

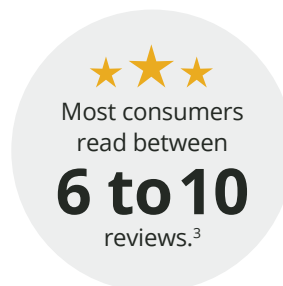
Pitching the Value of Reviews to Clients

An agency's guide to selling online review management services



The importance of online reviews for local businesses has skyrocketed as consumers lean ever more heavily on other people's opinions and experiences before making a purchase decision.

A new survey found:



¹ McDonald, Jon. "99% of Consumers Rely on Online Reviews before Making a Purchase." CardRates.com. May 2, 2024.
^{2,3} Ibid.

Yet many local businesses either lack a review management strategy or lack the budget, time, or resources to be as effective as they want to be.

That's where you come in.

If you run a marketing agency and want to add online review management services to your offerings, you need to develop a compelling pitch so you can successfully sell these services both to your existing client base and to new prospects. The right pitch provides a foundational education to your clients, helping them understand **the importance of online reviews** and how investing in review management services can impact their bottom line.

In this guide, we'll help your agency develop a winning pitch centered on four key aspects of review management that are especially relevant today:

- 1 Social proof
- 2 Local SEO
- 3 SMS marketing
- 4 Continuous feedback

You should come away armed with talking points that demonstrate the undeniable value of reviews and the integral role your agency can play in helping your local business clients use customer reviews to their advantage.



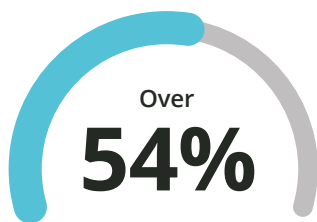
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Social proof:

Giving consumers what they're looking for

When customers research a business, they're skeptical about taking at face value what it says about itself. A more honest and useful source of information comes from other customers.

Humans are social creatures who take cues from others when making decisions. Whether we like it or not, this is especially true regarding shopping. If other customers say a business is good or give it a high star rating, that's the social proof a new customer needs to try the business.



of consumers say reviews that mention specific pros and cons are the most helpful.⁴

⁴ McDonald, Jon. "99% of Consumers Rely on Online Reviews before Making a Purchase." CardRates.com. May 2, 2024.

Conversely, if the reviews are mostly negative or if there are no reviews at all, new customers will shy away from the business — that's how much influence the opinions of others, or lack thereof, can have.

Local businesses that work hard to provide a great customer experience need to back up their efforts with a large body of quality, detailed customer reviews that provide the critical social proof potential customers seek from their peers.

Easy selling point



Customer reviews give potential customers the confidence and relevant information they need to convert and buy.

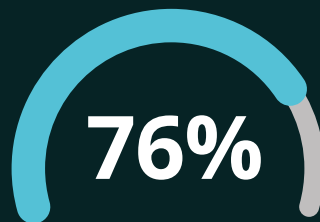
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Local SEO:

Raising visibility to attract more customers

One of the biggest hurdles for any local business is getting noticed. In a sea of local competitors, how can the business stand out?

Every business with an online presence needs to operate with two goals in mind: first, get in front of people, and second, convince prospects to choose them over the competition. Customer reviews help with both.



of people who search locally on their smartphones visit a business within 24 hours.⁵

⁵ Miller, Miranda. "What is Local SEO & Why Local Search Matters." Search Engine Journal. March 14, 2022.

Google ranks local businesses for relevance, distance, and prominence.⁶ The presence of positive customer reviews that also include relevant keywords helps check the relevance box in search engine algorithms — i.e. the business sells or provides what it says it does according to its own customers. Reviews play a role in the prominence factor as well. The number of positive reviews and ratings on Google — and around the web in general — raises the business profile, improving search rankings.

Another factor at work is that Google and other search engines index each new review as fresh, original content. When a business can boast a lot of fresh content in the form of new reviews flowing in, this also affects its ranking.

⁶ "How to improve your local ranking on Google." Google Support.

The end result is that when a business ranks higher in search results, they're more likely to get in front of its target customer. When customers see positive reviews of the business, they're more likely to choose it over the competition.

Easy selling point



Reviews help local businesses get in front of and attract local customers, creating a competitive advantage and generating more revenue.

