

Your Reputation is Everything
Protect it Now!



We help you Build & Market your Reputation

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: What is Reputation Marketing?.....	3
What is an Online Reputation?.....	4
Why Reputation Matters?.....	7
Reputation Marketing Trends.....	9
Who Needs Reputation Marketing?.....	14
What Needs to Be Done?.....	15
Chapter 2: Developing a Reputation.....	16
Claiming Your Listings on Review Sites.....	19
Start with Google+ Local.....	22
Ask Customers to Post Reviews.....	24
Chapter 3: Marketing a Reputation.....	27
Encouraging Optimized Customer Reviews.....	29
Marketing Your Stellar Reputation.....	30
Creating a 5-Star Culture.....	34
Sources.....	37
Appendix: Reputation Marketing Checklist.....	38

Chapter 1: What is Reputation Marketing?

You've likely heard the term "Reputation Management" and may have an idea about what it means. It's a discipline that aims to influence how a business is perceived by others. It's also a discipline that has a shady reputation of its own. For example, some companies post fake reviews, censor negative ones, or use black or gray hat tactics to bury negative search results. That's not to say Reputation Management is completely unethical. In fact, there are many steps businesses can take to manage their reputation.

However, **this ebook isn't about Reputation Management: it's about Reputation Marketing.** Though both disciplines seek to improve a business' reputation, Reputation Management tends to be a

reactive approach while Reputation Marketing is proactive.

With Reputation Marketing, the goal is to **build a five star Reputation first and then market that stellar Reputation Online and Offline.**

Though there is some overlap between Reputation Management and Reputation Marketing, banish the term Reputation Management from your vocabulary. It's a commodity that's not overly interesting to the business community and frequently perceived as a gray area. In contrast, **Reputation Marketing is an effective marketing technique** that involves a customer service-oriented mindset, ethical practices, increased trust, and better conversions.

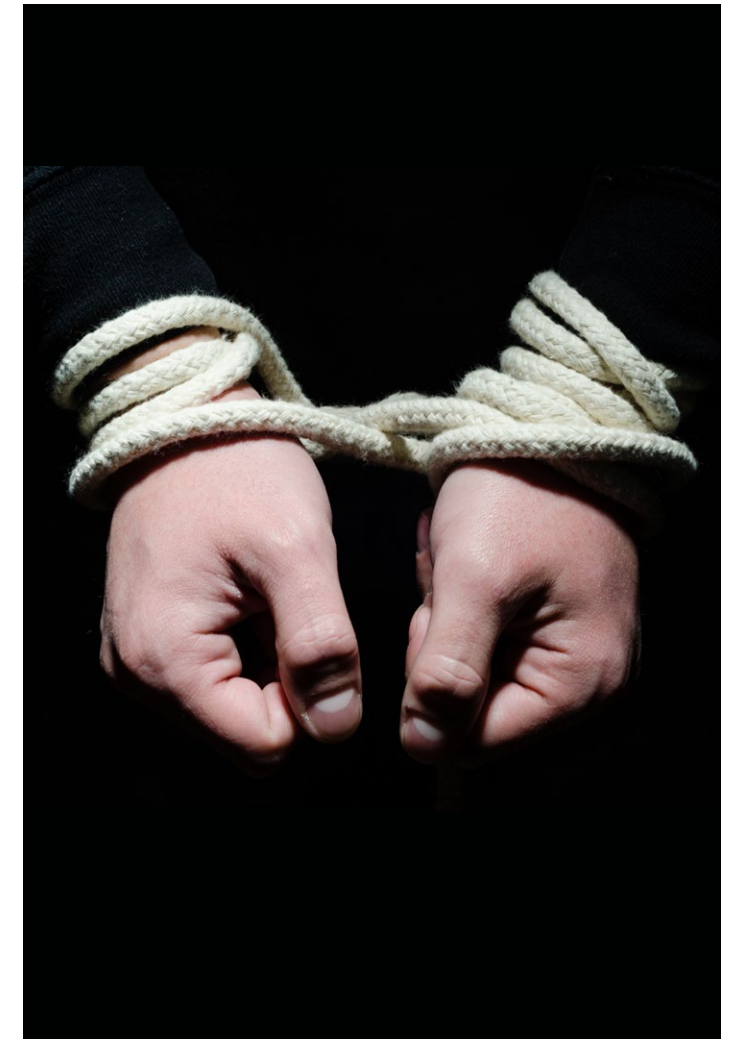
Reputation Marketing can also increase the ROI of your other marketing efforts and give your business a competitive advantage.

What is an Online Reputation?

Though you may hold the administrative keys to your website, **you are no longer fully in control over your Online Reputation.** Sure, you can build a gorgeous website, load it with credible information and professional photos, and showcase your products and services in the best possible light, but your customers now have a voice and they're increasingly using it on social media and review sites.

Major online retailers including Amazon and eBay include online reviews prominently with each product they sell. Look at any product description on any major retail-

er's site and you will likely see consumer reviews prominently displayed. Most sites use a five star rating system and provide an aggregate value such as 3.5 or 5 stars representing the product's overall rating. They also typically display the number of reviews in total along with a hyperlink so that you can read each review at your leisure.



Some sites will display the most helpful reviews as voted by other consumers alongside the product description while others will show the most recent ones.

Why do they do this? To help consumers determine which product to buy.

It's not just products that get the five star (or less) treatment. Services are fair game, too. Sites such as Google+ Local, Yelp, TripAdvisor and FourSquare are popular destinations for consumers to share their experiences with businesses of all types.

Virtually any business type can be reviewed including, but not limited to:

- Restaurants, Hotels
- Dentists, Doctors, Veterinarians
- Auto repair shops
- Dry cleaners
- Photographers
- Funeral homes
- Plumbers

- Contractors
- Real estate agents...

Some online review sites are specific to a given profession or category. For example, WhatClinic.com is specific to health-care providers while TripAdvisor focuses on hotels, airlines, and travel reviews.

