

IMPROVING THE

ONLINE REPUTATION

OF YOUR BUSINESS



DERRY COKER

Why Worry About Your Reputation?

So Many Customers Check Your Reviews

Even if you don't check your business' reviews very often, your potential customers are! Take a look at this data:

- 70% of consumers read 4 or more reviews, with 20% looking at more than 11
- Positive reviews make 68% of consumers more likely to use local businesses
- Negative reviews stop 40% of consumers wanting to use a business
- 91% of 18-34-year-olds trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation
- 57% of consumers won't use a business that has fewer than 4 stars (up from 48% in 2017)
- 86% of consumers read reviews for local businesses
- 27% of consumers looked online daily for a local business in 2018 – more than double the percentage in 2017

This Is Costing You Money!

Their inspector **didn't know what they were doing**. Claimed my car had a cracked frame. 3 other different shops inspectors said the frame was fine and could be fixed easily.

– ★★☆☆☆☆ *Steaven O'Nele*

One of the **worst experiences with a company ever**. Take your car if you want paint on your windows, a rude response from a front office lady, a rental company to charge you over 400 dollars because they didn't cover what they were supposed to, and the **biggest headache of your life**.

– ★☆☆☆☆ *Abigail Bartolomeo*

Just call someone else. **Bad people running bad business**. Failed to complete the job and overcharged me multiple times. Tried to fix problem multiple times and was eventually neglected and told to stop calling. Has been a **headache through and through**. Go with Applewood!

– ★☆☆☆☆ *Alexandra Ruby*

This guy's office is literally the **most uncomfortable place ever**. Needs to be redecorated badly. Overall seems like he knows his stuff, but **I didn't ever want to go back**.

– ★★☆☆☆☆ *Morgan Kline*

Never again. What a bunch of **money hungry ripoff artist**. Needed a crown re glued and they insisted I needed an x-ray. I had just had it put in not that long ago. I'm not paying for an x-ray i don't need. Since I didn't agree to the x-ray somehow I was rude to the assistant. Then they wouldn't put the crown back in without the x-ray. The **dentist was RUDE**, good thing for that betta boy I was feeling bad.

– ★☆☆☆☆ *Tim Kinder*

A recent study by Go Fish Digital found a clear correlation between negative reviews and potential customer volume. Here is what they found:

With 1 negative result about your company or product: your company risks losing 22% of potential customers

With 3 negative results about your company or product: your company risks losing 59.2% of potential customers.

With 4 negative results about your company or product: your company risks losing 70% of potential customers.

So What Can You Do?

We work with businesses every day to help them with their online reputation. In this guide, we've outlined some strategies you can use to get things back on track, and avoid more negative reviews in the future.

The Most Important Review Websites

First, let's focus on what you need to focus on. There are dozens of websites that can have reviews about your business, but only a few of them are essential to having a good online reputation. Here they are:

Google

This is the big one. It is typically the most visible for any business, and it plays a part in the Google rankings for a business, particularly in the maps section. For most businesses, this will be the most important place to have good reviews.

Facebook

This is often the second-most visible place a potential customer will see your ranking. They give an average star rating for businesses, but no longer ask consumers to leave a star rating - they ask if their experience was good or bad, and ask them to write about it. From there, they calculate the score based on a proprietary algorithm.

Yelp

Yelp seems to have been getting slightly less important recently, but they are still found and seen by plenty of people. With their algorithm that often blocks good reviews from displaying or counting in the average rating, you have less direct control over your Yelp rating than the others, but it is still worth working on.

TripAdvisor

This only really applies to businesses that tourists would be more likely to visit.

Restaurants, hotels, and anything related to tourism would be well-suited to have good reviews on TripAdvisor.

Most service-based businesses, and/or those that only cater to local residents can skip this one.

Industry-Specific Sites

Certain industries have sites that are specific to their industry. Avvo and Angie's List are two major examples for lawyers and contractors respectively.

