

Overcoming Negative Online Reviews

A Step-by-Step Guide



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The Digital Marketing Dude

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About the Author:



Peter Brissette, The Digital Marketing Dude, is a lead analyst and project manager with Idea Age Consulting and owner of the digital marketing and consulting agency DMD Consulting.

Peter has more than fifteen years successful experience in B2B and B2C sales and marketing for small businesses.

Working in such industries as advertising, automotive, catering, financial services, computer hardware and software, senior care, high tech manufacturing, internet marketing, consumer electronics, video security and many more.

Peter can walk a small business through a discovery process to uncover the key factors that will differentiate them from their competition. This differentiation will oil the machine of digital marketing for business growth.

Peter has expertise in the following areas: Search Engine Marketing, Search Engine Optimization, Website Development, Internet Marketing, Video Marketing, Email Marketing, Mobile Marketing, Content Creation, Product Development, Social Media Marketing, etc.

His focus is on helping a business in one of three ways. First to increase the number of incoming leads. Second to increase the quality of those leads. Finally to improve the conversion rate of those leads. The goal is always on how to build a long term relationship with his clients by consistently providing value.

He is the co-author of “Facebook Marketing for Business Growth” and contributor to the “Be Facebook Productive” report from ProductiveToday.com. He writes articles for online ezines, blogs, association newsletters and magazines.

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You can receive his FREE weekly digital marketing tips by visiting www.dmdude.com

Forward



By Greg Jameson

Best-Selling Author of “Amazon’s Dirty Little Secrets”

GregJameson.com

Many companies today are concerned about people writing reviews about their company when they have no control over this process. Anyone can write a review about anyone, post it to any number of the various review sites, which is then visible for the world to see, and the company cannot do anything about it, including getting it deleted if it is a negative review. That’s scary.

Or is it? As consumers, we love online reviews. Often we start our shopping experiences at Amazon, primarily because of their extensive online reviews. In my book, “Amazon’s Dirty Little Secrets”, I discuss how Amazon uses this to their advantage, essentially getting customers to sell other customers on why they should buy a product. Customers trust Amazon because they post negative reviews right alongside of the positive reviews. Frequently, before deciding on a hotel room, we will look at online reviews to pick a place to spend the night. We do the same for restaurants, doctors, and contractors. Our online reputations follow us everywhere.

But what happens when you get a negative review online? Even if you can mitigate it, the review may be sitting there for days, weeks, or even months without you even knowing that someone has trashed your reputation. In this step by step guide, Peter Brissette makes the comment that the best way to overcome a negative review is to never get one! This is not just a flippant remark – it is actually very insightful. Here’s the thing – we are all human, and as humans we are likely to have a bad day and make a mistake. The result is we may frustrate a customer to the point that they make a negative comment about our business. But if you have developed such a strong online reputation, a single negative review might not be the end of the world. There is a famous quote that says, “Live in such a way that if anyone should speak badly of you, no one would believe it.” Apply this philosophy to your business and negative online reviews are simply not something that you have to concern yourself with – at least on a daily basis.



A great way to insure that you know what people are saying about you is to set up notifications by using Google Alerts. With this free tool, Google will send you an email every time your company is mentioned.

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That way you can quickly respond to online reviews, both positive and negative, and let your customers know that you are listening. Another option is to use the site, SocialMention.com to keep track of how frequently people are talking about your business and what they are saying. In today's crazy world of people saying whatever they want about whoever they want, it is important that you monitor your online reputation.

As I mentioned, consumers love online reviews. Given that reviews are so important to the decision making process, companies not only need to manage online reviews, but should be actively seeking them out. This helps to build trust. You should develop a plan for getting reviews – don't just leave it to chance. This publication will help you do just that.

Why listen to me?

I first wrote this guide back in December of 2010. I thought then that online reviews were becoming very important. What I realize now is that they are more important than ever before. Because of that I am on a mission to communicate this to every owner of a local business.

We have been managing local listings and reviews now for clients since 2009 and have been able to gain considerable experience in finding what drives the best results.

Most recently I was a contributor to an article in InPaint magazine titled “Attack of the Killer Review, Overcoming negative online reviews about your business.” If you would like a copy of the article please email a request to support@dmdude.com.

Do any of these statements apply to your business?

- You are not gathering customer testimonials in a consistent or systemized way.
- You are not leveraging the social proof of your existing customers in order to grow your business.
- You do not have a strategy for handling your online reputation and are not prepared to counteract negative comments.
- You are not leveraging mobile search or mobile apps.

If any of these are true then this you should continue reading.

Are you prepared to handle an online negative reviews attack?



It is not unusual to have a customer that is **not happy** with the service provided by a business. Most will not ever say anything but occasionally there will be those that feel they need to “**warn**” others about your poor service or bad product experience.

What if you received the message: “***We will spend 25 million dollars to ruin your business name if you do not comply***”?

Imagine the challenge of a **threat** of having to give in to someone who wants something from your business and will go to great lengths to coerce you to comply.

I was recently privy to just such a situation. It was an unusually **brutal online attack** by an individual trying to force a business to capitulate to their requests. The attack was massive and fierce. In fact it was so **cleverly devised** that the customers of the business being attacked were left with the idea that the business was either no longer reputable or not even in business any more.

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The attack came from online. It used social media, video, email, cleverly devised surveys, etc.

The business being attacked which has been around for **more than 45 years was not ready** to deal with this. They were left scrambling trying to fight its way through this digital online barrage. In fact they are still fighting the battle today. They had no digital marketing or **reputation strategy** to be ready for such an attack.

