

REPUTATION SENSEI

REPUTATION  
MARKETING SECRETS  
REVEALED



# THE COMPLETE ONLINE PLAYBOOK FOR TRANSFORMING REVIEWS INTO REVENUE™

WWW.REPUTATIONSENSEI.COM  
COPYRIGHT 2023 | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED



# 5 STEPS FOR TRANSFORMING REVIEWS INTO REVENUE

**Step 1:** The Most Important  
Review Sites And Why They  
Matter 5.

**Step 2:** The Best Way to  
Generate Reviews 7.

**Step 3:** A Proactive  
Approach To  
Reputation  
Management 10.

**Step 4:** How Reviews And  
Local SEO Can Bring In  
New Customers 11.

**Step 5:** Marketing Your  
Reviews Into Revenue 12.





# Introduction - The New Norm

Today's businesses and their leadership must understand the importance of a proper online **reputation management** strategy. Whether you're a car dealership, a professional services company, a medical practice or in the trades, your online reputation is everything. It defines how the purchasing public perceives your brand and its credibility. *"If the world says it's so; it must be so – if we say it's so, it's likely met with skepticism."*

A sound reputation marketing program offers direction for the conversation regarding your business when it's impossible for you to be a part of that conversation. According to Jeff Bezos, *"your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room."* Successfully leveraging the voice of your customers, clients or patients ensures that what is said to friends and family regarding your business aligns with your brand's reputation. And in fact, neglecting your reputation may lead to brand slaughter. This damage is likely to be discovered not immediately, but when the door chime at the business sounds off less frequently. For this reason, when you wish to be successful, you must first make a point to prioritize your online reputation and establish a strategy to both manage and monetize it.

**But just where do you begin? This perfectly reasonable question leads to several others:**

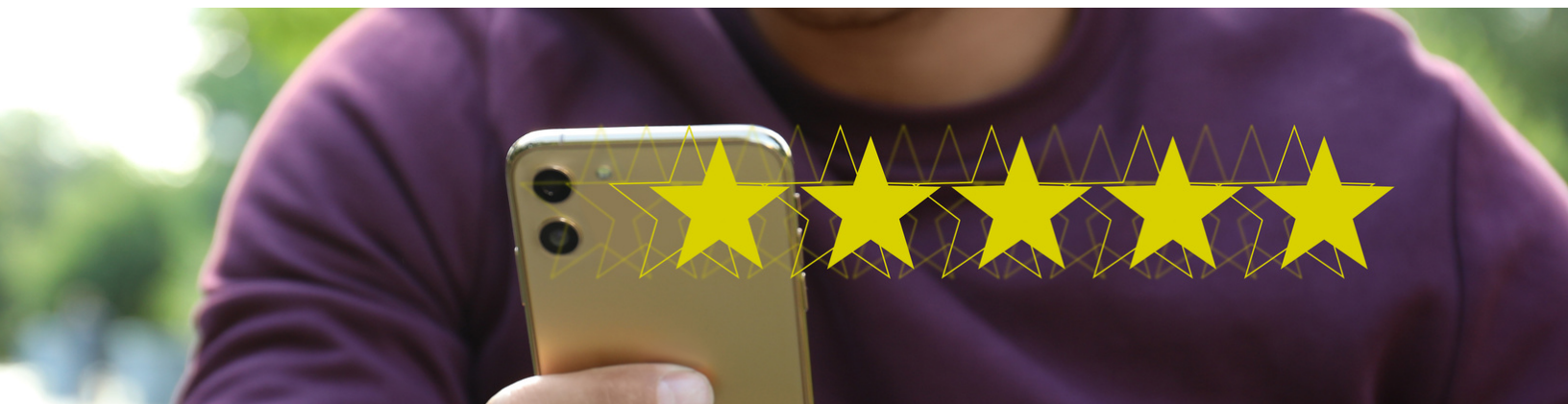
- When did it become normal for online reviews to define your business?
- Where are these online reviews getting posted, and why do they matter so much?
- What are the best ways to generate reviews in the first place, and how can you possibly manage them all?
- How can reviews help your business in the long run?
- Should you use reviews to market your business? Why? How?
- To answer all these questions and more, you must first understand the new way consumers shop for information.



No matter where you look online, sooner or later you're bound to encounter the star rating system. The star rating might be displayed front and center, or stars might reside off to the side or down at the bottom of the page. Stars are handed out to movies and TV shows, books, products, cities, attractions, people and businesses, almost always with some sort of written review attached to explain the number of stars given. The internet loves a good star rating. Many websites aggregate everyone's star ratings and written reviews into an average, but will typically allow you to access each individual review. These online reviews are readily available for all to see, and countless consumers rely on this information to make informed decisions.

