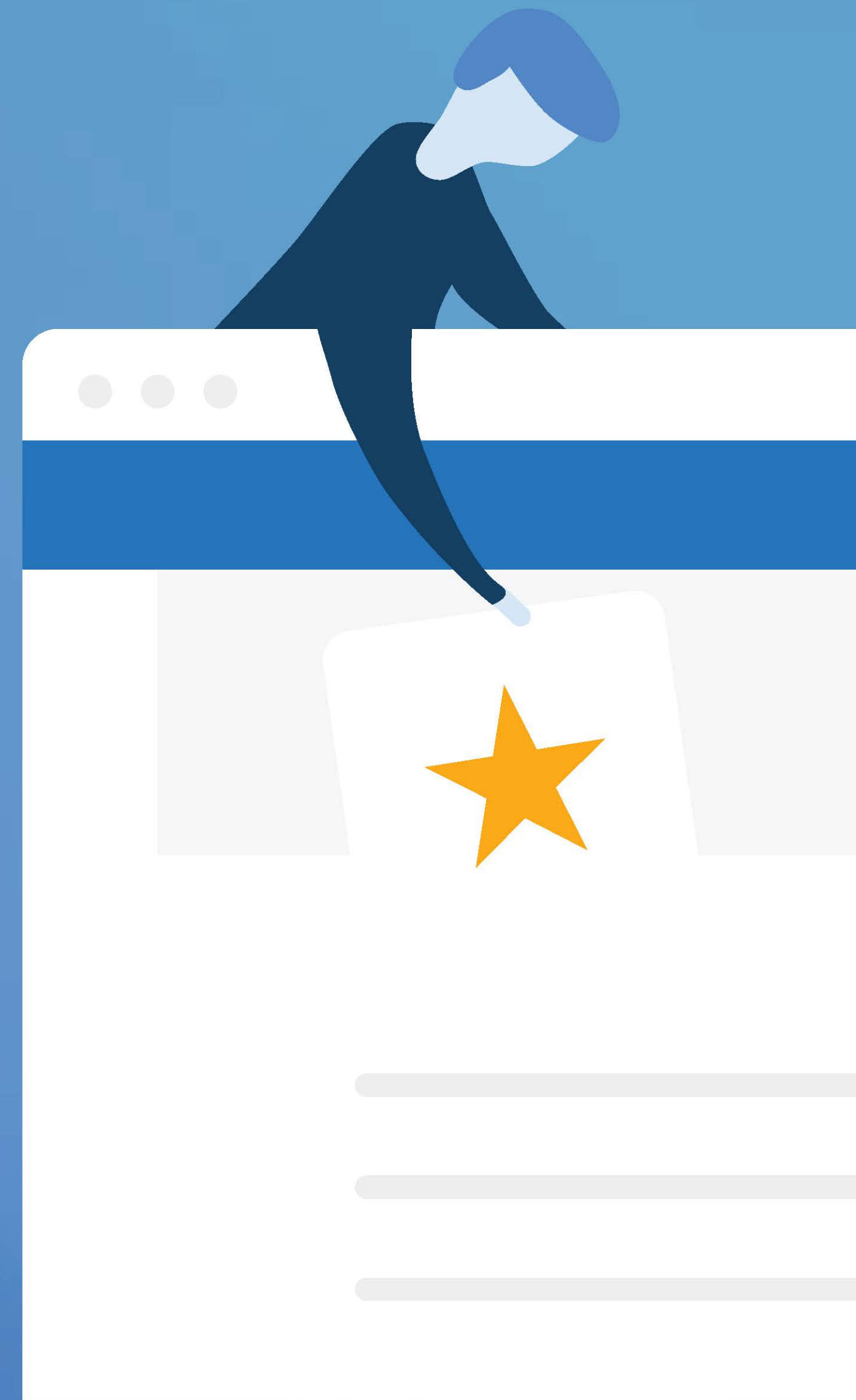


How to respond to negative reviews



Introduction

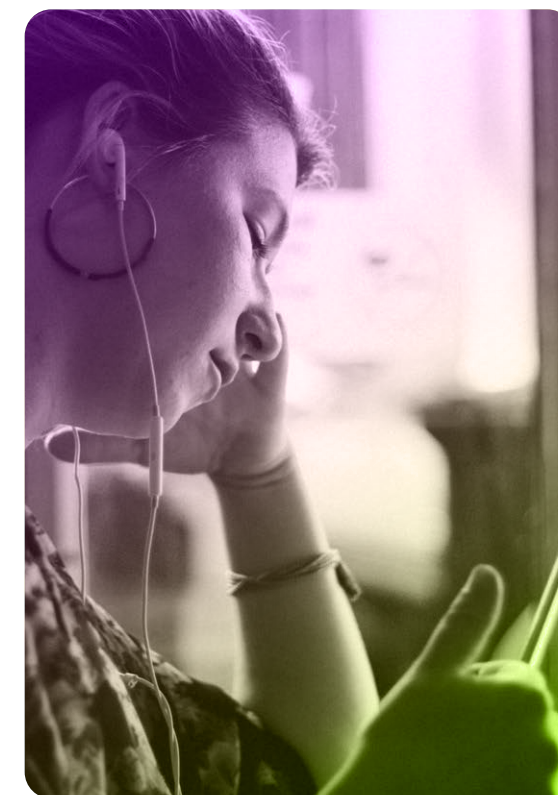
As wonderful as it would be to simply make all negative customer feedback disappear, review management is a bit trickier. Most sites have strict policies in place around review removal. In the majority of cases, reviews can only be removed if they violate specific terms and conditions, and the removal can only be done by the review site itself. Requesting review removal tends to be a long, lengthy process and you aren't guaranteed to get your way.

So how can you make sure negative reviews don't damage your business?

If the negative reviewer is a real customer, it could be far more effective to engage in a dialogue and try to resolve the issue one-on-one. More often than not, a dissatisfied customer spews rants on review sites just to let off steam. Acknowledging the customer's concerns could help cool down the rage and maybe even win loyalty back. Who knows? The customer may even be inclined to update or even delete the review if you handle the issue well enough.

The important thing to remember is, in one way or another, "the customer is always right" — regardless of your frustrations. Responding to bad reviews with accusations comes off as unprofessional and defensive rather than attentive and caring. If your business has some less-than-awesome online reviews, stay calm. There is ample opportunity for damage control. Even the nastiest customer feedback can be overshadowed by enough positive reviews.

Handling negative online reviews is an inevitable part of running a business. In this ebook, we'll show you how to use it to your advantage.



Uh-oh, you've got a negative review. What should you do?

Positive business reviews are welcomed with open arms and cause little friction. But here's the twist: friction can be beneficial, because growth requires feedback—all reviews are feedback.

