

Tips to manage your business reviews

Business reviews are more important than advertising. Customer reviews can have a big impact on your business. Opinions about your business are easy to find and buyers are more informed today than ever. Regardless of whether you're selling a ten-dollar widget or a ten-thousand-dollar service package, buyers read about your product or service before they ever step foot into your business or try your product. This is equally true if you're a nonprofit or any other organization who wants to attract people to whatever it is that you have to offer.



Buyers can browse through reviews and read other's opinions about your business or organization before you have a chance at a first impression.

Decision-makers are armed with [smart phones](#). They can stand at your front door or see your product on a (virtual) shelf and quickly learn what others have to say about it. And even if

they don't have time to read reviews, they can take a quick glance to see how many *stars* you have compared to other options they're considering.

Good reviews are helpful because they let you know what customers appreciate. Bad reviews are helpful because they help you learn how to improve your business.

After reading reviews, buyers approach your business with expectations based on what they've already read. Since they've chosen your business, it's likely because all the stars have aligned. You're positioned at the right time and location when they're ready to take action.

So what can you do as a business owner to embrace business reviews and attract more customers? Take a look at some of the following ideas to see what might apply to you:

Accept negative reviews as opportunities to learn

[Yelp](#) is recognized as one of the most popular business review sites. Lots of small businesses owners have a love-hate relationship with Yelp. The good side of Yelp is that a small hole-in-the wall coffee shop has the opportunity to outrank a big franchise such as [Starbucks](#). It gives small businesses a chance to get noticed and thrive. But lots of small business owners also fear that Yelp can hurt their business. Consider some of these Yelp experiences:

No one likes to be judged. By their very nature, judgments are attacks. Business owners who get bad business reviews can and do get dismayed. And Yelp, no doubt, feels the same about this

upcoming Billion Dollar Bully documentary by [Prost Films](#).

The best way to look at Yelp and every other review tool is that these are extra doors to your business. Some turn out to be more welcoming than others.

Release your grievances toward others and you'll find that they begin to melt all around you.

Learn from your competitors' business reviews

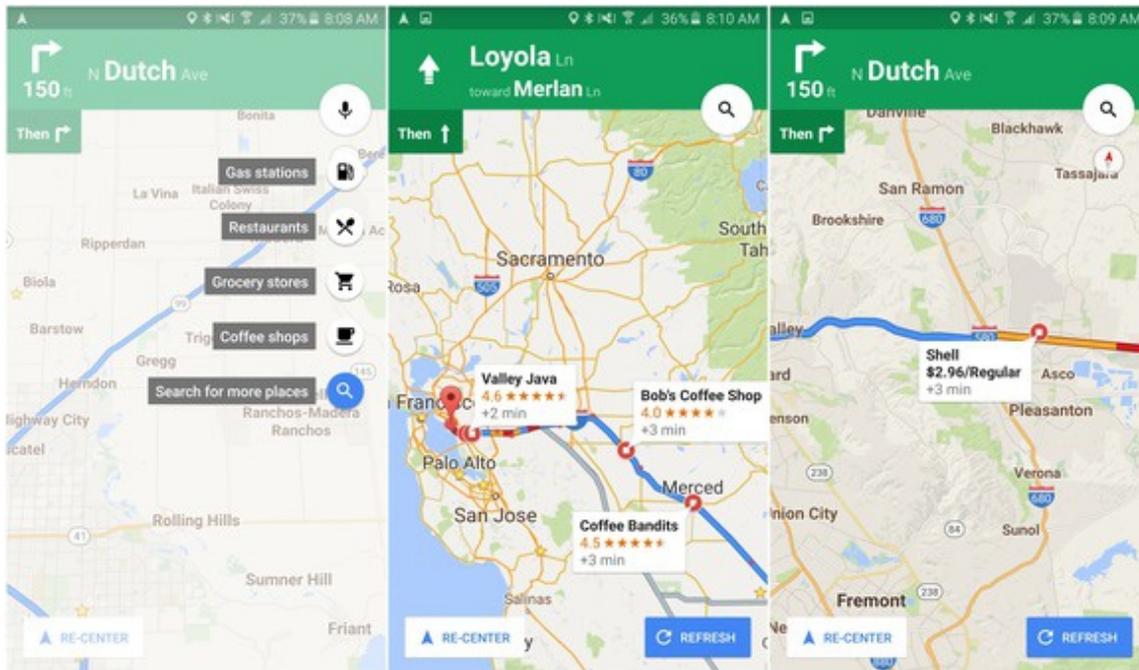
[Amazon](#) reviews can affect your business whether you're selling through Amazon or not. If your customers are shopping in a brick and mortar store, they can check to see what others think about a product and do a quick price comparison. If it's cheaper on Amazon, they can add it to their cart with a quick click knowing that it will show up at their front door within a day or two. Amazon has had a big impact on both online and brick and mortar stores. If you're selling products that are also available on Amazon, or if you're selling through Amazon, these reviews can affect your business.