Digging Deeper into Local SEO and Reviews:

3 Scenarios to Consider

Scenario #1: Your client is a star

Your local business client is the only one with reviews appearing in search results. As long as the reviews are solid, your client is well-positioned to become a magnet for clicks over the competition.

Suggested strategy: Encourage your client to keep doing what they're doing since it's working. As more businesses start to gather reviews, it will be important for fresh reviews to keep coming in to ensure they hold their ranking position.

Scenario #2: Your client is NOT a star

Every other business in the search results has reviews, but your client doesn't. In this case, the potential customer will likely pick one or more of the other businesses with good reviews and contact them all — but your client will miss out.

Suggested strategy: Implement a review strategy, and identify ways to gather reviews quickly so they can see the impact immediately. Send an email or SMS to exciting customers asking them to leave a review is a great way to jump-start that process.

Scenario #3: Your client is pretty normal

Your local business client has many good reviews, then suddenly gets a bad review. This is normal. Most businesses aren't able to please every single customer, which means sooner or later a negative review will appear. However, having a bedrock of good reviews can provide cover for and protect against the inevitable bad review.

Suggested strategy: Aim for balance. Guide your client in making business improvements to boost overall customer satisfaction and dial up efforts to solicit reviews from happy customers. Also, made sure they are responding to negative reviews.

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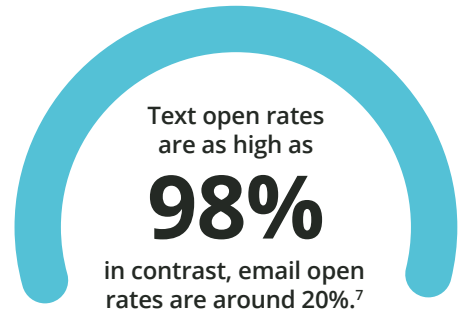
SMS marketing:

Enhancing a review strategy with faster reach

There are multiple ways to ask customers for a review — but sometimes it takes time for the customer to follow through or it may require a little prodding. Digital methods are the answer to making the process more efficient.

SMS marketing — or texting — is the current channel of choice for businesses that want to quickly and directly connect with their customers. Review management services that include SMS capabilities can enhance a review strategy and make it much faster and more efficient.

Using an SMS tool, businesses can text review requests to customers immediately after a purchase, service, or customer service interaction. While the experience is still fresh in the customer's mind, they get the text, tap a link, and can easily leave a review. And because nearly everyone owns a smartphone these days, customers are more likely to see and engage with the text faster than if they get the review request via email or other means.



⁷ Cote, Stanzie. "The Future of Sales Follow-ups: Text Messages." Gartner. Oct. 4, 2019.

With SMS, local businesses never have to miss an opportunity to engage with customers and possibly earn a new review, which means businesses can build up their body of reviews in less time. And as we've already discussed, getting new reviews consistently is excellent for local SEO.

Easy selling point



SMS helps local businesses reach satisfied customers anytime, anywhere, to request and receive reviews faster.

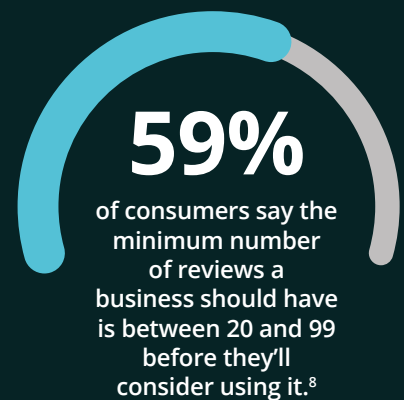
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Continuous feedback:

Enabling a steady review stream

Getting a handful of reviews here and there isn't enough. That's because much of **the importance of online reviews** revolves around volume: the more reviews a business gets, the better it is.

As we've shown, having a large number of reviews helps with SEO, establishes and solidifies consumer trust, and, crucially, gives the business valuable insight into what's working well and what isn't.



⁸ Paget, Sammy. "Local Consumer Review Survey 2024: Trends, Behaviors, and Platforms Explore." brightlocal. March 6, 2024.

With a platform that can automate many of the daily and weekly review-related tasks, along with support and guidance from your agency, your local business clients can enable a perpetual customer feedback loop that includes:



Continual feedback means the business always has a window into the customer experience. They can develop a deep understanding of their own wins and failures and better understand customer pain points and preferences.

