



GROW YOUR BUSINESS WITH ONLINE REVIEWS

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REVIEWS BUILD TRUST

We live in a world where trust is earned and not given. A potential new customer to your business doesn't know, like or trust you... yet.

How do you get them to trust you? Traditionally it takes about 5-8 touchpoints to build trust with a potential new customer. This can be a visit to your website, a call with a member of your team, an email and more.

It all starts with the first thing that a potential new customer will see, which will usually be your website. There are a number of credibility items that you can include on your website, such as having clear and visible contact information.

The best thing you can present are testimonials or reviews from your existing customers. These are genuine comments from real people who have used your products or services.

Reviews matter. Think about how you purchase a product or service, particularly on the Internet. The number of reviews and the quality of these reviews can make a big difference to your purchasing decision.

Faced between the choice of two similar products, one with 100+ reviews and an average rating of 4.9/5 and another with 8 or 10 reviews and a rating of 2.5/5 - which one are you going to choose?

Your potential customers are making decisions like this about companies like yours on a daily basis. They're actively comparing the products and services that you offer, to those of your competitors. Most importantly, they'll be looking at reviews that past customers have left.

Are you currently collecting and displaying reviews for your business? If not, you could be missing out as you're losing your ability to stand out when someone is making comparisons at the point of their purchasing decision.

It's not just your website that will be displaying reviews either. When you carry out any sort of local search on your computer in Google, for example, you'll see a map listing with three businesses listed. Some of these businesses will have review stars next to their listing.

These review stars come from a business page called "Google My Business" or "GMB", for short. You likely have a page for your business here already, but you may not realize how important it is to how your business is viewed in one of the largest search engines in the world.

This guide will show you how you can begin generating more reviews for your business and use these to effectively show the great service that you provide to your customers.

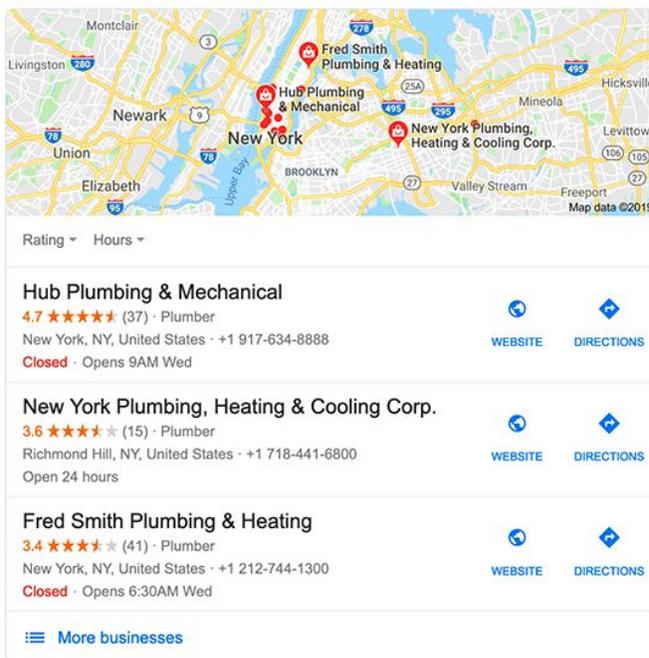
1 Why Should You Care About Reviews?

As mentioned in our introduction, reviews are critical to purchasing decisions. You should care about reviews because they can be the difference between your business doing “okay” and “great”, particularly if you’re in a competitive marketplace.

Reviews are what we refer to as “social proof”. These are statements from third parties (your customers), to attest to the quality of product or service that they received from your company.

Social proof is a great currency to have in your business. Customer reviews and testimonials are one of the strongest forms of social proof. You only have to look at a company like Amazon, to see the difference that great reviews make.

Products with a higher number of good quality reviews on Amazon are typically generating more sales and thus more visible to customers. It’s critical for both Amazon and third-party sellers that they are able to collect reviews from customers who purchase their products.



It’s not just E-Commerce either. Service-based businesses will find this important too. Here’s a screenshot from a Google search for “Plumber New York”:

Google shows three businesses and the ratings that have been left for them. See how the top business stands out with a rating that is much higher than the other two?