This David Horsey cartoon offers insight into Amazon's company culture. Behind-the-scenes [Glassdoor](#) business reviews can influence the talent you attract and the ultimate results you get in your business.

Ask every happy customer to write a business review

Google reviews and ratings conveniently pop up when you're searching for places on Google maps. Google maps *search along route* feature is useful when you're trying to save time and make convenient stops. Whether you have a brick and mortar location or not, Google encourages you to remind customers to leave a review. Learn more about how to [get reviews on Google](#).



Google Maps lets you search for food, gas, and more along your navigation route.

[Foursquare](#) brands itself as a “location intelligence company.” It’s also a good contender for finding food, nightlife or shopping business reviews and ratings by location. If your business falls into one of these categories, it’s a good idea to keep an eye on your Foursquare business reviews.

Disable ratings and reviews

[Facebook](#) allows you to choose whether or not you want to enable business reviews on your business page. Go to the [Facebook Help Center](#) to learn [how to allow or disable ratings and reviews on your page](#). If you go to [Facebook’s @facebook page](#), you’ll see that they, ironically, do not have this feature enabled. If every business review system gave you the option to disable the ratings on your business, you could choose to ignore ratings altogether. But going dark online also makes you invisible to potential customers who use online search tools to guide their buying decisions.

[Yelp vs Google vs. Facebook Reviews: which should you focus on and why?](#)

Hire bloggers to provide you with business reviews

Bloggers are a terrific resource for business reviews. Bloggers can educate people about your business. They can share reviews that highlight the benefits of your product or service. They can share a customer testimonial telling what it's like to work with you. You can find bloggers on just about any topic. They can help you come up with creative ways to share your business. Many are willing to barter in exchange for product or service samples, so it's worth asking. If you'd like to go this route, here are some tips on [how to ask bloggers for backlinks and reviews](#). By the way, if you'd like me to blog about your business, [contact me](#) today to discuss the possibilities.

Invite YouTubers to film your product or service

[YouTube](#) offers a platform for anyone with a [smart phone](#) who wants to share their thoughts about a flight, an electronics product, an [RV](#), or anything else on their mind. [YouTube](#) is an ideal way to let people get a glimpse into what you have to offer, especially if it already lends itself well to an audience, such as a church or a school, for example where preachers and teachers are already talking to an audience. Although YouTube is driven by videos, anyone can comment on the content. This, in essence, is a form of a business review to a YouTuber. And if you're part of the video, you can get feedback as well.

YouTubers who have lots of subscribers can have a big influence on their followers. And they have the freedom to tell stories on just about anything, including educating people on new products. Consider this "Hands Free Segway thing" review post by YouTuber [Casey Neistat](#):

