

Ratings & Reviews Best Practices

The ability to post business reviews online allows customers to voice their opinions like never before. With the influx of smartphones and social media applications customers can provide instantaneous reviews. This may seem a little intimidating as a business owner, but the thing to remember is that this provides you a chance to extend some old fashioned customer service. Marketplace has added customer reviews to our site to help our community share their thoughts about their favorite local businesses, and reviews will help increase traffic to our site. Included in this is the opportunity for business owners, like yourself, to respond directly to these reviews. Below we have provided some best practices to help you interact in the most beneficial way.



Responding to Customer Reviews

Engage

The single best thing you can do is engage customers that go out of their way to provide feedback about your business. If the review is positive, thank them for the comment. And if they have voiced a concern or asked a question, respond to them. Letting customers know they have an online forum to speak with a business is a powerful tool in your marketing efforts.

Respond in a Timely Manner

Marketplace will send an email notifying you that a review has been posted to your page. If you feel that the review needs a response, it is best to do that within the same day. This way it shows your customers that you are attentive to their needs. And a quick response to a negative review may prevent the problem from snowballing.

Speak Conversationally

Though you may know everything about a product or service, your customer probably doesn't. Responding with a lot of technical jargon is not what most customers will understand. Speaking as if you are having a conversation will help customers feel more comfortable in posting their reviews.

Remain Calm & Be Polite

If someone leaves a negative review, it is important that you respond in a polite and calm manor. Remember, what you are writing will not just appear to that specific customer, but will stay on the site for everyone to see. Getting into a fight with a customer will only make you look worse.

Be Honest

If you are going to respond to a negative rating, you should be completely honest. If you feel that the criticism is justified, it is best to admit your mistake. Integrity can go a long way for the image of your business. You can build a lot of credibility and trust with your customers by admitting when you have made a mistake.

Listen

Take time to read through their review carefully. If they have a problem, try to get to the root of it. For example, a restaurant customer may post something about their food not being prepared well, but it may really have been the way the waiter handled the matter that set them off. Get a handle on what the actual problem is.

Promise To Improve

If responding to a negative review, end your response with a positive message. Let the customer know that you have heard their concerns and have taken note. If it is a justified criticism, promise them that you will take efforts to improve your product or service. This demonstrates to this customer and other potential customers that you will listen, and improve, based on their input.

Use Reviews To Your Benefit

All forms of feedback can help your business improve. Use your Marketplace reviews to help you understand what your business is doing well, and though it may be hard to hear, what your business *isn't* doing well. Having a collection of customer feedback is a valuable resource to your business.



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