



Your Online Reputation Means Serious Business

Share: [f](#) [t](#)

When people search for a new Café experience or a Café near their home or business, they look online – at reviews mostly and at the Café's social media pages. Even websites and blogs don't miss their attention. And how you appear online is crucial to winning their business and keeping it. Your online reputation matters –especially what your customers say about you in reviews.

You can't ignore Google reviews

Since Google reviews are favoured by the search engine and show up when your business comes up in search results, it stands to reason that having positive Google reviews is going to enhance your online reputation and entice customers to your door. When your search result shows up with five stars and 20 positive reviews, more than a nearby competitor, that's strong social proof you're doing something right.

So what happens when things go wrong?

What happens when you get a bad review? There certainly will be occasions when things don't go to plan and a customer is unhappy. If he or she doesn't address the matter with you directly, it would in all probability be broadcast on social media or on review platforms (Google Reviews, Zomato etc.).

When that happens, it's easy to feel affronted, angry or hurt. But take a step back before you do anything at all. Keep in mind that what you do next and how you choose to respond is important. To help you along in such times, here are three key pointers.

1. Build your Online Voice

What you say and how you say it on social media builds a picture of the person you are and tells people about your values and beliefs. The closer this voice is to the real you the better, because it is honest and leaves a clear, unambiguous picture in the minds of customers. This is something you need to decide at the very outset, even before you put yourself out there on social media.

It is this voice that you cultivate that will be important when it comes to responding to customers who leave online reviews that you don't necessarily agree with. For instance, if you have cultivated a voice that is approachable and warm, make sure you carry that in your response as well.

2. Encourage Sweet Spots

People love to hear what others are saying about your business because it builds confidence. The positive comments you receive online are gold and you use them to your advantage by pushing them back out on your own social media channels.

Say 'Thank you' to people who leave comments. If it's a really great comment ask permission to repost it. You might want to make this a regular feature; a weekly 'positive vibes' post.

To build reviews you have online, so that you climb in search rankings, let your customers know how much you appreciate being reviewed and why. You can do this 'subtle soliciting' in your social media posts. You could also add a note on your menu.

However, it's not on to actively solicit reviews, so work out how best you want to do it. For instance, in your approachable and warm social media voice you could simply begin your post with "Show us some love", if that works for your customers. Only you can decide that.

3. Wait out your Emotional Storm

Not many of us are that great at receiving criticism and it's easy to feel angry, especially if you think the criticism is unwarranted or unfair. It's only natural to be emotional and that's okay. After all, this is your business and it matters to you. And, you're human. But, the golden rule is to stay calm.

Only respond when the worst of the emotional storm has passed and you've done your homework. That means talking to your staff about what happened or if you were involved, writing down your recollections of the event.

Don't go for the jugular. If the complaint was nasty, don't respond in kind. Here's your chance to show how mature you can be and thereby build more positive vibes for your establishment.

The Thumb Rules of Online Response



Disclaimer: The content on this page is merely suggestive and based on chef experiences. Nothing on this page is providing any assurance regarding an increase in sales, demands, profits or any other aspect whatsoever. Results arising from implementing the suggestions may vary and the website owner shall not be held liable.