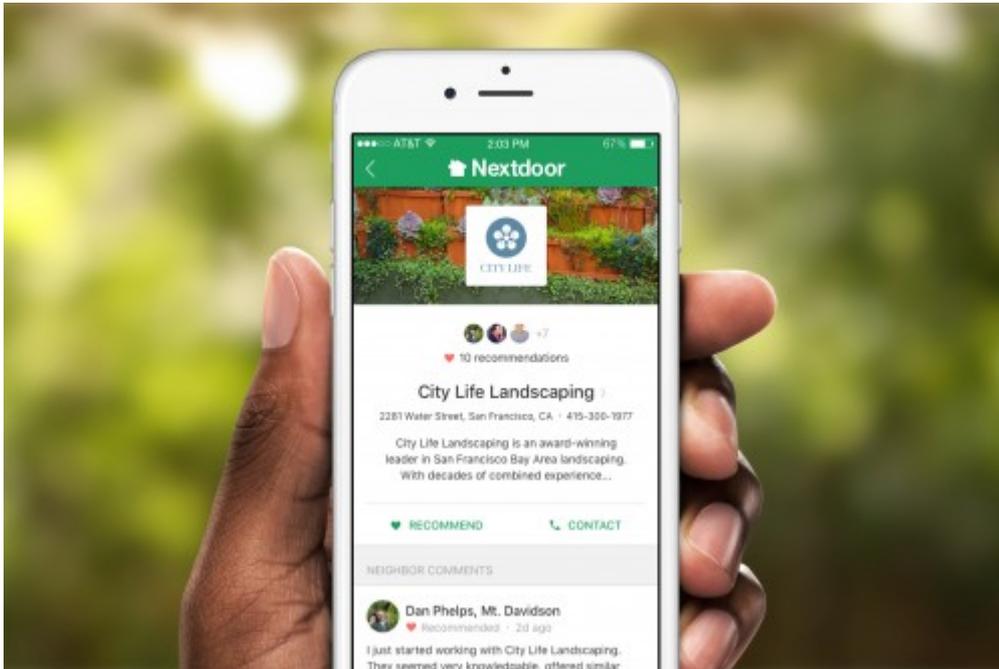
Snap photos of happy customers

[Instagram](#) tends to be a happy place. It's a terrific app that allows you and your customers to snap, post and share attractive pictures within a few minutes. If your customers are taking the time to mention you in their Instagram feed, it's probably positive. Smile and welcome the photos.

In addition, Instagram gives you the opportunity set up your [business profile on Instagram](#) and self-promote with annotated photos. Be sure to use [hashtags](#) to attract your ideal customers.

Connect with your community

[Nextdoor](#) offers a feature for recommendations. If you depend on local work or walk-in traffic, this is a great way to connect with people in your neighborhood. If your business isn't already listed, you can [add a business in recommendations](#) for free. This is a great app to spark face-to-face friendships and goodwill referrals within your community. Once you establish your reputation, satisfied customers will naturally want to share brief reviews along with their referrals.



Respond to business reviews

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) touts itself as a tool to help “people find and recommend businesses, brands and charities they can trust.” In practice, however, the BBB tends to be the go-to place where customers log serious complaints against a business because they know this is a place where the business owners might actually take action to resolve a complaint. Click here for an [overview of how BBB ratings are calculated](#).

A BBB rating is not an indicator of the success of a business. Amazon, for example, is one of the biggest businesses in the United States. Although the majority of its customer reviews are negative, [Amazon maintains an A+ rating with the BBB](#).

Make it a high priority to be responsive to complaints not only on the BBB, but anyplace else where they might pop up.



Respond to questions about your business

[Quora](#) defines itself as “a place to share knowledge and better understand the world.” It’s a great place to engage with chatty intellects who are willing to answer questions posed by its users. Buyers don’t necessarily go directly to Quora for business reviews, but if you offer a complex product or service that costs a few hundred dollars or more, you might want to take a serious look at Quora. Chances are, people are talking about it. Some brands are so prominent that all their questions are grouped together. If you’re an Evernote user, and I highly recommend it by the way, check out some of the [Evernote Q&As posed on Quora](#).

Review your customers

[Uber](#), [Airbnb](#), [OfferUp](#), [OpenTable](#) and more companies are not only giving customers a chance to rate the service provider, but also giving the service provider a chance to rate their customers. When both parties know they’re evaluating each other, it tends to result in a more cordial interaction. And this is reflected the exchange of reviews and ratings. If it makes sense for your business model to offer mutual ratings,

consider adding the option.

