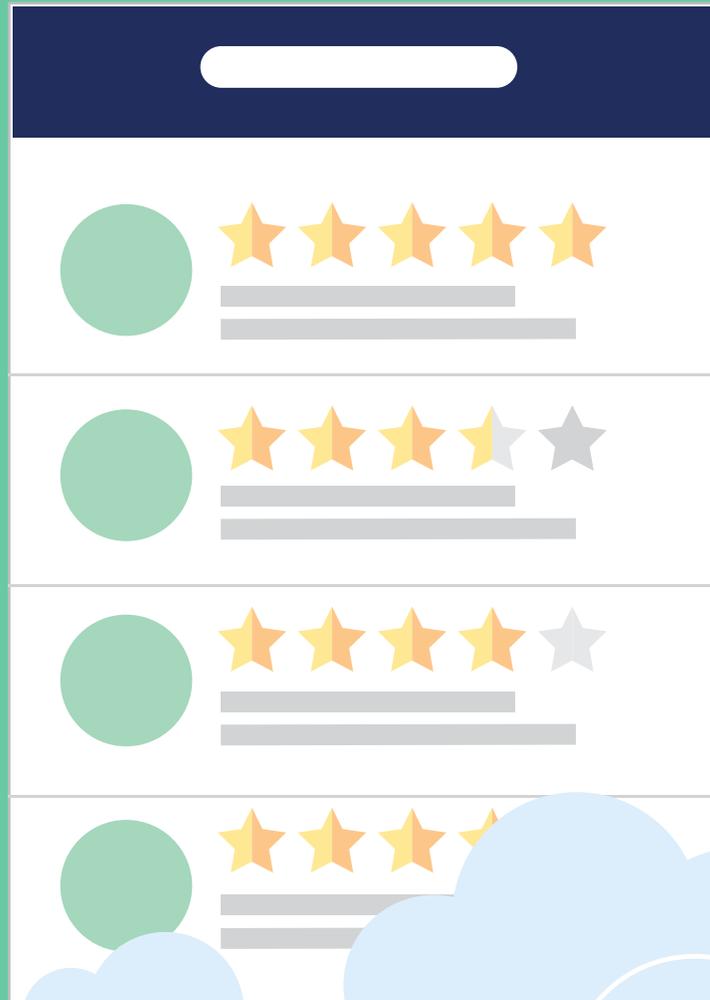


THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS



Free
eBook

 **ThriveHive**

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the first thing a person does when they want to know something is look it up online, and your business is no exception. Regardless of how your potential customers find out about you, their immediate inclination is to see what other people have to say about you—to “check the reviews”.

That being said, getting a steady stream of high-quality reviews for your business should be a top priority in your marketing plan. In this eBook, we'll cover the impact of online reviews on your business, how to set your business up to get more reviews, how to directly ask for them, and where to get them so that you can increase your visibility online and attract more customers.



90% of people read reviews before visiting a business



84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.*

* Source: Forbes

THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS

With the prevalence and power of online review sites like Yelp, Google Maps, Facebook, and Angie's List, it is essential to understand the impact they have on your business and to proactively build your online reputation.

REVIEWS INFLUENCE BUYER BEHAVIOR

Online customer reviews are widely used by consumers to make purchasing decisions.



ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY BUSINESS 2 COMMUNITY*

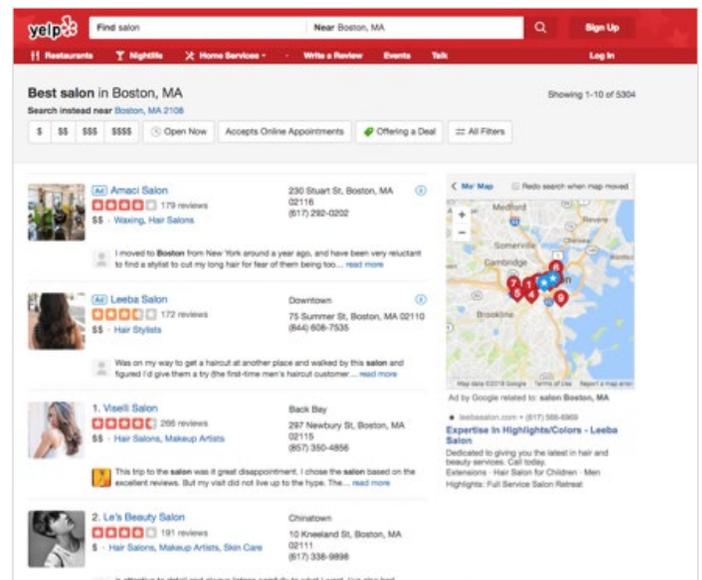
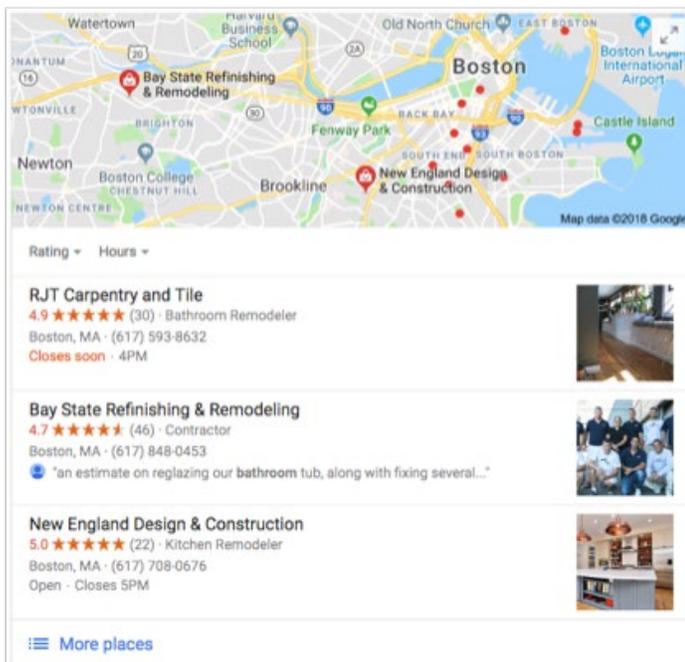
* Source: <https://www.business2community.com/infographics/impact-online-reviews-customers-buying-decisions-infographic-01280945#vKjYZPLiHlyfmtMi.g7>

THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS

REVIEWS AFFECT YOUR VISIBILITY IN SEARCH RESULTS

Reviews about your business aren't just impacting those who are seeking out information about your business specifically online. The presence (or lack) of reviews on your business directly impacts the way your business appears in broader search results.