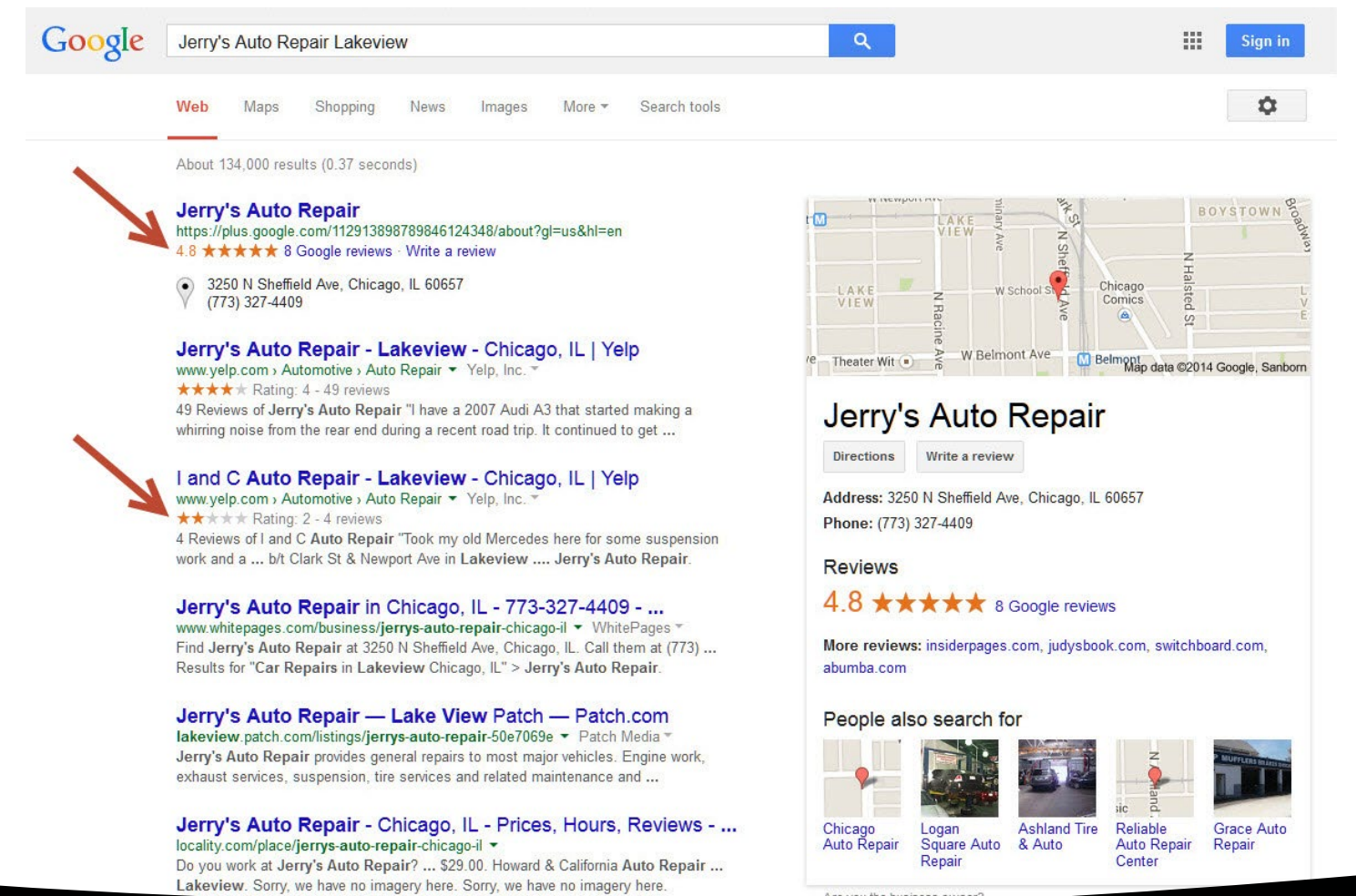
Not too concerned about third party review sites? You should be. Even if your prospects are not actively thinking about visiting a review site **when looking up your company on a search engine, they will most likely see plenty of reviews about your company in the search results page.**

In fact, Google may even display a score for your company based on the reviews it has linked to you! Even if Google doesn't have any listing for your company on file, it may list review sites such as Yelp or WhatClinic prominently on the results page.

The screenshot below shows Google search results for Jerry's Auto Repair in Lakeview. Notice how each site has been scored by Google? **These companies have no control over Google placing its own review scores alongside the page listings.** The top listings have dramatically different scores: Jerry's business approaches five stars, but his competitor has a dismal 2 stars. Which one would you choose?

What if your site appeared with just one or two stars? It would not matter how successful an SEO campaign is if a site hits number one on Google but only has one star.

This brings us to another important facet of Reputation Marketing: trust.



Why Reputation Matters?

Let's imagine for a moment that you need a new auto repair shop and you know of two shops near your home. You search for each by name on Google so that you can get their phone numbers. One has several 5-star ratings in the search results page as in our earlier example; the other has just 2 stars. **Which shop are you more inclined to call?**

The consequences of bad reviews should be readily apparent. Below are just a **few of the consequences of bad reviews:**

- Bad reviews undermine existing online marketing successes. It won't matter if you're number one on Google if you only have one out of five stars.
- Bad reviews erode trust.
- Bad reviews influence other potential customers not to use your products or services.



A good reputation in the search results could make the difference between a customer calling your office or continuing their search.

Where bad reviews erode trust and defeat all of your other marketing efforts, good reviews build trust and support your marketing campaigns.

Imagine once again that you are searching for a new auto repair shop.

This time, you don't know where to start so you enter the words "auto repair Lakeview" into Google. Google returns its normal search results as expected.

In this example, the top four spots are from Yelp. The first listing has four stars, the second listing has 4.5 stars, the third listing has no stars, and the fourth listing has 5 stars and over 400 reviews.

Which repair shop will you pick?

Google Auto Repair Lakeview

Web Maps News Shopping Images More Search tools

About 726,000 results (0.30 seconds)

Jerry's Auto Repair - Lakeview - Chicago, IL | Yelp
[www.yelp.com](#) › Automotive › Auto Repair › Yelp, Inc. ▾
 ★★★★★ Rating: 4 - 49 reviews
 49 Reviews of Jerry's Auto Repair "I have a 2007 Audi A3 that started making a whirring noise from the rear end during a recent road trip. It continued to get ..."

Reliable Auto Repair Center - Lakeview - Chicago, IL | Yelp
[www.yelp.com](#) › Automotive › Auto Repair › Yelp, Inc. ▾
 ★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - 76 reviews
 76 Reviews of Reliable Auto Repair Center "It doesn't get much more frustrating than getting a flat tire on your way to work in sub zero temperatures. Pulled into ..."

