Take Control of Your Online Reputation

The internet has changed the way we do business forever. Today, online reviews give people a public platform and a megaphone to share feedback that can impact your business, and your online reputation largely depends on them. This guide will share insights and tips about how to address online reviews—both good and bad—so you can build trust and influence customers to choose your business again and again.

Online Reviews Are Essential to Your Business

99% of shoppers research products online before stepping foot in a store[1]

94% of shoppers say a bad review has convinced them to avoid a busines[2]

Why Should You Respond to Reviews?

Build Trust with Shoppers.

Reviews provide an opportunity to show potential customers your company's personality and values.

88% of shoppers say they're likely to choose a business if it responds to all online reviews, both positive and negative[3]

Turn Negative Reviewers into Your Biggest Advocates.

Receiving a negative review is never easy. But by responding, you can show customers you value their feedback and win back their trust.

33% of customers who leave a negative review will turn around and post a positive review if the business addresses the issue[4]

Boost Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Responding to reviews not only builds trust with customers—it also builds trust with Google. Reviews appear in the Google search results, which means your responses can influence potential customers before they even visit your website.

Responses improve your search ranking by showing Google your business is active and responsive

When Should You Respond to Reviews?

The Sooner You Respond, the Better.

When it comes to reviews, response time matters—especially to shoppers who need customer service. Respond quickly to stand out from the competition and positively influence shoppers when it matters most.

53% of shoppers expect businesses to respond to negative reviews within a week; one in three people expect a response in three days or fewer[2]

No Response May Be Better Than a Late Response.

Responding to a negative review that's already more than 30 days old is rarely effective and may do more harm than good.

Use your best judgment about whether or not a late response will draw more attention to the issue

Find a System That Works for You.

To improve response speed, give yourself a consistent time period to address reviews.

Did you know:
Most online review systems, like Yelp, offer automated emails that alert you the moment you receive a new review

How to Respond to Negative Reviews

Negative reviews are bound to happen, but what you do when you receive one makes all the difference. A carefully crafted response not only helps unhappy customers feel important, but it also shows potential customers that you're attentive and helps build trust.

45% of consumers say they're more likely to visit a business if it responds to negative reviews[2]

Start with Empathy.

Do your best to understand the customer's experience. Even if the feedback seems unfounded, try to understand why the customer is frustrated and acknowledge their concerns.

Simple and Concise Is Best.

Strive to keep responses to three to four sentences. Avoid asking follow-up questions if possible. Long, complex replies may confuse the customer and further frustrate them.

Keep It Professional.

Think before you respond. Don't make negative or defensive statements, and never lash out at the customer. When possible, ask a neutral party to review the issue and your response.

Offer to Talk Directly.

Properly resolving a situation sometimes requires moving the conversation offline. For complex issues, provide your contact information and offer to talk with the customer directly.

Listen to Learn.

Sometimes a customer brings up a problem you haven't heard about yet. Take time to investigate the issue, and think of solutions to prevent it from happening in the future.

How to Respond to Positive Reviews

While it may not feel necessary to respond to positive reviews, taking a quick moment to thank a happy customer builds loyalty and shows potential customers you care about their feedback. We recommend replying to all positive reviews—even if with just a quick "thank you."

Thank the Reviewer and Be Specific.

Show the customer you value their time by responding to specific elements in the review. For instance, when someone compliments your team, you can thank the customer and let them know you've shared their praise with your coworkers.

Example:
"Thank you so much for the kind words! I've shared your comments with our team!"

Seize the Opportunity for a Little Self-Promotion.

Look for opportunities to turn positive feedback into a subtle marketing message.

Example:
Whether it's insurance for your home, car, or business, [NAME] looks forward to serving you for many years to come!"

1. "From Discovery to Purchase: Key Digital & Physical Influences on the Customer Journey," Power Reviews, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.powerreviews.com/research/key-digital-physical-influences-customer-journey/>.

2. "Online Reviews Statistics and Trends: A 2022 Report by ReviewTrackers," ReviewTrackers, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.reviewtrackers.com/reports/online-reviews-survey/>.

3. "Local Consumer Review Survey 2023," BrightLocal, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>.

4. "How to Respond to Negative Reviews Online," BrightLocal, accessed April 27, 2023, <https://www.brightlocal.com/learn/review-management/profile-management/how-to-respond-to-negative-reviews/>.

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