

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2025



THE TO-DO LIST FOR GETTING REVIEWS FOR LOCAL SEO

**GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE
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THE TO-DO LIST FOR GETTING REVIEWS FOR LOCAL SEO

Online reviews are essential for businesses as they build credibility, offer social proof, and significantly impact SEO and local visibility. Positive reviews enhance trust and customer engagement, leading to increased leads and higher conversion rates. Negative reviews, while challenging, provide valuable opportunities for improvement and demonstrate transparency and responsiveness, which can also positively influence potential customers.

Importance of Online Reviews

Reviews play a crucial role in local SEO by improving trust signals and brand reputation. Although many businesses focus primarily on how reviews affect search rankings, their overall benefits extend beyond SEO. A robust review profile helps brands attract new leads, provides social proof, and encourages customer loyalty through active engagement. Moreover, reviews can significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions, making them a critical component of a successful digital marketing strategy.

Leveraging Reviews Effectively

Effectively obtaining online reviews involves thoughtful strategies to encourage customers without causing annoyance or risking negative feedback. Here are several approaches to solicit reviews effectively:

- **Direct Ask:** Simply asking customers, clients, colleagues, or business partners for reviews is often effective. Leveraging existing relationships increases the likelihood of receiving positive feedback.
- **Verbal Request:** Direct, verbal requests made during personal interactions can encourage customers who have had positive experiences to leave reviews.
- **Digital Outreach:** Utilize emails, text messages, or social media channels to remind satisfied customers to leave reviews. Personalized digital outreach often yields positive responses.
- **Passive Requests:** Display QR codes or review links prominently on physical materials such as receipts, flyers, or in reception areas, providing an effortless review submission process.

Best Practices for Review Requests

When requesting reviews, ensure messages are concise, respectful, and personalized. Offer clear instructions, especially for customers who might be less tech-savvy, and always include contact information for a real person to handle any concerns directly before they become public. Follow-ups should be gentle and infrequent to avoid irritating customers. Personal touches can strengthen relationships, leading to genuine and impactful reviews.

Effective Review Management

Utilize review management tools responsibly to request, gather, and respond to feedback. It's crucial to avoid platforms that manipulate reviews by suppressing negative feedback, as these practices violate FTC guidelines. Proper management includes promptly addressing both positive and negative reviews, and demonstrating care and responsiveness to your audience.

Strategies for a Positive Review Profile

- **Respond to Reviews:** Address all reviews promptly to show engagement and commitment to customer satisfaction.
- **Know Your Customers:** Understanding your customers allows genuine interactions and helps quickly identify fraudulent or malicious reviews.
- **Make Reviewing Easy:** Provide clear instructions and user-friendly options such as QR codes or direct links.
- **Encourage Authenticity:** Promote honest reviews rather than incentivizing or pressuring customers, ensuring feedback remains genuine.
- **Personalization:** Adding personalized touches to review requests reinforces customer relationships and enhances the likelihood of positive reviews.

What to Avoid When Seeking Reviews

- Don't focus exclusively on one review platform; diversify to reach broader audiences.
- Never pay for or incentivize reviews, as this undermines authenticity.
- Avoid requesting fake reviews or leaving false reviews for competitors; it's unethical and damages your credibility.
- Don't ignore negative feedback; use it constructively to improve business operations and customer experiences.
- Avoid impersonal automated responses, as genuine engagement builds trust and loyalty.

In conclusion, actively managing and encouraging online reviews is integral for local business success. Reviews foster transparency, enhance customer trust and significantly contribute to SEO and lead generation efforts. Embracing both positive and negative feedback allows businesses to evolve and meet customer expectations effectively.

2

GOOGLE BUSINESS PROFILE NOW INTEGRATED WITH LOCAL SERVICE ADS

Google has announced a significant update for businesses using Local Service Ads (LSAs) - all new customer reviews must now be collected through your Google Business Profile (GBP) link. The previous LSA review link is no longer valid, requiring businesses to update their review collection process accordingly.

Google Local Services Ads

Your Google Business profile is now affiliated to your Local Service Ads Account

This [Google Business Profile](#) belongs to your business and it has been affiliated to [redacted] on Local Services Ads by Google.

