

Online Review & Reputation Management

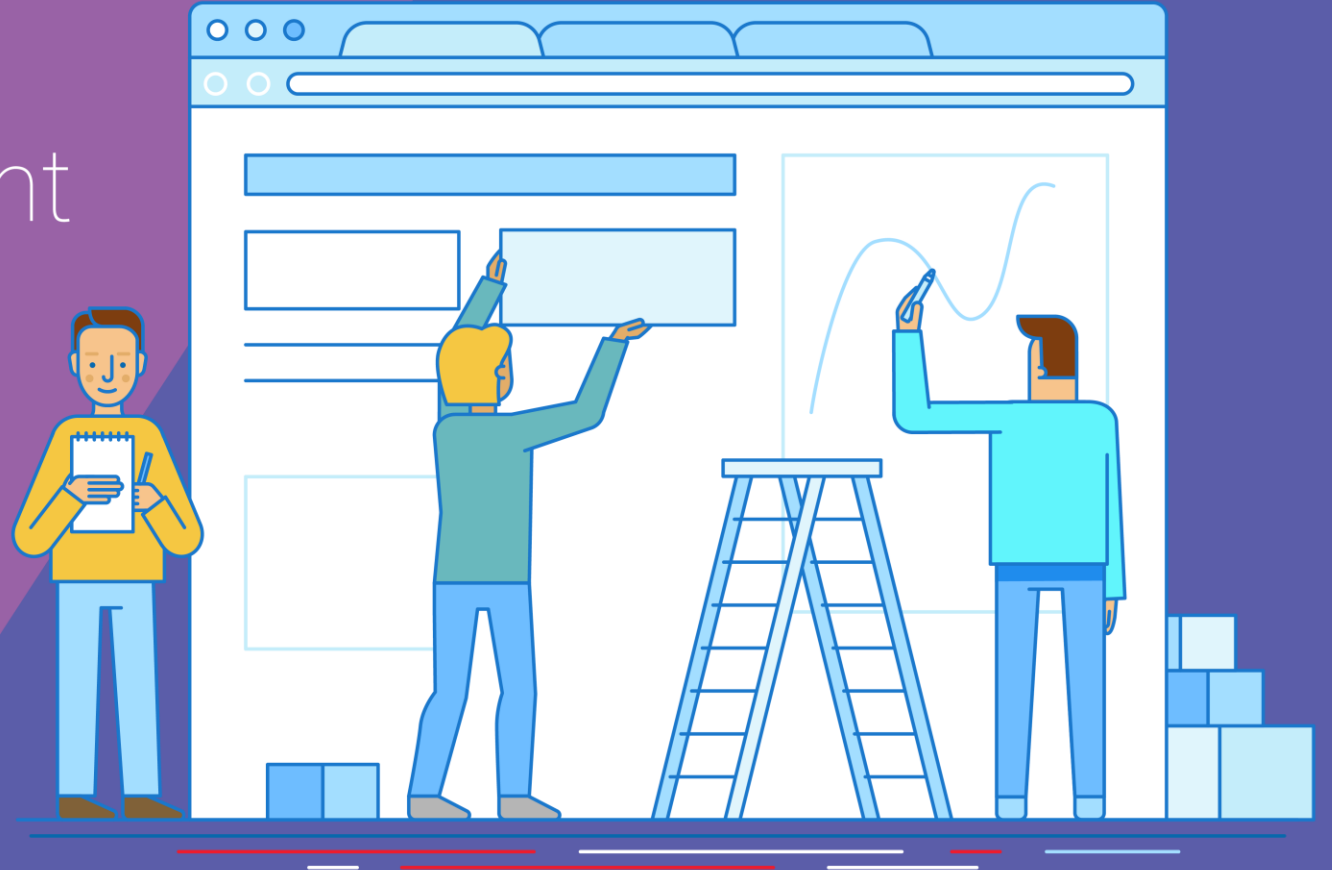


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Overview

Your online reputation and reviews can be some of your best marketing tools.

For your regulars, they get to show their love. For those who don't know you yet, it can swing them from "Hmm, maybe I'll try it" to "I have to go there!"

But you have to manage your online reputation. Otherwise, you're leaving it all in the hands of customers—and that can be risky.

Sometimes this means promoting and sharing positive reviews; other times it's interacting with customers who weren't overly impressed. No matter what the situation, the key is engaging in the right way. That's what this playbook is all about.