Auto Repair Lakeview, Chicago, IL - Yelp
[www.yelp.com/search?cflt=autorepair...loc=Lakeview%2C...](#) › Yelp, Inc. ▾
 Top Auto Repair in Lakeview, Chicago, IL Ashland Tire & Auto, Reliable Auto Repair Center, Jerry's Auto Repair, Auto Repair 4 Less, Pong Imports & U S Auto ...

Ashland Tire & Auto - Lakeview - Chicago, IL | Yelp
[www.yelp.com](#) › Automotive › Auto Repair › Yelp, Inc. ▾
 ★★★★★ Rating: 5 - 410 reviews
 b/t Grace St & Waveland Ave in Lakeview I am a female who recently moved to Chicago and needed car repair, a friend recommended this place and i was ...

Map for Auto Repair Lakeview

Suddenly, being number one on Google isn't what it used to be. **Those five colorful stars immediately draw the eye to the fourth repair shop in the list**, and because the reviews are stellar, they instantly build trust and compel users to click through. That said, Google is increasingly rewarding reputation by listing the companies with fantastic reputations higher in the results list.

Stellar reviews are even more powerful than that. Because they are trusted as much as personal recommendations by the vast majority of consumers, **5-star reviews pre-qualify your leads**. Those who have read stellar, authentic customer reviews about your product or service have already been pre-sold. Conversions are higher because trust has already been earned.

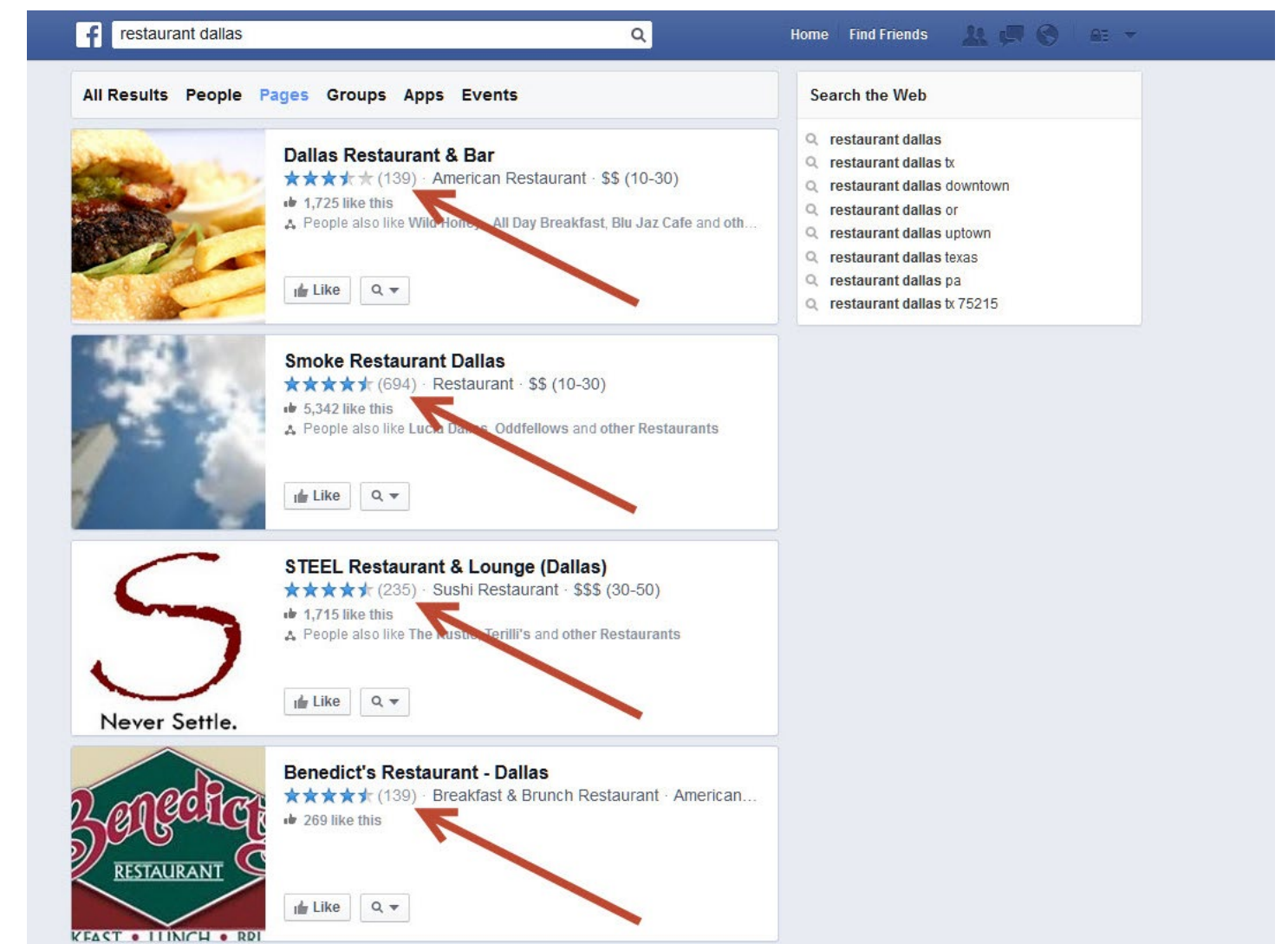
Reputation Marketing is a form of referral marketing as opposed to lead generation marketing.

With lead generation marketing, customers may find your business but you must work hard to earn their trust. With referral marketing, customers are referred to your business by others who have already shared their positive experiences with them.

Reputation Marketing Trends

Online reviews are appearing virtually everywhere, including Facebook.

Not only does Facebook now display ratings on business pages, followers can quickly and easily enter their own reviews. This particular entry into the online review site has an important implication: When a user posts a review on Facebook, that review will show up in their friends' news feeds.



Reputation Marketing is getting local. Sites such as Google+ Local, Yelp, TripAdvisor, FourSquare, and various local business directories have emerged, all wanting to become the local destination for local searches.

Google+ Local is a great example of this. By attracting businesses to create Google+ Local pages and interact with consumers, Google knows that many of these businesses will buy ads or take advantage of its Offers program.

