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How to use Customer Reviews to Boost your Business

Customer reviews provide an invaluable trust signal to potential customers.

By leveraging user reviews, you're telling the world that you care what customers think, that you welcome their feedback, and that you've nothing to hide.

You're also doing your bottom line a big favour. Using online reviews could see your conversion rates climb up to 58%. But customer reviews can provide a raft of benefits to a business operation even closer to home: your employees. Here's how to use customer reviews to boost and benchmark employee morale and motivation:

Impact

In the old days, customer service was a face-to-face transaction, and the

effect of your efforts was tangible. But in this digital world, it's easy to feel alienated from the end result of your work.

Customer reviews demonstrate to employees that their actions do have an actual impact on the lives of others, imbuing their efforts with greater meaning and purpose.

Empathy

Again thanks to our digital existence, it's easy to think of customers as faceless online entities. But customer reviews make them 'real', and employees are better able to empathise with them and their stories of good or bad service. After all, they're customers themselves and know how annoying it is when things go wrong!

Recognition

Everyone likes a pat on the back, and while your employees may well get that from you, it's far more valuable to their sense of worth and purpose that they feel their efforts are part of the

greater good. Reading accounts of happy and delighted customers makes employees feel appreciated. Happy employees are more productive and adaptive to change.

Plus, this 'buzz' heightens the impact of a negative review, so the employee is more likely to take steps to ensure the problem doesn't recur.

Credibility

Managers and supervisors can wax lyrical about morale and motivation, but 'When leaders attempt to deliver inspiring messages, many employees react with scepticism, questioning whether leaders are just trying to get them to work harder.

End users, however, can deliver convincing testimonials of their experiences with the company's products and services, showing that leaders' messages are more than rhetoric.' Customer reviews provide a more credible source of feedback for employees.

Ways you can leverage customer reviews to boost employee morale and motivation.

#1. Make sure all employees are aware of your review platform

This increases cohesion between staff and customers, creates a friendly atmosphere and fosters a community your employees will want to serve.

#2. Internal promotion

Things such as a 'review of the week' or a poster of reviews in the canteen are great tools to boost engagement

#3. Create a straightforward response policy

Have a policy that allows employees to respond to reviews without huge amounts of bureaucracy and 'signing off'. If necessary, provide training sessions detailing your in-house guidelines for interacting with customers.

#4. Make customer reviews a default part of team meetings

Use the old 'criticism sandwich' technique: talk about a positive review, then discuss any issues arising from a negative one (remember, customer reviews provide an invaluable insight into ways your business can be better), before finishing on another high note.

#5. Make customer reviews part of your internal feedback and appraisal process

Employees need to see that you know they're making customers happy.

Reasons Why Fake Reviews Are Deadly For Your Business

Large and small companies have valued customer reviews for years.

And for as long as we can remember, businesses have always used client feedback to better serve customers. Of course, your success in business relies on whether or not your customers are satisfied with your services. And more often than not, happy customers will always refer new clients to services that they enjoy.

But if you've ever been tempted to pay for fake reviews for your business then don't. Here are 4 reasons why fake reviews are deadly for your business:

#1. Protect trust, it's hard won but easily lost

Consumers trust online reviews like personal recommendations. Don't manipulate or take advantage of that trust. Protect it. Maintaining that trust is important as consumers' sensitivity towards this issue heightens. Information that will challenge their brand loyalty may change their buying behaviour and their overall opinion about the company, in general.

Consumers who realise that your company's reviews are will move on from your product to find better alternatives. And as their awareness towards the issue arises, they get better at sniffing fake reviews out.

#2. The gains are short-lived

Constant input of fake reviews have been proven to raise a company's business and sales, but don't let that fool you. The short-term gain is marvellous. But the hazard you face in the long-run is debilitating. You might get a short term boost but it's not sustainable if it's based on fake reviews.

