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## Hey there!

We live in an era of constant social-local-mobile interaction. Every local business is bound to receive its share of negative reviews. As a matter of fact, a profile of nothing but glowing reviews can actually look suspicious to your customers.

Over the past few years, the prevalence of review sites has grown exponentially. This is why **negative reviews are a constant threat** for more and more business owners.

Cases in which a pattern of accusations of terrible service, bad business practices or illegal activities can begin to fill up the search engine results with very negative data about a given business.

That's why reputation management has seen such a big growth in recent times.

In simple terms, the practice of **reputation management** involves replacing undesirable content with new content that paints a given business in a better light.



Most of our audience is comprised of small to medium local business owners, so we naturally focused on the best ways to remain proactive, engaged and informed with the **best ways of doing reputation management** for your business.

The only thing that's worse than under-engaging in online media is handling social media badly. No one can damage you as seriously as you can damage yourself if you don't know what you're doing.

Did you know that **75% of local business owners** haven't even considered doing reputation management? This is to be expected considering that most small business owners have to be jacks-of-all-trades to some degree, just to be able to run a small business effectively.

And to tell you the truth, this is part of the reason why they **REMAIN small business owners**.

Regardless of your business niche, just know that managing your business reputation is no longer optional. You need to do it - If you want to grow, of course.

This practice is not new.

Online reputation management and repair has been a burgeoning segment of online marketing for years.

Over the years, we have been an active part in numerous cases of reputation repair.

I can tell you that if a business doesn't invest in developing their online presence and reputation proactively, they will more than likely **pay considerable costs later** in terms of lost revenues.

In what follows, we are going to cover several aspects that you need need to focus on when doing **Reputation Management for a local business**. These will prove helpful regardless if you're a consultant looking to help others or a small business owner with a hands-on approach.

## **1. Work on your customer service**

We've been in this business for over 10 years now, and one thing that we can tell you from the get-go is that customer service is always the front line against a bad online reputation.

Before spewing bad things about your business, most unhappy clients will take things up with you. If you do a good job of alleviating their problems, only a very small portion of them will decide to denigrate your brand online.

Customer reviews generally cover only three things:

- **Product/service quality**
- **Product/service performance**
- **Unresolved customer support issues**

Knowing the customer experience is necessary for providing great customer service. **Get personalized feedback** from your customers and from your employees (if you have any).

Also, there are a lot of industry-specific practices that you can implement to improve the process and make things easier for the people that bring money into your business.

The bottom line here is to make it easy for the customer to get help for you and your business. And the easiest way to do this is to hire someone that really cares about your clients. Or do it yourself.



Once you have the customer service part covered, you can move on and focus on the other aspects that will help you to reach and maintain a good online reputation for your business.

## 2. Claim All Relevant Social Media Profiles & Review Site Profiles

**Building a healthy social media presence** on the social networks your customers use is a powerful and effective marketing tactic that any small business can benefit from. Even if you don't have the time and know-how, or just aren't ready to start, you still need to participate on a basic level.

At the bare minimum, you need to protect your future social media efforts and your online reputation by **claiming your business and personal names on social media sites**.

The same way social media sites help small businesses be found online, **review and local directories** show up high in search engine rankings, providing more exposure for your business.

With this in mind, claim your profiles on these high traffic sites:

- [Google My Business](#),
- [Facebook Places](#),
- [Bing Places](#)
- [Yelp](#)
- [Yellow Pages](#)

Provide your locations, photos, business hours, description of your services, payment options and categories to provide all your information to potential customers and build citations for your business.