Dissatisfied customers typically tell 9 to 15 other people about their experience; some tell 20 or more.

It takes approximately 40 positive customer experiences to undo the damage of a single negative review.

Why Online Review & Reputation Management Is a Must

Online review and reputation management isn't really an option—more and more this is something you HAVE to do.

Here a few reasons why:

- **Those who check reviews are nearby and ready to spend**

When people visit Yelp, for example, they're hungry and ready to make a purchase or take action—they're just undecided on where to go. Positive reviews are key in guiding them to your establishment.

- **Customers are watching**

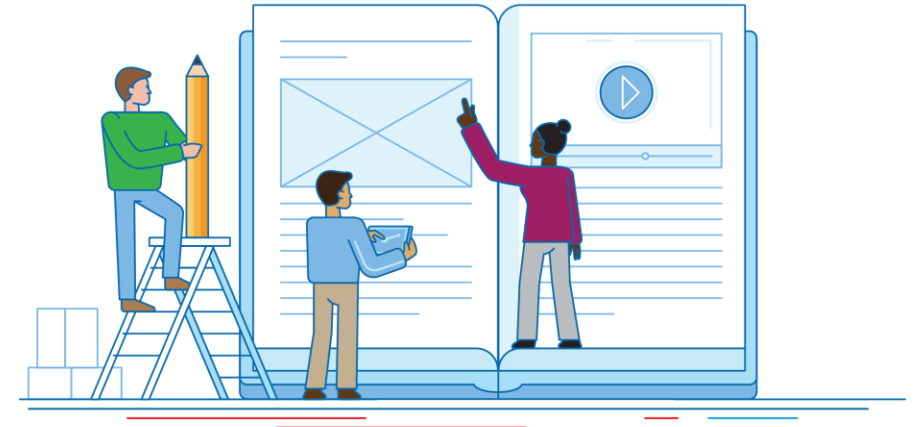
As people check out reviews, they especially like to see how the owner/operator responds. This is a chance to show your customers that you're listening.

- **Silence is not golden online**

If people are talking about your establishment, good or bad, you want to have a role in the conversation.

- **Positivity and negativity feed off themselves**

If positive things are being said and shared, building on them creates even more good will. If negative things are being said, and you don't respond, it can be seen like you agree. Or worse, you don't care.



When using Yelp, consumers are ready to spend somewhere near them, but are undecided on where to make a purchase or transaction.

What Online Review & Reputation Management Can Do for You

- **Increase traffic** by improving your profile on review sites and online searches.
- **Increase positive customer sentiment** as they share their great experiences.
- **Lessen or eliminate** the effects of bad reviews.
- **Generate return visits** and customer loyalty through online interactions and possible rewards.
- **Help solidify your brand**/character by giving your operation a real voice personality.

Good customer experiences lead **42%** of consumers to **purchase again**.



42%

of consumers say a recommendation from friends or family would influence their purchase more than a sale or promotion.

Getting the Basics Right

One of the first things you should do is claim your business on review sites and look into what type of software, and create a social media presence, if you haven't already. Here are few places to start and how to make it happen. (And please note that we don't think of these as either/or. It's best to use them all, if possible.)

General Search & Review

Google My Business

- Create a Google My Business listing at [Google.com/business](https://www.google.com/business/) and completing the necessary forms, if you haven't already done so.
- This will allow you to manage how your business info show up in Google searches, on Google Maps, and other Google properties.
- One valuable feature with Google is that you can gain followers and then use it as an exclusive marketing channel to provide special offers directly to them.
- Plus, you'll be able to get lots of information on how customers are interacting with your listing.



- To start, go to [TripAdvisor.com/Owners](https://www.tripadvisor.com/Owners) and search for your business.
- If someone has already added it, select your business and then click "Claim Your Business" from the drop-down menu. (It's important to see if it's already been added because Trip Advisor only allows one listing per property.)
- If it's not yet added, click "Get listed now" and complete the form.
- By claiming or creating your listing, you can add photos, descriptions, highlights, and other bits of info that might entice customers. Plus, you can manage your reviews and get plenty of data on how you're engaging with customers, and how you're measuring up against competitors. And it's free! (Unless you want to secure higher listings on search results or take advantage of some of their premium offerings.)