#3. Unrealistic expectations lead to massive disappointment

The problem lies in the fact that when outrageous expectations are built up, it's much harder to meet and in turn, maintain. Building up your company's ratings on false pretences will only open all sorts of failures down the road. It starts unsustainable trends.

What will you do when every one of your consumers' experiences won't match with the expectations you've set up? The backlash will be worse. An avalanche of false reviews will start, and some will think it balances everything out. But in reality, it just makes everything worse.

And on that note, don't shy away from negative reviews. Take them as constructive criticism instead. Too many five-star reviews will raise eyebrows and create skepticism among your consumers.

A Power Reviews report show that 82% of consumers seek out negative feedback to get the full picture, based on the belief that the truth often lies somewhere in the middle.

#4. There's a consequence to fake reviews

Reviews are vital nutrients for any business big or small. Entrepreneurs are fully aware of how positive ratings impact their business and generate revenue.

Consumers won't consider a company unless it has at least a four-star rating. But unfortunately, only about 15 out of 1,000 customers will bother to leave feedback.

Don't worry about negative reviews. A study revealed that 95% of consumers distrust companies with no negative ratings as they suspect censorship or inauthenticity.

In fact, consumers are more likely to trust brands that contain both positive and negative reviews. Your customers are fully aware that no matter how expertly manufactured a product is, it's not perfect.

At the end of the day, trust is what helps your relationships with your customers. Trust is what will secure their loyalty towards your brand.

The Art of creating marketing position for your brand

Many people have different interpretations about what brand positioning means. It's one of those concepts that is hard to pin down, yet at the same time is so important to the success of your brand. Positioning is at the heart of your brand. It's essentially the summation of everything your brand is about.

Positioning is built from what you know to be true about your customer. It takes the benefits you've outlined and makes them meaningful to customers.

In its simplest of forms, positioning is the mental space you want to occupy in your customer's mind. It's the first thing you want your customer to think about when they hear your brand name.

Creating an emotional connection with your customer is the key to being a brand. But that emotional bond should be reflected in the positioning statement for the business. Positioning is more about emotions and less about the facts.

Once it's nailed, your brand's positioning becomes the basis for building the brand experience across the entire marketing plan. The key is to make sure the actual brand experience delivers on what was intended in the positioning.

You need to dig deep into the emotional benefit that you offer your customer. Think about how you want your customer to feel about you, every time they think about you. Try to capture that in a brief statement that best describes what you can offer, and jot down a few options.

Run them by your team and do a little brainstorming. It's a lot of fun and you'll be amazed at how quickly you start generating ideas.

What rights will EU online shoppers buying from UK have?

Irish shoppers buying online from UK companies could face significant changes to their rights, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) has warned.

A new study from the CCPC has found that 72% Irish shoppers have bought online from the UK in the last two years and nearly 30% have done so more than 30 times. Those who shopped online from the UK more than 10 times during the past two years, were highest amongst 15-24 year olds and ABC1 social class. "When

you buy online from an EU-based business, there are protections which ensure that you have the opportunity to change your mind and also you have very strong consumer rights if something goes wrong. 40% of those who shopped online from the UK, have returned something they have purchased online. This is highest amongst females 50% and those who live in Dublin 48%. 'Product did not fit me/suit my needs' was the top mention for returning 55%.

Brexit boost for EU retailers?

Uncertainty over consumer protection rights post-Brexit could turn out to be a boost for Irish and EU retailers with 31% of respondents who shopped online from the UK reporting that they will 'Buy more from websites in other EU countries', while a quarter stated they will make no changes. 60% of

respondents are aware that their rights are different when purchasing goods online depending on whether the company is based in the EU or outside the EU. This is lowest among those aged under 35. The chair of the CCPC Isolde Goggin warned shoppers to pay attention to returns policy and terms and conditions on websites before they buy.

