

TOP FIVE TIPS for responding to online reviews



You would never ignore a customer who walks into your business, so why would you ignore someone who posts an online review? Responding to online customer feedback, whether positive or negative, can create a

level of trust and earn customer respect and loyalty. Here are some tips for responding to online reviews and making the attention work to your advantage.

1. TAKE ALL REVIEWS, POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, SERIOUSLY

Set up daily alerts to receive notification when a review is posted. Carefully read the review and draft your reply to acknowledge the subject or situation. Avoid generic messages. They come across as insincere and dismissive, and may not be appropriate to the matter in question. A poor response can escalate a problem.

2. REPLY PROMPTLY

Sending timely responses reflects positively on your company's image and can solve a problem before it compromises your reputation. In the case of a positive review, it is a courtesy to thank the customer for visiting your business and taking the time to write a review.

3. MAKE POSITIVE REVIEWS WORK FOR YOU

Nothing sells a product or company better than positive feedback from satisfied customers. Take the time to reply to positive reviews and personally acknowledge the client's visit and support of your business. Mention your business name so that it shows up in search engine results, and use the opportunity to do some marketing – highlight a special offer or a product that may appeal to the reviewer. Invite satisfied customers to spread the word and, of course, return to your business.

4. KEEP REPLIES TO NEGATIVE REVIEWS SHORT AND TO THE POINT

Three sentences, thoughtfully composed, are enough to communicate what is needed at this point. Respectfully acknowledge the concern – provide assurance that the matter is taken seriously and that the client's voice is heard. Emphasize that this situation is not standard for your business. Avoid mentioning your business name in the reply.

5. RESOLVE THE ISSUE OFFLINE

Provide the dissatisfied customer with a contact who can address the complaint offline. This will prevent a lengthy, public exchange. Once the matter is settled, thank the client and extend an invitation for a return visit. A positive experience could turn the negative reviewer into one of your biggest champions.