

# How to Reply to Reviews

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When in doubt, get some help



Getting customer reviews is a necessary part of doing business these days — and how you respond to them matters. Whether a customer is wowed, a little disappointed, or downright annoyed, you can respond in a way that builds business credibility and enhances your brand's reputation.



<sup>1,2</sup> Local Consumer Review Survey. brightlocal. Jan. 6, 2022.

In this guide, we'll briefly cover the benefits of replying to reviews before diving into tips and templates that make the process much easier.

## Why reply? 5 hard-to-deny benefits

First of all, why reply to a review at all? If you currently have a sporadic approach to replying to reviews, maybe you haven't noticed much of a difference to your business. But when you change your approach and consistently reply to all reviews — even the not-so-good ones — you can drive long-term business success.

1

### BECOME MORE CUSTOMER-CENTRIC

Customers want to be seen and heard, and they expect a fast response when there's a problem. By giving timely replies to reviews, you show your customers that you're committed to great service, meeting their needs, and resolving their problems — always.



2

### INFLUENCE THE CONVERSATION

You don't have any control over what gets posted on review sites, but you can control what you say in return. Replying to reviews is an important opportunity to clarify a situation, provide additional context and information, and offer support.



3

### BOOST BRAND LOYALTY

Replying to reviews establishes a two-way connection with your customers. It makes your brand human to them and to everyone else who might be reading the reviews. It's these types of human, emotional connections that ultimately drive brand loyalty.



4

### INCREASE VISIBILITY

One of Google's main factors for local search rankings — prominence — is measured using signals like customer reviews. When you reply to reviews, you end up getting more reviews, which means you can impact those signals and increase the visibility, or prominence, of your business in local search.



5

### GET MORE CONVERSIONS

All of these benefits eventually lead to more conversions. How? Because a customer that feels seen and heard by you keeps buying. Other customers who see your interactions with customers through reviews start leaving their own reviews. More reviews improve your local search ranking. And a better search ranking earns you more new customers.



A study found that business locations with a higher volume of replies and reply rates correspond with higher conversion rates. The highest reply rate of **8.13%** averaged a conversion rate of **13.86%**.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Case Study: Positive Google Reviews Improve Paid Search Conversion Rates. Location3. 2018.

## The most important reviews to reply to

Your reply process is dependent on the structure of your business and the resources you have available. It doesn't have to look like everyone else's, especially if you're just getting started and building your team.

But remember that no matter what type of review you're replying to, existing and potential customers are watching, and how you respond is an indicator of your commitment to running a great business.

## Here's a breakdown of the order of importance when replying to reviews:

1

### All negative and neutral reviews

If a customer took the time to post a negative review online, you can be sure their experience was pretty bad. As cringe-worthy as a negative review can be, it's of utmost importance to acknowledge the customer's experience right away, convey empathy, and take responsibility.

Similarly, responding to a neutral review is just as important. The customer who left it may typically love your brand but clearly experienced something that wasn't quite right. A neutral review is an opportunity to make it right with the customer and retain their loyalty.



2

### Direct Feedback

When you provide a way for your customers to contact you — a form on your website, customer service number, or request for feedback in an email or text — you are actively inviting customers to do so. So if they have a complaint, it deserves immediate attention.

Your response to their feedback can be a deciding factor for a customer that wants to continue doing business with you but isn't convinced yet. A prompt, sincere reply with a resolution to the problem can help make the difference.



3

### Google reviews

Since Google is the most used search engine, Google reviews are among the most popular, with Google Business Profile the top-ranking review site in the U.S. Google reviews appear next to your listing in Maps and search.

This kind of visibility is important to harness. When you respond to a Google review, you can help improve your local ranking on Google. And as we discussed above, a better search ranking can bring in more customers.



4

## Facebook Recommendations

As the third most popular review site in the U.S., Facebook offers a chance for you to engage with your customers on a social platform through its Recommendations feature. Users are required to write at least 25 characters of text in order to post a recommendation.

Due to the popular and social nature of the platform, a recommendation can raise the profile of your business. And your response to each recommendation can help influence public perceptions of your brand.

5

## Industry Review Sites

With a plethora of industry review sites out there, it may seem like an uphill battle to track reviews on each and every one of them. While not the topmost priority for your business, when you do reply to reviews on these sites, you're making your brand a part of the conversation — and providing a trail back to your business.

At the same time, some review sites for certain industries can be really important — for example, Angi for service-related businesses and TripAdvisor for hospitality. So finding out where your customers are sharing their experiences and opinions can help you manage them accordingly.





