

HOW TO TRANSFORM  
YOUR BUSINESS USING

# THE POWER OF REVIEWS



thebestofeastbourne



# TESTIMONIALS ARE DEAD

When running a business, you'll either see, hear or get told what seems like an endless amount of Entrepreneurial catchphrases - and most of them are usually, quite useful but one of the most accurate and timeless is - "Your best salespeople will always be your customers".

Another that coincides with this perfectly is "What other people say about you is 100 times more powerful than what you can say about yourself" - and that is also, just as equally, true.

And for several decades, businesses focused on getting testimonials.

BUT, testimonials, now, are dead.

They have nothing like the impact or the value they used to have just a few short years ago and that's because they've been replaced by the "testimonials of the 21st century" which are REVIEWS.

Reviews are out there on a whole plethora of websites like Tripadvisor, Google, Facebook, Trustpilot Check-a-Trade,

## Did you know?

7 out of 10 consumers will leave a review for a business if they're asked to



## Did you know?

90% of consumers read less than 10 reviews before forming an opinion about a business



## Did you know?

84% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation



## Did you know?

74% of consumers say that positive reviews make them trust a local business more



thebestof and more. And the smart thing to do for any business that's serious about building something that is sustainable and long lasting is to have a proactive strategy to develop and get reviews from people that you know have enjoyed what you have done for them or have provided.

Today, the businesses that achieve the super-success are not always the ones with the lowest prices or the biggest range of products. In fact, the winners are not even always the biggest brands. The real superstars (especially at a local level) are trusted companies who offer an unrivalled and exceptional customer experience again and again.

So we have put together this guide to help you get the most out of reviews with tools and techniques that will get you more of the reviews you want and less of the ones you don't. There's even a section on how you should respond to reviews that have been left - both good ones and indeed the occasional bad one.

By the way, don't sweat or worry about a bad review because what we know for certain is that businesses that have a selection of reviews, that have varied star ratings, come across as having more credibility than those that have hundreds of just 5\* reviews - because people are smart and they will think something's up. We all know businesses can make mistakes sometimes - it's how you respond to it publicly on a review board that makes the difference (more on that later).

But let's get cracking on getting those reviews in.

# The QUICK FIX CAMPAIGN

The aim of this campaign is to get a 'flurry' of reviews pretty quickly.

When done correctly, you can secure reviews to increase your credibility online so that more people choose to buy from you and not your competitors.

This is ideal to use if you're looking to generate some more reviews fast.

You can see the template that you need to use below:



## Template:

**Subject: A small favour...**

Hi [FIRST NAME],

I have a small favour to ask – it won't take long I promise!

Would you leave [BUSINESS NAME] a review on [PLATFORM]?

We're trying to improve our rating and as a super valued customer I would reeeally appreciate it if you could help us out :)

To submit your review, just **CLICK HERE**.

[NOTE: Make sure you link the 'Click Here' to your review platform].

Thank you sooooo much (in advance!)

[NAME]

## Example:

**Subject: A small favour...**

Hi Nigel,

I have a small favour to ask – it won't take long I promise!

Would you leave **Johnson's Accountants** a review on **Google**?

We're trying to improve our rating and as a super valued customer I would reeeally appreciate it if you could help us out :)

To submit your review, just **CLICK HERE**.

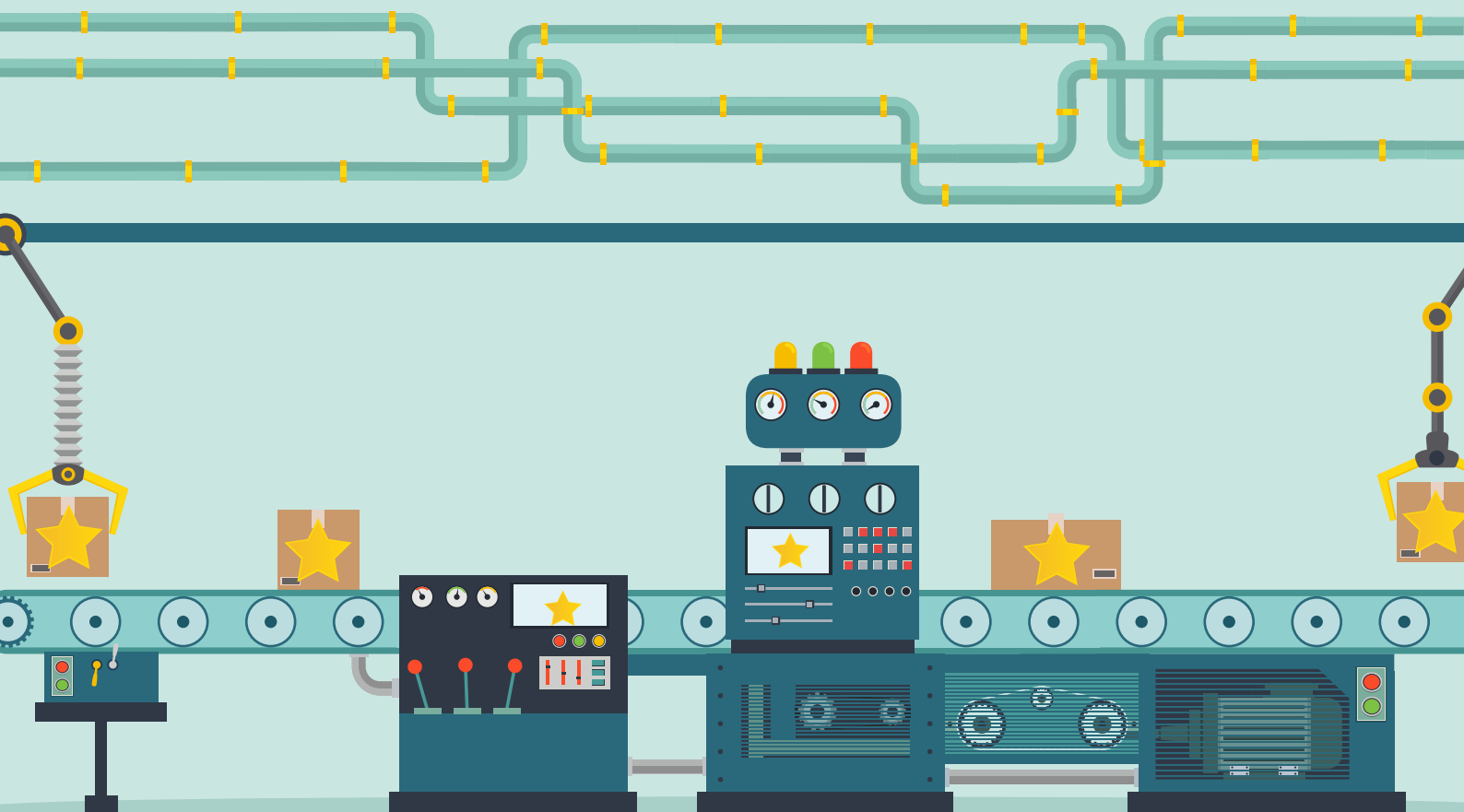
Thank you sooooo much (in advance!)