Negative customer feedback is often even more valuable than positive feedback.

Absorb negative feedback as constructive criticism—your customers may be complaining, but they're still taking the time to engage with you. Negative online reviews are only posted by customers who care. Return the favor. Dig deep into customer reviews to pinpoint the issue. Often customers vent in long-winded rants, and the actual problem is difficult to identify amidst that hurricane of emotion. Comments like “worst service” or “horrible quality” are vehement but vague. You may have to directly ask the customer to explain their issue in detail. Once you understand the problem, you can take corrective action.

Remember, when customers post negative reviews, they believe their complaint is valid whether it truly is or not. This means even if they aren't in the right, something led them to believe they were. Identify what this something is, for perception and reality frequently blur, and enough misconceptions from other customers can lead to a negative business reputation. In your response, clear up any misunderstandings to prevent any future confusion from potential customers.

“A gracious response can transform livid customers into loyal ones.”

How to turn negative feedback into positive experiences

1

Don't react—respond. Address customer complaints promptly and thoroughly: **69% of customers attribute their positive customer service experience to swift resolution of their issue**¹. Fight the knee-jerk urge to defend your business, even if the negative feedback is unfair. As in any human interaction, denials and accusations only elevate conflicts. The shorter the conversation, the better. Also account for the setting: if bad customer reviews are posted on public sites, whatever you say is visible to everyone. Even in private exchanges, however, your response reflects your business as a whole.

