

SPARK

BUSINESS IDEAS TO FUEL YOUR BOTTOM LINE

Why Your Business Needs Consumer Reviews to Survive

The opinions of past customers can make or break your business. In today's world, not only do you have to work hard to deliver an excellent customer experience, but you also have to capture your customers' feedback once the deal closes if you want to attract new business. That's where consumer reviews come in. If you're interested in staying ahead of the competition, make sure you've got online reviews that are positive, current, and can be found in the right places.



The Importance of Consumer Reviews

If we take a closer look at the above findings, it tells us several key things:

You need reviews to gain consumer trust. With 91% of consumers using reviews to determine whether a business is good or bad, you absolutely need to have online reviews, or you won't even be a part of the conversation. Each time you close a deal, be sure to ask your customers to write a review about their experience.

Your reviews need to be positive. People are turned off by negative reviews. In fact, 60% of consumers distrust a business if the reviews are bad. What's more, 87% of people won't even use a business if their star rating is less than three. For your reviews to be effective, you must deliver exceptional customer service that leads to positive reviews and ratings. For the times that you may receive a negative review, be sure to respond promptly and address the customer's concerns calmly and professionally. Doing so will let other users see that you care about your customers and could even persuade the reviewer to change his or her feedback.

Your reviews need to be current. A glowing review from two years ago is likely to be considered obsolete. Since 73% of consumers think that reviews older than three months are irrelevant, your reviews need to be up-to-date. Proactively work to obtain new, quality reviews on a regular basis, and never neglect an opportunity to ask for customer feedback.

Your reviews need to be in the right places. There's a plethora of review sites on the web, so which ones should your reviews be on? Search engines, like Google and Bing, are a must, as 63% of consumers use search engines to find reviews. In addition, 37% of consumers head directly to dedicated review sites, like Yelp, to read reviews. You may also want to have a presence on industry-specific sites, such as Zillow. Lastly, don't forget about Facebook ratings, LinkedIn recommendations, and the power of posting reviews on your own website.

How to Ask Customers for Reviews

Asking for reviews can feel a bit awkward, but if your customers are happy, they should be more than willing to share the love. Plus, 7 out of 10 consumers will leave a review if asked to, so don't be shy. Here are some tips on how to ask for reviews:



In person. According to a study published in the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, a face-to-face request is 34 times more successful than an email, requiring only six in-person requests to equal the power of a 200-recipient email blast. Use this to your advantage by asking your clients for reviews in person. Also, keep your ear to the ground for any unsolicited verbal feedback. When they say something nice about you, follow up with, "Would you be willing to share that feedback on Google or Facebook?"



In an email. While in-person requests are more powerful than email, that doesn't mean emails are ineffective, and they can be a big time-saver when you've got a busy schedule. If you send thank-you emails to your customers after a transaction, that is a great place to ask for a review. Be sure to sound genuine and personal, include a direct link to the review site, and offer some questions to consider as they write the review. Here's a helpful [Review Request Email Template](#) that you can use to ask customers for reviews via email.



On your website and social media. This is less about making a personal request and more about making it easy for people to leave a review. On your website, put clear call to action buttons and links to your top review sites. On social media, share a post every now and then simply asking your followers to leave a review on your page.

A Few Other Pointers:

- Don't wait too long to ask. Request a review while the deal is still fresh in people's minds - within one to two days of the transaction.
- Request permission before posting people's reviews on your website.
- Be careful about offering incentives in exchange for reviews. Yelp, for example, has some strict guidelines on this. Familiarize yourself with the rules for each review site so you don't end up damaging your reputation.
- Don't just respond to negative reviews. Responding to positive reviews gives you another opportunity to say thank you and allows your personality and professionalism to shine.

How have user reviews helped your business? I'd love to hear about it!

Share this article:



Jim Sample
NMLS #45678
Sample Mortgage X
1335 Strassner
Saint Louis, MO 63144
314-987-6543
EMAIL ME
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