"When you buy online from an EU-based business, there are protections which ensure that you have the opportunity to change your mind and also you have very strong consumer rights if something goes wrong, for example if you don't get your items delivered," said Goggin. "When the UK leaves the EU, these protections will no longer be guaranteed when buying from UK-based retailers.

Why it's Vital to Drive More Traffic to Your Website

Web traffic is a pretty simple concept. In short, this term refers to the number of visitors your site gets on a regular basis. High-traffic sites have more page views than low-traffic sites.

It's probably no grand revelation to you that traffic is important to websites. Naturally, every site owner wants more people to visit, whether the goal is to generate more income or simply share the content they've created with the broadest possible audience.

A common reason for wanting visitors to visit your site is to increase conversions. A conversion refers to an action that you want your users to take, like making a purchase. When somebody buys something on your site, for example, they've converted from being a regular user into a customer.

However, conversions can be many other things as well, such as signing up for a newsletter, creating an account, or completing a form. Either way, to improve your conversions, you'll naturally want to increase the traffic on your site.

While traffic itself is essential, it's just as vital that it's good traffic. This generally refers to visitors who stay a while, interact with your content, return multiple times, and ultimately convert.

Having 500 visitors who stick around is usually better than having 5,000 visitors who leave quickly, never to return.

Why Marketing Your Site Leads to Increased Traffic

One of the most pressing concerns for any website owner is how to help people actually find your site. This can be a daunting task, especially considering that there are literally billions of websites on the internet. Making yours visible in that crowd can be challenging.

This is where marketing your site becomes key. By creating and deploying a strong marketing strategy, you can increase visibility and awareness of your site, which is naturally the first step towards encouraging people to visit it.

Marketing can refer to any work you do that gets your site mentioned or seen elsewhere online. This could be through paid advertisements, promotions, or getting your content shared on other sites or social media platforms. Either way, it's all about making people conscious that your site exists and communicating why they'd want to visit it in the first place.

One common technique is known as inbound marketing. This type of marketing focuses on 'pulling' people to your site by providing something of value. This could be a blog, video content, online courses, giveaways, and so on.

Creating content designed to address any problems and needs of your ideal customers, you attract qualified

prospects and build trust and credibility for your business. The key point here is that you need to create valuable, high-quality content, which is no small feat. However, the benefits of doing this are many. For example, a relevant and well-written company blog can help you build backlinks, drive traffic, and establish your brand as an authority in your field — all at the same time.

How to Identify Your Target Audience

The most crucial aspect of effective marketing and driving the right kind of traffic is knowing whom you're marketing to. It's impossible to get everyone to your site, so you'll need to

focus on those who will benefit the most from what you're offering.

To do this, you'll need to consider and identify your target audience — the people you want to market your site towards. While this group could be quite general, based on characteristics such as their age, gender, and location, it could also be very specific.

For example, your target audience could have a particular niche interest, or work in a very specialised industry. We also recommend that you create a customer profile, which is a complete picture of your theoretical ideal customer. This provides you with a greater understanding of your target audience, as well as how best to communicate with them.



4 Great Team Behaviours that Leaders Should Strive For

Great team behaviours are those that improve teamwork, foster team spirit and increase efficiency. These are the team behaviours that you want to hold on to and encourage.

1. Team Members Show Respect for Each Other

Showing respect is one of the easiest team behaviours in many ways, but it has a big impact on teamwork. When your team members aren't respectful to each other, small issues become large and tempers flare.

You want your team members to show respect for each other's time and skills. You need them to apologise when they've made a mistake which has inconvenienced others.

Signs that you have a problem with respect in your team

You notice some team members trying to dump work onto other colleagues and ignoring their workload. You notice some team members delegating tasks they feel are "beneath them" to other people who they see as less important. More helpful team members become overloaded with work while others don't offer to help at all. "Please" and "Thank you" are foreign concepts to your team members.

Some ways to solve respect issues in your team. Be a role model. Show the respectful behaviour that you want to see. Act fast. Identify disrespectful behaviours and correct them, quickly. Let team members know that the behaviours you are seeing won't be tolerated.