Food Specific Search & Review



- With Yelp, you'll have to create the page (customers can't create one for your place.) To start, head to [Biz.Yelp.com](https://biz.yelp.com).
- Provide all the necessary information, submit the form, and then confirm your email.
- Once up, your listing can be customized with your story, photos, hours, and more.
- Similar to Google and Trip Advisor, you'll also get plenty of data about views and engagement. And just like Trip Advisor, it's free to create an account, but you can pay for better search results and other premium services.



- Open Table has a ton of great services to choose from to help connect with customers online and keep them coming back.
- To get started, go to [restaurant.OpenTable.com](https://restaurant.opentable.com).
- Because they have several services, including Venga for POS tie-ins, you'll likely have to communicate with an Open Table representative to see what's best for you.
- The cost varies based on the service, but it starts in the extremely affordable range and gives you unique ways to interact with customers, in terms of reviews, offers, reservations, and more.

Review Management Software

- Actually getting people to review your establishment is still one of the biggest hurdles, even if they loved it. Sometimes they just need a little nudge to do so.
- Grade.us provides an easy, unobtrusive way to ask and remind customers to review your business on the sites that matter to you.
- Their software allows you to increase reviews, reach unhappy customers before they share anything negative online, collect data to make the most of any campaigns you do, and showcase your best reviews with ease.
- To get started, visit www.grade.us and enter your email on the homepage where it says, appropriately, "Start Here."

Preferred Partner

Grade.us Online Review and Reputation Management

Get the reputation you deserve with Grade.us

Review Generation

Get great reviews.
Boost your reputation.
Attract new consumers.



Review Monitoring

Listen to consumers.
Show that you care.
Win their loyalty.



Review Sharing

Showcase your reviews.
Blast on Twitter and Facebook.
Stream to your website.



Social Media

Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / Etc.   

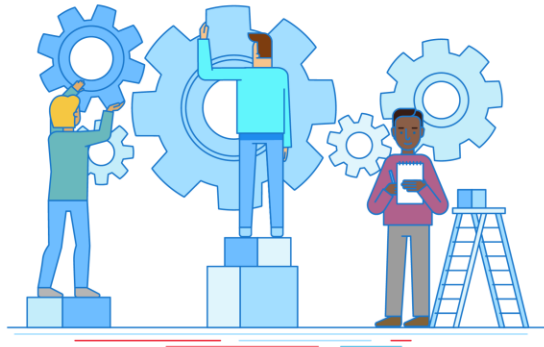
You don't have to have accounts on every social media platform but having at least one is a must. These will allow you to interact directly and quickly with customers.

- Many customers will go straight to your social media account(s) to voice their opinions (positive and negative).
- Your followers will be up-to-date on your latest offerings, events, or news immediately.
- You can highlight noteworthy items that are receiving mentions in online review platforms to create traffic between both platforms.



Be Proactive

- Consider a crisis communication plan for urgent issues.
 - For example, if there's a foreign object found in the food, reported cases of food poisoning, legal issues, etc., it's important to respond ASAP to de-escalate the situation.
- Share stories, pics, and videos about any goodwill efforts you've done or are doing in the community.
 - Using social media to show and share your character is a great way to create positive and deserved PR.
 - If you sponsor a group or team, mention it; if your employees are volunteering, talk about it; etc.
 - This can help solidify a positive reputation, generate traffic, and bolster you against any negative reviews.



Stay up-to-date

- Set up a Google Alert/Review Alerts so that you know when people are talking about your business online.
- Consider a review response tool for automation and ease.

Review trackers

- Collects online reviews from over 100 sites and notifies you of new reviews, plus you can use tools to discover trending issues and topics based on customer feedback.
- \$45/month