**John Johnson.**

# The REVIEW GETTING SYSTEM

**When looking to increase the number of reviews you have online and to increase your credibility, having a systemised process is a fantastic way to do so.**

Ideally, before doing this, you will have a list of customers that you believe will be happy to leave you a review.



## STAGE 1

# WHERE CAN I GET REVIEWS?

**Before you jump in and try getting reviews from your customers you must first understand 'where will they be looking for reviews?'**

For example, if you're a hair salon, people will tend to look at Facebook and Google My Business. Whereas if you're a restaurant owner people direct themselves to Trip Advisor and Google My Business.

This is immensely important because if you don't know where your customers are searching for your business, you will be wasting your time and efforts.

There are multiple platforms that you can use to get reviews. For example - Google My Business, Facebook, Trip Advisor, Trust Pilot, Written Reviews (Which you upload later to another platform).

P.S. We can help with this if you're not sure which one(s) are best for your audience.



## STAGE 2

# CHOOSE YOUR PLATFORM...

## Google My Business Review Process

*(if you don't know what this is - just give us shout!)*

The first thing is that you need to be very, very careful ensuring that your reviews are genuine and real. There are lots of people out there in the world who will claim to get you reviews and they'll do that wrong and actually go against all the rules.

So, you've got to do it properly and there are a number of ways to make this happen.

You need to make sure that you're getting reviews consistently across a period of time. Getting a large dump of reviews online all at once can actually cause question marks for Google. So, it's important to have a regular spread of reviews, for example, weekly, monthly, quarterly basis.

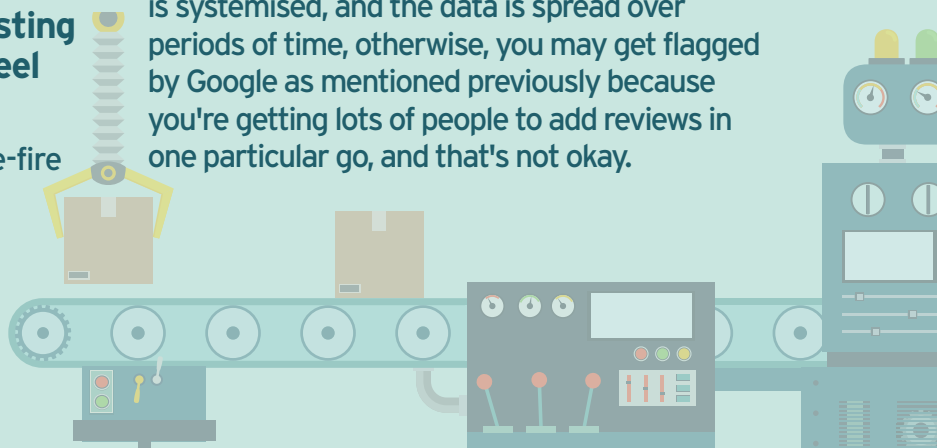
One of the quickest ways to make that happen is to essentially **ask your existing customers to tell you how they feel about you and your service.**

And so subsequently a really quick sure-fire

way is to ask all of your existing customers. If you have them on a database, send them a little email asking them to help you (*see the Quick Fix email template we showed you earlier*) with your star rating or with your rankings on Google or indeed just ask them for feedback about you.

Send them the link to your Google My Business listing as there's an area within Google My Business listing which is a place for your reviews. It will be quite a long link so you'd need something like Bitly which is an URL shortener, and you'd simply put that in the email. The recipients of your email would then click on that, and they would leave you a review.