Now this is a worst case scenario. I hope you will never experience anything that extreme in your business. However it does beg the questions, ***“What is my online reputation strategy or How do I overcome a negative online attack?”***

The online reviews landscape.

Online reviews is generally referred to as Reputation Management. Recently it has been also called Advocacy or Influencer Marketing. All seem to fit the idea pretty well but I prefer to call it Review Marketing. Why is that?

I like to call it that so that we can better understand its place in how it impacts a local business. Your online reviews should be a key component of your all around marketing plan. Therefore I call it Review Marketing.

Reviews are being used everywhere.

I first saw reviews being used a number of years ago on Ebay. When you buy something on Ebay both the buyer and the seller have an opportunity to review one another. I think if businesses had that same opportunity there might not be some of the negative reviews out there.

Another company place we see reviews is on ecommerce sites like Amazon. Amazon is always asking you to review your recent purchases. I think anyone that shops on Amazon takes the time to read some of the reviews before hitting the buy now button. I know I do. What is interesting to me on Amazon is that they also let you review the reviews. They make it possible to give a thumbs up on a review if it was helpful to you.

Then there are new companies coming into the marketing place that are causing major changes. One such company is Uber. Uber is a car service that uses an app on your phone that allows you to request a pick up. In most cases you are picked up in less than ten minutes. Once you get to your destination you don't even have to worry about the payment to the driver. You just say good bye and your credit card is charged in the app. As soon as that happens the app will ask you to review your driver. I would guess review the rider is coming next.

I wonder what is next? Here are some website ideas I thought of:

Reviewyourparents.com so kids can let everyone know about how their parents are doing.

Then of course we need reviewyourkids.com so parents can have their say.

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What about this, reviewyourspouse.com? That would be interesting...

I jest, but I could see this type of thing happening with such an emphasis being placed on reviews.

Online, the term “testimonials” has been replaced with the word “**reviews**” or comments. A small local business should have a system in place to leverage the variety of options to collect these reviews. The reason for the use of the term reviews is primarily because of restaurants and entertainment venues that depend on foot traffic.

It is also a fact that testimonials on your website are less effective than testimonials (reviews) on a third party site but that does not mean you should not be consistently collecting reviews for your website. In fact it is critically important for you to own that piece of your review marketing.

In this report I want to primarily focus on businesses that may not typically be already be collecting online reviews. You will find that many restaurants and entertainment businesses are taking advantage of mobile search and online reviews. These businesses are trying to get foot traffic in the door. They are also having the issue forced upon them by the visitors to their locations who are using mobile devices.

The businesses that are not consistently taking advantage of this are **services based businesses**. Some examples would be B2B service companies like printer or office equipment repair companies. Other examples would be B2C business such as plumbers, HVAC, roofers, carpet cleaners, Real Estate Agents, Financial Services Professionals, as well as Doctors, Dentists and Attorneys.

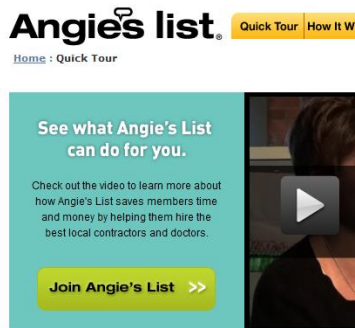
Some of these businesses might even say that they are not online or only have a limited online presence. What they fail to recognize is that their business information is being used online on multiple websites. These sites are aggregators of local information trying to connect visitor contact information and demographics with advertisers. These sites are also providing review platforms for their visitors.

There are hundreds of local directory, IYP (internet yellow pages) and reviews websites. Each of them have collected information about your business even if you have not asked them too.

How do you get on these sites?

We will talk more about this as part of the “6 Key Areas of Local Review Marketing”, but the most common starting place for this is with the phone company. As soon as you setup a business phone with the phone company that has your business name, address and phone number, the process starts of pushing your data out to the internet.

What are some of these sites?



Most all of these sites have some type of login and registration feature. It may be tied back to Facebook or have its own built in social networking.

Another feature of these sites is that basic listings and connections from consumers are **free**. There are no charges for it. Because of this some companies have opted to “**fake**” the reviews by having employees post “anonymous” reviews about the business. Anything that is anonymous is very suspect.

One site that has a different model from this is **Angie's List**. The subscribers to Angie's list pay to be able to post reviews on the site. Because of this the reviews are very highly regarded. High reviews on Angie's list for many service companies means a steady flow of customers.

Following is a short review of some of the free sites available where reviews can be posted.

Where to gather reviews:

Google Places: (now called Google My Business)



Google Places should be the primary location for a local business to have reviews added. Google will also pull reviews from other web properties and include them under the local businesses Places page. Unfortunately Google does not provide information on how their search algorithms will 1. Collect this information and 2. Display the information.

Google Places has also recently added the option to allow you to respond to any reviews on your places page. I think this one feature will probably help many of you who you have a fear of actively pursuing reviews online. Not every site will give you the opportunity to respond but Google Places does, and that provides you the opportunity to show how you handle problems and provide solutions.

Google Places was taking reviews from others websites like Yahoo, Yelp, etc. so that when you went to your Google Places page you could actually read these other reviews. Google got sued for doing this because they were essentially stealing content from other sites and displaying it on theirs. Other websites didn't like this and that is certainly understandable. A court ordered Google to stop this and they did. However they will still display the number of reviews there are as well as a link back to the website where the review is so that visitors can read it.

Why Google Places?

Google places, with your website, are the key components of local search for your business. Both your website and your Google places account must be optimized to help your search results ranking.