**If you're unfamiliar with the concept of online reviews, it's rather easy to dismiss them. So what – right? Who cares what other people think, especially if it's negative?**

Growing up, many of us were advised not to care what others think about us. The same message is often shared in a counseling setting: What others think of you is none of your business. This perspective may be entirely appropriate when dealing with schoolyard bullies, adult conflicts or general naysayers, but let's extend this thought to what others think of your business. There's only one answer: When it comes to running a business in the 21st century, that strategy just does not apply.



The truth is that online reviews have a direct impact on consumer decisions. A 2019 study found that a whopping **68% of online shoppers in the U.S.** judged a brand or retailer by their star rating alone, while another 61% said that the sheer number of reviews a business had also influenced their opinion of the company overall. This is a clear indication that for most consumers, online reviews define a business' ability to deliver value. For business owners, this means placing a real focus on online reviews. If you do not, you're going to lose business to a competitor who does.



## Step 1: The Most Important Review Sites and Why They Matter

Granted, this is something of a tall order, especially for those who have never paid attention to their online reviews. Even if you understand that reviews are quite important and deserve your attention, how do you determine where these reviews are being left? And furthermore, why does everyone seem to flock to certain websites in the first place?

Today, consumers write the majority of online reviews via Google, Facebook and Yelp – the “big 3” group that dominates internet activity in many ways. Learning more about the nature of each of these sites will help you understand why they matter so much to the consumer – and to your business.

### Google



Google is readily available to internet searchers and consumers, and this accessibility is a huge part of why online reviewers favor Google. When consumers type in the name of your business they are rewarded with all the information they might want to know – from your address and phone number to photos of your business, links to your website or social media accounts, and more. And it’s all presented to them at the top of the page in a Google Business Profile (GBP) listing. You might not be on social media, but it’s much harder to not be on Google. It’s still the search engine of choice by an overwhelming margin, and this ensures its place as the review site of choice.

### Facebook



While Facebook falls 60% short of Google’s review numbers, as the second most popular review site it’s worth your time and attention. Just as Google is the most popular search engine, Facebook remains the most popular **social media** platform. While Facebook originated as a place for users to interact with one another online, as time has passed it has become much more. Facebook is quite popular with businesses, many of which run their own Facebook accounts for advertising and marketing purposes. Users have the ability to review those business pages with a recommendation.

Facebook changed their rating scale a few years back from the time-honored 1–5 stars to “would you recommend?” This change was most likely derived from Facebook user behavior data that showed when looking for a potential business, most social users were asking their network of friends and family who would you recommend?

# Yelp

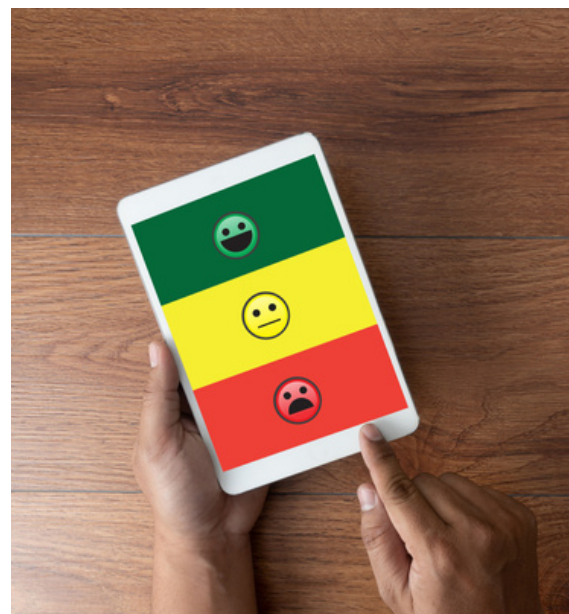


If Google is a popular place for online reviews because it's a valued search engine, and Facebook is so popular because it's a widely-used social media platform, then Yelp's position as the third most popular place to find online reviews stems from its strategy of combining the aspects of search engines and social media sites into one unique platform. Users can search Yelp for businesses, read reviews left by other customers – and leave a review of their own to contribute to a business' overall reputation.