Google has invested in several areas including delivery services, wallet applications, and loyalty programs as part of its Google+ Local expansion.

According to the Maritz Research 2013 Online Customer Review Study, respondents noted that they try to “read a range of reviews” and that **if there are not enough reviews, they don’t take it seriously.**

Consumers are increasingly relying on reviews from other customers to make buying decisions. Another important study, BrightLocal’s Local Consumer Review Survey 2013, found the following:

- 85 percent of consumers say they read online reviews for local businesses
- **73 percent of consumers say positive online reviews make them trust a business more.**
- 65 percent of consumers are more likely to use a business which has positive online reviews.

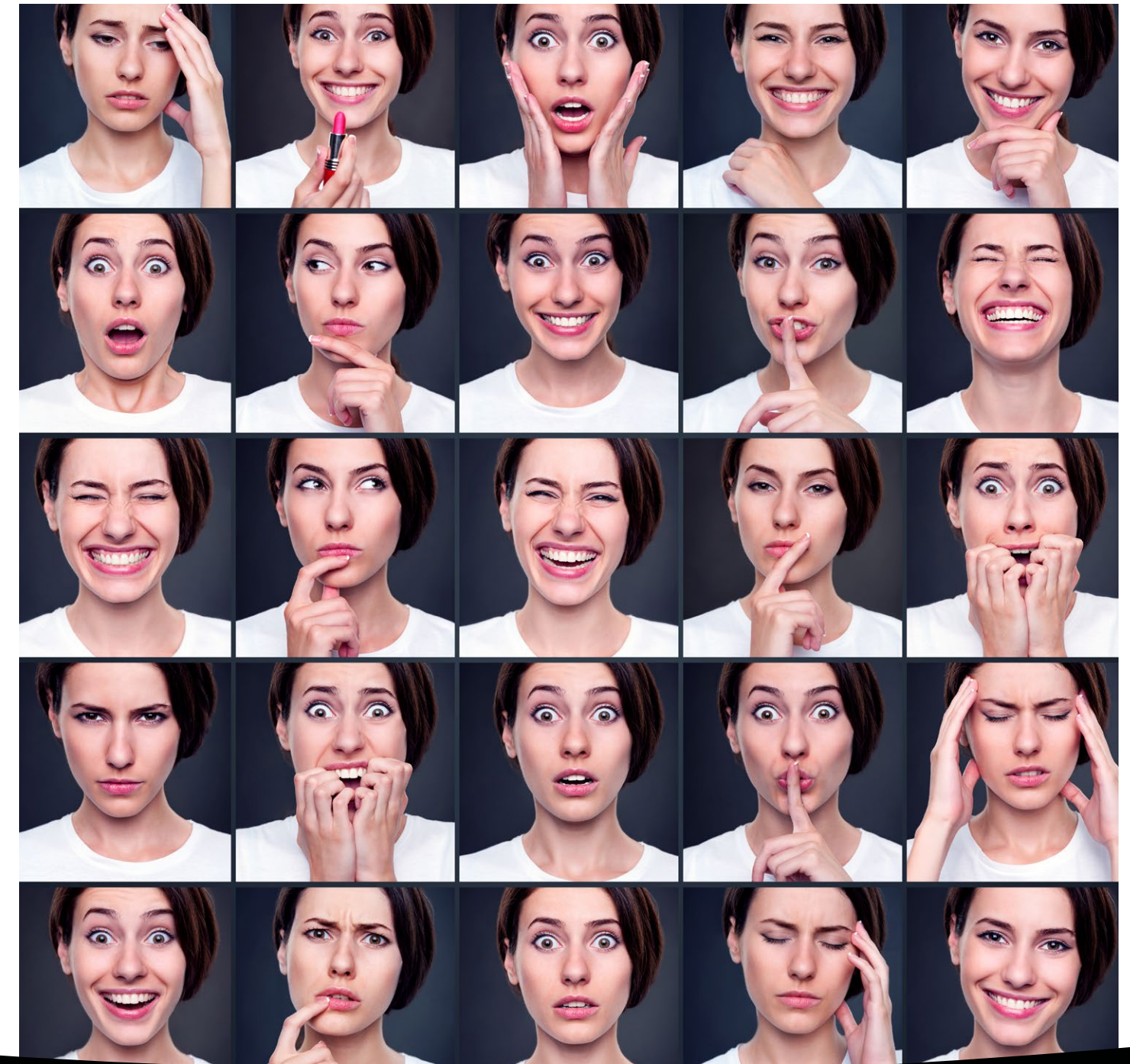
- 79 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

A 2013 survey by ZenDesk, The Impact of Customer Service on Customer Lifetime Value, customer service stories are spread widely - especially bad ones. **95 percent of respondents said they had shared bad customer service stories** while just 87 percent shared good ones. 35 percent used online review sites to share those bad stories while just 23 percent used online review sites to share good ones. 88 percent of respondents claimed that online review sites impacted their buying decisions.

BrightLocal’s 2013 Local Consumer Review Survey revealed that **70 percent of consumers trust a business with a minimum of 6 to 10 reviews.** Nielsen’s 2013 Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages report reveals another trend: Word-of-mouth recommendations remain

the most trustworthy (84 percent) followed by trust in advertising on branded websites (69 percent) and online consumer reviews (68 percent).

These figures edge out editorial content in newspapers, television advertising, email messages, and other forms of advertising.



Another important trend involves cracking down on fake reviews. In September 2013, the New York Attorney General's Office busted 19 companies for creating fake online reviews, a practice known as "astroturfing." Review sites want real reviews, too. They use a variety of techniques to filter out fakes or highlight the legitimacy of the reviewer.

For example, Yelp uses filters to suppress about 25 percent of submitted reviews that appear to be potentially fake while Amazon includes "Amazon Verified Purchase" alongside reviews written by customers who purchased the item directly on Amazon.

Culling suspicious reviews, cracking down on companies that submit fake reviews, and proving the authenticity of individual reviewers, work together to ensure the overall integrity of the online review ecosystem.

Finally, **Reputation Marketing actually plays a role in SEO.**

Google is increasingly listing third party review sites along with the businesses consumers search for. It's becoming important for local search as well.

Optimizing reviews with the product or service name, city, and relevant keywords can influence search results. Likes, shares, Google +1s, Twitter mentions, check-ins, and other social signals also influence search engine results.

