

GOOGLE REVIEWS 101



INTRODUCTION

Before the internet, marketing was more art than science. A banner ad was something you printed out and hung up in front of your business. Getting customers meant actually going outside and getting them.

Today, if you knocked on a customer's door, they might call the police. Even a phone call can feel intrusive. The majority of emails (~80%) go completely ignored. Connecting with customers is harder than it used to be. Ted Byrt, an insurance agent in Canada, saw this first hand building his insurance agency.



We started in 1995 and grew an office from no customers to the largest in the city. We did it the old-fashioned way—knocking on doors and advertising in the Yellow Pages. Today, if you can't rank on Google, you're in trouble.

Ted Byrt, Owner - Ted Byrt Insurance

OUTRANK YOUR COMPETITION

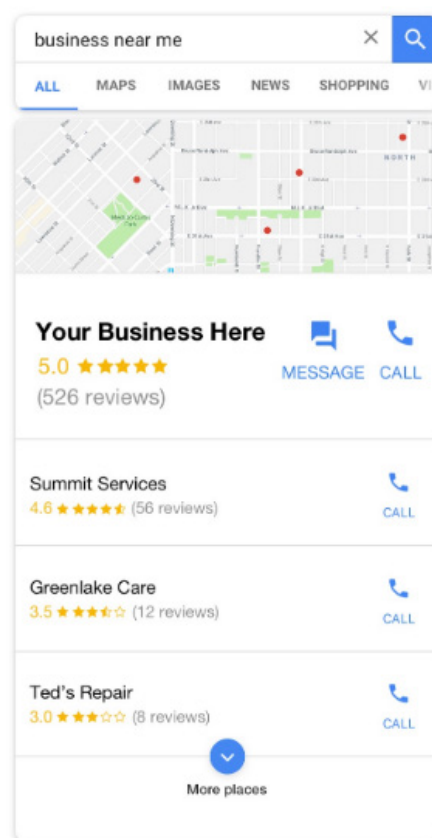
It's true that most searches start online, but where do they end?

Is it on your website or a competitor's? When it comes to getting found by your customers, local businesses—those with a physical presence—actually have a huge advantage. Did you know that Google gives priority to local businesses in search rankings?

When people near you search for a business like yours, you get a top position in Google's Map Pack.

The top local business in Google's Map Pack typically receives around 25% of clicks, and the top three make up around 50% of clicks from searchers.

If you don't see your business featured on Google's Map Pack today, then read on, and we'll show you how Google Reviews impact your Google rankings, and what you need to change in order to outrank your competition.



Google Map Pack

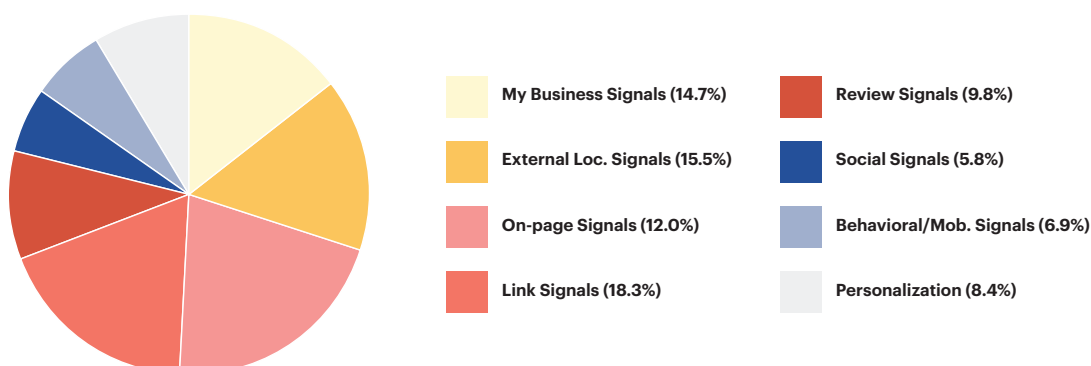
WHAT ARE GOOGLE REVIEWS AND WHY DO THEY STILL MATTER?