TIP: Think about the products or services that you sell and how your customers are purchasing these. How can you start collecting reviews and testimonials from your customers?

2

How Do You Get Started With Reviews?

It has never been easier to get started with collecting reviews from your customers. Here's the #1 secret to getting reviews, it's revolutionary... you ask! That's right, all you need to do is ask for them.

We'll go more into the specifics of how you can ask for reviews in the next section, for now - let's focus on what and why.

Whether you have 1000 new customers each week or you work with just 1 customer each month, you need to have a streamlined process in place where you are asking your customers for a review after you have delivered your product or service.

The length of time you leave will vary depending on your particular product or service.

For example, if you sell shoes - you'll want to give your customers an opportunity to have worn them a few times before you ask for a review. Whereas if you're an emergency locksmith, you can ask for a review much sooner as you've performed your service in-person and obtained an immediate result for your customer.

You'll need to think about what motivates a purchasing decision from your customers. Think about the biggest problem that your customer has which your product or service is solving. This is the type of thing that you ideally want to be highlighted in your reviews and testimonials.

You'll also want to think about how your potential customers are looking for a product or service like yours. Depending on the niche and industry that you serve, you will find that people use the Internet in different ways, especially when it comes to reviews.

There's an excellent report from Bright Local on how consumers use reviews for local businesses, which you can view here -

<https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>

It's worth paying particular attention to the differences between the age groups surveyed, as this is another factor. Younger people are more attracted to Social Media, as an example, so if they're part of your core target market you will want to ensure that your reviews are visible on Social Media.

Understanding your audience is the key to positioning your reviews in front of your target audience, helping them to make a buying decision.

TIP: Take the time to think about your target audience and how they would look for a business like yours. Consider the demographics of your "ideal customer" and make sure you can get your reviews in front of them.

3 Asking For Reviews

As mentioned in the previous section, the easiest way to generate reviews for your business is to ask your customers for them.

So how do you ask?

The most basic and simple method, which will work well if you serve a limited number of customers is to simply send an email asking them to review your business.

This could be a request for them to write a written review or testimonial that you will feature on your website, or you could point them towards a specific location such as your Google My Business page, Facebook page or an online property such as Trustpilot.

For businesses that serve more than a handful of customers each week, it would be too time-consuming to send out a manual email to each customer. This is where we can help using the ReviewLead platform, or you can start using email automation.

What you would need to do here is to create an email sequence that consists of one or more emails that are asking your customer to leave a review. You add the customer into your automation sequence and send out an email (or series of emails) asking them to leave you a review.

These emails will normally be set to send a number of days after your customer has received the product or service that you offer. As we mentioned earlier, they need to have an opportunity to have received and appreciated their purchase.

Once this has been set up, you can add a new customer into the sequence in just a couple of clicks, rather than having to type and send a new email every time.

With ReviewLead, the heavy lifting is done for you. We take care of sending your initial review request and follow-ups as well as reaching out by SMS text messaging.

If your business sells products or services online, it's possible to completely automate the entire review process from payment to the review request email, and automated follow-ups/reminders. This will need a little investment unless you have a technical team member on-hand, but it's worth it as it gives a completely hands-free approach.

TIP: Look at the number of customers that you're serving on a monthly basis and decide on the best strategy for your business. The majority of businesses will be best served using some form of automation either through your email provider or a specialized reviews platform.

4 Saying Thank You

Now let's talk about how you can stand out among your competition. There are two very important words in this world that aren't always used enough in business - "thank you".

If you can take the time to thank people for leaving you a review, you help to cement the business relationship that you're offering to your customers and add in a human element to the process.

Whether you're a sole proprietor or you have a team of 20 or more - creating a human element to what you're doing is imperative. Prospective customers who read reviews about your business online will see that you care about what your customers think.

This goes for negative reviews as well as positive. It's a simple fact of life that it's impossible to please people all of the time. In fact, it's OK to have a few negative reviews. It's a little counter-intuitive, so I'll explain.

If a business has 100% of their reviews as 5 stars and no-one has ever said a bad word about them, it can be a red flag. It's not natural to see this, so it may be worth digging in a little further.