## Industry-Specific Sites



Beyond Google, Facebook and Yelp, there are many industry-specific sites where consumers can read and write reviews for a specific kind of business. For instance, car dealerships might rely more heavily on sites like Cars.com, DealerRater and Edmunds, while home services companies might depend on Angie's List or Home Advisor. While these industry-specific outlets don't have the numbers seen with the "big 3," they are absolutely worthy of consideration. Their hyper-specificity to your business' niche makes them just as important and relevant to the conversation.





## Step 2: The Best Ways to Generate Reviews

It's likely there are existing reviews for your business online, but sometimes a business will have no reviews showing, even in 2021. When a business has zero reviews, it can be just as damaging to their reputation as ignoring reviews that do exist. Thankfully, there are several different ways you and your business can generate reviews from your customers. You may ask if this could result in inauthentic or disingenuous reviews – it won't. It all boils down to this: the more effort you put into generating reviews, the more conversions you'll successfully achieve.

### Best Practices:

- Conversations are key
- Post signage in your business
- Use review cards
- Send SMS text messages
- And yes, email is still viable



### Conversations Are Key

First, the simplest method of all: Direct your staff to have conversations with customers, asking them to leave a review of your business on Google, Facebook, Yelp, or another industry-specific online review site. This face-to-face interaction with the customer is ideal for many reasons – the most obvious being to give them a friendly face and a pleasant conversation to remember as they head home, get online, begin to compose their review and assign a star rating to your business. These brief conversations are critical and highly effective at generating reviews. One important note: Always put the benefit of the review on the customer. For example, when a customer is leaving your business, your employee might say:

*“We appreciate you coming in today; can I do anything else?  
By the way, we'd really appreciate some feedback on your visit – it helps us  
serve you better. It's easy to leave us a review on Google or Facebook.”*

### Place Signage in Your Business

Another great option for generating customer reviews is to strategically place signs that ask customers to review your business online. The best places for these signs include:

- At the front desk
- In the lobby or other waiting area
- At the cash register or other place of checkout
- At entrances and exits
- Anywhere your customers mingle or gather



Basically, any easily visible space in your business will work. It does help to have these signs placed so they are the first thing customers see when they walk in, and the last thing they see when they leave. You want the customer to think about their experience with your business from start to finish, and allow their observations to inform their online review.

Here are a few suggestions regarding your messaging. Design signs to communicate the fact that customer experience and feedback are important to you as a business owner. Display logos to clearly show those review sites that are important to you. Add a QR code with direct links to the desired review sites. Most importantly, have your signs professionally designed to match your company branding.

### **Offer Review Cards With QR Codes**

Review cards are another important way to get your staff involved in the review process. These cards act as a physical reminder for the customer to leave a review, while also reminding your team to have those conversations with customers as they check out or leave. As with signage, have review cards professionally designed. Add a QR code to make it easy for your customers to find the review sites via a direct link. In fact, some companies are now adding this to the back of everyone's business card.

Have employees place the cards in the bag along with the customer's purchases or staple them to the bottom of receipts. This puts the power to write and post a review in the hands of the customer, making it feel more like a choice they're making rather than doing you a favor. The customer also has the opportunity to pass that card along to another person who may have frequented your business in the past, giving them a chance to leave a review of their own.





## Send Text Messages (With Permission)

Given the casual nature of texting it might sound hard to believe, but **90% of consumers** have indicated they'd prefer to text with a business rather than call or email. With the popularity and the ease of texting today that certainly makes sense, but how can you make it happen?

It all starts with getting the customer to sign up for text alerts – this allows you to have a direct line of communication with the customer. From there you can add their number to a text chain that sends out frequent updates. After they interact with your business (whether for an appointment, a routine shopping trip, or to hire you for a service), you can send them a request to leave a review. Technology makes this method easy, with many software products available to help you send out review requests via text and email.

## Send Emails

In the age of social media, smartphones, text messages, and so on, it's easy to dismiss email as somewhat outdated or under-used – but you might be surprised to learn that email is still a viable option for generating reviews. These review request emails work similarly to text message requests: You'll first want to get customers to sign up for email alerts, then prompt them to leave a review not long after they've interacted with your business. That way, their experience with your business is still fresh in their mind, and their review and star rating can reflect the most accurate recollection possible. And just as with text messages, the email will go straight to the customer's phone (or another device) and catch their attention with a notification. Now you can expand on the conversation when a customer is leaving your business:

💬 *We appreciate you coming in today; how was your visit? By the way, we'd really appreciate some feedback on your visit – it helps us to serve you better. [HAND THEM A REVIEW CARD] It's easy to leave us a review on Google or Facebook. We'll send you an email and text with a link – thank you.* 💬

## Summary

In summary, if you want to generate reviews for your business it's going to take some effort from your team. Hold regular meetings about the customer experience and how this affects your company's culture. Think Chick-fil-A... this is a company that exemplifies guest experience in every way. Their process ingrains customer service into the DNA of every employee via continuous training and company culture.

