!"

Company owner Brandon Hopkins is a 15+ year veteran of the SEO and ORM industry. With many years of experience comes time-tested ranking results stretching back many years. With this history of success, Hopkins guides DiamondLinks.net and is always pushing the envelope of testing and cutting-edge SEO strategies.

Hopkins is active on many SEO and ORM forums by the handle 'BHopkins'. If you see him, say, "Hello!"