Next time you're looking at online reviews before making a purchase, pay attention to people that leave 2, 3 and 4 stars out of 5. These reviews may give you a little more insight about particular product, service or company in question.

While you won't particularly "thank" the user in the traditional sense, what you are able to do is appreciate the concern or problem that they have and follow-up with it publicly. Again, this shows that your company cares about its customers.

So how do you say thank you? Here are three recommended methods:

- **Reply to the review** - Most review platforms will allow the business owner to reply to reviews. Take the opportunity to say thank you and follow up with any reviews that are left for your business.
- **Email the customer** - If appropriate, you can send an email to the customer that left a review. It's a great way to say thank you and it allows you to keep a personal touch that specifically talks about the product or service that they purchased.
- **Send a Personalized Video** - Use a free service like [Loom](#) to record a quick 10-30 second thank you message, which is personalized to the user. This one takes a little more effort but could have a big payoff in customer loyalty. The extra time spent on this one is a way to really differentiate your business.

TIP: Make a plan to schedule in a little time each week to follow up with reviews that are left for your business. Whether this is replying to a review, sending a personal email, or having fun with leaving a custom video message - make sure you take the time to show your customers that you care.

5 Repurposing Reviews

Okay, now it's time to get your marketing cap on! Let's talk about repurposing reviews.

Repurposing a review gives you a great opportunity to make the comments from your customers visible in another location or using another medium.

This can be as simple as creating a social media post that showcases the review, you could feature it on your website, it could be used in a video or even in your next printed brochure or document.

Before we go through how you can repurpose your reviews, it's worth mentioning that it's always a smart (and polite) idea to ask your customers if you can share their reviews in other locations, such as your website and social media. The vast majority will say yes, but it's always good to have confirmation in writing.

With that said, let's run through 4 different ways that you can repurpose the reviews that your customers leave for your business:

1. **Your Website** - It's a great idea to make sure that the reviews you receive for your products or services are featured prominently on your website. This would include your homepage and any sub-pages that are relevant, e.g. those that talk about your offerings in more detail.
2. **Your Website (Case Study)** - Yes, this is the second mention of your website - but this is far more in-depth. You can take the review and use this as part of a case study to show the problem that your customer had and how you were able to solve it. Case studies are an excellent way of showing your expertise and the review from your customer serves as the final chapter of the story.
3. **Social Media** - Create graphics that feature reviews from your customers and post these on your social media accounts. It's an easy way to repurpose content and make sure it's in front of both existing and potential new customers.
4. **Promotional Videos** - When you create a promotional video for your business, you can feature reviews from your customers. Even better if you're able to ask them to be part of your video and repeat their review in more detail, live to camera. This is very valuable!

YOUR BUSINESS CAN STAND OUT

Great reviews can massively enhance the reputation of your business and help potential new customers to trust that you're able to assist them with their needs.

Whether you sell products or services, it's important that you're encouraging your customers to leave reviews. These will show the quality of what you have to offer and in many cases, make a difference to how your business can be viewed in the search engines.

One important thing to note that we didn't cover in the above sections is that you should try to avoid incentivizing reviews.

While it might seem like a smart idea to offer people who leave a review a discount coupon, money off voucher or free product - you need to ensure that you're not "buying reviews". This is frowned upon and is not a great ethical process. Plus you're going to get biased and potentially low-quality reviews in the process.

By all means, you can offer a prize draw for people who leave feedback - this is quite common and as part of a monthly / quarterly process is not unreasonable. But make sure you stop short of offering everyone something in exchange for leaving a review.

Having an effective Review process for your business will help you to get more exposure to your business online. It also helps to continue a conversation with your customers after they've made a purchase from your business.

Don't forget to say thank you to the people who take the time to leave a review. This can be in the form of replying to their review, or you can go the extra mile and record a personal video from your smartphone that is unique to them.

We'll be sending over some additional tips and suggestions over the next few days that you can take and action in your business. Keep your eye out for these as the first one should be arriving tomorrow.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to get in touch!

To your success,

Ray Mitchell
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