

The Step-By-Step Guide to Boosting Your Online Reviews

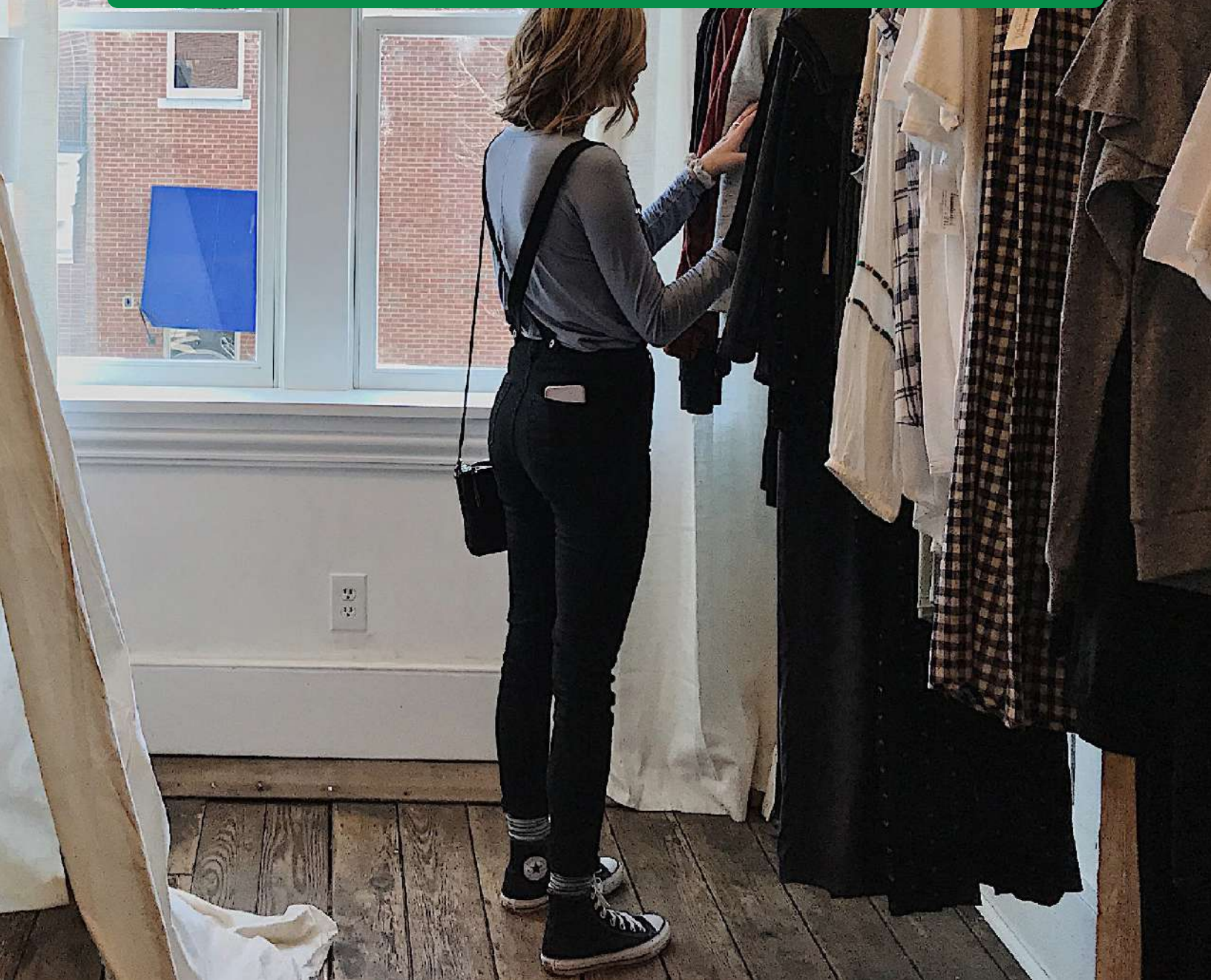


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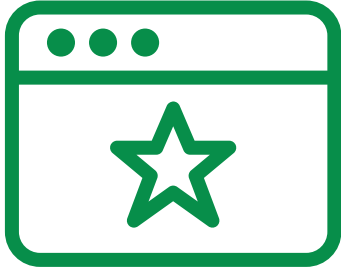
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Online Reviews — The Secret to More Business



Online Reviews—The Secret to More Business



What is one thing you can do to help get more customers in the door? Receive more five-star reviews! More than **76% of shoppers** will research you online before they come into your shop, and **89% of millennials and Gen Xers** will trust online reviews as much as recommendations from a friend.

