

YOUR GUIDE TO ONLINE REVIEWS AND RATINGS

Your business's reputation used to be what you said about yourself, through advertising or word of mouth. Now it's customers who define businesses, by providing real-time feedback on review sites and social media.

Crucial to effectively managing your online presence is getting, monitoring, responding to and amplifying online reviews.

How important are online reviews?

- 88% of potential customers read reviews to assess the quality of local businesses
- 39% read reviews on a regular basis
- only 12% don't read reviews

Consumers control the conversation

Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ have dramatically changed the way businesses communicate. Review sites favour the consumer: businesses no longer have control over the messages people see.

Customers can rave about a business...or let everyone know they had a terrible experience.

Responding to negative reviews and amplifying positive feedback is essential for success. Failing to respond on review sites and social media is worse than having a phone line that goes unanswered; thousands of people see the lack of response.

Managing your reputation is about working *with* your customers to create an authentic online image. Customers are now the other half of marketing—the story you tell about your business has to be consistent with their experiences. Inconsistencies lead to negative reviews; if you promise no wait times and a customer has to wait for half an hour, he or she will let everyone know.

What makes a good online reputation?

Being visible and maintaining a good reputation go hand in hand. Not being listed on the sites customers use is just as bad as negative reviews...but when your online profile includes positive reviews generated by your customers, your reputation leads to tangible results.

Building a consistent online presence and a positive reputation is important for both consumers and search engines. Important aspects of your online footprint include:

- number of listings
- consistency of listing information (name, address, phone)
- overall sentiment in reviews
- frequency or speed of new reviews
- overall volume of reviews
- social activity—especially engaging with reviewers

More than nine out of 10 smartphone users seek local information online. Google claims 90 per cent of those searches lead to action, and more than 50 per cent lead to sales.

The fact is that the majority of customers are committed to making a purchase *before* they enter a local business. They make their decision based on a business's visibility, how effectively it manages its reputation, and social networks. If your business has a superior web presence, customers will come to you rather than your competitors.

Reputation drives conversion

What people see online matters; 74 per cent of customers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations—a huge shift in thinking, and a trend that's growing year by year.

Online reviews have moved from 'nice to have' to essential. As customers look to these sites for feedback, updating your profile, responding to reviews and engaging with customers becomes ever more important. Maintaining a positive online presence is the customer service of the digital age.

Trust

When you decide to try a new restaurant, how do you choose? When your car breaks down, how do you find a mechanic? Remember that 88 per cent of consumers read online reviews to determine the quality of a local business, and they do so regularly. Being listed and being reviewed offer credibility to local businesses.

What can we do to help you?

Most businesses don't have the time or resources to manage their digital profile. That's where we come in.

Managing your reputation

Our software helps your business monitor every aspect of your online reputation.

Monitoring your online reviews

Monitoring reviews is vital to managing your reputation Management. Our system uses sophisticated algorithms to search for mentions of your business, tracks what people are saying and identifies where they're saying it.

Generating reviews

Our software gives you the power to generate new reviews, showcase testimonials on multiple platforms, manage customer feedback and monitor review statistics. You can request reviews individually or in bulk, add a widget to review websites and amplify your presence on third party sites.

Generating listings

Remember that listings go hand-in-hand with reviews? Our system monitors online directories, review sites and social networks, making sure your clients get the information they're looking for.