

How to use reviews to build your business

Back in 1891 Oscar Wilde wrote "there is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

Well over a century later, many businesses have not embraced Oscar's sentiments and positively cringe at the thought of being talked about online. In fact, many business owners don't even set up social media as they are scared off by the thought of getting negative reviews.

This article looks at how to use reviews in a positive way to build your business.

Since the advent of the internet there have been two major shifts in buying decisions.

1st major shift

Nearly all sales decisions are now made online.

When the world wide web was rolled out to the masses we initially used search engines like Google, Bing, Yahoo and Ask Jeeves to find more information about goods, products and services.

Search engines became the place where your customers and prospects could gather the vital information that would help them make their buying decisions.

In other words, it was all about what you said about yourself on your website.

2nd major shift

The birth of social media has meant that in today's world there are many more places that your prospects can go to gather information to help them with their buying decisions than just your organisation's website. These places include social media platforms and review sites such as:

- Facebook
- Google My Business
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Trust Pilot

- TRUSTist
- FeeFo
- Trip Advisor
- CheckATrade

Remember...

It's no longer just what **you write** about your business on social media.

It's now **what's written about you by others** and this includes reviews of your business.

Fact!

If a competitor appears more credible or more reliable than you, your customers and prospects will reach out to them first and not you.

Ignore or embrace?

From a practical standpoint as a business owner or marketing professional your choices are fairly limited. You can ignore the concept of reviews or embrace it.

If you ignore reviews and choose not to ask for them or suppress them across all of your social media platforms then there will be two outcomes:

1. you won't run the risk of getting any negative reviews
2. your competitors will continue to build the number of reviews they have which will build trust and confidence in them with online searchers. In other words, you will stay still while your competitors move forward

How do I go about getting reviews?

If you want to build trust and credibility in your business you need to work on gathering reviews from several sources.

On your website

The obvious place to start is by asking your (happy) customers. You may have received testimonials over the years in the form of emails, letters and cards. All you will need to do in this case is ask the sender if you can pop their testimonial on your website. As they have all ready given the testimonial in the first place they are unlikely to refuse. Give some thought as to whether you will provide the whole testimonial or just a snippet and also if you will protect the identity of the author and just use something like "Mrs J of Lincoln".

I'm taking the opportunity to reiterate my normal comments of just how helpful your staff are - having them on the end of the phone is just like having an extension of the office - they really feel like colleagues rather than phoning another company.



Charly Wright, W&H Supplies Ltd

Social media

Your customers can leave reviews on Facebook and Google My Business. Remember that leaving reviews might prove to be an obstacle for some of your less techie customers. It's a good idea to draft an email with screenshots to walk them through the review process. A good online marketing agency will be able to help you if you struggle to do this.

The customers that have all ready given you a testimonial are the perfect target market for gleaning reviews. It's a good idea to email them and say words along the lines of....

"You've all ready kindly said [this and this] about us. Would you please take just 30 seconds to pop this on Facebook and Google My Business using the handy guide attached?"

It's a good idea to ask for reviews on Facebook and Google My Business every 3 to 6 months.



Review sites

Third party reviews have always been powerful, and sites like CheckATrade have been gathering reviews since 1998. As with Facebook and Google My Business it's a good idea to continually ask customers for reviews and especially as part of the after sales/service process where (hopefully) customer satisfaction levels are high.

How to deal with the negative

It's inevitable that not all of your reviews will be 5 star. It can be really frustrating to get a bad review, but remember sometimes things do go wrong. What's important is that your customers and prospects see that you act promptly and genuinely attempt to solve and make good any problems.

It's a wise move to provide a telephone number and ask the negative reviewer to talk to you. This is much more likely to result in a successful resolution and also gets any further negative feedback offline and out of sight.

Whatever you do, don't fan the flames or cause an argument. Stay calm and rational. It's all about how you handle the situation.

How to deal with the positive

Always thank everyone online who leaves a positive review online or offline.

Don't forget to ask social media reviewers if you can pop their kind words on your website and vice versa.

Aggregating reviews

Platforms like TRUSTist are very good at scraping all the reviews that you have on your website, social media and trade review sites and then injecting the average "star" rating into search engine results. The stars give instant credibility in search engine results even if you only have a handful of reviews.

Cleaners In Fife | Dunfermline Cleaning Services | Companies

<https://timeforyou.cleaning/uk/home-cleaning/fife/> ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.9 - 71 reviews

Domestic Cleaning Fife, Dunfermline & surrounding areas. ... Are you looking for an honest, reliable and affordable, police checked* domestic cleaner in the Fife area? ... Aberdour, Burntisland, Cowdenbeath, Cupar, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline, Elie, Fife, Glenrothes, Kelty, Kinghorn ...

Conclusion

It's just as easy to ask for a review as not to. You just need a simple system in place and some email templates stored.

The rewards of gathering reviews are trust and credibility which can only do your business good.