

Reviews, Referrals, Recommendations and Repeat Customers

by GregDeTisi - Tuesday, May 03, 2022

<http://THE SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH BLOG.COM/2022/05/03/reviews-referrals-recommendations-and-repeat-customers/>

Reviews, Referrals, Recommendations and Repeat Customers

Familiar with the words in the title?

Are you managing these areas effectively?

You might be open and ready for business which is AWESOME, and the first major step in operation, so well done if that's you, and you may be selling your products/services well which is the primary goal, 'but' how well do you REALLY know what your customers are saying to others about you?

And how well do you know what your potential customers are seeing about you?

If you just focus on selling alone and ignore what customers think then you are only doing half a job.

Obvious? Perhaps, but then what strategy do you have to manage communication with buyers?

If monitoring and communicating with your customers is one of your 'nice to do on another day tasks' then maybe you need to think again, and you definitely need to read this.

The time is now to start getting to grips with what you need to know and do about 'not only growing your business', but also not losing business through neglecting how you connect with your customers.

Why? You could potentially jeopardize your entire operation and be out of business in a matter of time, that's why.

A bit harsh?

You may think so, but the truth is that we all have to deal in facts not in theories, and the fact of the matter is that in our day and age a customer expects a certain level of service or they will A) Go elsewhere very quickly or B) Rant and rave about what you didn't do well on a public source.

But this is quite obvious in some ways isn't it?

Sure, because 'you and I' both naturally will look at others reviews before we buy a product or service, agreed? And this is a sign of trust and quality, or a lack of it, so we all read reviews and some of us leave them. Whether it's on Google, Trust Pilot, or somewhere else, we want to know what other's feel and have said about a particular product/service.

How can this help you?

You can study what others say about your competition, gather the data and aim to do better! "Of course I want to do better than my competition" you may say; but are you doing this yet?

Well, here are some things to consider when studying the reviews to help you:

X= Your nearest competition

What value are customers getting from X?

What have other's experiences been about X?

How did they feel about the X product or service?

What value did they feel they were given by company X?

Will they be returning for more as they loved X or not?

When was this review written about X and is it still relevant?

Why did they like or not like X specifically?

Did the company X bother to reply to their customers?

How can you improve upon what X do now?

What strategy might you implement to outperform X?

How do you differentiate from X and is this an advantage for you?

What is unique about your brand that can serve you well compared to X?

What would I think and feel if I was their customer and what would I want?

Can you see how these questions can really help you?

And as business owners, you and I can look at such reviews in particular businesses like ours, and we can study the information about what the experiences have been, and we can use this to become the number 1 option.

If we want to grow and expand, and if we want to have delighted customers who enjoy your products/services and become repeat customers, then we want to feel that not only are we passionate about what we do, and what we share, but that we care about our customer, and this can drive that customer loyalty we desire.

There is a deep and satisfying joy to be found for us in satisfied customers, as I know too well myself - and if this is your primary goal you will certainly have an advantage.

So ensure that you use whatever tools and resources you can to have that advantage over others. Take courses on digital transformation/strategies or whatever is required to ensure you can grasp and implement a powerful CRM strategy.

Here is how understanding your business customers can really help you to become number 1:

NOTE: Before we start I am going to 'assume' you already know your ideal customers, and have conducted sufficient research and input into targeting and marketing to the specific demographic of buyers/ And also that you already sell to them, operate a small business and have a grasp on the importance of your products and services and what customer service means?

If not stop - here and understand those points first before you move on. And subscribe to others in similar niches and look at their automated strategies that gather your information and see how they grab your attention but also how they speak and sell to you through that process.

Did you do that? OK great; you are back - then let's begin!

When someone leaves a review on Google or Trust Pilot or on another source you will see it, as all will, and you can then comment, and respond to that review of course in a way which shows that you care as a business owner. And as it is also open to the general public, millions of eyes may also be seeing this review.