**YOU HAVE TO** ensure that your process is systemised, and the data is spread over periods of time, otherwise, you may get flagged by Google as mentioned previously because you're getting lots of people to add reviews in one particular go, and that's not okay.



# Facebook Review Process

The same principle would apply for Facebook reviews.

Some of you may have a way of capturing reviews when you've done a good piece of work, through cards and things like that.

If people do send you 'Thank You' cards, then that's okay. I would simply take a picture of the card and upload that onto your social

media and use the words from those cards as a testimony alongside your website. Ensure you put the name of the person and indeed a picture if you've got it.

Also, add a date of when the review was added. Dates are really important against reviews.

We say that you should have 10 reviews for every year that you've been in business.

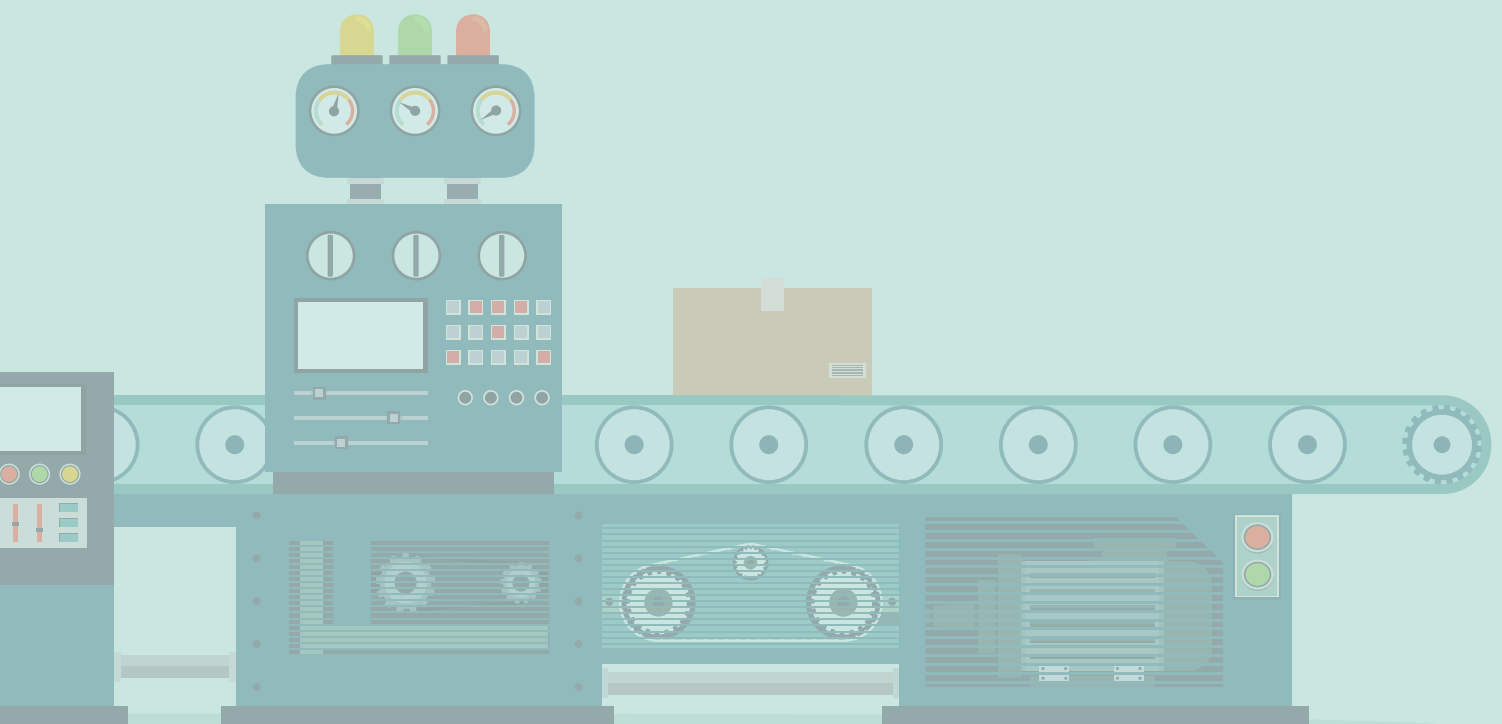
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## Other ways of getting reviews...

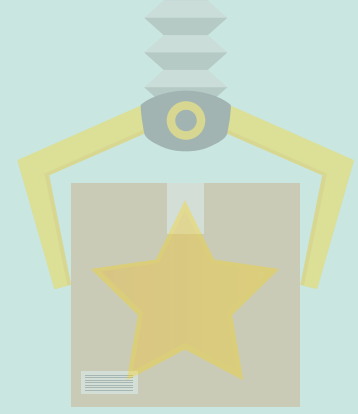
In some areas of business and certain business sectors, you might have good, regular footfall. If you do, that's brilliant, because that means that you can ask while people are with you. If you run a garage, have a hair salon or a beauty salon, a dentist, a place where people wait this is a perfect opportunity to have an iPad set up, or a QR code on a poster that, when scanned, links to your preferred review site, so they can

leave a review there and then for you.

Another way of doing it is to have review cards, which are then inputted into your CMS system and added to your website. If you want people to go on to external review platforms such as Google and Facebook and other such sites, then you're going to need to send them directly to those platforms using QR codes.