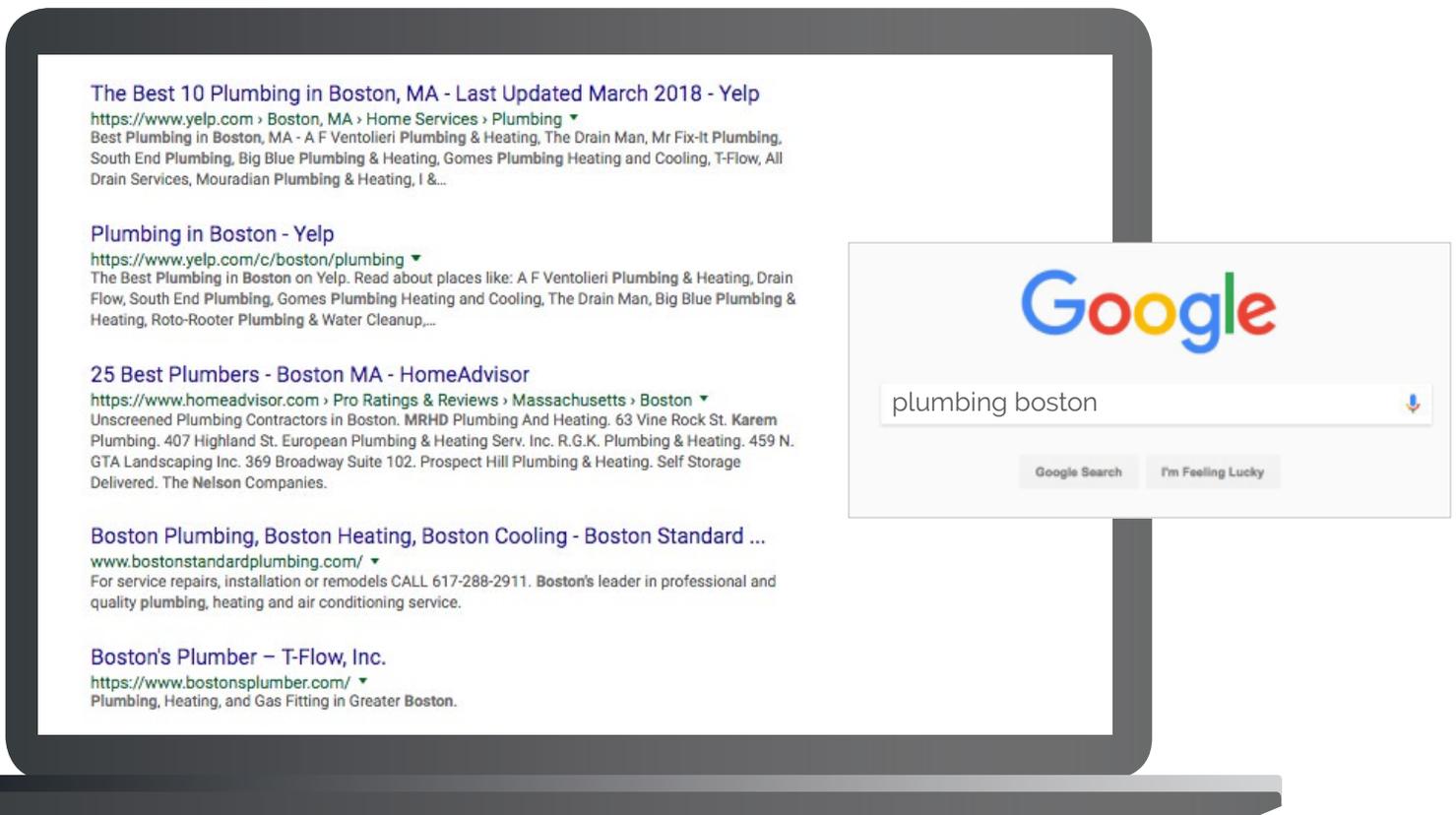
Local results for Google searches, Google Maps results, and Yelp are just three examples of review platforms that show both a star rating and even a snippet of the review in their search results:



This is why it is important to make sure you are consistently collecting positive reviews for your business—to help you rank in search results and also to ensure that the snippet users do see before they even click on your business is a positive one.

THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS

For example, a search for “plumbing boston” yields the below results. As you can see, businesses like South End Plumbing, Gomes Plumbing, and Boston Budget Plumbing get first-page exposure simply because they have positive reviews on these sites.



THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS

REVIEWS HAVE MARKETING BENEFITS



Social Proof: You can say all you want about the value of your own business, but nothing is more credible than the approval of an actual customer.



Marketing Content: Reviews make for easy and effective content to share on your website or across social channels.



Holistic Viewpoint: Customer reviews offer insight not just into your specific product or services, but also into what the overall experience of engaging with your business is like.



Set Yourself Apart: Customers are more likely to write a review on our business if it stood out to them in some way, often mentioning things you may not have noticed yourself or thought to highlight to potential customers.



