

Get More Online Reviews

Utilize the 12 most popular and effective strategies to get more reviews and boost your online reputation!



Provided as a courtesy of our agency

Online Reviews Cheat Sheet



Reviews are critical in the online world, and certainly a vital component that is necessary in order for your business to remain competitive and sustainable. They really have really become part of our culture, and in my opinion, the new online currency. Your company reputation is transparent to the online world.

Reviews create more brand awareness, add credibility to your company, and provide the type of social proof that has been shown to influence customer behavior, especially when it comes to making a buying decision. ***According to BrightLocal, (a leading online marketing research company), 88% of people trust online reviews and testimonials from unknown consumers as much as they trust recommendations from people they personally know.***

It is important to not only have a sufficient amount of good reviews, but those reviews need to be recent. In fact, most studies and research reports that we have read indicate the majority of online users do not feel a review is very valid if it is older than 3 months.

Here is another reason to have a frequent flow of new reviews.

In the event you receive one that is unfavorable, the impact will be less severe and oftentimes enough good reviews will push the bad one further down the page or possibly to a second page. I would also like to add that since different types of reviews appeal to different people, it is good to have a diversity of personalities and styles to get the maximum impact and have your best chance of connecting with that prospect and converting them to a paying customer.



We have utilized a variety of successful strategies to help our clients get more reviews, and more importantly, get reviews that convert better. We will go into more detail on that in a minute. Depending on the type of business you have and what products and services you offer, these strategies and recommendations may have to be modified slightly. You can determine which are the most appropriate for your business and implement them accordingly. ***The bottom line is just to do it.*** Any reviews are better than none and more is definitely better than fewer, so don't get hung up on all of the details.

1. Verify and optimize your Google My Business (GMB) listing



Since Google is without question, the most popular search engine. Therefore, it stands to reason that your business must be properly claimed and optimized in your Google My Business (GMB) listing to take

advantage of improved local rankings. Here are a few quick steps to get you started for more details you can refer to this page:

<https://support.google.com/business/answer/7091>

- **Step 1:** Log into the Google Account you want to have associated with your business (or create a new Google Account if you don't already have one or want to use a different one).
- **Step 2:** Go to google.com/business and select "Start now" in the top right-hand corner.
- **Step 3:** Enter your business name.

The setup is fairly straightforward if you just follow their prompts. If you want to maximize your listing for the best exposure and rankings, it is important to follow some important guidelines such as verifying your location, keeping your hours accurate, managing and responding to reviews (all reviews whether they are good or bad), add photos and/or videos, and by all means choose as many categories as

they allow that are relevant to your business. This will provide greater exposure and increase the chance of prospects finding you.

2. Setup and optimize your Facebook business page

facebook

Facebook is the largest social media network in the world with an estimated 2.4 billion monthly active users. A

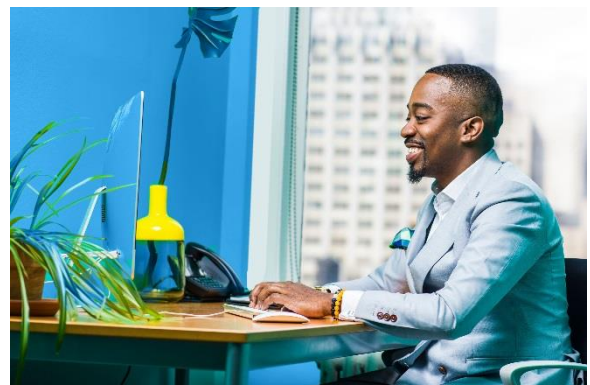
Facebook business page is similar to your Facebook profile but specifically designed for businesses. It has enhanced functionality such as the ability for customers to leave you reviews. You can also measure things like engagement and likes so you can determine how effective your page is and tweak it to improve performance.

You will first need to sign up which you can do by visiting <https://www.facebook.com/business/pages> and click on the blue button that says create a page. After that you will need to select your business classification whether it is a business or a community. Follow the prompts and add your company's important information. Make sure you take advantage of the option to upload a compelling cover image as well as any other photos or videos. This will not only enhance the look of your page, but it will also improve visitor engagement and conversions.