# Reviews with Prizes/Incentives



People like to win prizes, they like to win wine, food and they like to be treated. If you can incorporate these into your reviews within a designated amount of time it's a good way to increase engagement in your process.

So, for example, if you're running an MOT centre - anybody that has an MOT with you within a month and leaves a review gets their next MOT for free, or a value to spend with you in your business! This could also be used for hairdresser's, whilst they're in situ, you could get them to leave a review while they've got their colour on and direct them straight onto Google.

You may incentivise your staff at the same time - so the person that helps generate the most reviews could also win a prize.

The key is, you've simply got to ask.

Ask face-to-face, have a request for a review in your premises, whether that's a poster, an email, a card, a sticker on the mirror if you're in a salon or something that you leave on your counter.

You could also leave something on your invoices or your email signatures. Basically, anywhere you can ask someone, simply do it, and you'll be surprised just how many you get in.

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## Template

Subject: 95% of your customers do this <<first\_name>>!

Hi <<FIRST NAME>>,

I have a small favour to ask - it won't take long I promise!

You see, 95% of consumers occasionally or regularly use online reviews to determine which local business to use - FACT! So, we are trying to increase our reviews online and I was wondering if possible, could you take a couple of minutes out of your day to leave us a review?

To submit your review, simply click the link below and let us know what you think!

<<ENTER LINK - EG GOOGLE REVIEWS, FB OR OTHER.>>

Thank you so much for taking some time out and leaving us a review, we're very excited to hear what you have to say!

Many thanks,

<<NAME>>.



# Example

Subject: 95% of your customers do this **Rob!**

Hi **Rob**,

I have a small favour to ask - it won't take long I promise!

You see, 95% of consumers occasionally or regularly use online reviews to determine which local business to use - FACT! So, we are trying to increase our reviews online and I was wondering if possible, could you take a couple of minutes out of your day to leave us a review?

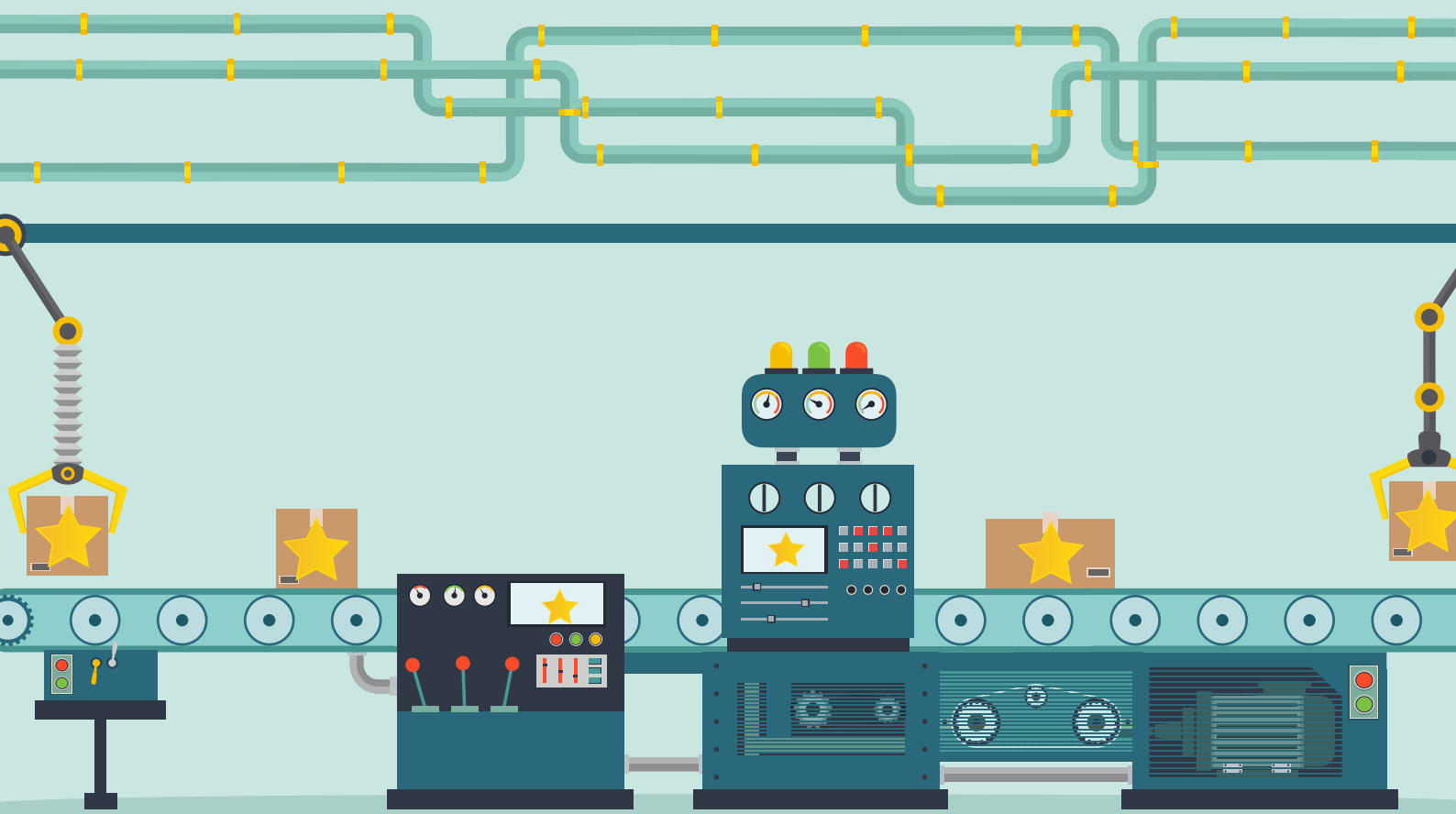
To submit your review, simply click the link below and let us know what you think!