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Besides Google Places, there are many other sites where reviews can be gathered and leveraged for social proof. All of these sites provide maps and location-based search functions.

UPDATE: Google My Business now incorporates all of the Google Places, Maps, + in one place. You probably already have a listing there that you don't know about. Just create a gmail email account to connect to the page and claim it. It will have to be verified via phone call or postcard that is sent out with a special code. It is critical to the process that this step is done.

Facebook Business Pages:

You can add a "reviews" tab to your Facebook Page and invite your customers to post reviews there.

The advantage is not only getting a review, but also increasing the followers to your Facebook Page.



Facebook pages should be set up with key words in mind and will appear in Google searches. They can also be leveraged as a multimedia and information publishing platform by either connecting or replacing your business blog. Facebook pages can be integrated with your website and other online properties as well.

You can learn more about Facebook Marketing by reading the special report written by Gogo Erekosima, the Small Business Digital Coach and myself. Download the report at www.ideaageconsulting.com/facebookreport.

What about Facebook Places?

UPDATE: Facebook has now merged their Places Pages with your Standard Business Page. There are no longer two different pages.

It is also important to note that you cannot manage reviews on your Facebook page, if you have that feature turned on. You can collect reviews and comment, but you cannot remove a negative review. Unless you are actively managing your reviews, I recommend disabling that option on your Facebook Page.



LinkedIn:

Most small local businesses are still not leveraging the power of LinkedIn. LinkedIn profiles are the highest rated profiles of all social media sites. If you search my name, the number one profile that comes up is LinkedIn. On LinkedIn a review is called a recommendation.

Here are the steps to leverage LinkedIn for reviews:

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1. Setup a 100% complete profile that is key word optimized for your business.
2. Provide a link that allows others on LinkedIn to connect with you directly by providing your email address as a part of the link (contact me for details on this).
3. When someone connects with you, who is a customer, send them a note asking them for a recommendation. If possible write a recommendation for them first.

Yahoo Local:



If you do not already have a Yahoo email account, you should go ahead and establish one. Once you claim your local listing, you can then add pictures and information about your business. You can also link this to your Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Yahoo Local has a reviews section for your business where customers can rate your business on a 5 star scale and write a review.



Yelp:

Yelp has quickly become one of the premium locations for local searches and information. It is a platform that is specifically developed for mobile users. Mobile searches are growing at a very quick rate. Having an optimized profile on Yelp will help you in gaining new customers.

Yelp is built for reviews. It also connects with Facebook and allows you to upload pictures and additional information about your business.

Check the end of this guide for a step by step guide on setting up a business profile on Yelp.



Fourquare

Fourquare is a check in and social platform for local businesses. It primarily works as an app on mobile devices and uses location-based data to drive user interaction.

When someone has the app on their phone and is close to your business, Foursquare will alert the user to “check in” and to leave comments about your business. If your information does not come up automatically for a user, he can then create the information about your business.

Superpages:



Superpages is a site that is connected with Yellow Pages. It aggregates local business listings by category and provides additional advertising platforms for local businesses. A basic listing is free on the site, and it also provides a location for reviews. Reviews from Superpages have appeared in Google Places, though this cannot be predicted or controlled.

Superpages also has a Facebook “like” button and provides social sharing options.

City Search:



City Search is another aggregator of local information. City Search will identify your location from your computer’s IP address, and then provide you with local search results. It is built, as well, for gathering reviews about local businesses.

The listing must be claimed, and it will allow you to add links to your Twitter and Facebook Page accounts. It also has a Facebook Like Button integration. Pictures and additional information can be added here as well.

Merchant Circle:



Merchant Circle focuses more on building its own social network that invites visitors to get coupons and discounts from local vendors. It also invites users to ask questions to its network of local businesses. It provides a free platform for a local business to add its information. It will allow pictures, additional information, as well as social sharing options. It also invites reviews from its visitors.

Summary:

These sites that I have referenced are some of the more popular ones, and yet there are many more available. The sites you choose need to be strategic, based on your specific business needs and target market.

There are usually niche sites, forums and communities of which you could connect that would allow you to quickly promote your business among a more specific affinity group. That is always a good idea if you are looking for fast business growth.

The impact of mobile on local search and reviews

In the last few years I have watched as smart phones and pads have quickly expanded their capabilities. Searching for something a few years ago was only done on a PC. That is no longer the case. I began to see this in customers' website traffic numbers. Month by month, the mobile traffic was growing. It grew enough so that changes had to be made to make websites responsive in design, in order to look good on all devices.

Here are some important stats that you need to know in order to better understand the impact of mobile devices on your local business.

79% of smartphone owners and 81% of tablet owners use their device to search locally.

40-50% of mobile search carries a local intent.

Size of business is not an excuse for lack of online presence. Searchers looking for independent businesses have high expectations of finding a business website.

Searches on Portal, IYP (Internet Yellow Pages) and Local Sites have a similar chance of ending in a purchase.

Source: comScore Trends Shaping Local Search in 2014

How do consumers view online reviews or why do reviews matter?

Let's test your knowledge a little bit here. What would you say is the percentage of consumers that use online reviews? Would you believe it is 86%?

That is a very significant number when you consider both desktop and mobile search. I would guess that it is even higher on mobile devices.

Here is another question for you. What is the percentage of consumers that trust online reviews? That number would be 79%. That is increase in the last couple of years of 5%. People trust online reviews about your business. I would say that is a pretty good "why reviews matter" realization!

By the way, the percentage of consumers still using traditional yellow pages is only 2%. Now if your target demographic is in that 2% you should keep using the yellow page. If not, then you might want to invest more in your online marketing strategy.