Customers today are very digitally savvy. They research everything from what kinds of products exist to solve a particular problem to looking at specific brands, from doing price comparisons to searching for local shops where they can purchase the items. Consider these startling statistics from a **survey from BrightLocal**:

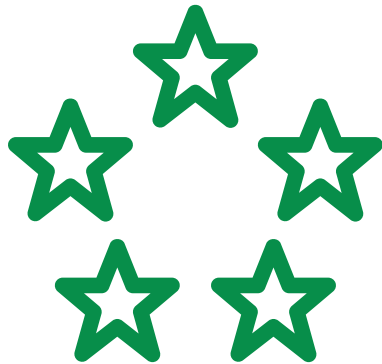
- **89% of consumers** are “highly” or “fairly” likely to use a business that responds to all of its reviews.
- Only **3% of consumers** said they would consider using a business with two stars or less.
- **34% of consumers** only leave positive reviews, while **7% of consumers** only leave negative reviews

Yelp, Amazon, and Facebook are a few of the most common review sites in general, however there may be review sites specific to your industry. For example, if your business is related to home improvement, don’t ignore Angi. If you’re a bed and breakfast owner, you should definitely be monitoring TripAdvisor and other travel sites. If you’re an aesthetic provider, one of the biggest review sites in your market is RealSelf. Do a little homework to uncover which review sites are most important for your type of business and monitor your online presence there.

A photograph showing the lower legs and feet of several people in a shopping environment. On the left, a person wears a dark blue dress and brown strappy high-heeled sandals. In the center, a person wears a dark blue and white vertically striped skirt and black strappy high-heeled sandals. To the right, a person wears a light pink top and blue pants. A black shopping bag is on the floor near the person in the striped skirt, and a white shopping bag is on the floor near the person in the pink top. A green text box is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

5 Steps to a Fantastic Customer Experience

5 Steps to a Fantastic Customer Experience



Customer reviews are really a digital form of word-of-mouth marketing. When customers are happy, they will tell on average **six or more people** about their experience. When they're unhappy, they will tell on average **15 or more people**. (Psst...if you cater to millennials, congratulations—this group of people buck that trend and will tell on average **17 people** about good service.)