What are Google Reviews?

Google Reviews are made up of star ratings (1 to 5 scale) and a written response customers provide about their experience with a local business. For business owners, Google Reviews are a critical component of local marketing. Since Google uses its reviews to influence local search results, mastering Google Reviews will have an immediate impact on the number and types of searches your business shows up for. Beyond local search, Google Reviews have many additional benefits for local businesses.

What are the benefits of Google Reviews?

- 1 GOOGLE REVIEWS INCREASE EXPOSURE AND LOCAL SEO.** Google's search algorithms are complex. But one thing is certain—Google reviews have an impact on local search results. According to Moz, roughly 9% of Google's entire search algorithm is driven by review signals like the ones you'll find in a business' Google reviews.



Getting regular Google Reviews is one of the fastest ways to improve your local SEO. While traditional SEO activities, like keyword research and blogging, are effective. It can take months and even years to see results.

With proper execution, Google Business Reviews can be one of your most successful marketing tactics. This is partially because Google allows your business to show up in the Google Map Pack mentioned earlier. If you haven't correctly completed your Google My Business listing you won't appear in the map pack. If your business doesn't receive regular, authentic Google Reviews you won't show up at the top of the map pack.

- 2 GOOGLE REVIEWS INCREASE BRAND TRUST.** Transparency is becoming more and more relevant for consumers. That relevance (and importance) placed on transparency can largely be accredited to the accessibility to vast amounts of information on any given business. Today, it's not uncommon for a consumer to research a business before purchasing products or services. In fact, nearly 88% of consumers have read reviews to determine the quality of a local business. A large part of this research is generally done through Google reviews.

The same survey reports a staggering 72% of consumers say positive reviews make them trust a local business more than they may have otherwise. This provides a great opportunity for local businesses to gain a competitive advantage over their competition by collecting Google Reviews. Conversely, it creates a sense of urgency with how to respond to negative reviews, especially negative ones, which will further build customer trust.

- 3 GOOGLE REVIEWS CREATE A VALUABLE FEEDBACK LOOP.** One of the biggest advantages of Google Reviews is the feedback loop and customer intelligence you can gain. Every Google Review you collect can, and should, serve as a customer survey response for you and your staff. In addition, each Google review will generally tell you a few things:

- Whether or not your company delivered a positive customer experience
- Where your company did an amazing or not-so-amazing job
- What product or service they received from your business

Reading positive and negative Google Reviews can tell you exactly what your business is doing well and where there's room for improvement.

★★★★★ 11/20/11 Went in for oil change. Left with oil change, new wipers and new license plate light bulbs. I work for a company that focuses very specifically on service and customer loyalty. I am very impressed with the man that helped me. Wish I had got his name. Wish I had given him a high five. I will bring my truck back for future service. Thanks!

While a user-friendly site experience and smartly designed web page are extremely important, Google Reviews can be powerful enough to do the conversion alone.

4 GOOGLE REVIEWS IMPROVE CLICK THROUGH RATE TO YOUR WEBSITE.

Any smart business knows that it's vital to get customers to click on your website when it shows up in a search engine. You may spend all the time and money in the world on your SEO strategy, but if people aren't actually clicking on your business, all the effort is in vain. Luckily, having Google Reviews is an excellent way to increase the click-through rate when you show up in a search engine. Your Google Review rating will show up next to your business name in Google, so a good collection of positive ratings will increase clicks through to your website.

5 GOOGLE REVIEWS CONVERT MORE CUSTOMERS.

Once customers have clicked through to your page, you're nearly to the end goal. Customers who come to your site need to be enticed to purchase something from your business. While a user-friendly site experience and smartly designed web page are extremely important, Google Reviews can be powerful enough to do the conversion alone. For this reason, any business with a strong rating on Google should consider publishing that rating on their website. This rating will increase customer trust even if they've never read your online reviews.