<https://bit.ly/2NCyt5M>

Thank you so much for taking some time out and leaving us a review, we're very excited to hear what you have to say!

Many thanks,

**Connor.**



# ALL OF YOUR REVIEWS. ALL IN ONE PLACE. ALL OF THE TIME.

**After putting in the effort to increase your reviews, and as a sensible business owner, you'd want it to be as easy as possible for your potential customers to be able to see these reviews.**

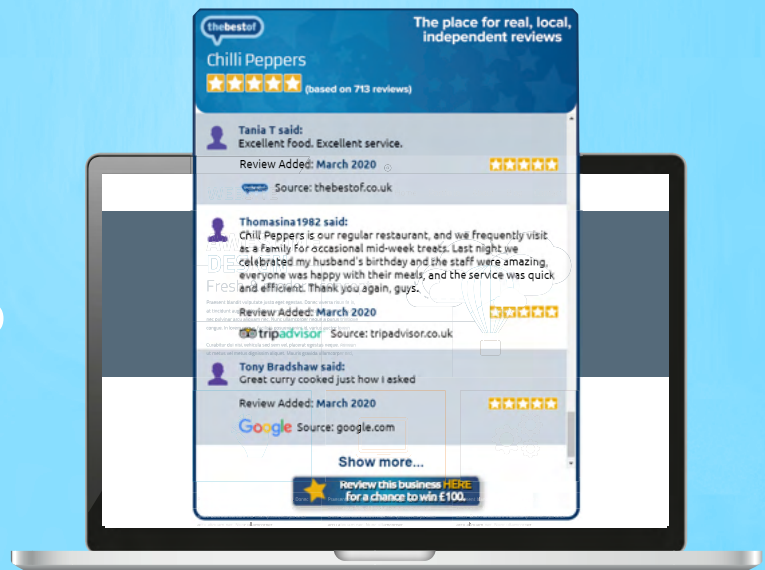
But with so many places for people to go to see them, people don't have the time or patience now to flip from Google, to Facebook, to Trustpilot, to TripAdvisor, to Checkatrade etc to check you out fully.

And it can be frustrating if half your reviews are in one place and half are in another – as your potential customers may only think you're half as good as you actually are!

So wouldn't be great to be able to have ALL the reviews from multiple platforms all in one place?

Well here at thebestof, we believe that you deserve your hard work to be, not only recognised, but to be showcased effectively so that you can truly be seen as one of the best businesses in your town.

That's why we now have the ability to accumulate ALL your reviews from multiple



platforms and show them on your feature on thebestof website. We already have Google, Yell, TrustPilot, and TripAdvisor, with others such as Facebook and more coming soon.

Just imagine...

All your reviews

From all the major review sites

All in one place

All of the time.

We can even supply you with a simple piece of code so you can show and even collect reviews on your own website!!

And what's more, when someone leaves a review on any of the sites, it automatically updates on your feature on thebestof site AND on your own website - so no extra work for you to do at all.

Genius.

# RESPONDING TO REVIEWS

***When people leave you a review, you must make sure that you're responding to them!***

This will help you improve your brand reputation amongst current and future potential customers.

The process of responding to reviews must be done whether the review is positive or negative to ensure your customers are satisfied with your product/services.

The truth is, you are always going to get both good and bad reviews, but what is important is how you respond to each of them. The key here (especially with bad reviews!) is that the response you give is personal and makes the reader realise there's a real person behind the business.





**David Ruddle**  recommends **thebestof**.

February 15, 2020 · 

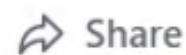


I have run thebestof Eastbourne since 2011. Over the years the team at HQ has changed a lot and this last year has been by far the most positive.


New resources made available to help me while Becky and James are always on hand to help when I need them.



1 Comment



**thebestof**

Thanks David. Great to be working with a great group of people like yourself too 



**Jamie Firman**

97 reviews



★★★★★ 6 years ago

Alex & Sarah are so helpful, they have helped my progress my business into several different sectors, without their help i'm not to sure where i wold be now, since i joined the best of walsall my business has grown and grown and i strongly ... [More](#)



**Response from the owner** 6 years ago

Thanks Jamie. Jay's Discos is a fantastic business and you deserve all the success you achieve. It's a pleasure working with you. Thank you for your support.

# RESPONDING TO **NEGATIVE** REVIEWS

*Not all reviews are that simple to respond to  
- especially negative ones!*



## Most of us will think that our negative review is uncalled for. Unnecessary.

### Full of lies...

...but the important thing here is to remain calm and NOT respond with a negative rant or argument. All this will do is make YOU look bad. Trust us.

What you want to do is acknowledge how they're feeling, apologise (even if it's not your fault) and offer to help them to resolve the issue (preferably in private/offline).

### Below are a few examples of responses to bad reviews.

Use them as inspiration for your own.