2. Team Members Share the Workload

The best teams are those that share the workload, regardless of the role they play within the team. This promotes collaboration which can really motivate team members. Team members feel like they're "all in this together" and that somebody will help them if they are in trouble. Support within a team is critical to employee engagement, and it doesn't just come from the leader. Signs you might have a problem with work sharing. People are often saying things like "that's your job" or "your work" rather than taking a team view. They are distancing themselves from responsibility and blame. Ideally, you want "your work" to become "our work". People in one role are overloaded with work, while others are easily coping, without offering to help.

Watch out for people who are doing less than others. If they don't volunteer to help out, then be more directive and instruct them to do so. Address poor performance in your team. Sometimes if team members don't want to help others out, it's because they feel like the other person isn't capable. "Why should I work harder when they can't even do their job". Look for these situations and tackle them fast. Great Leaders Keep Learning.

3. Team Members Give Each Other Credit

One of the best team behaviours is team members openly sharing credit for work, or publicly recognising each other's contribution. This shows trust, collaboration and respect. It also demonstrates a less competitive mindset that may undermine the effectiveness of the team. You notice a team member taking all the credit for work performed by

multiple team members Team members take the "default credit". They don't openly claim the credit, but instead of identifying the contributions of others, they say nothing at all. Be a role model: Be mindful of giving credit where it's due. Step in: If others aren't giving credit when they should, raise it directly and do it for them.



4. Team Members Take Accountability

When your team is working well, team members are more likely to take accountability for their actions. In addition, you may notice team members start to hold others accountable too. When your team members take accountability, it means you don't need to take everything on yourself. Your team will play their part and take ownership and pride in their work. Ultimately, you are responsible for what happens in your team, but it helps when your team cares as much as you do.

Ways to Drive Organic Traffic to Your Site

These methods all focus on how to encourage more organic traffic, which is visitors who make their way to your site naturally (via search engines, links from other sites, and so on).

1. Perform Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

In short, SEO refers to a series of practices for optimising your site and content to make it more likely to rank well in search results on sites like Google. The earlier your pages appear, the more traffic you'll typically see. For example, the site ranked No. 1 gets an average of 32.5% of the traffic for a particular search term, while the site ranked No. 10 only gets 2.4% - and sites that don't make it to the first page of results do even worse.

When it comes to optimising your website, there are plenty of SEO tools to help you out. For example, you can use SEMrush to perform keyword research, which will show you what terms people are using to find your site. You can also use it to find related keywords, which you can work naturally into your content.

You can also pick up a WordPress plugin like Yoast SEO. This will guide you when creating content, to ensure that it's optimised for search engines and follows all of Google's SEO standards. While the requirements can seem overwhelming at a glance, you'll soon understand these guidelines and be able to optimise your content quickly.

2. Create a Social Media Presence

In recent years, social media has become one of the most crucial factors in generating organic traffic. When you consider that there are over 2.5 billion social media users in the

world, the reasons why should be obvious.

As such, leveraging social media to bring people to your site is key. When it comes to organic traffic, the most significant consideration is that you pick the right platforms to use, and then create a presence that appeals to your target audience. Fortunately, there are plenty of ways to do this. You can: Use a scheduling tool. Social media can take up a lot of time if you do everything manually. Fortunately, there are several tools you can use to schedule and manage your posts efficiently.

Create engaging and visually appealing content. If people are going to interact with and share your posts, they need to be well-written, look good, and have a unique voice. For example, if you're using photos in your posts, you should make sure you know how to edit them to look their best.

Don't be afraid to use hashtags. Hashtags are a significant part of making sure your posts are discoverable by people who may be interested in them. Use hashtags that are popular but also directly relate to your site for the best results.

Consider your brand's voice. It's essential to maintain a consistent voice in all your posts, but also to find one that appeals to your target market. Is your brand casual or professional? Serious or cheeky?