Strengthen Your Brand Identity: How you respond to a review has just as much of an impact as the review itself, whether that review is positive or negative. Online reviews are opportunities to show your brand personality and integrity to the public.



Build Trust: No business is perfect and consumers value transparency, so a healthy mix of positive and negative reviews, accompanied by the proper responses on your end, will earn you the trust of your audience.



Improve Rankings: As mentioned above, having positive online reviews can boost your rank and visibility on highly trafficked platforms such as Google and Yelp.

WHERE TO GET REVIEWS

Many of the websites you want your company's listing to show up on (with 5-star reviews) are the sites you use personally when searching online. These include:

GOOGLE: You can set your business up to get reviews via Google through a Google My Business listing. When your business is Googled, a business summary will populate on the right hand side of the page, which also displays your rating.

YELP: Yelp is one of the most popular company directory websites with an easy-to-use platform for consumers who want to leave their opinion regarding products and services.

FACEBOOK: Once you set up your Facebook Business Page and designate yourself as a 'local business', there will be an option on your page for users to write a review.

ANGIE'S LIST: If your business provides home services, this is a terrific paid review site where five stars can go a long way.

BBB: Any and all businesses should have their info listed with the Better Business Bureau.

Don't forget that these are official review sites, but there are other unofficial forms of online reviews, including:

- Third party blog posts and articles
- Comments on your business blog
- Social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
- Comments on your social media posts

HOW TO GET MORE REVIEWS

GET LISTED

Get listed in multiple directories. Not every customer is on Facebook or Yelp, so the more places where they can review your business online, the better.

PROVIDE UNFORGETTABLE SERVICE

To get reviews, give your customers a review-worthy experience. Go the extra mile to show that you see them as valued individuals. Maintain high standards of service to show that customer satisfaction is your top priority.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Follow up with satisfied customers through email, polls, and surveys.

ENGAGE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Invite your customers to share their thoughts on social media and actively engage with their comments. The comments will serve as unofficial endorsements for your business.

You never know when a positive conversation with a follower may spark them to write a review. 

HOW TO GET REVIEWS

RESPOND TO NEGATIVE REVIEWS

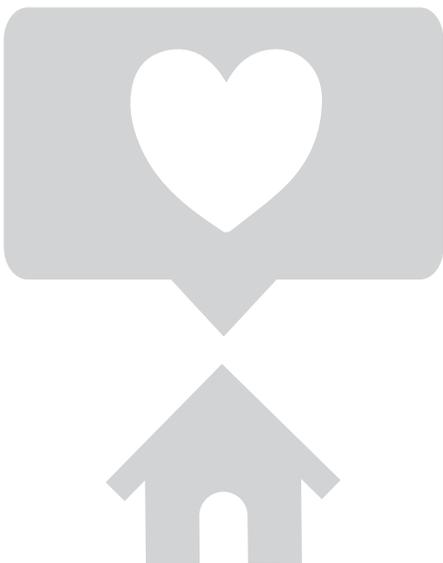
Always respond to negative reviews. Do so publicly and politely so that others can see you care for your customers, and then take the conversation offline where you can resolve the issue personally. Often, customers who write a negative review will write a positive one if the problem is fixed or if they receive good customer service.

REVIEW OTHER BUSINESSES

What goes around comes around, right? If you want to get reviews, you should be willing to give reviews as well. *Pass the positive word and your love for another business, and chances are they will return the favor!*

ASK DIRECTLY

Asking for reviews can be intimidating but it is often the most effective approach—so effective that we've devoted the entire next section to it!



HOW TO ASK FOR REVIEWS

So how exactly should you ask for reviews? It can feel a bit awkward or like you're asking too much from your customers, but people generally love to share their opinions. Here's how to create those opportunities in a way that is transparent and feels natural to you and your customers.



In Person



If you're having a positive conversation with a customer in your store, you might try something like:



You know, those kinds of comments really help prospective customers to feel more confident in choosing us. If you don't mind writing what you just said in a quick review on Facebook, that would be awesome.