Online reviews and social media are here to stay.

They are highly trusted by consumers and are playing an increasingly important role in influencing buying decisions and SEO.

Who Needs Reputation Marketing?

All businesses can benefit from Reputation Marketing.

Whether you're a cake decorator or a swimming pool builder, most of your future customers will look to the experiences of other customers before making a decision.

Some will actively seek online reviews as part of their research process. Others will be more passively persuaded by reviews that appear alongside your website in search engine results pages.

In both cases, **how many stars you have earned from others will make a difference in your ultimate success.**



What Needs to Be Done?

As with other forms of marketing, Reputation Marketing requires strategy. Though some reputations are built organically, wouldn't you prefer to shape your reputation rather than leave it completely to chance? **Reputation Marketing is a proactive, step-by-step approach** that involves the following:

- Claiming your space on online review sites.

- Encouraging your customers to post reviews.
- Developing that 5-star reputation.
- Developing a culture of customer service to ensure that you have earned each of those five stars and will continue to do so in the future.
- Marketing your stellar reputation.
- Managing your reputation to ensure that you continue to earn 5-star ratings and address any negative reviews promptly.

Now that you understand what Reputation Marketing is all about and why it's important, let's dig into how to develop a 5-star reputation.



Chapter 2: Developing a Reputation

As discussed earlier, online reviews are a form of referral marketing which is a much warmer approach than traditional lead

generation activities. Referral marketing builds trust and converts at higher rates.



Online reviews actually include several psychological buying triggers which make them so effective at influencing buying decisions.

Though numerous buying triggers exist, some of the most powerful are regularly found in online reviews including:

- **Authority** - Buyers learn about your expertise, how much experience you have, and your background by reading reviews.
- **Likeability** - Online reviews can provide consumers with insights as to how likeable you are. They're more likely to buy from people described as "caring, kind, and easy-going" than from those described as "rude, irritable, rushed, or arrogant."



- **Specificity** - Online reviews can also provide specific details about a product or service that may not be mentioned elsewhere such as "They have a secret menu. Ask for the Yeti burger and they'll put on extra bacon and blue cheese." More importantly, specificity is much more descriptive than vague phrases. For example, "She's a great tutor" is certainly positive, but it's vague. In contrast, "She's a great calculus tutor who makes learning fun" tells us exactly where she shines.

- **Proof** - Online reviews serve as social proof that you are delivering on your promises. Social proof is the most important form of proof available as social proof is all about what others say about you. While you can hire an ad agency to make a beautiful company brochure, consumers trust the experiences of other consumers over other advertising.

As you go about developing your reputation, it's important to understand these buying triggers.

While you would never write your own reviews, you can certainly ask your customers to be specific about what they liked about your product or service.

In addition, knowing these buying triggers can help you to select the most effective reviews to feature on your own websites and marketing materials.

There are many ways to start getting reviews. Let's start with the third party sites such as Yelp and Bing Local.

Claiming Your Listings on Review Sites

Each geographic region will likely have its own local authority directories which vary by country and even by city. In the United States, some of the heavy hitters are:

- Google+
- Bing Local
- Yahoo Local
- CitySearch
- InsiderPages
- Trip Advisor
- Manta
- SuperPages
- Yellowbook

In the United Kingdom, you'll find a different set of authority review sites such as:

- Yell.com
- SmileLocal.com
- Wheresbest.co.uk

- LocalDataSearch.com
- LocalLife.co.uk

No matter where you live, you can find **relevant local directories** by searching for your desired service type and city.

For example, if you would like to find the best directories for a plumbing business in Las Vegas, enter "plumbing repair Las Vegas" into Google. You'll find local directories within the first two pages of the search results.

Many review sites offer businesses free listings. Some even go so far as to create listings on your behalf. Thus, you may have a presence on some of these sites without your knowledge! People may be reviewing your business on these sites even if you never heard of them before. These sites typically allow you to either set up a new listing or claim an existing listing.

In order to find most of your business's existing citations, type your business name, address, and/or phone number into a search engine. You'll discover the directories where your listing exists.

Why claim a listing? Doing so provides you with greater control over the listing itself, it gives you greater citation authority in the eyes of search engines, and it provides you with access to additional markets. By claiming a listing, you can enter additional information about your business, products, and services. You can add photos, links to your website, and in some

cases, contribute to a blog or interact with other members of the site.

Another reason to claim listings is to ensure that the listing contains the correct information for your business. If the site created the listing on your behalf, such as by pulling information from a third party database or manually keying the information in, who's to say that the information is correct? What if the phone number is wrong or they have your home address listed instead of your business address? By claiming your listing, you can edit it.



What is citation authority? Remember how back links used to serve as “votes” of confidence for a webpage? Local listings complete with your business’s name, address, phone number, and other details on authority sites such as Google+ Local or Yelp serve as votes of confidence, too. They signal to Google and other search engines that your company is a legitimate local company.

At the same time, creating a presence on these sites exposes you a wider market.

Many of these sites are social networks in their own right. Users on Yelp, for example, may limit their search for providers to those listed on Yelp. If you’re not listed, you won’t be found.

Another reason to claim a listing is so that you can respond to bad reviews. Responding to bad reviews appropriately and promptly can quickly resolve the original situation as well as show others that you truly care about your customers.



Start with Google+ Local

Each site will have its own unique requirements for claiming and validating listings, though each is fairly straightforward. **Google+ Local is the biggest and most important directory and many other directories pull information from it.** Thus, start by claiming your Google+ listing and make sure it is complete and 100 percent accurate. Add a description, photos, categories, product pages, coupons, and other elements. From there, make sure all of the additional directories you claim have the exact same contact information.

Once you have claimed your listings, you’ll be all set to start gathering reviews on your selected third party review sites. Before we go into gathering reviews, let’s first discuss **why a customer would bother to leave a review.**

Customers who have horrible experiences with businesses often go to online review sites as a means of expressing themselves as well as to warn others off. It’s a way to hold a business accountable for an awful experience. Those who have ho-hum experiences aren’t as motivated to review a business online because nothing extraordinary happened. In essence, they got what they paid for; nothing more, nothing less; their expectations were met. Those who had wonderful experiences often leave positive reviews to both share their experience and recognize the company.