Source: <http://www.brightlocal.com/2013/06/25/local-consumer-review-survey-2013/>

The trust factor.

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Where should you spend your marketing dollars? The real challenge with any marketing and advertising that you do is the trust factor. The trust factor or BS meter for some, is when a potential customer comes in contact with a message about your business and they have to decide if they believe it or not.

Each different marketing medium has a different “trust potential.” Trust potential is the inherent amount of “trustability” (that is not a word, I know, but I like it) that any given medium has.

Let me give you some examples based on some recent surveys. Somewhat popular the last couple of years has been SMS marketing, which is text messaging on your phone. People will sign up with a local business to receive special offers via text message. The percentage of consumers that trust those messages or the “trust potential” is only 29%. That number absolutely blows me away. Why wouldn't you trust a message you signed up for?

How about an email that you signed up for? The Trust Potential is only 50%.

The two mediums with the highest Trust Potential are:

1. Recommendations from people I know, Trust Potential of 92%
2. Consumer Opinions Posted Online, Trust Potential of 70%

No other medium is trusted more than personal recommendations and online reviews, even when factoring websites, newspaper articles, billboards, ads on TV, and other such advertising.

Let that sink in for a moment. If you are thinking about how to get the most “bang for your buck” then Trust Potential needs to be a part of the consideration.

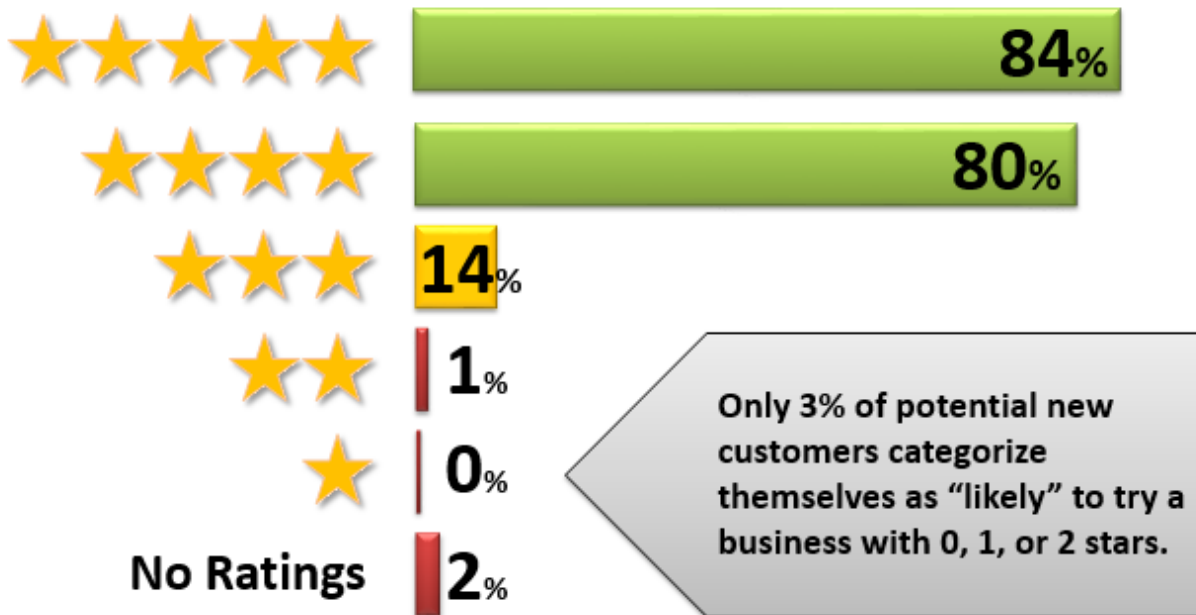
Source: Neilson Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages 2012

The 5 Star System

Let us take a moment now and look at how the 5 Star rating system impacts consumer response. Research shows that consumers place value on the 5 Star system based on their likeliness to initiate business. Note: This is also a measure of the “Trust Potential”.

A 4 or 5 star average rating results in 80-84% likelihood that a consumer will initiate business with a vendor. After that rating, the drop-off is severe. At 3 stars, the likelihood (or Trust Potential) for a consumer to initiate business with that vendor is only 14%.

It is important to note that if you were planning to stay out of the fray, and not participate in this whole “online reviews thing”, you might want to rethink that idea. If you have 0 stars, your Trust Potential is only 2%. Think of it this way, I can chose two companies. The first has one 4 star review, and the other has none. My choice, 98% of the time, will be the one with the 4 star review.



Source: Pepperdine University School of Business Study - June 2012

Local Search Ranking Factors

Every year, a survey of agencies that do local search rankings for their clients, is conducted.

In the 2013 survey, they cited 180 different ranking factors in two main categories. The two categories were Foundational Ranking Factors and Competitive Difference Makers.

In the 80/20 principle, looking at only the top 20 percent of the factors based on the survey, we discover the top 24 local SEO ranking factors. These top factors will drive at least 80% of the results. Of the 24, 14 relate directly to online reviews. The remaining factors primarily deal with either citations from directory websites or directly with the coding on the customer's website.

Once again, the impact of reviews is key in how search is being driven for both desktop and mobile devices.

Source: <http://moz.com/local-search-ranking-factors>

The 6 key areas of local reviews marketing.

