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## FIRM MANAGEMENT

# Positive Reviews: The Power They Hold and How Firms Can Get Them

The best way to get reviews from your customers on the platform you prefer is to ask them. If you notice a particularly happy client, don't be afraid to ask. On the other hand, avoid requesting reviews from anyone who has had any recent, unresolved ...

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I wrote an [article](#) recently about best practices for accountants who want to use social media, and part of understanding social media's strength is also about recognizing the advantages of positive reviews – which can often be found on social media.

Customer referrals are undoubtedly one of the best ways to grow your accounting practice but getting new clients from word of mouth can be quite a feat. Even if each customer talks about you to twenty people, it is likely you would only get a few new clients. However, harnessing that client's positivity about you and getting it to the masses is a whole other ballgame.

### **Online reviews and how to hook strangers**

There is a legitimate worry from many small businesses and independent consultants that having a presence online with the ability to receive reviews can end up with bad consequences. This is a definite possibility if you have a dispute with a client or an issue that doesn't get settled before it escalates, and while this is generally rare for accountants, it is best to evaluate your client relationships before moving forward with online reviews.

However, if you feel confident in the positive client relationships that you have, online reviews can have a hugely positive impact on your business growth and client acquisition.

While many people would not trust someone who shows up on their doorstep, online reviews have a different impact. There is a general impression that the anonymity of the internet leads to unbiased opinions and reviews. And according to [research from Brightlocal](#), more consumers are reading online reviews than ever before. In 2021, 77% 'always' or 'regularly' read them when browsing for local businesses, which is up from 60% in 2020. The research also shows that almost one out of two people trust online reviews as much as recommendations from family and friends.

### **SEO and reviews**

Reviews are – maybe surprisingly – a big part of SEO. Most people will find your business thanks to a Google search and as you are likely aware, showing up on the top of the first page is paramount to success. A 2019 [study](#), which analyzed over 5 million Google search results found that only .78% of users go to the second page of

the results and another [study](#) found that 28.5% of users click on the first organic result, with the second being click by 15% and the third position by 11%.

Reviews are a great way to get to the top of the Google Search and should be a big goal for your business or practice management strategy.

- Customer reviews give more content with keywords about your business for Google to read and increase your rating within their SEO system.
- Google can identify positive reviews and infer that your website is of high quality and therefore, highly valuable for its users.
- Responding to reviews provide more keywords for Google, signifies that you are active, and has the added benefit of potentially changing a negative review into a neutral or positive one.

## How to get reviews

The best way to get reviews from your customers on the platform you prefer is to ask them. If you notice a particularly happy client, don't be afraid to ask. On the other hand, avoid requesting reviews from anyone who has had any recent, unresolved issues with your service. If this is an issue for your firm, avoid automated requests for reviews to prevent reaching out to any potentially unhappy customers.

You can establish a process as part of your business plan to systematically ask clients for their reviews. You can organize a way for a link to pop up at the end of a transaction that makes it easy to write a review for your preferred platform. You also garner reviews through incentives like discounts or gift cards if you are having trouble getting feedback. This can be helpful to incentivize reviews but it should be used rarely to make sure no one feels coerced into providing a positive review.

Make sure that leaving a review is as easy as possible for your busy clients and don't hesitate to share how much they mean to your business.

As business owners know, the most important thing is to listen to feedback and consistently better your services since the best way to get good reviews is to have a really great offering.

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