You will also want to completely fill out the about section for your business and take advantage of that section's "story" feature so you can provide your visitors with more information about your company history and mission.

3. Ask for reviews yourself

Although some of your customers will leave reviews for your company without you directly asking them, do not only rely on that passive approach. By doing so, you would miss the opportunity to receive a lot more reviews so don't be shy.



There are many different ways to ask for reviews and some of the following ones may be more or less appropriate for your business, but I would recommend you consider as many as possible to get the maximum exposure for your brand.

Some suggestions are asking for reviews in person, asking for reviews over the phone, via email including a subtle request in your email signature line. You could also utilize them on your website if you have any type of thank you page or order confirmation page.

4. Encourage your employees to ask for reviews



Since your employees may often have more direct contact with your customers, it is recommended that they be trained to gather feedback and ask for reviews whenever appropriate. Asking for a review over the phone would be very appropriate if your company routinely makes follow-up phone calls to make sure that the customer is satisfied. After a brief dialogue, your staff could ask "We sincerely appreciate having you as a customer and are thrilled to know that we did such a good job of serving you. It would be very helpful if you could recommend us to others in your community that are not familiar with our services, so they too could have a similar experience." Then you could direct them to the appropriate review site you wish to gain more reviews on.

5. Promote your best reviews

This is a very powerful strategy that I often see underutilized. I'm not sure if people are not aware of it, don't realize the importance, or simply too shy to "toot their own horn". Let's explore some highly effective ways to utilize this strategy. Since your website is one of, if not the first places a prospect goes to look for information about your business, it stands to reason that you should prominently display your best and latest five-star reviews on your website.

At a bare minimum, these reviews should always be on your homepage. However since many visitors often enter your site through interior pages, so it is best to have these reviews displayed on all pages. Depending on the platform on which your website is built, there are various plug-ins or widgets available that can facilitate this. If you are fortunate enough to have some video reviews from your customers, (which convert much better by the way), you definitely want to have one or more of those on your homepage.

6. Respond to all reviews even the negative ones



I often see business owners only respond to positive reviews, if they respond at all. This is a mistake for several reasons which I will explain. Obviously if someone took the time to leave you a great review, they should be commended for that. Publicly thanking them and showing your appreciation obviously makes them feel

good and lets them and the rest of the Internet world see that you truly care about your customers. This builds trust and rapport.

In your reply, you can also creatively throw in the name of the product or service they purchased (if appropriate) to give your review a little keyword boost. Be very subtle with this so that your reply does not sound like a sales message. Google and your customers will frown on that.

It is equally important to respond professionally to any negative reviews. Your prospects and customers know it is not a perfect world and sometimes mistakes are made. By actively reaching out by way of the reply and showing a sincere attempt to resolve the issue reinforces that you really do care about customer satisfaction, which certainly can have a positive impact on your reputation.

Some people are impossible to please so don't expect to turn everyone around. However, the fact that you are actively trying to make them happy goes a long

way to show your prospects how you might handle a potential problem with them. Sometimes that makes more of an impact than a good review.

Remember this is somebody's opinion of the experience so it is important to detach emotionally and resist the urge to take it personally even though it may seem like an attack. Once you start down that road it will end badly for all parties and can certainly have a negative impact on your online reputation.

7. Use the Yelp badge or banner on your website



Since Yelp recently changed their terms of service so it is now a violation to directly ask someone to leave the review on your Yelp page. However it is perfectly acceptable to use something like "Find us on Yelp" or "Check out or Yelp page" with the

hope that they may leave a review for your company once they are on your page.

You can also incorporate a yelp banner like the one shown above. Yelp has a high authority ranking and many of your prospects will go there to check out your reviews before making a purchasing decision.

8. Make it easy for customers to leave reviews

The more steps or time involved for customers to leave reviews, the less likely it will happen. Respect their time and make it very convenient for them to access the review site or social media directory you wish them to leave a review on. I would definitely recommend using some type of link shortening service since the actual URLs for some of those pages are not very attractive. There are several services that are available for free. You can use as <https://bitly.com/> or <https://tinyurl.com/>. There are many others as well. Most of those types of services also provide some kind of analytics so you can see how many people are clicking on those links. You can use this data to tweak the performance.