One bad review can be disheartening and challenging to accept, if you have experienced this, but the fact of the matter is that this is someone's honest often emotional opinion of how they may have felt at the time.

So, you might attempt to ask them to speak with you, or to share their views or complaints BEFORE they place a review up for everyone to see, right? Sure, this is achievable and can be a great way to avoid bad reviews, but on the other hand a bad review is an opportunity to think about 'why' this has occurred.

TIP: We can add comments to suggest that a customer contacts us before leaving reviews near to our sales buttons, in our emails or anywhere in the sales process politely, so that the customer can contact us right away if there is anything we can do to help them have a better experience PRIOR to leaving an awful review on any site. We may also add contact details to social media platforms near our BIO or just about anywhere, to show that we not only care but want to put things right.

Reviews, Referrals, Recommendations and Repeat Customers

Going back to working with bad reviews, we may help to put them right of course, but we may also learn a great deal from them.

Rather than immediately become offended, upset or defensive we might first seek to solve this and create a personal dialogue with the customer to reassure them that we wish to put things right, and also to then ask the customer if they might consider editing the review once they are satisfied.

So for example, even if a customer leaves a poor review of sorts, they may later edit that review to reflect the subsequent solution which has been dealt with, or even if they don't edit that review, others may see that you as the business owner 'cared' and that you were communicative and polite, as this will also help you to be seen as trust worthy, professional and transparent.

Everyone is different of course!
And it's a good job really.

We are all different, and we cannot control others feelings and thoughts, and nor should we be able to, so there are times when it is best to just be grateful for the opportunity to look at the opinion of another and see if there is a way in which we can act upon the concern and improve our approach or consider how we may perhaps adjust whatever requires our attention in some way.

It is not that complicated either...strip back the layers and it is just about the human touch.

Very often it is quite obvious what a complaint or concern is about also, so we may put it right.

I will now give you a real example of this:

A friend of mine visits a particular English pub brand and he always enjoys what he eats' there. So his family and him are regulars at this establishment. However, he was contacted by a fine (as in owed money) collection company, suggesting that he owed £170 for a parking fine he had ignored, which was applied when he parked in the car park opposite the establishment.

The process is that upon entering the pub, one will enter one's number plate to confirm that one is a customer of the pub.

But, he was not told that he had to do this, and he later discovered that 'at the time he was there' the machine was broken.

This meant that he couldn't have added his details anyway, but again no-one explained this to him!

He luckily later managed to resolve this, after a call from a very aggressive payment collection gentleman, but he heard that this had also happened to another 200 car owners. Now, wouldn't you think

that after a few of these customers complaining, this might prompt a simple process applied to the system which would have helped to prevent such unnecessary threats of fines to so many customers?

And - many people did give negative reviews to the pub brand because of exactly this. Can you see how this may have been avoided?

My thoughts are that this doesn't need to happen. And it could potentially ruin a reputation - couldn't it?

Certainly we may not need to act upon a particular concern to hope that it can be edited in some - as the review is absolutely valid, just as the above complaints were valid. So all we can do is apologize sincerely and move on.

Then there are some customers who may even leave unrealistic or wacky reviews, and there isn't a great deal we can do about every single review, and as there is not 'one size fit's all', in life or business, there are times when we have to just take it on the chin and accept what has happened.

A review can be a great way to gauge what we may do better, or why we do it and how we do it, but it may also help us to see if we are really doing our best or not and of course how we may outperform others.

Reviews, Referrals, Recommendations and Repeat Customers

Reviews need to be honest, and potential customers need to be able to conduct their own research when it comes to spending their money, so they will want to see what others say, and what they truly think, as it's the best way to determine whether or not to go for it, or to carry on shopping around.

However, research shows that many bad reviews can be avoided, if the business owner has just a little more of an understanding and open minded outlook. That is not to say that passionate business owners don't have a right to defend their blood sweat and tears, of course they do, but they may also be emotionally led, or offended so it can create a sense of arrogance around what is offered, and thus a

customer may also feel offended in some way.