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For Uber, Airbnb and Other Companies, Customer Ratings Go Both Ways

By JULIE WEED DEC. 1, 2014

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Travelers are often asked to review their hotel, restaurant and car service. But increasingly, it goes both ways.

Drivers for Uber and Lyft, for example, rate their passengers from one to five stars at the end of each ride. If a rider receives three stars or fewer, the driver and passenger will not be paired up again. And at OpenTable, the



Harry Campbell and other Uber drivers rate their passengers from one to five stars at the end of each ride. Christine Cotter for The New York Times

Join a matchmaking site

[Angie's List](#) is a membership site that “eliminates anonymous reviews giving you trusted, more credible info to make the right choice.” If you’re a contractor, for example, and finding high quality customers is important to you, Angie’s List might be a good fit for you. Be prepared to go through their background check. If you’re interested in listing your business, check out [Angie's List Business Center](#) to learn more.

[Consumer Affairs](#) provides “expert resources and verified reviews” to help customers make smarter buying decisions. Their philosophy is that “everyone deserves to make smart decisions based on unbiased feedback and research-driven information.” They encourage visitors to write business reviews about their experiences with their member brands. Check out their [Brands platform](#) to see if it might be right for your business.

Participate in a business review site that makes sense for your niche

If you own a **restaurant**, you might want to consider [Zagat](#) which helps foodies “cut through the clutter of available dining choices” to find the best places wherever they are. Or [OpenTable](#) where your customers can “make restaurant reservations the easy way.”

If you manufacture a **product**, you might set a goal to be a featured product in [Consumer Reports](#) or the [Environmental Working Group](#) “whose mission is to empower people to live healthier lives in a healthier environment.”



If your business depends on your reputation as an **expert**, consider writing a book. [Goodreads](#) is a terrific place for you as a leader to share your bookshelves and review books. Between Goodreads and Amazon, indie authors have an opportunity for their books to rise to the a bestseller and they have the opportunity to compete with all the big name publishers. Goodreads is a terrific tool for authors and their readers. And it's also a great place to find, read and review books in your industry. To make the most of your reviews, follow Goodreads [Review Guidelines](#).

Keep Twitter on your watch list

[Twitter's mission](#) is “to give everyone the power to create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers.” This means that you can share information about your business while tagging anyone you want. And it means that others can do the same to you. For better or worse, others can also create fan clubs such as [Trader Joe's List](#) or protest groups such as [InequalityAtWlmt](#). Twitter is not a main contender when it comes to business reviews, but depending on the type of business you operate, you might want to keep it on your watch list.

Highlight customer testimonials on your website

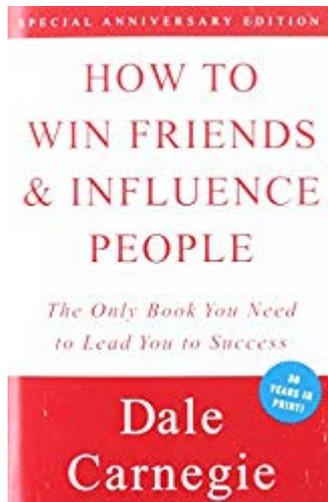
Nearly every business can benefit by having a website. It's the one place online where you can define your brand and the intent of what you have to offer. It's a great place to highlight a variety of customer testimonials that give insight into the benefits of what you have to offer.

If you have a content rich and attractive website, buyers are more likely to check it out to see what you have to offer. This is the one place where you have complete control of your customer testimonials.

Provide great customer service to everyone

Your best line of defense is to treat all your customers and

employees with love and respect. Encourage everyone in your business to read and discuss books that help to develop their people skills such as: [How to Win Friends and Influence People](#).



If you need a writer to help with responses to your business reviews, or assist with content marketing on your website, let me know. I'd love to help. [Contact me](#) today.



[Dr. Lorraine Haataia](#) has expertise in several industries including education, construction and transportation. She believes that our thoughts create our reality. She's passionate about writing because it gives readers the opportunity to learn on demand, expand their minds, and benefit by seeing the world in a new way.