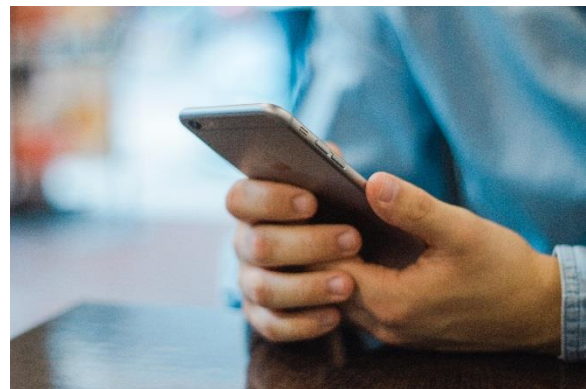
If you are a little more tech savvy and want to create a QR code linking directly to your review page, there are several websites available such as <https://app.greateandtrack.com/> or <https://www.the-qrcode-generator.com/>. You can then place that code on any of your printed materials, business card, flyers, or electronically on just about anything else.

9. Use customer receipts and email signatures to solicit reviews

Many of your customers and suppliers probably receive emails from you on a regular basis. Therefore, it is recommended that you add short little blurb to your email signature line asking for a review. It only takes a few minutes to setup and then it can work silently in the background for you. It can be something very subtle such as "Have we done business together?" or "Have we had the pleasure of serving you?" "Please leave us a review on Google and Facebook." It's just a gentle reminder but it can certainly work to get you more reviews.

10. Run an email campaign

Hopefully your company collects the email addresses of your customers and clients. If not, it is highly recommended that you begin to do so immediately since there are so many free or low-cost options available. That is a topic for another discussion.



There are a variety of situations in which an email campaign can be used effectively to solicit for reviews. For example, it can be used as part of a customer service or customer satisfaction follow-up series. "We want to make sure you are satisfied with your recent purchase/transaction/experience with us. Please let us know what we can do to improve our service. It would be very helpful to recommend us to others in your

community that are not familiar with our services, so they too could have a similar experience. Therefore, we would like to ask you to leave us a review on Google (or Facebook). Here are the links for your convenience."

You could do something similar as part of a re-engagement email series. It would give you an opportunity to reconnect with customers who may not have engaged with you recently. Let them know how much you have appreciated their support in the past, offer them an incentive of some sort to reengage with you, and ask for a review using similar verbiage. There are many other situations in which email could be effectively used not only to rekindle the relationship resulting in potential business, but also a highly valued review.

11. Have a dedicated review page and/or feedback form on your website



You have probably seen other businesses that have a specific page on their website to collect feedback and reviews. It is most effective when you include a brief survey consisting of 2 or 3 questions that can be used to gather specific feedback regarding their experience with your company. This is typically information that may not be included in the review, but highly valuable because it provides input from the customer's perspective on areas of your business that may benefit from improvement or reinforce things that are already working well.

We have successfully used <https://www.surveymonkey.com/> and <https://www.hotjar.com/> but there are many free or low price options available in that regard. After the survey form, have a brief blurb about how much you appreciate a review and include links to 2 or 3 of the review sites or social media platforms you wish to get more reviews on. There are many widgets or plug-ins available that have some pretty exciting options regarding streaming reviews on your website, so consult with your webmaster to see what's available.

12. Follow-up with your review requests



Do not become discouraged if everyone does not immediately respond to your review request. When they saw your original message, they might have been busy doing something else, or it was just not a convenient time. With that being said, it is important to follow up with the 2nd and 3rd message. We have reviewed

various studies that have shown the number of responses on the subsequent messages are equal to or greater than the first message, so you can essentially double the number of potential reviews. Follow-up can be done via email and/or SMS depending on which platform you use. There are also a number of low-cost automated services that can do this for you in the background. From a productivity and efficiency standpoint, that approach can be highly effective.

Conclusion

Hopefully this guide has provided you with some valuable insights regarding the importance of getting online reviews and some effective strategies for doing so. There are many other tools and techniques available other than what was covered here. You can certainly implement these strategies yourself or train your staff to do so. However, if you would like to focus on what you do best with the services and products you provide, we are happy to provide competitively priced done for you solutions. ***Contact our office today to discuss your needs and goals. We look forward to helping you build your online reputation.***