# How to reply to negative reviews

Let's be honest: getting a negative review can be really hard, and knowing what to say can be even harder. After all, you don't want to accidentally make a bad situation worse despite your best intentions.

Here's how you can reply to a negative review with grace and make up for a poor experience:

## ▶ Respond promptly

Our survey shows over half (55%) of consumers expect a business to reply to a review within one day. If ever there was an occasion for a swift reply and resolution, it's a negative review. It shows your business cares and is taking action.

## ▶ When the review is left publicly, respond publicly

It's an opportunity to show all consumers you're capable and willing to right a wrong.

## ▶ Read the review thoroughly

That way you can use the customer's own words to personalize your reply and show them you're taking the situation seriously.

## ▶ Offer a solution

Showing empathy for the situation and being respectful is vital to successful response management, but a solution is at the core of what the customer really wants.

## ▶ Put the right person in charge

Ensure that the person replying to negative reviews has the authority to offer solutions.

Here's an example of a real reply to a **negative** review:

★★★★★ 0 out of 5 stars

Steve P - November 17, 2018

We were never notified that the technicians were coming. They dug up our tank, but didn't move it closer to the house as I had been told they would do (as it sits currently the tank blocks the view from a house window), nor did they clean up the gas line look, which was poorly installed at the beginning (your manager's comments to me, not mine). Got an advertisement for Amerigas in the mail today, might be time to make the switch.



Response: Janet H. - December 3, 2018

Mr. Petters, I apologize for the delay in my response. Your feedback was quite valuable and I brought it to the attention of our Service Manager, Brian Stanley and our Vice President, Nicole Cameli. Brian will be contacting you in the next day to address your concerns and complete the adjustment to the tank's placement as originally discussed earlier this year. Should you need immediate assistance, please contact our office, 540-373-9096, and ask for Brian, Nicole or I. Sincerely, Janet Hahn



Need more help?

Get the templates so you can craft your response to a negative review.



## How to reply to neutral reviews

Neutral reviews are less common, since most people will only post a review if something went really well or really poorly. But the beauty of neutral reviews is that they usually contain both a compliment and a complaint — which means it's a chance to really play up the good and thoroughly address the bad.

Here's how you can reply to a neutral review using this two-pronged approach:

### ▶ Respond promptly and publicly

Just like with negative reviews, neutral reviews are a signal that something didn't meet your customer's expectations. For that reason, connect quickly to show support and publicly to show consumers you care.

### ▶ Celebrate compliments

Let your customer know that you appreciate their positive feedback.

### ▶ Resolve issues

If there's something that prevented your customer from giving a 5-star review, figure out what it was and offer a resolution to their complaint.

### ▶ Be specific and concise

Aim to address the positive and negative feedback in 100-150 words.

Here's an example of a real reply to a **neutral** review:

**Gloria Calderon**  
6 reviews  
★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ a year ago

I love the food from Clean Juice. Everything is excellent and prepared with high quality organic products. I just wish they added all the ingredients listed when you order online. It's been more than a couple of times that I order in UE and our wraps come without dates, caramelized onions or it is the walnuts. It's a great place to eat but lately they forget their recipes.

**Response from the owner** a year ago  
Hi Gloria. Thank you for sharing your thoughts on Clean Juice. I apologize for the missed/incorrect orders. The dates and walnuts come on the new sweet and savory wrap - apparently my team needs more practice! (No onions in our store.) Please reach out to me prior to your next visit or order (704-904-4561) - I would like to make the missed orders up to you. Mike McAfee, owner.



Got some neutral reviews you need to respond to?

Get the templates and give it a try.



# How to reply to positive reviews

Good feelings attract more good feelings. When a customer is sharing a positive experience about your business, you can keep the positivity going by responding to it. You get to create that two-way connection we discussed above and build even more goodwill toward your brand.

Here's how you can reply to a positive review and keep the good times rolling:

▶ **Make it short and sweet**

You can include a detail from the review to make it specific and personal.

▶ **Use a conversational tone**

How you respond should align with and be recognizable to your brand.

▶ **Respond publicly**

Share in the online conversation so that others can get a sense of your brand.

Here's an example of a real reply to a positive review:

★★★★★ 5 out of 5 stars



Sara Fort - April 18, 2022

This is one of the best banking experiences ever. Always a person to speak to and a personalized touch with my banking experience. Wouldn't think to ever move to another bank



Response from the owner - April 18, 2022

Thank you so much Sara. We strive to create a distinctly different experience. We so appreciate your affirmation!



Want additional inspiration?

[Get the templates](#)