Don't forget to engage with others as well. Social media is not a one-way street, so be sure to comment on, like, and share posts from other users. This will make your social media presence more personal while providing additional value and reasons for your audience to follow you.

3. Start a Blog

Blogs aren't just for recipes, general observations, and cat photos. In fact, a blog can be a powerful tool to drive more traffic to your site. The reason

why harkens back to what we said earlier about providing value to your users. Running a blog is an excellent way to post content that others will find both helpful and worth sharing with others.

Best of all, getting started is very easy. You can get a blog up and running in minutes and then it's just a matter of creating your content. Of course, writing blog posts people will want to read isn't necessarily simple.

Tips on optimising your blog's structure will help you when it comes to planning out how your blog should be set up. Once your posts are live, it's time to make people aware that they exist. That's when it's time to promote your posts, especially on social media. This will be much easier if you've already created a social media marketing strategy, as discussed above.

The most crucial factor here is that your content is of high quality and is actually worth reading. No amount of optimisation can cover for subpar content, so this should always be your number-one priority.

4. Produce Branded Video Content

You can probably guess that Google is the world's largest search engine, but do you know which one comes in at No. 2? The answer is YouTube. Considering that the site has over a billion active monthly users, who collectively watch one billion hours of video every day, it offers a lot of opportunities for raising awareness of your site.

By creating branded video content, you can present your site to a worldwide audience through a medium they're familiar with and primed to engage on. What form your videos take depends entirely on your site and ultimate goal.

Ways to Drive Organic Traffic to Your Site (cont.)

For example, if you run an eCommerce website, you could create videos to explain your products or services. There are plenty of possibilities, and the good news is that getting started is easier now than ever. Naturally, there are plenty of practical considerations before you can start. For instance, you will at the very least require a camera and some form of editing tool. However, if you own a smartphone you already have both at your disposal. Today, consumer-grade cameras and editing software are more than enough to create quality, engaging videos.

The most vital aspect is to keep your branding consistent and prominent. It should be obvious that the videos are an extension of your site, and that people can find out more information by visiting you there as well. To do this, include links in your video descriptions and feature your site's URL at key points in your videos. This will help drive interested viewers to your pages.

5. Create an Email List

As we covered earlier, one of the tenets of good traffic is that it doesn't just visit once. You want to make sure people have reason to come back to your site again and again. While creating consistently strong content is a big part of that, another method is to use email in your marketing efforts.

In fact, email marketing is even more effective at converting customers than social media. By collecting the email addresses of your visitors, you can contact them whenever you have something new on your site. For example, you could send out an email whenever you have a new blog post, or a regular roundup of the content you've posted in a certain timeframe. This will encourage your audience to return to your site regularly, and also helps build a sense of loyalty and commitment to your brand. You can write a powerful Call To Action (CTA) that encourages visitors

to submit their email addresses. Creating CTAs is an art form in itself, but the key is making the benefit of signing up obvious to the user. Clearly state what you'll provide them with and why it benefits them, and they'll be all the more likely to sign up.

6. Build a Public Relations (PR) Strategy

Essentially, PR consists of creating relationships with various media outlets, in order to get your site and brand mentioned on their channels. This can be a hugely important factor in driving quality traffic, as they'll be directed from a trusted, authoritative source.

Developing a PR strategy can be a tricky proposition, so you'll need to prepare accordingly. Everything we've covered so far can help you make some headway. For example, you can reach out to publications to see if they'd be willing to feature your blog posts or videos or make connections via your social media channels. How you go about promoting your site ultimately comes down to its purpose and end goal. Take your target audience into consideration, consider what outlets they follow, and narrow down the ones that are suitable for your brand. In addition, be persistent and friendly, and make sure your site is offering high-quality content, and you should be able to build lasting relationships with people in your industry.