Be sure to wait until the opportunity to ask happens naturally in the conversation. Don't force it or ask immediately upon the first positive remark, as you will come off as disingenuous.

HOW TO ASK FOR REVIEWS



Phone

If your business offers customer support over the phone, don't be afraid to ask satisfied customers for reviews.



I'm glad I was able to assist you today and we're so appreciate your business. We would love it if you shared this experience on Yelp. Seeing reviews from existing customers makes others more comfortable, knowing they'll get the support they need should an issue with our services arise.

Be cognizant of who you're asking. If you've just helped a customer through a long or difficult problem, it's probably not best to ask them for a review.

HOW TO ASK FOR REVIEWS



Group Email

In emails that ask for reviews, remind your readers of the value of their input or highlight a big milestone.



Hey everyone!

Positive reviews from awesome customers like you help others to feel confident about choosing us too. Could you take 60 seconds to go to [link to review platform] and share your happy experiences? We will be forever grateful. Thank you in advance for helping us out!

Hey everyone,



Did you know that the number of [your business] fans has doubled in this year alone? We must be doing something right! Let us know what keeps you coming back for more. This enables us to continue providing the best experience possible for you, and helps others understand how [your business] can make their life easier.

Dear [first name]



Thank you for your recent purchase. We hope you love it. If you do, would you consider posting an online review? This helps us to continue providing great products and helps potential buyers to make confident decisions. Thank you in advance for your review and for being a preferred customer.

HOW TO ASK FOR REVIEWS



Individual Email

Nothing can make a customer feel quite as appreciated than receiving a personal email from the business owner. Choose a handful of customers who have done a great deal of business with you, or customers with whom you're hoping to cultivate lasting relationships, and send them a personal note thanking them for their business and asking for the review.



Dear [first name],

As one of our preferred customers, your feedback is of the utmost importance to [business name]. We are constantly striving to provide the ideal experience for our customers, and your input helps us to define that experience. That being said, if you could take a minute to post a review on [review platform], we would so appreciate it.

We hope to see you again soon!

FINAL TIPS

Do not offer a financial incentive:

If a loyal or longtime customer happens to give you a glowing review, there's nothing wrong with emailing them a coupon or throwing an extra something into their next purchase, but businesses should not offer financial incentives for positive customer reviews.

Create a great first impression: A person's first interaction with your business sets the stage for their perception of your business and their future interactions with it.

Aim for 5 stars: It's important to get reviews so potential customers can have confidence in choosing you over a competitor, but one five-star review is worth more than 5 one-star reviews.

Be honest: It's okay to ask for reviews, and it's even okay to ask specifically for 5-star reviews. In fact, the more honest and transparent you are about it, the

more receptive and understanding people will be. After all, you are running a business and this is an important aspect of your growth.

Emphasize the value of the review:

Remind your customers that reviews don't exist for you to feel good about your business, but rather for other people like them to find what they're looking for.

Be specific about which platform to leave the review. The more guidance you give, the more likely the action will be performed.

Start small: Asking for reviews can take some getting used to. Start with your longtime, loyal customers who have the most familiarity with and trust in you.

Make it easy to review your business: Include links to your review profiles in customer correspondence like receipts, email signatures, marketing materials, and on your website.



To get five star reviews you don't have to be flawless and mistake-free. What's most important is to be honest, sincere, and attentive to your customer.

Be committed to providing the best possible experience for them from the start, and to constantly improving that experience through feedback and adjustments.



ThriveHive empowers small to midsize businesses to take charge of their growth. We combine human guidance with user-friendly technology to make marketing easy, effective, and affordable.

Whether you're looking to do it all yourself, have it off your plate entirely, or are somewhere in between, our custom solutions are meant to get you where you need to be. Book a free demo today and see for yourself!

See how ThriveHive can help your business grow!

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