With this information, they can do more of what’s working and change what isn’t working—so they can keep attracting new customers, retaining existing customers, and providing an optimal customer experience. Customers will recognize the business’s efforts and reward it with even more positive reviews.



Easy selling point



Opening up a continuous feedback loop informs business improvements that can lead to even more positive reviews.

More online review benefits to tout

In addition to the points we've already discussed above, here's a list of additional benefits you can use to press the **importance of online reviews** to your local business clients and why implementing a review management strategy just makes good sense:

Capture more word-of-mouth referrals:

When one happy customer tells a friend about a business, and the friend looks it up, that friend can get all the extra encouragement they need when they see an impressive body of positive reviews.

Capitalize on existing search rankings:

Even if only 10 people find a business in search results every day if each of those people is wowed enough by the business's reviews to click through to its site, then that business has something positive to build.

Boost rankings in Google's Local Map:

The business with the most Google reviews doesn't necessarily rank on top in the Local Map, but if a business can rack up Google reviews over time, then it will probably get more clicks than its competitors, and those clicks from would-be customers will eventually help improve rankings.

Develop non-Google sources of visibility:

Relying on Google visibility alone is to miss out on other viable lead sources. A business can turn Yelp, Facebook, Avvo, HealthGrades, Angie's List, TripAdvisor, and many other sites into additional trickles of leads.

Take the pressure off other marketing strategies:

A potential customer who makes it to a business's site is more likely to be "pre-sold" on how good that business is simply by reading positive reviews about it—which means other marketing tactics don't have to work as hard and can play more of a supplementary role.

Build an even better brand image:

If a business says it's great and past customers also say it's great, potential customers will listen to these messages even more since the brand stories and customer sentiments match.

Deepen customer loyalty:

Customer reviews provide an opportunity to engage with customers personally through review responses. The business can apologize if there's an issue, help solve a problem, or celebrate a great experience. These emotional connecting points build and maintain loyalty.

Provide proactive reputation defense:

Getting a bad review isn't suddenly the time for a business to start caring about its reputation. The business doesn't need to wait until it's in the middle of an image crisis to start asking its happy customers to put in a good word.

Generate easy content:

Customer reviews are content that an agency or business doesn't have to produce personally. The business can repurpose what customers say about their products or services as content for the website and other marketing materials.

Condition future customers to write reviews:

If a new customer finds a business and chooses it because of strong reviews, they are likelier to write a review themselves when asked.

Example pitch to clients

You can use any of the information we provided here to help create and refine your pitch to suit your agency's sales process and different phases of the client journey. Here's a sample initial pitch you can use to launch a conversation about **the importance of online reviews** and the need for review management services:

New Message — ↗ ✕

To Cc Bcc Cc Bcc

Subject

Hi [client's name],

I've been researching your customer reviews, and it looks like you have some good ones, but there is potential for generating a lot more.

Did you know that many positive customer reviews can improve your local search rankings and nudge prospects to buy from you? This can lead to an increase in conversions and revenue, and give you an advantage over your competitors.

Review strategy and management is something we can help you with. Are you interested in learning more?

If the client or prospect says yes...
Great. Let's schedule a conversation. I can also set up a demo of our review management platform for you.

If the client or prospect says no...
No problem. I can follow up with you again via email if that's okay.

In the meantime, at your convenience, feel free to review the types of services our agency provides and learn more about the benefits of review management for small businesses. *[link to a page on your agency's site, or attach a service sheet that spells out the benefits and your offering in detail]*

Send ▾ A 📎 🔗 😊 📷 🕒 ✍️ ⋮ 🗑️

Use review management to grow your agency

Your clients probably understand the importance of maintaining a positive online reputation and the role of customer reviews in this. But the key is to put it all together for them: Implementing an effective review strategy that seeks to build a large body of quality, detailed reviews from happy customers equals business growth.

That's why offering review management services is also key to your agency's growth. The services can open up new sources of revenue from a wide variety of clients who realize the importance of online reviews and how central they are to business success but don't have the time or resources to manage a review strategy entirely on their own. Supported by automated technology and SMS capabilities, review management is streamlined, efficient, and easily managed.

Learn how you can white-label GatherUp's comprehensive reputation management platform with SMS capabilities to support your agency's review management offering.

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