NOTE: By the way; I am not saying for a moment that we shouldn't stand by what we do with great pride and belief, of course we should, otherwise there is no point in being in business - but it also can potentially (not in all cases though) sabotage a brand if we are emotional and reactive rather than being considered and more responsive.

We all want a fair and balanced review to read, and we all want to know that the likes of Google and Amazon, amongst others are doing their bit to ensure that their reviews are HONEST and not biased in some way. There is increasing evidence to show that many biased reviews are fake, and so there has been a significant crack down on these reviews by the giant companies, and so there should be.

TRUST AND HONESTY is what counts in an increasingly FAKE world!

For business owners, we can ask for more strategic reviews which help to position us and also connect emotionally with a potential customer.

We all want feedback also if we are professional, and so it is an opportunity to potentially tweak, adapt, improve, edit or at least consider what could be done to improve the customer experience, but if 99.9% of your customers are happy, then the chances are that the 1% may always have an issue with something and that's just life.

TIP: With feedback we can gather data through creating polls, surveys, questionnaires and so on in order to mitigate this, and we can be strategic with our approach in order to preempt the possible occurrence

of bad reviews by having a process by which we have an advantage and are ahead of the curve.

Whichever you look at it, reviews and testimonials are opportunities for growth.

And this may lead to greater retention and loyalty from current customers by being more personal, more transparent and more caring.

According some recent studies, there is a general belief in most industries that acquiring a new customer can be 5 to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one. Logically then it makes sense to look after current customers even if we are still spending time and revenue finding new customers.

Simply; it can save you money by keeping customers.

The general view is that greater retention leads to a longer value from a customer, and this 'lifetime value of a customer' or 'customer lifetime value' CLV for short, means we can create consistent sales from one person for many years hopefully. And if you already knew this, you know that when it comes to customer acquisition, it is generally far easier to keep a happy customer than to find new ones as we touched on.

Here is another great article this time about what CLV is by Shopify, if you are not sure:

[WHAT IS CLV EXPLAINED BY SHOPIFY](#)

Do you want to know how to calculate the CLV in your business? Shopify explain it here:

[CLICK HERE AND CHECK IT OUT](#)

Reviews, Referrals, Recommendations and Repeat Customers

With regards to better understanding your customers and particularly in the digital space, it pays to understand what the data is telling us, and so here is what Adobe say about understanding the data behind your customers, which I recommend you study to become better be informed about what your data can tell you.

Here is the article - 7 data analytic trends for 2022:

[7 DATA ANALYTIC TRENDS FOR 2022](#)

NOTE: Did you know that a whopping 64% of people say or believe that customer experience is more important than price when buying something! So this has to be considered - and as we want great experiences, not average or poor ones, and if you want an advantage over your nearest and dearest competition, you will want to aim to become the primary choice.

So aim to be ahead of the curve
as this is a distinctly more
appealing situation to be in.

What is retention? If you don't know then check this out:

[WHAT IS RETENTION EXPLAINED BY PRODUCT PLAN](#)

And check out this one by Comarch about creating retention:

[16 ACTIONABLE STRATEGIES TO CREATE RETENTION BY COMARCH](#)

I hope can see how important these areas are, because this can really give you that distinct advantage and support you in increasing your profits, whilst also being personal, ethical, aware and progressive.

Let's just touch on
each area in more detail
so you can really ace this:

REVIEWS: What is a Customer Review? A customer review is a review of a product or service made by a customer who has purchased and used, or had an experience with the said product or service. Customer reviews are a form of customer feedback which is often digital and used in commerce and on online shopping sites. Feedback may also be word of mouth, email, or even through a video. It is important to pay attention to our reviews and to respond to them swiftly to show that we care, and can communicate personally with customers. Be mindful also that words can be taken into a variety of meanings and the context may be misunderstood if the review is not specific or detailed enough. This is why it pays to try to encourage specificity and a strategic objective when asking for a review, so that

almost anyone can grasp the meaning and act accordingly.