## 3. Listen to the people

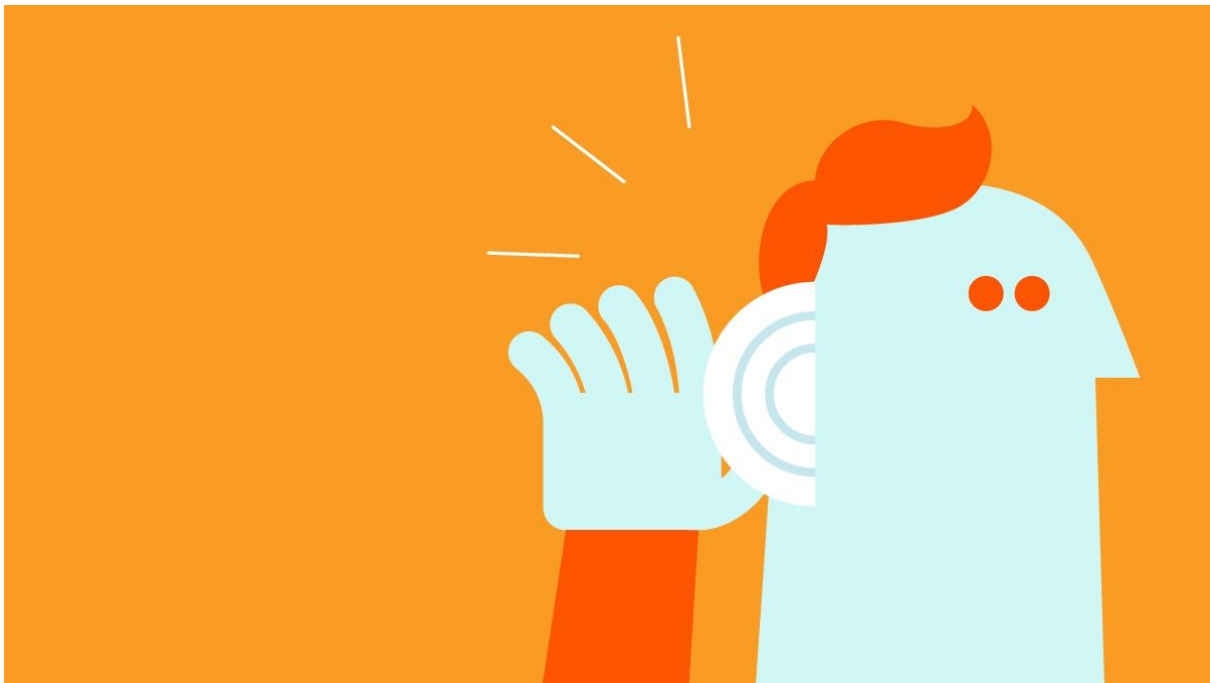
When responding to online complaints or bad reviews, seriously consider that there may be some weaknesses in your process that need to be addressed. Especially if you get frequent negative feedback about a specific thing.

The popularity of the phrase "**the customer is always right**" is your friend here. When dealing with clients that have already purchased something from you, don't be inflexible. Come up with a creative way to give customers what they're wanting without creating friction.

Over the years, we've certainly tried business processes that were just working or service fees that just made customers feel like they've been gouged. But just