In addition to the emotions involved, it comes down to cost versus benefit received. When the cost is high and the benefits low, customers are not likely to be happy. This equals a negative review. When the cost is high and the benefits as expected, then the customers got what they paid for.

This equals a neutral review (and there's no driving motivation to go leave a review). When the cost is low and the benefits high, the customers are likely to be thrilled. This equals a positive review.

By understanding how costs and benefits relate to the customer experience, you have a choice in how each transaction is handled. You can either increase the value or lower expectations or both. In general, the golden rule of customer service still applies: **Undersell, over deliver.**

While we speak of costs, we're not necessarily talking about raising or lowering prices; we're talking about value and how it relates to expectations.

For example, if you run an auto repair shop and one of your selling points is that your technicians will treat the car like it was their own, you've set an expectation of cleanliness and quality workmanship.

However, you could be setting customers up for disappointment if the technician leaves greasy smudges on the upholstery or fast-food wrappers in the front seat. On the other hand, what if you routinely wash each car and clean their interiors after the work is complete. A clean car is an unexpected surprise that makes your customers feel appreciated.

In both cases, **the actual cost of the service is less important than the perceived value, expectations, and benefits.** In the first example, the car owner will question the quality of the repair if the car is in worse condition than before. In the second example, the customer will feel pampered, appreciated, and confident in the service provided. When either of these customers posts a review, they will be sharing their personal experiences based on expectations and value perceptions.

By now you should understand why customers are motivated to post reviews. This understanding is crucial in developing a customer service culture which we'll discuss in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Ask Customers to Post Reviews

One of the easiest ways to start getting reviews is to **ask your customers to review your company**, ideally as soon after the positive experience as possible. There are many ways to do this. For example, you could remind customers as they're checking out that you're on Yelp or put a statement such as "share your experience with us on Yelp" on your receipts and invoices.

Some companies already use customer satisfaction survey cards to find out how they're doing.

These cards are generally used for internal purposes. However, you could just as easily print up "Leave a Review" cards and collect testimonials for use on your website and other marketing materials.

Another option is to collect reviews directly on your own website by directing customers to an online form. These options put you in control over reviews, too.



For example, you can moderate reviews and address negative reviews immediately before they are published.

Other options include:

- Sending email messages to customers along with a link to your review site asking them to leave a review
- Including a link to your review site on your actual website
- Business cards with instructions specifically for soliciting reviews
- Send a postcard with a link to your review site
- Incorporate reviews into customer satisfaction surveys
- Ask for a review in the office (you can even hand customers an iPad and ask them to post a review right then and there)
- Ask strategic partners for reviews
- Use contests to randomly reward people for leaving reviews such as entry into a monthly drawing

No matter where you direct your customers to post reviews, it's smart to give them a little guidance. No, you're not going to tell them what to write nor are you going to bribe your customers or reward them in some way for a review.

Reviews are only valuable if they're authentic and real. You're simply going to tell them the basic formula to follow. This formula is super simple, and it converts. Ask your customers to tell others the following four bits of information:

- Their name
- Their location
- The benefits they experienced
- Why they recommend you

That's it. These four ingredients are easy to remember and explain when asking for a review; they're easy for customers to follow; and the resulting reviews are among the most powerful available.

Not only do they convert really well, they're automatically optimized for search engines due to the specific nature of your customers' responses.

If you will be printing your own review cards or publishing an online form, it's even easier because you can simply create the collection form around these four ingredients.

By making it easy for your customers to leave reviews, you will get more reviews than if you wait passively for them to get around to it.

Gathering reviews directly from your customers allows you greater leverage over the process as well.

The next challenge involves what to do with all of those wonderful 5-star reviews you've gathered. They're all authentic reviews from real customers, and they include the four most essential ingredients in an SEO-friendly, highly converting testimonial.

You have the proof that you have a 5-star reputation; now it's time to market it.



Chapter 3: Marketing a Reputation

Now that you have encouraged customers to submit reviews, it's time to start taking control over your reputation. Some customers will go directly to sites like Yelp and post their reviews. Others, however, will send you email messages, post a review directly on your website's online review submission form, or return review cards via the postal service.

Reputation Marketing software can help you collect and share your customers' reviews without crossing the line into "black hat" territory. For example, Reputation Marketing software can create an online form for gathering your customers reviews, obtaining permission to post that review, and capturing each reviewer's name, IP address, and email address, and more.



You can also subscribe to a Reputation Marketing platform that will require users to sign in with a valid Facebook, Google, or Twitter account. No reviews will be posted through anonymously. As a reminder, never post fake reviews: it is illegal and will destroy your credibility.

When receiving reviews using mailers or web form submissions, we recommend posting them directly on your own websites or blog. With web form submissions, doing so is often a simple matter of clicking an "Approve Review" button.

We highly recommend maintaining a record of all reviews that you post to your web properties so that you have a trail proving that the customer wrote the review and gave you explicit consent to post it. Make sure that you include a checkbox where the customer gives you permission to share the review for marketing purposes.

The advantage of using an online form over directing your customers to a third party review site is that you have greater control over the reviews that come in. If a review is bad, you can opt not to post it. You can also find out what happened and address your customer's concerns directly.

Another option is to make it convenient for customers to post their reviews at your place of business. For example, you could have a public computer terminal or iPad available for customers to log into one of their social account and post the reviews.

Likewise, you could post a QR code prominently on your business card or in your office and encourage customers to leave reviews on their smartphones.