A BUSINESS REVIEW: This is for you an evaluation of metrics and performance over the previous period. It should be connected to your strategy and objectives - and is the product of everyone's activities, interactions and contributions.

REFERRALS: A business referral refers to a person recommending a business, product or service to another. It might be a friend, a family member or anyone else. This could occur immediately or over time. It could also happen through form of marketing and exposure, online or offline.

RECOMMENDATION: Anyone can recommend a business, place or anything else. Also anyone could be asked to create a recommendation to a company to confirm their satisfaction from the quality of work undertaken in order to help the company bring in a new customer or client.

REPEAT CUSTOMERS: Buy from you on more than one occasion. They love to come back time and time again. Often loyal to your brand. Then there are return customers who have bought before and buy again, but not buy in the future. However, the goal is to have the return customer become a repeat customer.

I am adding retention to my list as it is critical. Perhaps even obvious! And effective customer retention can help a business to survive. So, the goal is to keep customers and this is also applicable for keeping employees. The more engaged the workforce are and the more productive and effective they are the greater the output and results.

So how does this work both ways?

With driven and passionate employees, this will hopefully help the organization to operate at greater levels, and also to grow faster, but also to improve the standards with customer relationships. And with high standards with customer relationships and the use of CRM tools, this will undoubtedly support greater retention.

RETENTION: Or Customer retention is the strategy that an organization or company will undertake in order to keep customers and hopefully reduce the loss of customers. This is also about expansion and will focus on efforts to drive the survival and growth of a business. Application of managing and measuring

this strategy helps a business to improve and find ways to be more productive and thus have an edge over competition.

I am sure that you can see how these areas all connect, and how they all are areas 'not only be aware of' understanding, but also to be managed and mastered successfully, especially now more than ever, because with continued increase of online shopping and digital transformation, it is becoming more and more challenging to stand out and become the primary option for a customer as there is (as you probably know) so much choice now.

We have to be mindful of our digital transformation strategy, as it is in the adoption of digital technology that we must set our goals to implement ways in which we may increase sales, and improve efficiency, value - and even how we intend to innovate our systems to hopefully outperform others and give the best experience in our sector.

Remember this:

With today's sophisticated options when buying it is easy to miss what others are saying, and it is easy to overlook or neglect our part, but in using digital tools and resources for our small businesses, it means that we may set up personal and automated systems which do a great deal of the work, and these systems can be optimized to outperform many others when handled by a trained team.

In other words, we must ensure that all aspects of our small business operation run smoothly to ensure we are not missing the mark, losing customers, or annoying them in the processes which should be easy and simple. If we fail to play our part, we could get left behind, and be out of business in the modern world very quickly indeed.

By the way; are you unsure about the importance of being on TrustPilot? Then check out this article by SEO Training London it will help to understand whether or not you should create an account:

[CLICK HERE TO SEE IF IT IS IMPORTANT TO BE ON TRUST PILOT](#)

Final Tips:

1. You will want to be delighting your customers where possible. The more you do the more profits you will likely make.
2. Make your customer satisfaction your priority or hire someone who can - as it will change everything for you.
3. Remember that it comes down to the whole process and interaction. Become your customer and see how they feel about your brand image, ethos and the whole process and you will get an idea about what needs the most attention.
4. Make customers feel important and matter and you will be pleased that you did.

I will leave you with this quote from the late great Tony Hsieh:

"Let's take most of the money we would've spent on paid advertising and paid marketing and instead of spending it on that, invest it in the customer experience/customer service, and then let our customers do the marketing for us through word of mouth."

Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos

One more to get your juices flowing:

As always I hope this has been of use to you

Best

Greg

To start an effective and robust business plan so you beat competition contact me@

www.GregDeTisi.com

PDF generated by Kalin's PDF Creation Station