

Building Your Reputation Action Guide & Management Checklist

Pretend for a moment that you are a visitor in your town. This visitor has just spotted your store from a distance. What caught their eye?

Intrigued by that first glimpse, the visitor comes closer. What does the visitor see now?

Crossing your store threshold, what captures their attention as they enter your store?
...What is the overall message?

Pause for a moment and ponder some additional questions:

- Did your name resonate with the visitor because they had heard of you?
- What specifically would they have heard?

You know more about your store than anyone, anywhere, ever will. You also know that no matter how good you are, you are only as good as the sum total of every aspect of your business. Most importantly, you are obviously also committed to ongoing improvement, because you have visited this website. The attached MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST is designed to guide you as you think deeply about all of the areas addressed on the website. It will help you examine the impressions you make on the community and your customers, your social values and commitment to integrity, and the consistency of your brand promise.

The retail landscape has never been as competitive, nor as creative, as it is right now. Your consumers are bombarded with choices in every category you offer, in addition to exciting alternatives. Who you are, and how you communicate your message determines your market share. It's about more than your brand, more than your heritage, more than your mission. Competing in the marketplace is about effectively leveraging your value and communicating your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) to your target clientele. This checklist will help you to do just that.

Management Checklist

This checklist is a guide and navigation tool for examining how you can effectively promote and build your reputation. Every business touch point is important, from ensuring your commitment to responsible business practices, to transforming your sales associates into brand ambassadors.

#1 Anchor Your Brand...with Responsible Business Practices

- Ethical Diamond Sourcing**
Do you effectively ensure that all of your suppliers are in compliance with the Kimberly Process and System of Warranties?
- Disclosure of Treatments**
Do you have a policy and method to ensure that all treatments are disclosed to your customers? Do your customers know about your policy of disclosure?
- Differentiation of Diamonds ...from alternatives**
Do you differentiate diamonds in your store from all alternatives such as simulants, synthetics and/or laboratory grown gemstones?
- Detection Resources Utilized**
Are you and your staff aware of all the resources and equipment available that makes detection easy? Are your customers confident that you can detect any treatment or alternative to diamonds?
- Community Communications Clear**
Beginning with your staff, do they know about your commitment to responsible business practices? How do you ensure that your customers and your entire community know about your responsible business practices?

#2 Check Your Curb Appeal

- Store Name - Sign**
What do people think of when they see your store name? Do they think of your USP? (i.e. Good value, high trust, high quality, ethical, fair pricing, etc.?)
- Overall Appearance**
Are your parking areas, walkways, approaches and windows spotless, attractive and suggestive of your reputation?
- Entrance**
Is every aspect of your entrance inviting, welcoming and warm?



#3 Examine Your Customer Engagement

- Store Layout**
Does your interior appearance layout, receptionist and signage invite exploration and browsing?
- Ambience**
Is the color, lighting, aroma, sound level and merchandise displays supportive of your USP?
- Merchandising Mix**
Does your merchandising support your USP and your policy of differentiation of diamonds from alternatives such as laboratory-grown gemstones?
- Associate Appearance & Demeanor**
Do your associates match your brand message with the appropriate demeanor and appearance? Is their overall impact one of a brand ambassador or an associate with a sales pitch?
- In-store Signage**
Does your signage build trust and confidence? Does it address consumer concerns? Does it support your USP?
- Equipment**
Do you have detection equipment in view and in use?
- Customer Care**
What facilities are available for customers? Do your rest rooms, children's play areas, coffee or refreshment bar or other service areas reflect your USP?
- Welcoming**
Do customers feel welcome to come in and browse? Are they comfortable doing so?
- Interesting**
Is it easy and interesting to stay in your store, are there reasons to stop and get involved?
- Conversations**
Are your sales associates capable of conversation without being too focused on merchandise and selling?
- Access**
How do your associates encourage customers to try on or handle merchandise? Are props and mirrors easily accessible? Are there enough mirrors, including a full-length view?

DIAMOND PROMOTION SERVICE

- Industry Issues**
Are your sales associates conversant with issues in the industry, which could affect consumer confidence including conflict-free diamonds, the Kimberley Process, SoW, treatments and disclosure etc.?
- Customer Concerns**
How well trained are your associates in dealing with customer concerns?
- Policies**
How do your associates explain your ethical sourcing policy, your return policies, your warranties and guarantees, and your pricing policies? Can your associates explain and demonstrate your USP?
- Collateral Support**
Are there brochures, catalogues or merchandise guides accessible to customers and/or available for use by associates during a sale?
- Customization**
Are special orders and custom work encouraged? How easy is it for a customer to create a unique piece?

#4 Consider Your Finish and Farewell

- Time**
Is your payment and sales completion system quick and painless? What do you do once the sale is made to keep the customer engaged? Is your physical arrangement conducive to continuing conversation?
- Packaging or Shipping**
Do you offer boxes, shopping bags and gift wrap that customers like to show off, flaunt and save forever?
- Return Policy**
Is your return policy written on your receipts?
- Customer Relationship Management – The Basics**
How do you capture or update customer information for future communication? Is the system consistent with your USP?
- Farewell**
Are customers escorted to the door? Is the door opened for customers leaving? How are customers thanked upon leaving? Is there a memorable farewell?

#5 Ensure On-going Communications

Customer Relationship Management

What is the first communication a customer receives after a purchase? What is the first communication a customer receives after a visit? How are your associates encouraged to maintain contact with clients? How is your database used most often...for sales or relationship building? What news and information do you share with customers?

Customer Opinions & Advisory Boards

How do you get feedback from customers about your products and services? How long has it been since you held a customer focus group? Do you have a customer advisory board of some type? Do you use customer comment cards or surveys? How are they designed and delivered? What is done with the results? How do you handle complaints, or even rumors of customer dissatisfaction or concern?

Customer Referrals & Testimony

Do any of your customer activities contribute to referral business? Do you have loyal customers who have agreed to be formal referrals for you?

Community Engagement

Central to building a strong reputation is being seen as a good neighbor in your community. Consider sponsoring and/or supporting important local causes and events, contribute to charitable causes, etc.

Website

What does your website offer to encourage customers to come into your store? Is your website consistent with your USP? Does it help build your reputation? Are all of your responsible business practices and policies promoted on your website? Where?

Note: If your website offers the convenience of e-commerce, use this checklist again to examine every aspect of your virtual store.

Marketing

Do all of your marketing initiatives (e.g. direct mail, advertising) leverage your value and Unique Selling Proposition? Do all of your marketing initiatives increase consumer confidence? Everything that is communicated to consumers either increases or decreases their confidence...nothing is neutral.