BirdEye

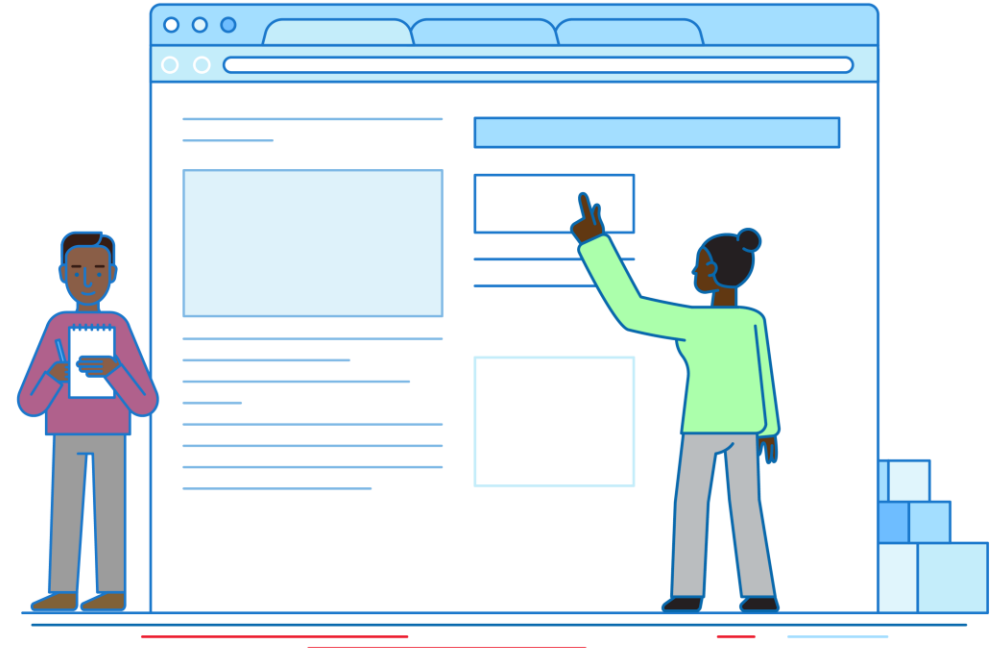
- All-in-one software that includes review monitoring, review generation, review marketing, customer surveys, support ticketing, competitive benchmarking, and more.
- Free trial offer
- \$3,000–\$5,000/year

The Nala

- Easy-to-use dashboard to request, monitor, and respond to customer reviews and send personalized, automated emails to boost positive feedback.
- 14-day trial offer
- \$129/month

What to do when responding to negative reviews

- Assess and evaluate before responding—take the time to respond with a clear head.
- Thank the guest for their feedback
- Listen
 - People leaving negative reviews want to be heard. Make sure you're listening and offering solutions to the issues they have mentioned.
- Share feedback with your team.
- Take them offline if possible.
 - Direct them to a customer service or manager email address or phone number.
 - "I'm sorry you didn't have a good experience. Please contact me at <EMAIL> so we can chat more."
- Apologize (and then move on; don't over apologize).
- Ask for another chance and possibly offer an incentive for them to return.
- Provide a solution and assure them you will do better.



Things to watch out for when responding to negative reviews

- **Don't** be confrontational.
- **Don't** be defensive.
- **Don't** make excuses.
- **Don't** delete, ignore, or hide the comment.
- **Don't** take the review personally. (This is a tough one but try to respond with a level head.)
- **Don't** be overly apologetic.
- **Resist** offering free meals. (This could create a trend of people complaining in hopes of getting rewarded.)

Do This

Review ★ ★

"I cannot in good faith recommend this place. I tried several things, which included chicken pita, hummus, and dolmades. **It was cute ambiance, but the food needs some major work**"

Response

"I'm soooo sorry you had such a bad experience at my restaurant! We strive to make everything from scratch and fresh, or it's product imported from Greece!

What day and time did you visit us? I would like to figure out what happened, because I absolutely assure you that this is NOT a typical guest experience and would love to have you return for a proper visit. I would also like to thank you for bringing this to my attention, as I take this extremely serious and I promise you that we will continue to get even better and more consistent. Please message back with your email and I will send you a gift card or we can plan a date and time for your visit and I'll make sure I'm there to personally take care of you. Have a nice day and again, I'm very sorry about this."

Do This

Review ★ ★

"I would like to start by saying that Pizza is very convenient for me. It is less than 5 minutes away from my house and the food always tastes good. We have patronized Pizza since it opened. **However, since the change in ownership, the service has been horrible. They seem to be unable to get your order right and unwilling to fix the problem.** No discount has ever been offered for their mistakes. We are not difficult customers, but we do want the correct order. We will not be returning."

Response

"We truly appreciate all your support, so I apologize that your recent experiences with us have not been up to our usual standard. **You should always receive friendly, attentive service and the correct order here. I'll be sure to look into this matter to ensure we're showing our guests the best service possible.** I hope you'll reconsider giving us another chance to show you our very best in the future."