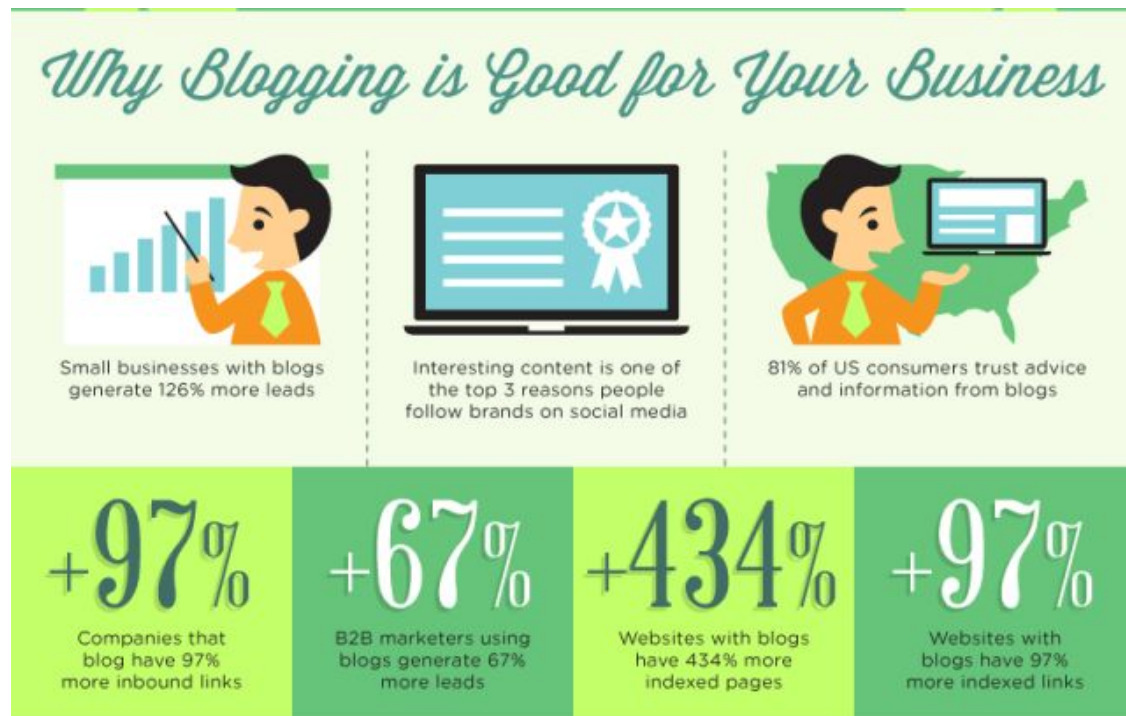
because you can pressure people into paying more doesn't mean that you should.

Before you treat your clients badly, consider that you could be driving existing or potential **customers into the arms of your competitor**. The extra money you make on that annoying fee could be canceled out by business lost from those who see numerous complaints about it online.



#### **4. Put together a blog**

You may feel that running a blog is unnecessary. It's true that you can be successful without a blog, but there are several good reasons to take the time to manage one properly. Perhaps the most important of these reasons is that having a business blog boosts your ranking within search engine results.



This is because **search engines tend to favor businesses that put out rankable content.**

A blog will allow you to add helpful content that can be search engine optimized with keywords that will help you rank higher in online searches.

How does operating a blog tie into managing your reputation? Like social media platforms, blogs allow your viewers to make direct comments on your posts, allowing you countless opportunities to engage with them.

This means you will get negative comments from time to time, but it allows you to show other potential customers that you have excellent problem-solving skills and will right any wrongs that occur.

## **5. Stay on top of your negative feedback**

Negative reviews and comments that show up online should be addressed immediately.

If you feel they highlight actual problems with your business, take the time to **respond both publicly on the review** and **privately with the customer through email** to make it right.

This allows you not only to lessen the impact of that review but also provides the opportunity to correct an issue or satisfy a dissatisfied customer.

Fast and thoughtful customer-centered responses to less-than-positive reviews show future customers that you care about their experience and value their feedback as a way to improve your business.



## 6. Stay away from debates

There may be many cases where your customer is in the wrong. You will find it is only natural in those instances to argue back in an effort to protect yourself and set matters straight in front of others.

But usually, the more heated an argument becomes, the **more likely you are to say something that you will regret**. These types of comments can be impossible to erase, especially if they are made on public forums such as social media profiles.

It is very difficult and takes a great deal of maturity, but it is far better to simply apologize sincerely and shut down any potential debates before they have a chance to damage your reputation.





## 7. Encourage positive reviews

Some of your customers are going to write an online review whether you ask them to or not, but **most won't think to take the time to write one.**

Unless they're business owners themselves, **they just don't realize how critically important those reviews are.** But as we know from the research, most of your happy customers will do you this favor **if you just ask**, assuming you do it at the right time and in the right way.

Always use your face time with your customers to show them just how responsive, conscientious and competent you are.

Then get in touch with them later on, while they're still thinking positively about the interaction and in a good head space to write a favorable review.



## Stay Tuned

That's it for now.

But make sure you're not missing out on any future free materials that we are going to release. We are working on some absolute gems at the moment, and I'll hate to see you miss them.

To ensure that doesn't happen, go to your email account and drag any of our emails from **Updates / Promotions** to **Primary**. Then, click **Yes** to ensure that you make our future emails as visible as possible.