Out of 180 key ranking factors, we can break it down to 6 key areas that matter. Those are:

- Consistency

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- Breadth
- Quantity
- Recency (I know, this is not a word either)
- Balance
- Quality

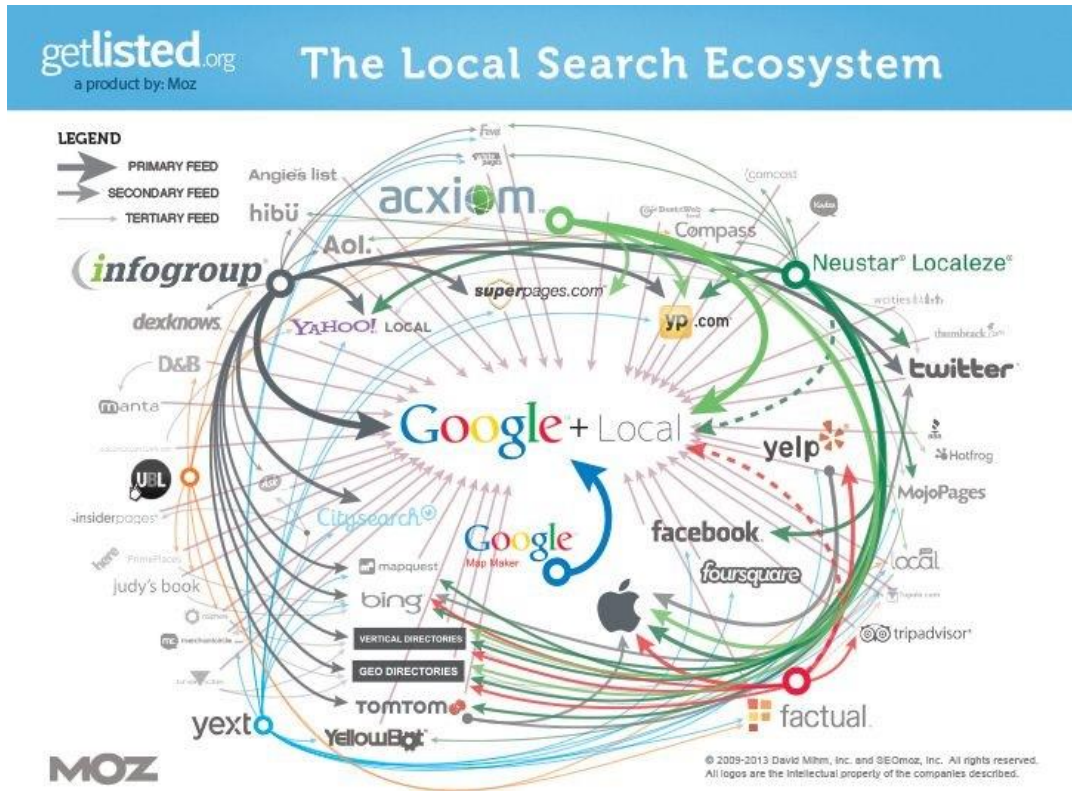
Consistency

There is a real challenge for consistency. You see, there are hundreds of sites out there that are collecting information about your business. The problem is they **do not** all have **one single authoritative source** to pull from.

There are many different moving parts, and each part uses its own method of data collection. Here are some key sources of content.

- Your website
- The phone company
- Aggregators - collect the data and share that data with other sites
- Government data - such as business information, court data, etc.
- Web crawl results - this could be results of what is found on various websites.
- Claims - information that visitors to various websites may indicate about your business.
- Consumer Signal - covers many things such as visits to your website, click to call on mobile devices, likes on your Facebook page, etc.

To give you an idea of what it looks like, here is a picture of the ecosystem from Moz:



Breadth

The more review sites that have reviews completed, the more those sites show up on a Google search. For this reason, the reviews should be monitored so that you can encourage potential customers to visit these sites. The best way to encourage them is to email a direct link to the sites for which you want reviews. In addition, you should be including reviews on your own website.

Quantity

The ideal number of reviews is at least 7 on a given review site. For some high traffic businesses, this is probably not difficult. If your traffic is lower, however, you will want to focus first on Google Places to get your reviews and then expand from there. Google requires at least 5 reviews in order to give an overall rating.

More reviews can also impact category searches. Category searches are searches done on directory websites for a specific category. For example, there are many categories under Dentist such as Orthodontists, Dental Implants, Teeth Whitening, or others.

The more reviews on a site, the less likely fake reviews will have an effect, either positive or negative to the site.

Recency

I know that “recency” is not really a word, but it does explain this point. New or recent reviews are more relevant than older reviews. Older reviews have less value to consumers because they may not indicate the current level of service; therefore, “recency” of reviews becomes very important to the business.

Balance

The best way to overcome negative reviews is to balance them with positive reviews. Obviously a good rating is critical, but it should look balanced. Google SEO likes “review diversity” as well. Well balanced reviews quell concerns that reviews might be faked; therefore, giving your reviews a much higher Trust Potential.

Quality

The actual text in the reviews makes an impact on SEO. Ideally, the reviews incorporate keywords related to the business or service provided. Encourage your customers to be as detailed in their reviews as possible.

In summary, these six key areas: Consistency, Breadth, Quantity, Recency, Balance and Quality, if implemented as much as possible, will yield the best results. The best results are more new customers finding you and trusting that you are a reliable service provider that they should do business with.

Is it really worth the investment of time and money?

Based on studies and actual outcomes, we can see the impact on the bottom line.

According to a Harvard Business School Study in October of 2011, a 1-star rating increase leads to a 5-9% increase in revenue.

Additionally, Woodbury University Business School, in a study in January of 2014, sites that 79.5% of business owners expect revenue to increase at least 1% with a one point star improvement. 65.3% expect revenue to increase by at least 5%.