Don't Do This

Review ★ ★ ★ ★

"Heard so much about this place. The place is really small so don't bring more than 2 or 3 people with you. The selection was minimal; I'm assuming because they close at 7. But still there was 3 beef and cheese, and like 5 vegetarian ones. The worker told me that he has everything frozen in the back, and could make sure the ones we wanted were thawed and ready to heat if we wanted to take them home. **All in all, I appreciate them bringing ethnic dishes to Springfield, and the prices are reasonable. They get an extra star for those reasons.**"

Response

"Thanks for the review. Our process is much more complicated than ordering online. We work with major facilities (like most fast food chains do). Not sure who you spoke with, but all our patties are actually baked in-house. **Seems like you didn't get the full experience you should have. This normally happens when people come in only for the purpose of reviewing our establishment and not genuinely wanting to try our food, not saying this is you, but we just can't have very option out at that time unless it's called in, we are still a growing business and everything has to be measured.** Lunch time is our busiest and on weekends, we extend our menu. Ask to speak with the Manager the next time you're in. I personally want to ensure that you get the great service you deserve. Don't forget that we now serve authentic Jerk Wings daily. Thanks again!"

Don't Do This

Review ★

"The owner is a buffoon to say the last. **Would never suggest this place to anyone.** Food 1/5. Drinks/happy hour 0/5."

Response

"You must be one of his friends, or just hiding behind a computer."

Updated Review ★

"Owner replying to my review – "you must be one of his friends, or just hiding behind a computer" Actually I am not. I am the person who came into your establishment to hang out with my family and while trying to get my sisters together to go home, you pushed me and started yelling obscenities. **Glad you responded, please let the people of yelp know if any of this is not 100% true.**"

What to do when responding to positive reviews

- Thank the guest for their feedback.
- Reiterate the compliment.
 - If it's an old family recipe or if you have trainings regularly to make sure your staff is on top of their game, tell the customer!
- Use it as a PR opportunity—anyone and everyone can see your response.
- Use it as a chance to get them back in or to provide improvement suggestions.
 - If you liked our Meat Lovers Pizza, I can't wait to see what you'll think of our Gargantuan Pizza with double the meat!"
 - "We're so glad you had a great experience! Is there anything you'd recommend that could make it even better next time?"
- Pass compliments along and share feedback with your staff.
- Use good reviews to promote your business. Add them to your website, social media, etc. (with permission from the reviewer).
- Occasionally reward positive reviews.
 - Consider giving loyal/influential customers a delightful surprise at your discretion.
 - For example, if a customer posts 10 positive, tagged messages about your establishment, reward them with a free entrée or discounted meal.

Do This

Review ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Really nice place walking distance from most of downtown. I had the Ratatouille Crepe with a side of Brussels Sprouts. **I'd highly recommend both to anyone. They know how to properly season their non-meat items (aka vegetables) and put emphasis on them.** I'm not a vegetarian, but I can really appreciate food that is seasoned right. Café nails all the vegetable dishes and you can tell that the cooks have knowledge on how to use the ingredients."

Response

"Thank you so much for your review, Ben! We appreciate your feedback and look forward to seeing you again soon."

Do This

Review ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“What a different concept. Small menu but that doesn’t matter because whatever you get it’s delicious. Fried olives-exceptional. Sliders-amazing. The atmosphere is something I have never seen before. Super comfortable but also alluring. **Our waiter was awesome. Attentive but not over bearing.** He had great suggestions for what we should eat and drink and he made sure we were taken care of. The bartender was also excellent. His drinks were delicious. **Overall, we were super impressed. I highly recommend.”**

Response

“Wow!! Thank you so very much for your 5-star rating and review. We are delighted that your experience with us was wonderful, and we’ll be sure to pass your kind words on. **Thank you so much for this, and know that we look forward to you joining us again! Thanks!”**

Do This

Review ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“This was my first trip ever to your town. Having lived in NYC for 21 years, I have eaten at many of the legendary Italian restaurants in Manhattan. It can more than hold its own and I plan on making this my go-to restaurant going forward. Great wine list!!! My waiter suggested the lamb chops and mushrooms in a sherry reduction on a bed of sautéed spinach and it was ethereal. Eight chops!!!! OMG!!! The staff could not have been friendlier!! **Two thumbs up and a job well done. This proves the point that you don’t have to be in a “big city” to get great food.**”

Response

“**We’re so glad you made the trip! Sounds like our waiter made an amazing suggestion---that does indeed sound heavenly.** Glad you enjoyed the wine list as well! We’ll see you next time you’re in town! Ciao!”



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Online Review & Reputation Management

If you have questions about online review and reputation management not covered here, or you'd like to discuss some of this in more detail, get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

Contact Us

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