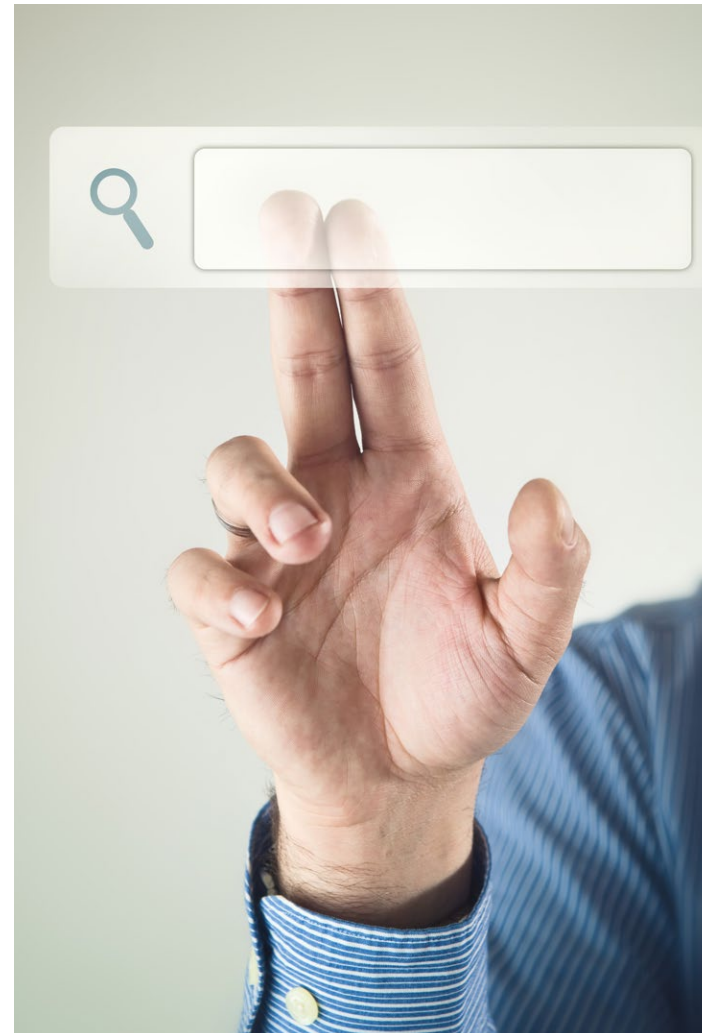
Encouraging Optimized Customer Reviews

Search engines rely on keywords to make sense of text on a webpage so that they can display relevant search results. Having the right keywords (such as your business type and city) in your online reviews is desirable. However, your customers aren't likely to be skilled in the art of writing search engine optimized reviews! While you can't write or rewrite your customers' reviews, you can certainly encourage customers to use specific language in their reviews.

One way to encourage this is by **showcasing optimized reviews directly on the page where your online review submission form is located.**

People learn by example, so if they see a review that contains the city name, your business type, many will include similar information including valuable keywords in their own reviews.

You can also provide hints in the way you word your survey or submission form.



Marketing Your Stellar Reputation

Once you have started collecting fantastic reviews, you're ready to promote actively your stellar reputation. It's time to "toot your own horn." This isn't just about bragging rights, it's about social proof. Your satisfied customers are giving trustworthy insights about their experiences with your company. You need to share this information with your prospects!

Google and other search engines will certainly help by displaying your reputation in the search results pages, but don't limit yourself to just this one technique. Other ideas for marketing your 5-star reputation include the following:

- **Add a feed** of 5-star reviews to your website or blog's sidebar.

Not only does this add the latest social proof to your website and build trust with visitors, it's easy to do. For example, you can grab a RSS feed of your Yelp business listing and copy and paste it into a widget. Some Reputation Marketing software automates the process and can be configured to show only the most current 5-star reviews.

- **Include reviews in your offline materials** such as brochures and printed newsletters. All of your printed materials are prime real estate for social proof. Make sure to include a section for 5-star reviews. You've earned these accolades from your customers, so share them!

The next time you print a company brochure, product information sheet, price sheet, company newsletter, appointment reminder cards, business cards, postcards, or even invoices, consider adding reviews.

- **Include reviews in your electronic communications.** If you send an electronic newsletter, definitely include online reviews. Again, your newsletter is prime real estate for a few testimonials. You can take it even further by updating your email signature file to include a review or two.
- **Share reviews on social media sites,** but do so sparingly. If a particularly heart-warming review with a meaningful backstory is posted, you want to share it with your social media followers.
- **Mention your 5-star reviews in your press releases.** You don't necessarily need to copy and paste reviews into press releases; however, you can certainly mention that your business has a 5-star ranking.



- **Mention your 5-star reputation in author resource boxes** when submitting articles to article marketing directories.
- **Share your 5-star reviews with prospects during sales meetings.** Don't assume they've already looked you up online. Use a tablet or laptop computer and perform a Google search for your company to prove that other customers are raving about you. This can tip a prospect over the edge, and you may not need to reduce your prices or offer any sort of incentives. That's the power of social proof!
- **Create a Google+ Local page for your business.** If you haven't already created a Google+ Local page for your business, do so ASAP. If you recall from a few of the earlier screenshots we shared, a solid portion of Google search results pages contain local listings of businesses with Google+ Local pages.

For example, in the screenshot below, the bottom portion contains Google+ Local pages.

Augusta & Paulina Auto Repair
www.aandpautorepair.com
4.6 ★★★★★ 12 Google reviews - [Google+ page](#)

Eliot's Complete Auto Repair Shop
eliotscompleteautorepair.com
4.6 ★★★★★ 41 Google reviews

Ashland Tire & Auto
www.ashlandtireauto.com
4.7 ★★★★★ 28 Google reviews

ABM AUTO REPAIR
www.abm-auto.com
4.4 ★★★★★ 10 Google reviews - [Google+ page](#)

Bucaro Brothers Auto Care
www.bucarobrothersautocare.com
4.5 ★★★★★ 23 Google reviews - [Google+ page](#)

Marvin's Auto Service
www.marvinsautoservice.com
4.2 ★★★★★ 24 Google reviews - [Google+ page](#)

Rogers Auto Group
www.rogersautogroup.net
4.5 ★★★★★ 55 Google reviews - [Google+ page](#)

Map results for **auto repair chicago**

A 1700 W Augusta Blvd
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 486-9768

B 3658 N Lincoln Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 935-2400

C 3737 N Ashland Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 549-0084

D 3044 W Montrose Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 878-5530

E 2707 N Ashland Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 472-6150

F 1828 W Belmont Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(773) 296-2584

G 2720 S Michigan Ave
Chicago, IL, United States
(312) 436-1147

Not only are these businesses displayed on a map, their reputations are prominently shown. Make sure that your 5-star reputation comes shining through by getting a Google+ Local page for your business.

- **Create a personal Google+ account and link it to your website.** This allows you to take advantage of “authorship”

which then adds your photo to Google’s search results such as in the screenshot below.



