

5 Review Management Practices to Avoid

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Building and maintaining a positive business reputation online seems to come easily to some SMB's and elusive to others. Online marketers agree ***you don't have to be all Sunshine and Rainbows to have a positive online reputation***, but you do have to be vigilant. ***Positive customer reviews can wield the colossal power*** to help your local or online business flourish and ***negative reviews, if mishandled, can become chaotic and quickly spiral out of control***, causing serious harm to your online reputation and your bottom line.

Review management, when done correctly, is a powerful marketing tool to attract new customers and boost organic and local SEO. Mistakes made when dealing with a bad review, responding to online consumer questions and your overall social interaction will remain attached to your business FOREVER. Because of this staying power, ***it is critical that you understand the following 5 review management worst practices to avoid:***

Sporadic, Disorganized Online Marketing

Your website or online listing is ***your one and only chance at a first impression for the 90% of potential customers who read online reviews before visiting a business*** in person according to a 2017 Local Consumer Review Survey conducted by *BrightLocal*.

Haphazard handling of your online reviews, both positive and negative, can be construed as ***a lack of organization, commitment and ultimately how potential customers believe you deal with all of your customers.*** For instance, if you do not acknowledge your happy customer's feedback, you may be regarded as complacent.

An unattended toxic review is an immediate red flag to the **74% of consumers who say that positive reviews make them trust a local business more** (BrightLocal). An unresolved customer complaint or product issue implies that you just don't give a damn.

Own It! Take Control of Your Online Reputation Today with an easy to use review management tool to get organized and help you easily obtain and maintain valuable customer reviews and star ratings.

Internet Ignorance IS NOT Bliss

In this day and age, there really is **no good excuse for being unaware of your company's online footprint**. While it may seem intimidating because you realize you can't fully control the online conversations that are taking place about your business, there is no need to worry.

By simply taking action you can significantly contribute to the conversation and direct the discussion of your brand or services. **Your input and online engagement will have far-reaching benefits like defining you, and your company, as an authority** in your industry and your interactive, positive online reputation.

Be Aware of what your customers are saying about you online. Monitoring your online reviews across every platform like Google, Facebook, and Yelp, as well as industry-specific review sites like Angie's List or DealerRater, is imperative to stay on top of the conversation about your company online.

Condescending or Insincere Review Reaction

Responding to customer feedback and comments is crucial, but **the way you respond says a lot about how you conduct business to potential customers**. The worst thing to do when responding to an unhappy customer on an online forum is to generalize their bad experience, redirect the blame back to the customer or offer insincere placation without offering a solution.

Just like face-to-face interactions, your **customers will recognize sincerity when they see it**. They will appreciate honesty and **most people just want to be treated fairly** and when they feel you have wronged them, they want you to make it right.

The main focus of **your review management should mirror your business' customer service practices**. If you feel your products and services were within the standards of how you have advertised them, stand up for yourself. But **if you are in the wrong, face the music** and express your apology with sincerity and detail how you are going to make it right.

Review Management is Cultivating and Maintaining Relationships with your valued customers. Each and every interaction should convey your appreciation for their business, interest, and understanding with their concerns and sincere caring and compassion when they are unhappy with their purchase. Fix the issue, remain professional and chances are - you will retain the customer.

Bad Review Revenge Equals Bad Virtual Karma

If a toxic customer leaves a negative review, you should ***never, ever retaliate or engage in an online argument***. If the customer is clearly in the wrong, you must ***maintain your composure***. Consumers can be very emotional if the circumstances involve something or someone they feel strongly about.

For example, a customer orders a birthday gift for their loved one, and because of a shipping error (that you had no control of) delays the gift's arrival, don't automatically shift the blame to the shipping company. Instead, ***invite the unhappy customer to have a private conversation, offline, to resolve the dispute***. You may offer to look into the situation and if necessary explain your methods and shipping policies.

Unavoidable negative experiences can be unpleasant to deal with, but if you can show sympathy and understanding while resolving the complaint quickly, you are showing your customer that you value their time and patronage without resorting to sarcasm, insults or threats of retaliation.

Good Online Practices bring Good Karma by responding to customer complaints with professionalism, you are showing potential customers what they can expect when they choose to work with you.

Offering Payment for Customer Reviews

Online users and search engines find great value in honest, unincentivized reviews. In other words; ***don't bribe customers for their reviews*** because 68% of customers will willingly leave a review when asked (*BrightLocal*). ***Professional review management tools provide prompted actions to help your customers quickly and easily leave their unbiased review*** of relevant review sites. If you are unsure about what you can and cannot ask for when asking a customer for an online review, here is a breakdown of [Google's review contribution policies](#) criteria for text reviews:

- **Do Not Post Advertising Content Within Reviews**
- **Avoid Commercial or Promo Content**
- **Never Bribe or Accept Payment or Goods for Reviews**
- **Do Not Bulk Solicit Customers for Reviews**

Now, you don't have to ask every customer for a review but be sure to ***seize the moment when you've provided great service and have a happy customer***. But, although you definitely didn't ask, your unhappy customers can also vent their experience through an online review. The services of savvy online reputation companies will include an invaluable review funnel to give you the chance to correct the problem before a negative review is posted. Most customers are willing to give you a second chance and forgive poor service or an unacceptable product if you make things right.

People Want to be Helpful by singing your praises online in a product or customer review when they're happy with their experience. Your review management strategy should include an after-purchase review request. If you ask - they will review.

Proactive Review Management to Protect Your Online Reputation

Utah SEO Pros can provide the right tools to implement a proactive review management strategy to build and maintain your online reputation. ***Direct the conversation about your business and show your customers that you care by establishing open and transparent communication through online reviews.*** Give us a call today at (801) 413-7734 and get your FREE Digital Marketing Analysis to see how our customized digital marketing strategies can help grow your business and your online authority.