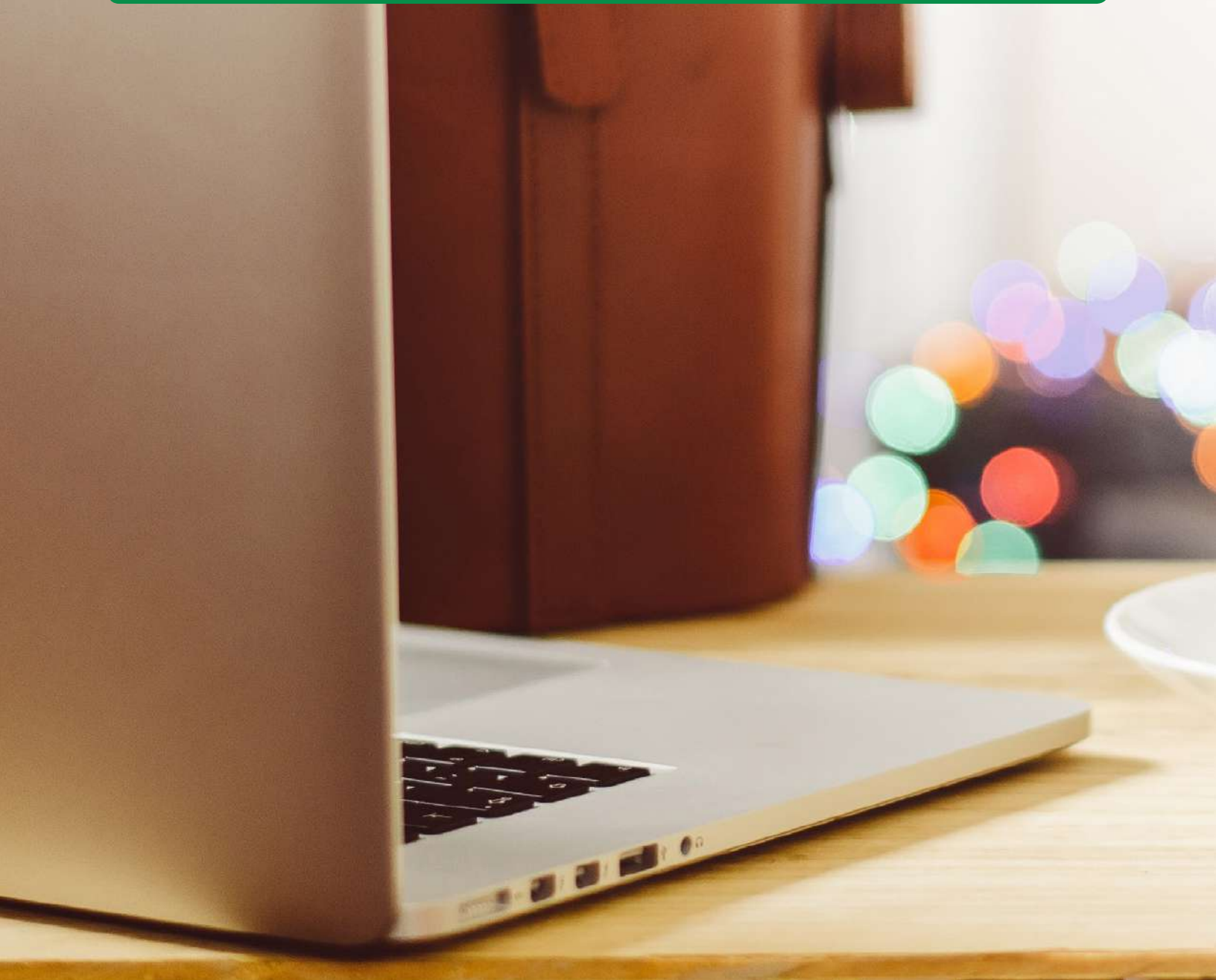
Luckily, customer experience can really be a competitive advantage for small businesses. Big-box stores can compete on price, but are often sadly lacking in that personal touch. Studies have shown that when it comes to making a purchase, **61% of consumers** will pay at least 5% more if they know they'll receive a good customer experience.

What's the flip side of that? Feeling unappreciated is the **number one reason** customers cite for switching away from products or services.

Here are 5 steps to memorable customer service:

- 1. Ask questions and listen.** Uncover what your customer really wants.
- 2. Be personable.** If appropriate, use their name and introduce yourself.
- 3. Be honest.** If you or your products weren't up to snuff, admit it and offer to make things right.
- 4. Go the extra mile.** Maybe it's offering to get them additional sizes when they're trying something on, or noticing they don't seem to be enjoying their meal. Checking in with customers and delivering a little more personal attention pays off.
- 5. Follow up.** If someone is unhappy, follow up as soon as possible to try to address his or her concerns.

6 Steps to Getting More Online Reviews



6 Steps to Getting More Online Reviews



1. Create a complete profile on all relevant review sites.

This obvious first step allows you to add information about your business and respond to reviews. The more complete your profile is, the more visible and persuasive it will be. Start with the basics: verify your address. If the site links to a map, make sure the map pin is correct. Check all categories that apply to you so your business shows up in any relevant searches. Add business hours, a link to your website, a phone number, and menus of products or services. Even details such as whether you take reservations, accept credit cards, and are wheelchair accessible can increase your discoverability.

2. Sell the sizzle.

Elmer Wheeler, a famous salesperson, is credited with saying, “Sell the sizzle, not the steak.” In other words, make your profile multi-sensory. Add photos not just of the interior and exterior of the building, but also of your products, employees, and (with permission) happy customers. Give your profile personality. If you are a salon, perhaps you can add before and after photos. If the atmosphere in your shop is really memorable, consider getting professional, eye-catching photos. When searching for a restaurant, for example, customers will often want to know what the outside seating looks like, whether it feels cozy or chic, and above all...whether the food looks good. Choose images that appeal to their senses and their emotions. Your images should make their mouths water.