Timely responses show respect, but rushed responses are dangerous. If the negative feedback strikes a nerve, wait until you've calmed down to plan out your reply. Take a walk around the block, watch a funny cat video, whatever works. Then begin carefully choosing your words.

2

Appreciate the voice of the customer. As mentioned above, negative feedback really can benefit your business. Without complaints, a problem may continue repeatedly and possibly worsen. Let your customers know you sincerely appreciate their feedback; even if you had to take a cold bath to quell your fury, don't let it show. Swallow your pride, thoughtfully acknowledge your customer's dissatisfaction and thank them respectfully for their feedback. **A gracious response can transform livid customers into loyal ones.** Ending the conversation on a positive note can spin a customer complaint into an outstanding customer experience.

3

Provide evidence of customer experience improvement. If you were able to take immediate steps to resolve the problem, let the customer know in your initial response. Otherwise, outline the steps you will take to fix it. If the issue was not promptly resolved before your response, follow-up once you've made changes so the customer knows you really listened.

Customer feedback loop

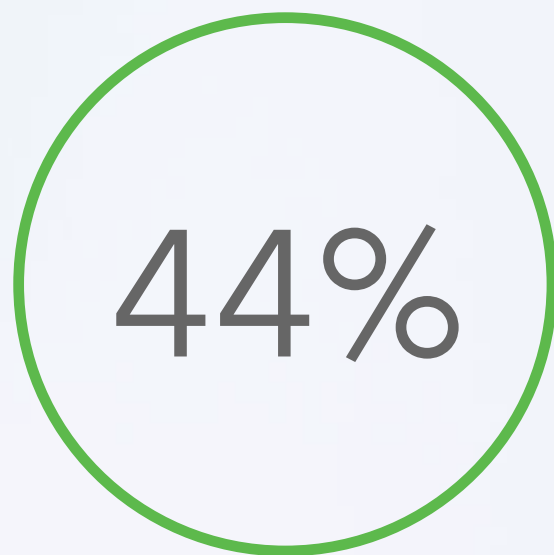
This is a simple three-step process that helps you make the most out of all reviews, both negative and positive.

1. A customer posts a review after a service or transaction.
2. You respond to the review accordingly--either thanking the customer or acknowledging their issue.
3. If the review is positive, use that information to replicate positive performance. If it's negative, make appropriate improvements to products and services to prevent the problem from happening again.





of customers consult online reviews before making a purchase decision.



of them consider reviews older than a month irrelevant.

Why do you need an online review management platform?

Collecting a high volume of new authentic reviews on a consistent basis is not going to happen without a dedicated strategy. An online review management platform automates and streamlines the review generation process so you can connect with every customer without taking time away from running your business. A steady stream of new reviews boosts SEO, increases click-throughs and conversions, and drives more organic traffic to your business. Not to mention, the more reviews you have, the less impact one negative one will have on customers' overall perception of your brand.

Customer reviews are the most authentic advertisement. **92% of customer consult online reviews before making a purchase decision**. It's not just the star ratings that matter to them, either. Customers value newer reviews over old ones--44% of them consider reviews older than a month irrelevant. New reviews give customers an accurate picture of how your business is performing and what they can expect should they choose to purchase from you.

How Internet Reputation Protector can help

Internet Reputation Protector review management platform gives your business the tools to leverage positive word-of-mouth and take total control of your online reputation. With Internet Reputation Protector, easily turn happy customers into brand advocates.

The Internet Reputation Protector platform makes the process easy by:

- Sending automatic real-time requests to your customers at critical moments
- Directing happy customers to third party review sites that matter most to you
- Instant new review alerts so you can respond to negative feedback instantly and solve problems before they become problems
- Providing detailed reports of your progress over time so you can see exactly how and where your online reputation management efforts are paying off

Don't let bad customer reviews get you down. Instead, use them to connect with your customers and nip issues in the bud to keep your online reputation squeaky clean



Internet **Reputation**
Powered by Small Screen Producer PROTECTOR



See a free live demo

And learn how Internet Reputation Protector can help your business manage negative reviews, get new reviews, and get new customers with one easy solution. Say hello to completely automated customer-driven marketing.