How to Use Paid Traffic to Grow Your Site

Organic traffic is vital, but it's not the only way to bring in more visitors to your site. As you might expect, paid traffic refers to any visits that are generated through sources you pay for. This can include advertisements, sponsored content, professional partnerships, and so on. One prominent example is Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising. This is a type of ad that appears alongside Google search

results for terms that are relevant to your site. As the name suggests, every time a user clicks on one of these ads to visit your site, you're charged a small fee.

Ads and banners. These are the ads you often see on the tops and sides of web pages. They can be highly visible, although they are commonly interfered with by ad blockers.

Sponsored content. This is sometimes known as advertorials and refers to articles and other posts that look like standard content but are actually paid marketing.

Paid search results. Services like Google AdWords can help your ads appear above the search results for specific keywords.

Social media ads. These are sponsored posts that appear alongside the regular content in feeds and before videos.

Influencer marketing. This refers to when an influencer in a particular field markets your product or brand in their content.

It's vital to note that paid traffic is just as legitimate as organic traffic. In fact, most sites will rely on a combination of both to get new visitors at a regular pace. No matter what your budget and purpose are, you should now have a much clearer idea of how to market your website to get that all-important traffic rolling in!

Traffic Jam

Getting eyes on your site is arguably the single most important reason to have one in the first place. If nobody knows about your website or understands why they should visit, your hard work will have been wasted and your revenue will likely suffer.

Brexit is already costing Irish exporters

Brexit has cost one in 10 Irish exporters over €100,000 to date, according to an Enterprise Ireland survey, with some firms saying it cost them €250,000.

One in three export firms have warned that currency fluctuations are their number one concern. They are also concerned about interference with tariffs (22pc), supply chain disruption (16pc) and uncertainty for Brexit's outcome (15pc).

Brexit has had an impact to their business with one in ten companies citing that Brexit has cost their business over €100K. Close to 5pc of companies say that Brexit has cost their business €250,000.

"Our research shows that Irish exporters are already feeling the negative impacts of Brexit through their profit margins," said Enterprise Ireland CEO Julie Sinnamon.

"We have consistently said that the wait and see approach is not an option and client companies are heeding this advice. In 2018, 945 new overseas customers were secured by clients with the support of Enterprise

Programmes that Enterprise Ireland companies have taken part in to enhance their Eurozone market engagement include: the development of a Eurozone market strategy, participation in a Management Development Programme, inward buyer visits or take up of the Market Discovery Fund.

In addition, Enterprise Ireland has approved over €9m in funding since 2018 to companies looking to enter new markets under its Market Discovery Fund, indicating that companies are taking action to mitigate against the impact of a no deal scenario

According to the results of the Enterprise Ireland survey, more than four out of five businesses identified the Eurozone as the market they are planning to expand into in the next year with 83pc citing its size and growth potential as a key factor, followed by a proven demand for a product or service (50pc).

"As we draw ever closer to the potential of a hard Brexit, businesses must continue to find new markets and to innovate their products and services," Sinnamon said.

"In the first six months of 2019, over 200 client companies had significant Eurozone market engagement with 57 Irish companies establishing a new market presence in the Eurozone so far this year, almost double the amount compared to this time last year. Our continued priority is to ensure that Irish exporters prepare for a hard Brexit, and to take action now. This will be good for their businesses, irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations."



An enormous number – 83pc – say they plan to extend into international markets over the next 12 months in response to Brexit, with the Eurozone area cited as having the most potential.

"Irish exporters are already feeling the negative impacts of Brexit through their profit margins" A survey of Enterprise Ireland client companies attending International Markets Week found that 53pc of companies say that

Ireland. This represented a 23pc increase on the 770 new overseas customers recorded in 2017.

"Overall, Enterprise Ireland client companies have opened 275 new overseas presences in the first six months of 2019.

As the 31 October deadline edges closer, Enterprise Ireland said it is actively encouraging client companies to further their diversification plans and take action now.