Host meetings where you read reviews from happy customers – especially those that call out team members by name. This is huge for building a culture based on “taking care of the customer.” Train your team on the steps you want them to follow regarding customer conversations, when handing out review cards, plus adding the customer to the email/text review request.



Host meetings where you read reviews from happy customers – especially those that call out team members by name. This is huge for building a culture based on “taking care of the customer.” Train your team on the steps you want them to follow regarding customer conversations, when handing out review cards, plus adding the customer to the email/text review request.

The final point regarding review generation is this: **MAKE IT EASY** for your customers to leave a review. 7 out of 10 consumers will leave a review – if asked, and if it’s easy. So, make it easy for your customers to leave reviews and they will.

## Step 3: A Proactive Approach to Review Management

Once you understand the importance of online reviews, know where most online reviews are being left, and have mastered the art of getting customers to leave a review, it’s time to turn your attention to what is arguably the most vital step so far: to actively manage your reviews. To fully grasp the significance of a proactive approach to review management, just look at the numbers – a colossal **96% of consumers** have spent time reading and analyzing how businesses respond to their customers’ reviews in the past, with 40% of them saying that they always do this. In fact, more than **80% of consumers** say they prefer a business that responds to the reviews their customers have left online, and would likely choose a business that responds over a business that doesn’t. Clearly, being proactive in review management is incredibly important. But what kind of approach matters most? Look to these three steps for guidance.

### Monitor Reviews

The first step in proactively approaching online review management is knowing where to look so that you can monitor your customers’ reviews. Yes, you’ll want to start with Google, but slowly begin to branch out to Facebook, Yelp, and those industry-specific websites mentioned earlier. Beyond this, you should claim your business’ Google My Business page. This allows you to gain access to key information Google has gathered on your prospective customers, and also allows you to respond to their reviews from the official identity of your business’ name. Facebook, Yelp, and other review sites have similar features.

### Respond to Reviews

Once you’ve established that you are the owner of the business and have gained access to those professional profiles, you can then begin responding to the reviews your customers have left. This practice should apply to both positive and negative reviews. When customers have contributed something complimentary about their experience, thank them for their kind words. If they’ve left a negative review, offer an apology and politely ask follow-up questions about the experience.





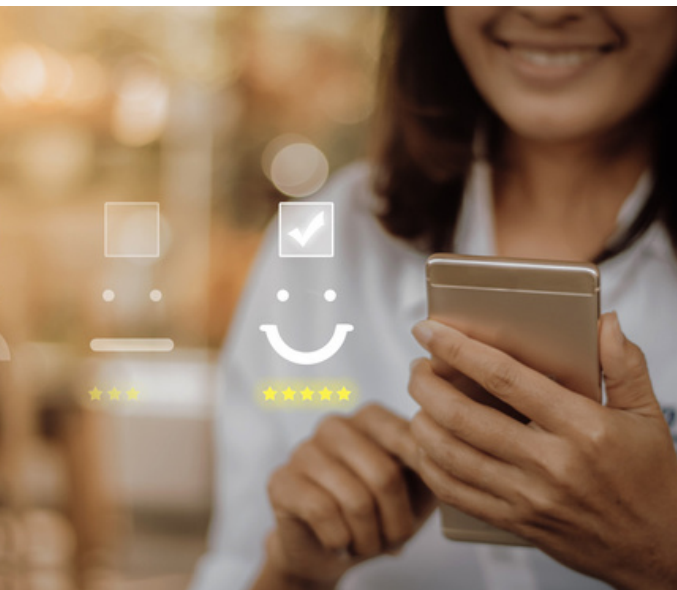
You can even go as far as asking them to contact you to discuss ways to resolve their issue, which may include offering coupons, discounts on a future purchase, or even freebies. It's important to do what you can to improve their experience.

### Challenge Fake Reviews

Unfortunately, sometimes a disgruntled customer or online troll will simply want to cause trouble for your business, and may leave fake feedback on review sites to tarnish your name or inconvenience you. Begin by flagging the review, if possible. This lets the administrators on the review site know the reviewer is not a legitimate customer, and allows them to begin the steps to remove the review from their platform. After this, leave a professional response that sets the record straight. Essentially, you have the opportunity to discredit any false claims with accurate information about the situation. It is critical to challenge these fake reviews before they do any damage to your business or its reputation. Hopefully, the review site will remove the fake reviewer and prevent them from doing any more harm to your business, and even other businesses the fraudulent reviewer may have targeted.