#### Hutson Heller

3 reviews

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 2 weeks ago

Messed up my girlfriend's crown... 3 times. Cut-rate, trendy "Austin" dentist shop. Never returning. Beware, completely incompetent. Plus the hip chairs in the waiting room are uncomfortable.

👍 Helpful?

#### Response from the owner 2 weeks ago

Hi Hutson,

I'm sorry to hear about your girlfriend's crown. I don't know how or what happened to your girlfriends crown, but mistakes happen and we are always here to fix it. I feel awful about your girlfriends experience. I assure you, there is no one on our team that is "incompetent", in fact we have an incredible team of board certified, highly trained doctors. Please let you girlfriend know we are happy to help her in the future, and her crown will be guaranteed by me personally.

As for the "hip" chair in the waiting room, I made it myself. I know it can be uncomfortable on some. We have 3 different types of seating to accommodate people of different shapes and sizes. I hope the big cushioned chairs can accommodate next time, and if not, you will like the big couch at our North office on Research Blvd.

Feel free to contact me at anytime,

Robin Bethell DDS

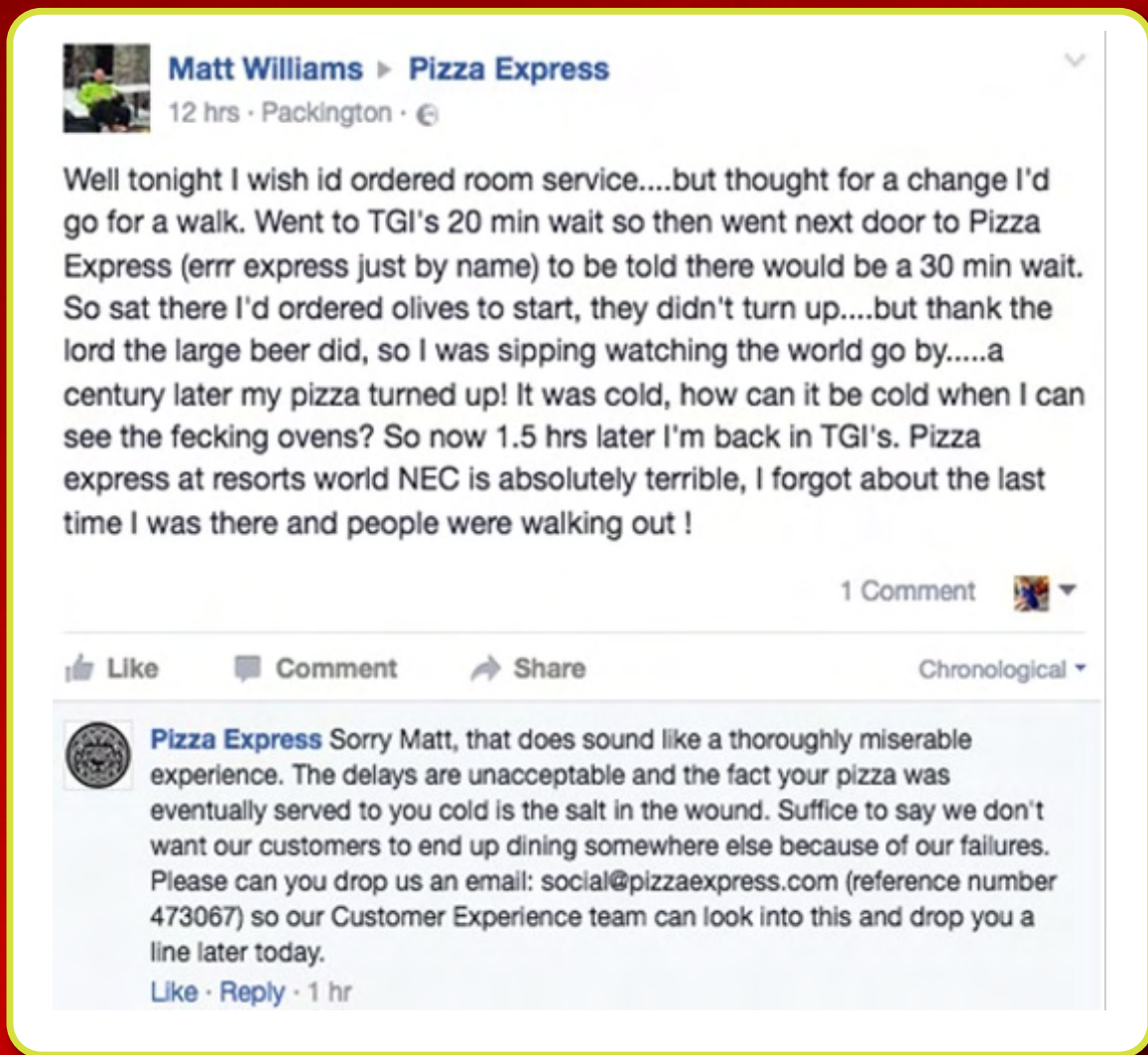
Owner

dentist@austinfoestfamily.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Probably the worst veterinary office I have ever been to. Granted, I have not been there for years now and I did like the actual woman who was the vet we dealt with.. but their prices and the office staff are just terrible. They say one thing one day and the exact opposite the next.. just wasn't a pleasant experience for us, or our cat and after getting my cat all her shots at the office I had her fixed at [REDACTED] and LOVED them. I have never gone elsewhere since and we have another cat and a dog as well who [REDACTED] care for at a 5-star rate.