New reviews for Local Services Ads now must be collected through your Google Business Profile link. **Your old link for collecting reviews won't work anymore.**

Your unique URL for requesting customer reviews:

You can also find your URL [here](#) on your Local Services dashboard.

What's changing:

↳ Fresh focus on reviews

Your **new** customer reviews will be managed from Google Business Profile, not your Local Services Ads account.

Beginning in early 2025, your existing customer reviews will also be managed from your Google Business Profile. Reviews will surface on both your Local Services ads and your Google Business Profile.

↳ Why is this important?

When your accounts are affiliated, managing your business on Google becomes easier and even more secure. [Learn more](#). From now, you must have an affiliated public Google Business Profile to run Local Services Ads.

↳ Security matters

Google matches your ad with your business to make sure only authorized people can manage your ad, calls and messages. Sometimes Google may ask a verified business to verify some information again.

Key Changes & Their Impact

1. Review Management Shift

- New customer reviews will be managed through GBP instead of your LSA account.
- Starting in early 2025, existing LSA reviews will also transition to GBP.
- Reviews will be visible on both LSAs and your GBP.

2. Importance of This Change

- Integrating LSA with GBP enhances security and simplifies business management.
- To continue running LSAs, businesses must now have an affiliated, public GBP.

3. Security Enhancements

- Google ensures LSAs are linked to verified businesses, preventing unauthorized management.
- Periodic re-verification may be required to maintain compliance.

Phase 2: Action Steps for Businesses

Immediate Actions

1. Verify & Optimize Your Google Business Profile

- Claim and verify your GBP.
- Complete all profile details: business description, services, hours, photos, etc.
- Ensure consistent Name, Address, and Phone number (NAP) across all online listings.
- Upload high-quality images and videos showcasing your work.
- Use relevant keywords in your business description.
- Confirm your GBP review link is correctly set in your LSA dashboard.

2. Update Your Review Request Process

- Stop using the old LSA review link.
- Obtain your new GBP review link:
 - Log into GBP.
 - Click "Ask for reviews."
 - Copy the provided short URL.
- Integrate the link into your website, email signatures, and digital touchpoints.
- Update CRM or invoicing software to use the new GBP review link.

3. Train Your Team

- Educate staff on the importance of the GBP review process.
- Provide scripts or talking points for requesting reviews.
- Emphasize that GBP reviews impact both GBP and LSA visibility.

Phase 2: Establishing a Review Strategy (1-3 Months)

Encouraging Customer Reviews

- **Timing:** Request reviews immediately after service completion.
- **Multiple Outreach Methods:**
 - In-person requests after service completion
 - Personalized email requests including the GBP review link
 - SMS messages with a direct link to leave a review
 - Review the link embedded in invoices and receipts
- **Simplify the Process:** Make it as effortless as possible for customers to leave reviews.

Monitoring & Responding to Reviews

- Enable notifications to track new reviews.
- Respond professionally to all feedback:
 - Thank customers for positive reviews.
 - Address concerns in negative reviews constructively and offer solutions.
- Actively engage with reviews to encourage more customer participation.

Ethical Review Incentives

- **No direct incentives** (discounts or gifts) as per Google's guidelines.
- Instead, focus on excellent service and indirect incentives:
 - Sending a thank-you email with helpful tips.
 - Running engagement-based contests, such as a monthly giveaway.

Leveraging Positive Reviews

- Share top reviews on social media.
- Feature positive feedback in marketing materials.
- Utilize GBP's "Updates" feature to highlight customer testimonials.

Phase 3: Ongoing Optimization & Review Analysis

Data-Driven Improvement

- **Track review trends** to monitor business reputation over time.
- **Analyze negative reviews** to pinpoint areas for service improvement.
- **Measure conversion rates** to assess how reviews impact LSA performance.

Maintaining an Optimized GBP

- Keep business details, services, and images updated.
- Explore and utilize new GBP features.
- Post regularly about offers, events, and updates.

Customer Feedback Integration

- Conduct customer surveys to gather insights.
- Create a feedback-friendly environment to improve services continuously.