- **Implement Google’s “rich snippets” for reviews.** Once implemented, Google will then be able to display a star rating under your name in the Google search results page. This involves putting a specific code on your website where your reviews appear. This code will need to be modified to explain to Google how your ratings are

conveyed using microdata, RDFa, or microformats. This is a highly technical step covered in greater detail at Google Webmaster Tools’ Structured Data and Rich Snippets section. Some Reputation Marketing software makes this a simple process.



Creating a 5-Star Culture

5-star reviews don’t happen by accident. They are the direct result of a fantastic customer experience. This means that your entire company needs to focus on making each customer experience top-notch. You may need to train your employees in customer service; you may want to hold focus groups or send customer satisfaction surveys to learn more about the customer experience; and you may want to use mystery shoppers to evaluate your business to get a better feeling for what your customers experience when doing business with you.

In fact, **the more proactive you are in getting feedback from your customers, the better you will understand what they are really looking for from your**

business. By doing this important research, you will be better able to deliver.

Creating a stellar Reputation culture is a circular process. For example, as you survey your customers, either through actual surveys or by monitoring their reviews (or both), you gain insights into the customer experience. By sharing those reviews with your staff on a regular basis, you are reinforcing the importance of delivering the best possible customer experience and developing strategies to overcome areas of weakness. As your customer service improves, your customer experience improves, and your reputation improves.

This drives home another important point: **Monitor your reputation.** If you’re using a system where the bulk of your reviews come through a form on your website or through mail-in cards, you’ll need to know when a bad review comes in so that you can address the customer’s concerns immediately.

If customers feel that their messages are not being heard by going to you directly, they'll go elsewhere with an even more scathing review.

Likewise, some customers will go directly to online review sites and post negative reviews. This makes it important to be aware of, and monitor, third party review sites.

You can do this by setting up Google Alerts for your company's name or products.

However, this isn't ideal. A better option is to use RSS feeds and a feed reader to monitor various RSS feeds from your business listings on various review sites.

You can take it a step further by using an app such as Zapier or IFTTT. You can configure Zapier or IFTTT to send you an email anytime your feed is updated with a new review.

Another option is to use a paid service to actively monitor the most popular review sites and notify you of new reviews.

If you get a bad review, you'll need to respond appropriately. Use a proactive customer service approach to turn an unhappy customer into a happy one. In many cases, customers will change their review once they become satisfied.

If a customer doesn't change a bad review, that review will eventually get buried thanks to fresh reviews coming in.

With a 5-star culture, **you should have a steady stream of good reviews coming in.** This is a powerful means of ensuring that bad reviews are quickly moved off the page and your overall average rating goes up despite the occasional bad review.

As part of your 5-star culture, you'll want to stress the importance of prompting customers to leave a review. Everyone in your company should know how to ask for a review. This can be as simple as training employees to circle your website's review URL on an invoice and ask customers to please leave a review.

If you want to add a motivational element to the training, give each employee color-coded review postcards to hand out and then reward the employee who brings in the most color-coded responses each month. Similarly, **whenever an employee is mentioned in a 5-star review by name, find a way to recognize him or her for a job well done.**



Sources:

<http://www.maritzresearch.com/~media/Files/MaritzResearch/Press/Maritz-Research-2013-Online-Customer-Review-Study-Release-FINAL-9-18-13.ashx>

<http://www.zendesk.com/resources/customer-service-and-lifetime-customer-value>

<http://www.digitaltrends.com/social-media/ny-sting-fake-online-reviews/#!yUkJn>

<http://www.brightlocal.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Local-Consumer-Review-Survey-2013.pdf>

<http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/reports/2013/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages.html>

https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/172705?hl=en&ref_topic=1088474

Appendix: Reputation Marketing Checklist

- Create a Google+ Local Page for your business. This is by far the most important directory because Google pulls reviews from it and prominently displays Google+ Local businesses in its search results pages.
- Identify the most popular online review sites in your country such as Yelp and CitySearch. Write them down here:

- Actively search for local directories in your niche. Write them down here:

- Claim your listings and create detailed business profiles for each of the national and local directories you listed above.
- Develop a 5-star culture. Adopt a customer service-oriented mindset and start listening to your customers to find out what's important to them. Train your team in the art of customer service and the importance of reputation.
- Ask customers to leave reviews and tell them which sites you prefer.
- Make it easy for customers to leave reviews by using online review forms, customer review cards, QR codes, or in-office computers.

- Get permission from your customers to post reviews on their behalf either using their real name or a pen name.
- Maintain records of all reviews you collect and post so that you can prove that your reviews are authentic.
- Add a dynamic feed of your 5-star reviews to your website or blog using RSS.
- Implement Google's rich review snippets and link your personal Google+ profile to your website so that you can take advantage of Google's authorship features.
- Include reviews in all of your marketing materials including electronic and printed sales materials.
- Proactively monitor your reputation and respond promptly to bad reviews.

Contact Reputation Aegis to learn more about our Reputation Marketing platform. We can help you protect one of your business's most important assets: its reputation.

About Reputation Aegis:

The Aegis, as stated in the Iliad by Homer, is the shield of Athena and Zeus. The concept of doing something “under someone’s Aegis” means doing something under the protection of a powerful, knowledgeable source. We are that source!

Reputation Aegis is a full-featured reputation management platform designed to help businesses:

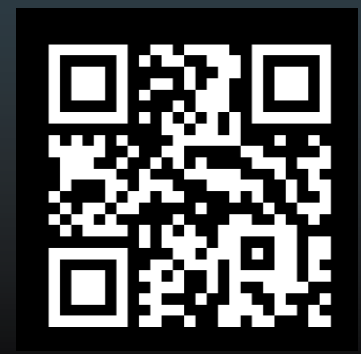
- establish a 5-star reputation,
- market it both online and off,
- and monitor any changes.

Your reputation is everything! Don’t leave it to chance. Learn more by visiting us at: www.reputationaegis.com



REPUTATION AEGIS

WWW.REPUTATIONAEGIS.COM



maxxcom

www.maxxcom.com

MAXXCOM Internet
2 Rue des Trois Mâts
56260 LARMOR-PLAGE - FRANCE

DIRECT LINES:

U.S.A. : 240-949-4999
CANADA : 514-613-2255
UK : 020 3322 7199
FRANCE : 09 50 43 43 55
SPAIN : 911 43 65 99

OTHER COUNTRIES:
+33 9 50 43 43 55