#### Response from the owner 7 months ago

Sorry to hear you had an unpleasant experience, as you mentioned it has been some years since you have been in and if you look through the photo section on our google page you can see recent reviews from people which are quite positive. While we try to do the best care possible, if any owners have any concerns we'd love to hear about them at the time so we can work with them to find a solution, clear up an miscommunications, or make things better. Glad you have found somewhere that is taking great care of your fur-babies.



You now may be thinking, "That's great. I'll now be getting loads of reviews but how can I really make the most of them?" Well here's some things to remember followed by some tactics that have been proven to work really well when implemented properly...

- **Reviews make your business more memorable which in turn builds brand awareness faster.**
- **Response rates from your marketing will improve - this may be an increase in conversion rates from follow-up or abandoned basket emails or improved click-through rates Facebook or Google Ads (more on this in a bit).**
- **Repeat purchases can be improved with reviews. The trust levels are increased quicker and the more a customer trusts you, the more they'll buy from you.**

Plus, they're an amazing resource of unique customer generated content - which search engines love.

And once you've got some reviews, they don't just have to be left on review sites. Why not use them in your advertising or on your website? You can do this in different ways...

- Quote an individual customer review.
- Use your overall rating in the images.
- Show how many customers have rated you highly.

## Look at this example -



By adding the Trustpilot logo, TrustScore and quote from a review, Michael Jones & Company increased their remarketing click-through rate by

# 41%!.

## Here's some other key things to remember and take note of when using reviews.

### Customer-Generated Content is SEO Gold

Having reviews on your key landing pages will improve how often you appear in the search engine results. The more often you appear, the more traffic you'll get. The reason that reviews help is that they provide the type of content that Google loves:

- **Reviews increase the amount of text on each page. The more text, the higher value the page has and the better Google can understand what the page is about.**
- **Review text is unique as it's written by your customers. Google loves unique text as increases the content value of that page. It also makes it easier to fill out pages that would normally be bare, like product or landing pages.**

Both of these elements help Google to better understand your page and your site. This enables them to show your page in the results for more relevant search terms, more often, resulting in a higher volume of better-quality traffic to your site.

The cherry on top is that all this happens automatically - no extra copywriting for you.

### Show how great you are in every single email broadcast

Every time you communicate with your prospects or customers via email, you should include proof of your trustworthiness. Just add your rating to your email header or a customer quote to the footer. You can also craft emails completely focused on social proof as these often have a great response rate. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Our top reviewed products this month.
- Thank you for making us a 5-star company.
- 5 ways we've used your reviews to improve our customer service.
- Meet Sue, our top customer service rep.
- We thought our teapots were great, your feedback has made them even better!
- The products you love.

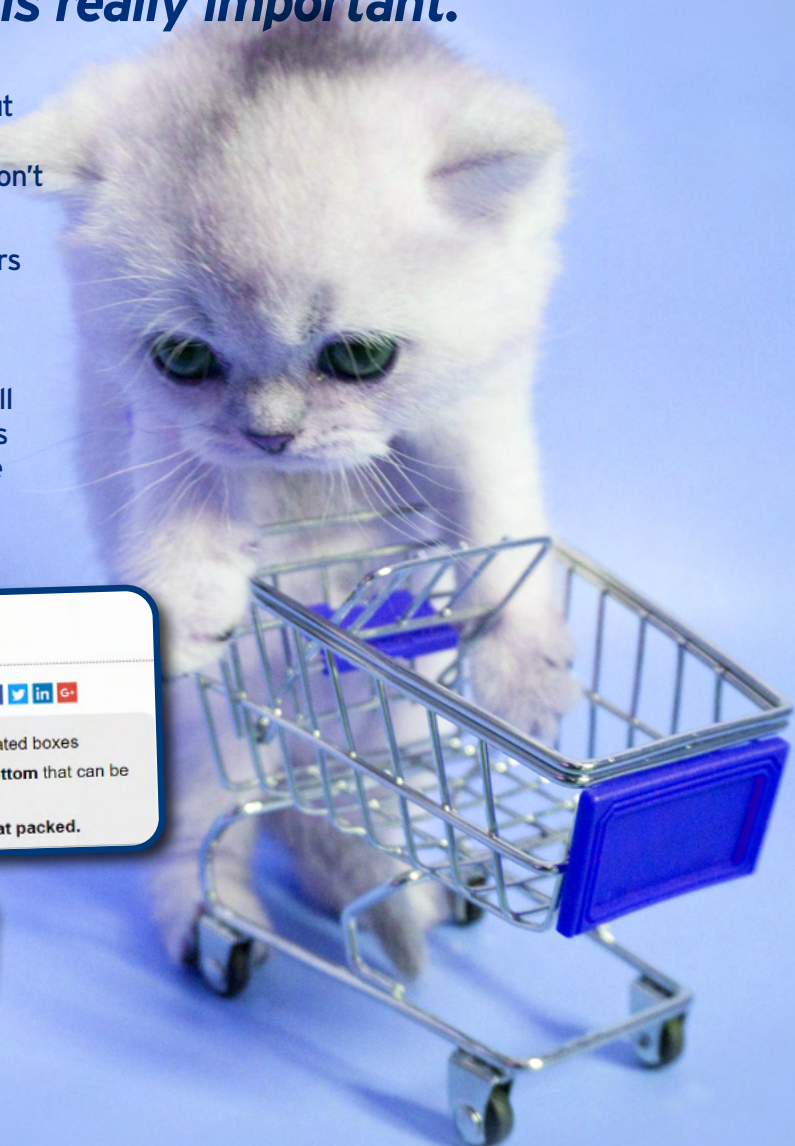


# ABANDONED BASKET REMINDERS

*If your business allows people to purchase products or services online, you'll always get some abandoned baskets. So, a campaign to encourage customers to come back and checkout is really important.*