Why you need a plan

You need a plan in place, really a system in place, to manage reviews because reviewers are motivated by emotion. Happy customers are more passive than angry ones. An angry customer wants to vent. For this reason, quite often the only reviews you might see for a business is one or two negative reviews.

The good news is that most angry customers only vent once. If you can capture their frustration before they vent publicly, you can prevent negative reviews.

Source: Pepperdine Univeristy School of Business Study from June 2012

What to do if you get a negative review.

It is quite possible that you will get a negative review. Below is a quick checklist of things you can do when that happens:

- Don't get one! Yes, the best way to handle it is to never get one. Make customer satisfaction your top priority.
- Answer the review directly with your contact information.
- Try to resolve the problem to your best ability.
- If the problem does get resolved, ask the reviewer to either remove or update the review based on that resolution.
- Check the review to make sure it is legitimate. If it is not legitimate, then ask the site to have it removed.

How to gather and manage the reviews

Our solution to the problem is creating what I call a **Reviews Marketing Portal**. The portal has nine key pieces that make it effective, based on the following concept. If there are twenty good comments, then the one bad comment becomes almost irrelevant. It is like the scores from Ice Skating competitions. The high score and the low score are dropped.

However, in order to accomplish this concept, you must put in place a process and system for encouraging reviews from your customers and make your business "review friendly".

1. Set up a Reviews Page on your website that will display your testimonials and private reviews. Include on this page links to other sites for which you either have or want to receive reviews.

This page should also have a form where you can capture new private reviews. Follow up the form submission with an email that has links to the top sites you wish to collect reviews and ask the reviewer to go to one of those sites as well to leave a review.

A note about Private vs Public reviews: A private review is a review that you collect for placement on your website. A public review is a review on any other website besides yours such as Yelp, Foursquare, Google Places, etc. It is important that you are collecting both private and public reviews.

2. Customize a special URL (web address) that makes it easy to direct your customers to the page. For example www.yourdomainname.com/reviews.

Note: You can also use a QR (quick response) code as well.

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3. Put that link on business cards, invoices, flyers, brochures. If you have foot traffic, then include this at your POS and even on tables, menus, or other areas if possible.
4. Make a reviews badge (an icon with a link) that can be placed on your other web properties such as Facebook or media sites.
5. Develop scripting and train your staff for in-person and telephone conversations that will encourage customers to give reviews and instruct them how to give them.

Remember when asking for reviews:

- Reviews must be uncompensated
- Reviews must be genuine
- Reviews must be substantive.

6. Monitor, Collect, Add

Keep an eye out for your reviews. When you setup your listings on review sites, you can have alerts sent to you. Plus, you can search your business name to look for reviews.

7. Share your reviews

Make sure you are sharing your positive reviews on your social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and even on LinkedIn.

8. Claim your listings

There are hundreds of review and local direct sites where you could claim a listing. Trying to do that yourself is a lot of work. If you can not hire a company like ours to do this for you, there are a few of the key sites where you should be listed. Remember, consistency in your listing matters. (see how to do this on Yelp at the end of the guide)

- Google My Business (Google Maps/Local/Places/+)
- Yahoo Local
- Bing Local
- Yelp
- Foursquare

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- Facebook
 - LinkedIn
 - Industry specific websites
9. Location information on your website
- Dedicated page for each location
 - Title Tag with City and State
 - Location sitemap uploaded to Google webmaster tools
 - Key geodata and kml data added to the page/site (talk to your webmaster about this)

In closing, are the key take away points of this special report

1. Change the term testimonials to reviews (or comments).
2. Google places is moving to the center of reviews.
3. Google “reviews” search results are inconsistent and cannot be directly manipulated.
4. Claiming and optimizing your listing on the variety of sites online is crucial.
5. You must make it easier for your customers by providing a single portal to access your reviews.
6. You need a process and system for consistently building your reviews.
7. Regularly monitor your reviews and respond and glean new testimonials/reviews for your website.
8. Integrate with social media whenever and wherever possible to expand social proof and trust.

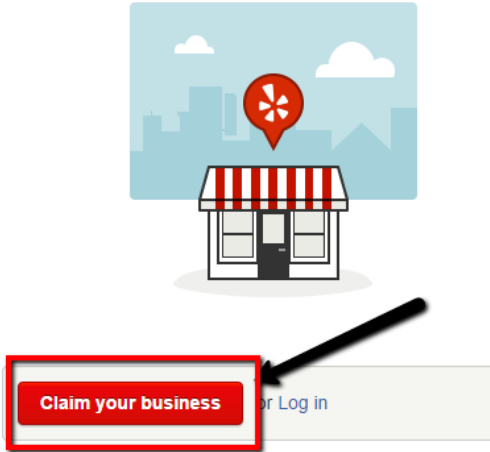
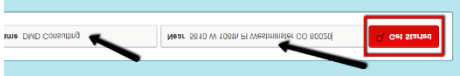
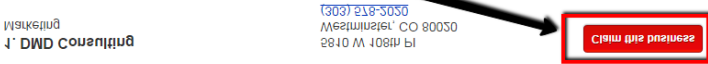
Thank you for taking the time to read my special report. I hope you have found it informational and practical in its solutions to effectively dealing with building your online reputation in an effective way.

Please contact me if you're interested in having a customized Reviews Marketing Portal built for your small local business. My phone is 303-578-2020, email is support@dmdude.com.



Setting up a Listing on Yelp

The first thing I recommend is setting up a gmail email account that is specifically used for setting up your local listings accounts. Something like yourbusinessnamereviews@gmail.com or yourbusinessnamemarketing@gmail.com are good options. Why? To keep it out of your regular business emails and so that you can have someone on your team manage the emails that might come in here. Also because you can create filters to forward important emails to other email accounts such as a negative review, etc.