## Step 4: How Reviews and Local SEO Can Bring in New Customers

Now that you understand the significance of generating and managing your online reviews, there's another factor to the equation you might not have considered yet: reviews that mention your location. Reviews that specifically mention your location can do wonders to bring in new customers. This is known as **local SEO**, or search engine optimization, and it helps to (quite literally) put your business on the map.



When new and potential customers search for businesses in conjunction with the words “near me” attached to the end, search engines pull up all businesses that match this description. The better your local SEO – in other words, the more people that review your business and discuss its location – the higher its position in those search results. This should be a great motivator to generate reviews from your customers, as the more local reviews you have, the better your SEO, and the more prominently your business will appear in search results. It also helps when you are responding to your reviews, as this is a major consideration in Google’s algorithm.

When your business appears near the top of the search results, it's much more likely that new potential customers will see you. That's why these reviews matter so much: They boost that all-important local SEO, which boosts your business in search results. Generating reviews is key in more ways than one. Reviews help define your business, impact how consumers view your brand and help bring in new prospects.

## Step 5: Marketing Your Reviews Into Revenue

So, now that you've put a tremendous effort into generating reviews, monitoring the reviews, responding to and managing the reviews, you're done... right? No, not yet! Now comes the most important part, transforming the reviews into revenue. But how do you do that? Marketing your reviews puts the voice of your happy customers to work helping attract more new clients to your business.

In fact, **marketing your reviews** – like the creation of local SEO – is just another great bonus that comes with having many online reviews for your business. You see, when positive reviews start flowing in, it's in your very best interest to turn those positive reviews into an opportunity to market your business. Almost like free advertising!

Seeing a positive review of a business online can leave a far more lasting impact on customers than any advertising campaign could hope to achieve. This is because new and potential customers are going to trust everyday people such as themselves far more than any ad. It's only natural that people would trust other people more than the business itself, but it's just as natural for you to make the most of this trust by using positive reviews in your business' advertising and marketing campaigns.

Think of movie posters, TV shows, books, CDs and even tech products like video game consoles or the latest smartphones. What do they all have in common?

They utilize good press in their advertisements to convince you of their greatness. This is what your business should do with your positive reviews. With enough focus, this step will make your company the most money with the least amount of effort. By putting the time and energy into an online reputation management strategy, you're earning the right to use the reviews you worked so hard to get to help you build trust and attract new customers through marketing.

Search through Google, Facebook, Yelp, and any industry-specific review sites that pertain to your business and find the ones that do the best job advertising who you are and what you do. Print the positive reviews on signs in your establishment, on review cards handed out to customers, or even on your business' social media page. The more outlets to market your business with your positive online reviews, the better.





## Summary

At the end of the day, your online reputation management strategy is tremendously important. On the surface, you may acknowledge that yes, reviews are indeed important, but when you fully grasp the components that define why they are so valuable, you can begin to take steps to make them work for you. Essentially, having an online reputation management strategy is part of successfully doing business today.

In this guide, you've learned how online reviews define your business and discovered the websites where those online reviews live. You've learned why it's essential for you to take a proactive approach to managing online reviews and the best ways to generate online reviews from your customers. Just as importantly, you've seen how reviews and local SEO can bring in new customers, and how those reviews can be used to market your business.

Do you have questions about making your reviews pay off for your business? Speak with the experts at [Reputation Sensei](#). We can help you perfect your customer experience, aid in the collection of positive reviews, and assist in bettering your online reputation to help you generate more reviews – and as a result, more clients and more revenue! Now that you know the importance of an effective online reputation management strategy, you know that time is truly of the essence. To learn more about how Reputation Sensei can help, [get in touch](#) with us today.







# ABOUT US

**Reputation Sensei™** bridges the gap between collecting and marketing reviews which is known as Reputation Cycle Marketing. Now businesses can transform their reviews into marketing assets that provide a return on investment and a continuous pipeline of new customers, giving business owners the best of both worlds.

Businesses from all over the country choose Reputation Sensei as their trusted partner to develop a reputation strategy that generates reviews from their customers, transforms those reviews into marketing assets to deploy online to communicate trust to attract more new customers. If you would like to learn more about online reputation, social media, or local SEO management, **schedule a free consultation today.**