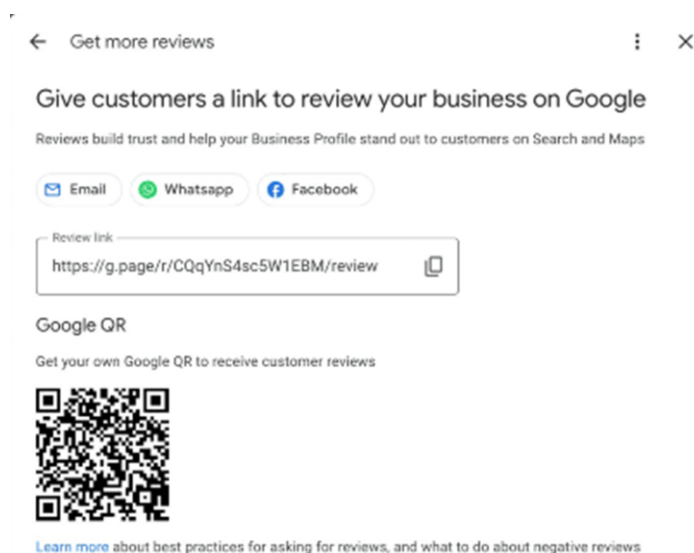
Final Thoughts

- This transition strengthens Google's review system, making it more secure and integrated. Businesses should act promptly to verify their GBP details, update review request procedures, and develop a consistent review strategy to maximize their LSA performance.

3

SIMPLIFY CUSTOMER REVIEWS WITH GOOGLE'S NEW QR CODE FEATURE

Last month, Google introduced a new feature allowing businesses to share QR codes with customers, enabling them to leave reviews via Google Search and Google Maps quickly.



How It Works:

- **Direct Access to Review Page:** Scanning the QR code takes customers straight to your Google Business Profile review page, skipping the need to search for your business manually and locate the review section.
- **Quick & Easy Process:** By simplifying the process, businesses can encourage more customers to leave feedback.
- **Seamless Integration:** This feature is built directly into the Google Business Profile dashboard, making QR code generation effortless.

How to Access It:

- Navigate to your **Google Business Profile dashboard** and look for the **"Ask for reviews"** section.
- From there, you can generate and download your unique QR code for reviews.

Key Advantages:

- **Higher Review Volume:** The convenience of scanning a QR code increases the chances of customers leaving reviews.
- **Improved Customer Satisfaction:** Offering a fast and hassle-free way to share feedback enhances the customer experience.
- **Stronger Local SEO Performance:** More positive reviews can boost your business's visibility in local search rankings.

Want to Learn More? [Join the conversation](#) on LinkedIn!

4

DASHBOARD & SEO UPDATES FOR APRIL 2025

1. Stay Ahead in AI-Driven SEO with Our Latest Updates - Live & Ready for You

We would like to share some important updates to our SEO deliverables that will help your clients stay visible in the rapidly evolving AI search landscape. As AI tools like ChatGPT, Perplexity, Grok, and Google AI Overviews redefine how people search, adapting now will be key to staying ahead.

We've enhanced our services to specifically target AI search visibility with the following features:

- **AI-Focused Keyword Research** – Identify terms and phrases that align with how AI engines process and prioritize search queries.
- **Conversational Content Strategy** – Create content that resonates with AI-driven platforms and aligns with natural language queries, ensuring higher visibility.
- **FAQ Schema Markup** – Structuring content to be easily picked up by AI for quick answers.
- **Voice Search Optimization** – Ensuring content is optimized for quick, direct answers in voice-driven results.

These enhancements are now live on your dashboard and ready to be implemented.

We're committed to keeping a close eye on emerging AI trends so you can trust that your strategies remain up to date.

Thank you for choosing us to support your clients' growth. We look forward to helping you navigate and succeed in this new era of AI-powered SEO.

2. Your SEO Audits Just Got Better with Insightful Summaries

We're excited to announce an upgrade to our SEO audit reports: each report now features a Summary section at the top for quicker insights and actionable recommendations.

These concise summaries, powered by analyzing raw audit data via ChatGPT, instantly highlight key SEO priorities. Additionally, we've included a brief overview on optimizing your presence for AI-driven search.

Check out the updated SEO Audit reports and share your feedback!