WHY ARE GOOGLE REVIEWS SO IMPORTANT FOR YOUR BUSINESS TODAY?

Google Reviews do so much more than just help you improve your local search ranking. They have an impact on the entire customer journey.

Awareness We've already talked about how online reviews help businesses get found by making you more visible to online searchers. But it's not just about getting noticed and staying top of mind, online reviews are where consumers go to [learn about new products](#) and businesses.

Consideration Once online searchers find your business, your star rating and number of reviews will have a huge impact on whether or not the individual will click on your listing to learn more. Businesses with a higher rating are more attractive. It's just that simple. According to research, the minimum star rating of a business the average consumer would even consider is a 3.3, and if you have less than a 4.0, Google n't even consider listing you in their Map Pack.

Purchase Next, online reviews play a huge role in whether or not a consumer ultimately chooses your business. In fact, 93 percent of consumers said online reviews have an impact on their purchase decision and 82 percent of consumers said that the content of a review has convinced them to make a purchase.

Post-Purchase Finally, after the purchase is made and a review is left, your reviews give your business valuable insights into its operation. Smart businesses are using tools like Feedback to help them make decisions to improve customer experience in real-time.

Now that you've learned about the key benefits of using Google reviews, you may be wondering if real businesses are experiencing these benefits. In short, the answer is yes.

Here are some examples of real businesses benefiting from online reviews:



Gallery Furniture has garnered 9,517 new reviews online, resulting in a huge increase in web traffic and inbound calls from customers searching online. They spend less on paid search results and other marketing efforts because of their presence.



Shannon Fine Jewelry has a 5-star rating on Google and almost 200 Google reviews, which has led to increased traffic to the site. Customers report this is directly because of the reviews they've read online.



Paul's Pest Control has grown their business into a new market thanks to all the customers who choose them because of their positive online reviews.



Zerorez carpet cleaners has greatly improved their customer service and business thanks to the feedback of 13,000+ online reviews.

How to get Google Reviews step-by-step.

Hopefully by now you realize the importance of collecting more Google reviews, but you might be wondering how to get started. The first step to collecting more reviews is setting up Google My Business. Below is a step-by-step process for setting up your Google My Business page and optimizing it to collect online reviews. You can also schedule a call with your Network In Action franchise owner to help you with this.

STEP 1 - Go to <https://www.google.com/business>

STEP 2 - Sign in to your Google Account, or create one. Then, click Next.

STEP 3 - Enter your business' or chain's address and create or claim your listing.

STEP 4 - Fill out basic information about your business

STEP 5 - Submit for verification

*** Typically Google will send you a post card within a couple of days with a PIN to finalize the verification process. Google does this to ensure that only the right people have access to update and manage a business listing on Google.**

OPTIMIZING YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING FOR MORE REVIEWS.

Once you have the ability to update your listing you should put in the effort to make sure it's attractive and filled with relevant information that will [entice searchers to click on your listing](#).

Google Reviews themselves help make your listing stand out and bring real customer feedback to the forefront. At the very minimum you should do the following:

[Add relevant information about your business.](#) Make sure that your business information on Google is accurate and up-to-date by [editing your Google My Business listing](#). When you fill out your business description, it should include all of the information about your business that customers might find relevant. You can include keywords, [but make sure you don't use this field as an opportunity to stuff keywords](#). Oftentimes, Google views this as spam and your local search ranking could suffer as a result.

[Upload high-resolution photos.](#) One thing many businesses neglect to do is upload enough photos to make your listing stand out among the competition. Pictures on your Google My Business listing help tell a visual story about what it's like to do business with you. Photos on your listing will help you [garner more interactions](#) with online searchers as well. Google has found that listings that feature photos receive 42% more requests for driving directions from Google Maps and 35% more clicks through to a business' website.

