

The impact reviews have on businesses



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Doing so helps companies improve their products or services.

• **Happy customers can reach out to friends and family members to share their experiences with certain companies.** Posting your own review on social media also can drum up business for a company you respect.

• **Customers should weigh their words heavily and think before posting a review.** The marketing and consulting resource The Chat Shop says 31 percent of customers are interested in grocery store reviews, 60 percent are likely to read restaurant reviews and 70 percent rely on technology product reviews. Make an effort to discuss issues with a company before leaving a negative review. You may be pleasantly surprised with the outcome. There's no need to hesitate when leaving positive reviews. Simply explain why you were pleased.

Reviews can make or break a company. Both business owners and customers have a role to play in making online reviews a valuable way to learn about a company.

Online reviews have long been a mixed bag for small businesses. Though positive reviews can help businesses stand out from their competitors, negative reviews can be as harmful as positive reviews are helpful. That's true even when negative reviews do not reflect the average customer's experience.

Search Engine Land, which covers digital advertising technology, reports 88 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Unfortunately for businesses, *Inc.* magazine and entrepreneur Andrew Thomas found that a customer who has a negative business experience is highly likely to share that experience by leaving a bad review. On the other hand, someone who has had a positive experience is unlikely to leave a good review. Roughly 10 percent of happy customers say they were pleased by a product or service. Furthermore, Thomas indicates it takes roughly 40 positive customer experiences to undo the damage from a single negative review.

Customer happiness should be the goal of businesses, with the added benefit of helping to generate more positive reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations. While that is happening, customers can think twice about online reviews.

• **Speak to product quality especially when you have a very good experience with an item.** Many retailers request feedback via email shortly after consumers have made a purchase. Take advantage of this opportunity to offer positive feedback.

• **Companies gather personal information from customers so they can follow up in many cases.** Great customer service helps prevent bad reviews and defines companies' brands. If you are asked for a phone number or email address, provide it.

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