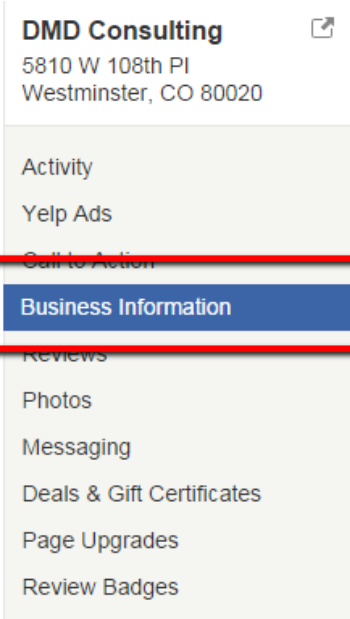
Most likely if you are a local business with an address and a phone number with the phone company, you already have a listing on Yelp that needs to be claimed. Below are the steps to claim your listing.

<p>Go to this link to start the process to claim your business.</p>	<p>https://biz.yelp.com/support/claiming</p>
<p>Click on "Claim your business"</p>	<p>The best way to manage your business on Yelp is by creating a business login. It's free, takes only two minutes, and helps you connect with the local community.</p> 
<p>That will take you to a search page. Enter your business name and address on this page and click "Get Started"</p>	
<p>Yelp will try to find your existing listing. If it is there then click "Claim this business"</p>	

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<p>You will then need to create a “Business Owner” account.</p>	<p>This is different than your personal Yelp account that you may already have. You could have signed up using Facebook or a personal email.</p> <p>Use your review specific email account that I mentioned at the begging of this process.</p>
<p>Once you click create Yelp will want to verify that you are the business owner.</p>	<p>To do this they use an automated call system that will call your main business number.</p> <p>The number will request a code that the Yelp page will display to you.</p> <p>Once you enter this code your profile creating and listing will be claimed.</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>To protect you and your business we need you to answer a quick phone call.</p> <p>Be prepared to receive a call from Yelp at 303) 578-2020.</p> <p>▼ Does an automated phone system answer your calls?</p> <p>On what extension can we reach you?</p> <input 1234"="" type="text" value="e.g. "/> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>► Is this phone number incorrect?</p> <p>Wait for the automated prompt and then enter the code: ██████</p> <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; margin-right: 20px;">Call Me Now</div>  </div>
<p>Confirm Email Address</p>	<p>You will also receive an email from Yelp confirming your email. Click the “Confirm Email Address” link in that email.</p>
<p>Once you have entered the number you can then manage your business profile. Click on “Your Business” in the top navigation to see information about your page on Yelp.</p>	

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<p>To complete your information about your business click on “Business Information”</p>	 <p>The screenshot shows the Yelp profile for 'DMD Consulting' with the address '5810 W 108th Pl, Westminster, CO 80020'. A menu of options is displayed, with 'Business Information' highlighted in a blue box and outlined in red. Other options include Activity, Yelp Ads, Call to Action, Reviews, Photos, Messaging, Deals & Gift Certificates, Page Upgrades, and Review Badges.</p>
<p>There are a few key areas that you will want to update the information on.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Category: You want to select as many categories as your business might be related too. You can pick up to 3 on Yelp. There are main categories and then sub-categories under those. Yelp provides drop down options for you to choose from. 2. Map Location: Make sure your map marker clearly shows where you are. You can adjust the marker so it is precise. This is very helpful for customers to find you! 3. Hours, Specialties, History, Bio: Fill in as much information as you can here to help your customers trust you are legit! 4. Photos: Go to the photos tab and upload photos of your business or products. 8 to 10 photos is a good idea and add captions to them as well.
<p>There you go! You are now ready to manage your reviews on Yelp.</p>	

One note about advertising on Yelp. There is a lot they have worked on with their ad platform which I have yet to explore completely. Like with anything else if you want to test something make sure it is a very controlled test that you can measure the results of.

Addendum

Your Website

In the world of marketing your business online, things are **constantly changing**. What rules you have to follow one day can change by the whim of a company, a case of litigation or many other possible influences.

One thing I really need to make a **very strong** point about is how your **website** affects everything else you do as it relates to **Online Reviews and Local Search Engine Marketing**.

If your website is not at or close to **100% keyword focused and optimized** then all your other efforts may end in vain. It all starts with your main website. It absolutely must be the core and center of your online marketing efforts.

There are a few key things that your **website must have** to succeed that you will not hear from your typical graphics design person or the fly by night website company that promises you a website live in five minutes. I mean seriously, how can something that you **literally throw up in five minutes get the long term** results you are after?

There are plenty of options out there that want to tell you how “easy” it is get your site up and going. They don’t tell you what it actually takes to make **your website “successful”**. If you are a local business, you need new customers. A web site that you just threw up tonight is probably not going to give you that. **Websites take work**. Hard work!

So what are a few things you must have on your website.

1. Your “**Meta Data**” must be updated and unique for each page (that is your title, keywords and description.)
2. You must have a **<h1>** tagged headline with your keyword in it.
3. Your **keyword** must appear in the body of the page at least one for about every 100 to 150 words (the page must be at least **500 words**.)
4. The way your **site links** from one page to another must be done correctly. This includes navigation and in context links.
5. You must have a **XML Sitemap** and an **RSS feed** (tech stuff I know, but critical.)
6. You must have a plan for how you will **build links** back to your site.
7. You need a way for your **visitors to help you** build the site content. This ensures fresh content that you don’t have to come up with on your own. And it could have its own comment and rating system.