Some of these allow reviews by anyone - others require that they be verified customers, or even that they originally connected with the business through their platform. As such, it's not as easy to integrate them into your strategies, but it's worth trying. These sites carry a lot of weight, simply because they focus on just one industry.

Strategies For Getting Reviews

Using An Email List

Do you have an email list sitting around that you rarely use, if ever? If so, you can put it to good use, by mailing clients and asking for a good review. Here is a good example for an auto mechanic.

Dear [name],

We just wanted to thank you again for trusting your vehicle with Tom's Automotive. We hope you had a great experience on your last visit, and that you come back again the next time you need an oil change or realignment.

We are proud to be the hardest-working and most dependable repair shop in the Chicago area, and we need your help to let everyone in town know about our business.

If you wouldn't mind, could you take just 2 minutes to click the link below, and leave a quick review and rating. Posting these reviews online allows everyone to hear about your experience, and helps us serve more people in our community.

Here is the link - [link]

As a thank you, here is a \$10 off coupon for your next oil change. Bring it in anytime in the next six months.

[coupon]

We look forward to seeing you on your next visit!

Tom's Automotive

It's short and to the point, but it goes over why the business is writing, and why the customer should help them. Plus, in this case, they are given something nice as well, which also doesn't hurt.

The "Checkout" Review

This is perfect if your business has a checkout desk, like a chiropractor, dentist, or auto mechanic. While the receptionist is taking care of payment and paperwork, they can hand the customer a card or plastic stand with a short message asking them to scan a QR code, or (even easier) go to a short URL, like ReviewDrJ.com

While the customer is waiting, and the service is fresh in their head, they are more likely than ever to be willing to leave a review. Since they can do this on their phone, they will already be logged into Facebook and Google, and possibly Yelp.

You can purchase a domain like the one mentioned above, and then forward it to wherever you want the customers to end up.

Encouraging the Happiest Customers To Leave Reviews

The best way to have mostly great reviews is to have most of the reviewers be happy customers. But how to make sure?

One way is to simply only ask customers for a review if they seem very happy with the work done. For a plumber, if the client seems a bit hard to please, or they complained about the price or how long it took, the plumber can process their payment without asking for a review. But for the client who just seems happy to have their appliances working again, and has thanked the plumber several times, he should be asked to leave a review when it's all done.

An even more accurate way is to use software that allows users to leave a review internally. If they leave a good review, it gives them links to review sites, and makes it easy for them to post the same review there.

If, however, the user posts a negative review, the software directs them to another page where we can apologize, offer a discount on future work, or request to call the customer, among other things. They would generally not be directed towards leaving a review on Facebook or Google.

As Reputation Marketing specialists, we offer this software to all of our customers.

Please give us a call to see how we can implement it for you!

Following Up via Email or Text Message

If you can send the customer an email or text message shortly after they visit, they are far more likely to leave a review. This can be as easy as assigning an employee to go through the customer records each day, and sending emails.

We also have software, available to our clients, that allows them to enter the name, email, and phone number of their customers, and have an automatic email and text go out, asking the customer to review them. It can send them right to the review page, or to the page we created with the software mentioned above.

NOTE: Every country has different laws regarding sending email and texts. No matter what country you are in, there is a good chance this is regulated in some way.

We are not lawyers, and this should not be considered legal advice in any way. Our understanding of US law is that sending email to “customers” is allowed, as long as it pertains to a transaction, and they can request to stop being emailed.

With texts, in the US, it is far more complicated. To be allowed to send texts, the user must have given explicit permission to be texted by the business. For our clients, we typically ask them to add certain language to their intake form or other place where they collect the customer’s phone number. Without this in place, it can be extremely dangerous to send a text, since the penalties can be severe. ***For all of these services, ignorance of the law is not an excuse, so please consult a lawyer, or review the applicable local laws before sending any messages to your customers.***

In Summary

I hope this information was helpful, and gave you some good ideas for helping your online reputation. We are often asked by business owners to implement these strategies (and others) for them, and we are happy to oblige.

If you are interested in discussing what our firm can do to help your business' online reputation easily and inexpensively, please just give us a call today!

Thanks!

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