[Include up-to-date hours of operations.](#) One piece of information customers are looking for when they Google your business is whether or not you are open. Because of this, you should take the time to update your hours of operation whenever a change occurs. It is also important to include any variations that may occur. For example, if you have special holiday hours.

START COLLECTING MORE GOOGLE REVIEWS AND INTERACTING WITH CUSTOMERS.

Once your business listing is claimed and you've taken the time to optimize it, now it's time to [start collecting Google Reviews](#) and [interacting with customers](#).

When it comes to collecting Google Reviews, you shouldn't leave it up to chance. You should make a proactive effort to ask all of your customers to leave a review.

We previously mentioned that 70% of consumers would be willing to leave a review for your business if you ask them. What we left out in that stat is that 20% of those who said they would leave a review ultimately didn't. One of the main reasons customers who are more than willing to leave a review fail to do so is sometimes the process can be difficult and cumbersome. They don't know where to go on Google to leave a review. Sometimes you send them an email with a link, but there are too many steps and they ultimately give up before actually leaving a review.

To prevent this from happening, you need to make the process as frictionless as possible. This can be accomplished by implementing an [online review management platform](#) that streamlines the invitation process and makes it ridiculously easy for your employees to invite customers and for your customers to leave reviews.



Network In Action RepMan's has really shown us that we had a huge gap in the opportunity to receive online reviews. We have so many fans out there, but we just weren't inviting them to review us. I cannot believe this is available to me at no cost as part of my Network In Action membership.

Log-On Technologies

A good online review management platform will also utilize text messages as the primary channel for invitations. Doing so can result in a significantly higher response rate and enables you to collect as many as 15x more Google Reviews than traditional email-based platforms.

HOW NIA MEMBERS GET GOOGLE REVIEWS

“We’ve been actively collecting Google reviews for five or six years. One thing we’ve found out is that it’s really difficult. We had instructions on a piece of paper for how to do a Google review, or if they were on the phone we would email them. That’s how we did it.

If we got two [reviews] a month we were pretty happy. It’s hard to keep on your team when your not getting the results that you hoped.

We bought a security system from a company here in the city. At the end of the service he asked if I would do a review for him on Google. He pulled out his phone and sent me a review invite. I was dumbfounded at how amazing and flipping easy it was, because I know how hard it is.

When I joined Network In Action my franchise owner made this software available to me as part of my membership.

I have a friend who said he’d like more Google reviews. I said, ‘Forget everything I’ve said before, just join Network In Action.’”

Texas Label Printers

3 TIPS TO HELP YOU GET MORE GOOGLE REVIEWS

Implementing an online review management platform is a good place to start, but if you really want to see the online reviews roll in you should consider doing the following:

1. Determine the right timing of the invitation. You know that you need to ask your customer to leave a review, but when is the best time to invite them? In our experience, the best time to ask is when there's some downtime in the sales process. For example, in the auto industry, a good time might be after the sale is completed and the customer is waiting in finance. Your customer is just going to be sitting there anyway, so why not ask them to leave a review and walk them through the process..

2. Set the expectation for the review. After you've determined the right time to invite the customer, now you can start setting expectations for what you want them to do. When setting expectations, you should let the customer know:

- Why online reviews are important for your business
- How they will be receiving the invite (text or email)
- When they will be receiving the invite

3. Eliminate barriers. The harder it is for customers to leave reviews, the less likely they will be to leave a one. That's why you need to make it as easy as possible, and if you've implemented an online review management platform as mentioned previously, you're headed in the right direction.

Google Reviews should be an integral part of your digital marketing strategy. They help increase your visibility, build trust with consumers, and help push consumers through every stage of the buyer's journey. If your business is taking proactive steps to secure reviews, you will see both an increase in traffic to your website as well as to your physical location. Contact your Network In Action leader to activate today.



www.networkinaction.com