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8. If you are a B2C business you must do a deep **Facebook Integration** that includes “like” buttons, comments, etc.
9. You must integrate **other social media** into your site. Google +1, Twitter, etc.
10. You need to plan your site well with the end result in mind. Your website should have specific **calls to action** that tells your visitors what it is they should be doing on your site. They can not guess at this either. It must be obvious.
11. Your site should have a very simple and **easy way to navigate** so that visitors can easily find the information they are looking for.
12. You must offer a **free report** or other information that invites your visitor to sign up on your **email list**. Yes, Email Marketing is still alive and well and you need to be fully engaged in it.
13. You must have **analytical data** on your website traffic, such as keywords, user demographics, pages visited, etc.
14. You have to **measure everything with conversion tracking**, from visitor, to lead, to customer and beyond.
15. **Bonus:** You should use special **tracking phone numbers** in your online marketing so you can measure exactly where your calls are coming from and what part of your marketing is working.

Each of the above items is very critical to your websites success. Use this checklist for your next website project. Basically, you need a **Visitor Built Viral Website**. There are probably less than 10% of all local business websites that actually fit into this category. Those that do have it are getting more traffic, more leads and more sales. Follow the list above and you can get it too!

Below is an example. Note: (this is old data at this point but does serve to illustrated this.)

My client’s website is ranked #9 for the search term “Assisted Living Littleton”.

[Assisted Living Homes Littleton Colorado](#) 🔍

[www.coloradoassistedliving.com/assisted-living-homes-littleton.html](#) - Cached

See a listing of our **Assisted Living Homes Littleton Colorado** from **Colorado Assisted Living Homes**.

#9 | PR: ? | Google Cache Date: ? | Traffic Value: ? | Age: ? | del.icio.us: ? | del.icio.us Page Bookmarks: ? | Digg: ? | Digg's Popular Stories: ? | Stumbleupon: ? | Twitter: ? | Y! Links: ? | Y! .edu Links: ? | Y! .gov Links: ? | Y! Page Links: ? | Y! .edu Page Links: ? | OSE links to page: ? | OSE links to domain: ? | Blekko domainlinks: ? | Technorati: ? | Alexa: ? | Comete.com Rank: ? | Comete.com Uniques: ? | Trends | Cached: ? | dmoz: ? | Bloglines: ? | Page blog links: ? | dir.yahoo.com: ? | Botw: ? | Business | Whois | Yahoo position: ? | Majestic SEO linkdomain: ?

The #1 website does not show up in the search for their website. What shows up in the search is their Google Places page but the ranking is based on their website.


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[MorningStar Senior Living - Independent Living, Assisted Living and ...](#) 🔍

[www.morningstarseniorliving.com/](#) - Cached

MorningStar Senior Living offers Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care Living Communities throughout the state of Colorado. We have facilitie ...

Button1a - About Morning Star - The Cottages at Dayton Place - Button2a

 5344 South Kipling Parkway, Littleton
(303) 972-3030

[yahoo.com](#) (11)

Place page

#1 | PR: ? | Google Cache Date: ? | Traffic Value: ? | Ape: ? | del.icio.us: ? | del.icio.us Page Bookmarks: ? | Digg: ? | Digg's Popular Stories: ? | Stumbleupon: ? | Twitter: ? | Y! Links: ? | Y! .edu Links: ? | Y! .gov Links: ? | Y! Page Links: ? | Y! .edu Page Links: ? | OSE links to page: ? | OSE links to domain: ? | Blekko domainlinks: ? | Technorati: ? | Alexa: ? | Compete.com Rank: ? | Compete.com Uniques: ? | Trends | Cached: ? | dmoz: ? | Bloglines: ? | Page blog links: ? | dir.yahoo.com: ? | Botw: ? | Business | Whois | Yahoo position: ? | Majestic SEO linkdomain: ?

The only way for my client to move into that spot with his Google Places page is to have his website itself move up in the rankings. Again that takes work.

You can also see in that example that the #1 site has a number of reviews that are online that Google is also taking into account. However, it all starts with the website.

Thanks again for taking the time to read this. I trust you will find it helpful in your online marketing efforts.

Peter

Do you need help collecting and managing your online reviews?

Local business success includes these three things.

1. Rich local listings
2. Collecting and managing online reviews
3. Maximizing your mobile presence with a Mobile App and mobile friendly website.

We believe that since you've taken the time to read through and digest this report, you are prepared to take a plunge into the world of digital marketing in general.

We can help you with Marketing Strategy, Search Engine Optimization, Local Search and Review Optimization, Pay Per Click Marketing, Social Media Marketing and Mobile Marketing.

You may have some questions, or you may have some specific misgivings that need to be addressed before you can do so. In either case, at here at DMD Consulting ***we work with companies large and small to create profitable marketing platforms for generating more clients, referrals and profits in record time.***

Special Offers

#1 If you have not already run a scan on your business you can do so at <http://dmdude.com/scan> You will get an instant report of how your business information (NAP) looks on the top 60 or so local directory/review websites.

#2 Competitive Report Value \$200

Do you wonder why other businesses are coming up before you do in the local search results? We can show you exactly why that is.

We will provide you with a detailed report of all the sites your top competitors are using to help them rank higher in the search results. Additionally we will provide a 30 minute phone consultation explaining the report results and what you need as an action plan so that you can start dominating the local search results.

The report and the consultation are valued at \$200 but is free when you mention this special offer from the "Overcoming Negative Online Reviews Guide".

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