3. Differentiate yourself.

Many review sites will offer sections for more information. Use these spaces to tell your unique story. What drove you to open your doors to business? Is everything locally made? Are you still making things the “old fashioned way”? Do you support the local community or only use organic materials? This is where you convince customers to come to you instead of the competition.

6 Steps to Getting More Online Reviews



4. Encourage customers to give feedback.

Many customers are willing to give feedback, but report not being asked. While Yelp has very **strict guidelines** on how to promote your page, other sites are not as strict. Make sure you learn the specific guidelines of a review site before asking for feedback. Even on Yelp, it's acceptable to promote that you have a page, just be careful on how you ask for feedback. Consider adding signage in your business, on your receipts, and at the bottom of every email indicating that your business has a profile on these sites. You can say things like "Check us out on Yelp" or "Find us on Facebook," but avoid specifically asking for reviews, or worse, offering anything in exchange for a review.

5. Integrate your systems.

Customers are already on review sites....if you integrate your reservation software with those sites, you not only encourage them to visit your store, you also encourage them to leave a review. Apps like **Booker** allow customers to book their next appointment right off your Yelp page including details like requests for specific tables or servers.

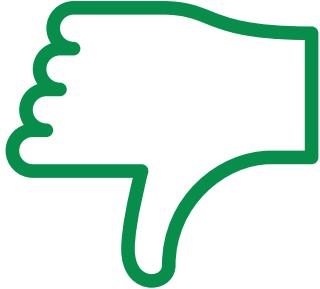
6. Respond to reviews.

Worse than a negative review is a business that doesn't respond to it. Show you care by thanking enthusiastic reviewers and answering questions. If they were unhappy, ask them to come back and offer to make it right. Responding to reviews is a great way to demonstrate your stellar customer service.

Responding to Negative Reviews in 3 Steps



Responding to Negative Reviews in 3 Steps



Negative reviews happen. Don't panic—approach it calmly and with a heartfelt desire to offer an exceptional customer experience. Here are three steps to handling a bad review.

1. Get to the bottom of what really happened.

Before responding, you'll want to know what went down and why. It's possible your product or staff were at fault; it's possible the customer was unreasonable, and maybe it's a little of both.

2. Give a brief, polite response online apologizing and offering to speak personally with the customer.

According to research, **a third of customers** who get a response to a negative review will delete their original negative post. Another third will post a follow up or new review countering their initial post. The best way to handle a negative review is to turn the original, unhappy customer into an evangelist.

3. Train your staff to prevent future issues and further negative reviews.

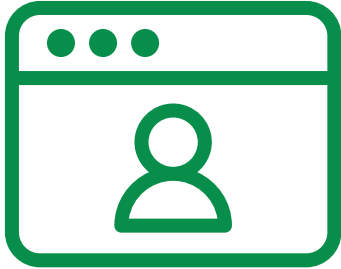
Your employees are on the frontlines of the customer experience. Try role-playing with your staff on how to deal with an unhappy customer. Also, remember to review and update your customer service training program regularly.

Read this **blog post** for tips on how NOT to respond to negative reviews.

4 Apps to Manage Your Online Reputation



4 Apps to Manage Your Online Reputation



1. Address bad experiences before they leave your shop.

Drive CX Connect allows customers to indicate their level of satisfaction right at the point of payment. Customers simply rate their experience and poor feedback can be flagged and immediately sent to the manager. This instant feedback allows you to turn around their experience and win back unhappy customers before they write a bad review.

2. Need help managing your Yelp profile?

Yelp for Business Owners helps you improve your online presence by helping you post images and other information easier. Plus, you'll be able to track visitor engagement, reviews, and respond to questions and comments.

3. Monitor your online reputation effortlessly.

With **BeSocial**, you can discover your social media ranking on Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare; monitor your online reputation on Yelp and Google; and see how it compares with those of your competitors.

4. Want to know what customers think before they post a public review?

Feedback lets you hear directly from your customers by printing a unique link to give private feedback right on their receipt. You'll find out what they love most about your business, and help keep harmful negative feedback off public review sites like Yelp.

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