

# Online listings and customer reviews

**Online listings and customer reviews are considered one of the most valuable, low cost and trusted marketing tactics by tourism businesses.**

It is recommended that tourism businesses dedicate time to manage their online listings and customer reviews for a number of reasons:

1.

Customers use reviews on platforms such as Google My Business, Facebook and TripAdvisor to discover new businesses, shortlist and select tourism experiences based on fellow reviews.

2.

Online listings assist your experience to be more widely visible online, where your Ideal Customer(s) are.

3.

Reviews are great for understanding customer feedback and potential experience improvements.

4.

Location-based search visibility of your tourism business is crucial and helps visitors using their smartphone find you whilst visiting a destination.

Many Online Travel Agencies also allow customers to leave reviews, such as booking.com, AirBnB, Zomato, Wikicamps, YouCamp and Yelp.

## Update and claim online listings

Online listings such as your Google My Business and TripAdvisor listings help your Ideal Customer(s) to find your tourism business when they are searching online. Your Ideal Customer(s) may use these online listings to help refine their holiday itinerary before travelling. These types of listings can be updated by the general public, so it is important that you claim and proactively manage your listings to keep them up to date.

**Key elements to consider when maintaining an online listing include:**



Quality and inspiring photos.



A short description that explains what makes your tourism experience unique.



Up to date contact details, address, map location and opening hours.



Use of other features, such as Posts (Google) and COVID Safe Practices (TripAdvisor).

# Online listings and customer reviews

## Maintain your online listings

It is recommended you assign one person in your tourism business to be responsible for overseeing your online listings and reviews.

**Ongoing tasks to maintain your online listings include:**

1

Claiming, updating and checking that your listings are up to date.

2

Setting notifications to receive an email if a review has been written or setting reminders to conduct regular manual checks.

3

Responding to reviews in a timely, consistent, and approachable manner.

4

Identifying any negative trends over time and working to identify opportunities to adjust the visitor experience to mitigate or reduce the risk of future negative reviews.

5

Searching for any other online locations where customers are leaving reviews for your business, and then actioning the above maintenance steps.

## Top Tip



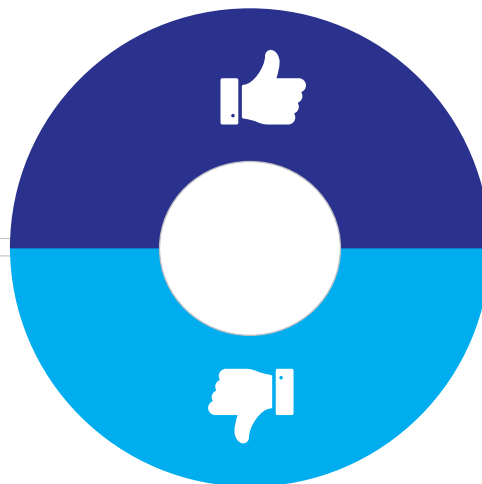
[Review Pro](#) is an example of a tool which can help centralise review monitoring and assist to identify trends.

## Responding to customer reviews

It is important that your tourism business responds individually to each review that you receive, whether it is positive or negative. Remember, you are not just responding to a single customer, but all other potential customers who will see your reply, now and into the future.

### How to respond to a positive review

Thank and acknowledge the reviewer and personalise a response each time. If a customer has taken the time to share a review, it is important that your tourism business shows appreciation of the advocacy that customer is providing for your business.



### How to respond to a negative review

#### Always respond

Never leave a negative review unanswered. Customer reviews can live online for quite some time (particularly Google My Business reviews); therefore, it is important that you respond to each customer regardless of the review. If you come across old, unanswered reviews, particularly on Google My Business, it is recommended to retrospectively respond to them.

#### Empathise

Acknowledge the reviewer's issue/s and show through your reply that the customer's feedback has been heard. Take responsibility, apologise, and explain how it will be addressed in the future.

#### Take it offline

Encourage the reviewer to contact your tourism business directly to help address or rectify the issues for them. This shows future readers that your business cares and is willing to solve customers' issues.

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## Minimising negative reviews



### Promote your experience accurately

Negative reviews often happen when a customer's experience did not match their expectations. Simple ways to address this include:

- Ensure your marketing material reflects what your experience offers.
- Ensure your online listings use photos and descriptions of your experience that are up to date and correctly reflect your experience.
- Identify who your Ideal Customer(s) are and ensure this is clearly communicated in your marketing.



### Plan for peak visitation periods

Issues such as increased wait times, overflowing parking, shortages or selling out of experiences during peak periods can lead to unhappy customers if not communicated at the time of booking.

- Proactively plan and work with your team on systems and procedures to mitigate the likelihood of such issues arising.
- Develop a communication plan ahead of time to correctly set customer expectations.



### Deliver quality customer service

Interactions with your customers are an important contributor to receiving 5-star reviews.

- Share your vision and the story behind your tourism business with your team. Your enthusiasm and passion will no-doubt rub off.
- Clearly outline your customer service expectations with your team and provide regular training.
- Encourage your team to solve customers' problems as quickly as possible, with the customer needs at the forefront.

### Develop a feedback process

Negative reviews are often written when a customer feels their issue or feedback has not been taken on board or addressed by the tourism business, driving them to online reviews where they feel they can be heard.

It is important your business has processes in place to collect, acknowledge and act on relevant feedback from customers before it is left as an online review. The feedback

process should be simple and easy for customers and your team to implement. How this process looks will depend on the type of tourism experience you offer.

Once you find a system that works, it is a good idea to build it in to your standard business operating procedures and ensure feedback is regularly addressed via a continuous experience improvement process.

# Online listings and customer reviews

## Generating more reviews

The quality, quantity, and recency of customer reviews for your tourism business is key in helping your business improve its rankings in organic search results on Google. It is recommended that you proactively encourage happy customers to leave reviews on platforms such as Google, Facebook and TripAdvisor. In turn, your happy customers become online advocates for your experience.

To identify the best way to encourage customer reviews, consider your Ideal Customer(s) experience touch points, and also what works for your business and team. It is important that you ask for reviews in a manner that feels personable and authentic to your Ideal Customer(s).

### Ideas to generate more reviews include:



#### Personalised note

A personalised note in your customers room compendium (for accommodation).



#### Personal approach

A personal approach by your team with a business card at the end of your customer's experience (for experiences).



#### Automated email

A personalised automated email that is sent immediately following the customers interaction with your business (for both).