

Responding To Reviews

With more options available to your customers, many will turn to online reviews to evaluate a company or product. Online reviews can have a significant impact on your brand and business goals. Not only is it important to be present on review sites like [Google](#) and [TripAdvisor](#) – which often show up on the first page of Google search results – maintaining your profile and responding to reviews are imperative.

Why Is It Important?

There are two types of “searchers” on the internet: those who know what they want, and those who don’t! We spend lots of time and money polishing our websites and social media channels, but we can never be sure if people are typing our business name or “best restaurants near me” into Google. The businesses with the best reviews and most active profiles will get the top spots in Google!



Responding To Positive Reviews (what you can and can't do)

We all love those 5-star reviews but there are some rules for eliciting and responding to them.

DO ✓

- Respond to every review, even if it's just to say thanks.
- Encourage visitors to leave a review after they interact with your business. This can be in the form of table card, email, etc.
- Ask visitors to review your business after a particularly good experience (like right after making a purchase or visiting your store) when the good vibes are plentiful.
- Track your score over time. Set up a calendar notification to remind you to record your score every month so you can see how your customer experience is improving.

DON'T ✗

- Brag, boast, or reveal personal information in your replies. Only respond to what the customer has said, don't add any colour commentary.
- Specifically ask for 5-star reviews! Many sites explicitly forbid asking for positive reviews.
- Incentivize good reviews! You can't offer discounts or deals in exchange for stars.
- Ask employees to add positive reviews to boost your rating. And don't add any yourself – even if it's something that a customer said in-person.

Responding To Negative Reviews

Sometimes, getting even one negative review can be a big blow to your business – and your mental health! However, it's not the end of the world. If you encounter a negative review, remember that you are responding for the next customer who will read that review too!

Use the **BOPEO** method, by digital marketing expert Naheed Somji, to respond to negative reviews.

The key to dealing with negative reviews is to acknowledge that all criticisms are valid in your visitor's eyes (even when they're not!) This doesn't mean that the visitor is always right, but it does mean that they deserve to be heard.

■ **Breathe** – Don't rush in to respond to a negative review when your blood is boiling! Consider your approach and even ask a neutral third party to help draft a response.

■ **Own It** – Whether you agree or not, something that happened with your product or service ruined their experience. As a business owner or employee, you are accountable. Apologize and explain the error if possible, but don't make excuses.

Ex. "I'm really sorry to hear your experience. We dropped the ball. It's rare, but it does happen and we feel terrible."

■ **Personalize** – Make references to the specific case (without revealing personal information) that have been shared, and address the reviewer directly. Sign off with your name and contact info if possible.

Ex. "Hi John, I'm really sorry to hear your experience. We dropped the ball. It's rare, but it does happen and we feel terrible. Our latest shipment was late, which is why we missed your delivery window..."

*Best,
Kathryn
Owner of XYZ Business"*

■ **Empathize** – Everyone has bad days and bad experiences. Put yourself in your customer's shoes to try and understand why they left a negative review. More often than not, their critiques are valid.

■ **Offer a solution** – If the problem can be solved, do it! Just remember that if you offer a solution that's public, future reviewers might expect the same treatment. In most cases, try to take the conversation off the review site by sharing your phone number or email.

Ex. "Hi John, I'm really sorry to hear your experience. We dropped the ball. It's rare, but it does happen and we feel terrible. Our latest shipment was late, which is why we missed your delivery window. Please call me ASAP so we can make sure you get your package right away."

*Best,
Kathryn
Owner of XYZ Business
519-555-1234"*

Ex. "Hi John, I'm really sorry to hear your experience. We dropped the ball. It's rare, but it does happen and we feel terrible. Our latest shipment was late, which is why we missed your delivery window. Even though you have your package now, please email me so we can send you a 'thank you' for your patience."

*Best,
Kathryn
Owner of XYZ Business
kathryn@xyzbusiness.ca"*