Many businesses rely on offers to get a good response from their abandoned basket emails, but by adding reviews into your communication, you could generate a big enough response that you don't need to give away your precious margin.

People are busier than ever before so customers need reminding of how great you are (which will decrease the chances of going to someone less good) - so by adding a couple of customer reviews to your abandoned basket emails they'll remember how great your service and products are, which in turn, will encourage them to come back and complete their purchase.



**Double Wall Cardboard Boxes**

Prices from: £0.39 + VAT

- Strong removal box grade twin fluted corrugated boxes
- FEFCO style 201, they have 4 flaps top & bottom that can be sealed with tape or glue
- Ideal for heavy & sensitive items, supplied flat packed.

Trustpilot

★★★★★

TrustScore 9.3 | 570 reviews

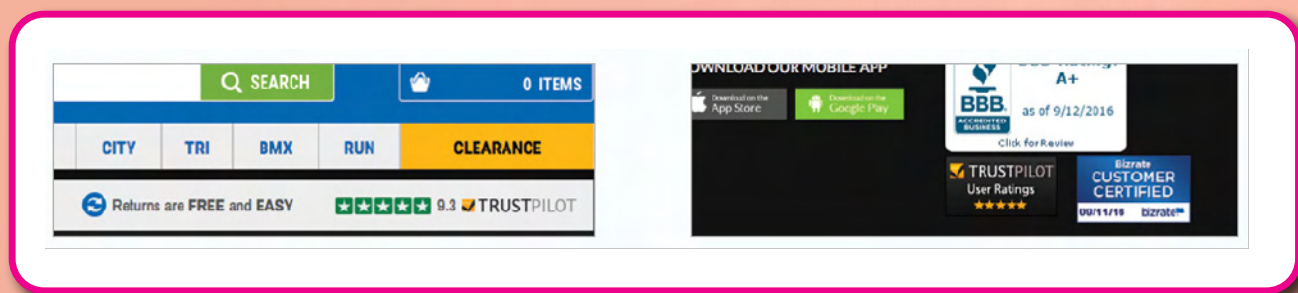
This packaging company saw a **125%** increase in CTR after adding reviews to their cart abandonment email.

# WEBSITE OPTIMISATION

*Customers can arrive anywhere on your site, so they might be making the critical decision to buy on any page. So in a similar way to emails, using reviews as social proof is a great way to encourage a purchase.*

The easiest way to make sure your trust-building social proof message gets across on your site is to add your rating to your header or footer.

**It's a small change that will make a big difference.**



## The homepage

First impressions count on your number one landing page. When it comes to website optimisation, the homepage is frequently overlooked in favour of the pages closer to the end of the purchase funnel, such as the basket, checkout and product pages. That is a missed opportunity.

The homepage is the most visited page on almost all websites and it's usually the number one landing page.

It's a page where customers get their first impression of your business, as well as a page they keep coming back to. So it's really important that they get a sense of trust as quickly as possible. So, on this page, you need to showcase your great customer service and how

well you look after your customers. That means your reviews need to be front and centre.

Here's some great ways to use reviews to create a great first impression on your homepage:

- **Highlight the quality and quantity of your reviews.**

For example "We've had 2,365 reviews this year, 95% of which are 5/5".

- **Feature 3-5 recent customer reviews.**

This highlights your best features and products.

- **Highlight your best reviewed products.**

*"Here are some products our customers rate 5 Stars".*

These approaches work on any other key landing page. Prioritise pages that have high traffic volumes and worse than average bounce rates.

# Exit Pages - plug the leaky bucket and keep people on your website.

Every visit to a website (including yours) has its start point and its end point - and if that end point isn't the "Thank you for your order" page, then you need to do something to keep visitors on your site and increase your conversion rates.

The first thing you should do, to understand where people are leaving your site is identify any pages with high exit rates. You can do this via the "Exit Pages" report in Google Analytics. There you just look for the pages that have a high volume of traffic but a high exit percentage score.

Once you've found your problem pages, you can add your reviews to reduce your exit rate.

With exit pages, it's worth taking the time to look at the actual page and see if you can spot a problem.

Are there enough calls to action to keep people on the site?

Is the page a dead end on the website?

And of course, are there any individual reviews that would really help on this page?

For example, a common exit point can be the Delivery and Returns page - so if you have reviews where customers praise your delivery and returns service, they'd be a great addition to this page.



**THINK  
MARKETING,**

**THINK  
REVIEWS**

**If you really want to make the most of your reviews, you need to embrace them throughout the business and throughout the marketing you do.**

**So when you think of a campaign or a performance challenge, think: 'how could reviews increase the response?'**



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