

Online Reviews: The Benefits, Best Practices and More.

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Growing up I was told by my parents not to care what others thought of me but to continue being who I was. Sure, they were just my parents and maybe they didn't phrase it as well as Dr. Suess, Bernard Baruch, or whoever it was that actually said:

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind"

But it was true; I shouldn't let someone's opinion affect too much of me as a person, especially if it was a person who didn't matter to me.

So what happens when you are a company and people are writing their opinions about you online? Well, you better hope that they are saying good things because what they say about your company online goes a long way.

Online reviews can influence others *to* or *not to* purchase your product/service, and even influence search engines to devalue your website on search result rankings.

In this article I will go over the benefits of online reviews on your website from an SEO and user standpoint. Topics include:

- [The SEO Benefits of Reviews and User Generated Content \(UGC\)](#)
- [How to Use User Generated Content](#)
- [How to Get Product Reviews to Appear on Search Results](#)
- [How Does Your Website Receive These Benefits](#)

What Are The SEO Benefits from Online Reviews and UGC?

A review on a website is the assessment of a product or service by an individual with the intention of promoting the product for others to enjoy, or warn others to stay away. **There are benefits** of having online reviews and user-generated content on your website. One reason is it gives opportunity to rank for longtail keywords and possibly non-marketing language that your audience may be using about your product. However, this only works if all reviews are coded in HTML and not behind Javascript on your page.

One possible shortcoming of reviews & UGC is that you may have one really great review featured on your product page one day, but two weeks and a number of reviews later that review is pushed down

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the page or worse, off the page due to pagination. So having control as to which reviews show and stay on the page may be beneficial.

Online reviews, however, **do not promise** increased rankings on all keywords alone excluding searches that include the name of your product and review (e.g.; 'product name' + review). Reviews can increase rankings if they help make your page popular and authoritative enough to earn links. Which requires users to visit, explore more than one page, and complete orders on the site.

Other benefits of reviews & UGC are:

- Opportunity for rich-snippets which can increase click-through rate
- Increased crawl frequency for each product page
- Build confidence in specific products to increase conversion rates
- More pages if each review has a single page with a dedicated URL
 - This is only recommended if your reviews are long and only excerpts of the reviews are shown on the products page

So to sum it up, user-generated content and reviews are good for SEO.

How to Properly Use Reviews & UGC

Having reviews and user-generated content on your site is good, but if you don't use it properly you may not be taking full advantage of the resources you have available. This could lead to a missed purchasing opportunity from a user looking to buy goods or a missed click-through to your website from a search result page. When you have reviews or UGC, be sure to do the following:

- Use on relevant product pages throughout the site
- Make sure they are coded in HTML and not other languages that may not be indexed
- Give reviews their own pages with unique URLs to target longtail keywords
- Use third party review sites and local site
- If you get bad reviews, respond to them and provide a solution
- Try to get at least 3-5 reviews a month

How to get Product Reviews to Appear on Search Results

Use Rich Snippets. Rich snippets are pieces of code added to your site to provide search engines with more information about the content on your site. This code could be added around reviews, events, products or your company contact information. Google states that the goal for a review rich snippet is to provide users with review information about a specific product of service, such as star rating and

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the name of the reviewer(s), on search result pages. There are a few different standards set in place by Google though.

When using review markup, the main topic of the page **needs to be about the specific** product or service. For example, using review markup on a page containing multiple products is not recommended or supported by Google because Google may not know what review to show on the search result page. Also, if the markup contains a single review, the reviewer's name **needs to be a valid name** of a person or an organization. For example, "SALE,40% off Next Week" would not be a valid name for a reviewer.

With review markup you are able to markup individual reviews or aggregate review information. The aggregated review would be the average rating for a local business or the total number of user reviews submitted. However, you can include the review-aggregate format for pages containing multiple reviews or if your page contains both multiple reviews and a single review. Such as a product-listing page that contains multiple individual reviews on the single product. But it is best to pick one format and not use both.

L'Amourita Pizza - Structured Data Linter

linter.structured-data.org/examples/google-rs/review.md.html ▼

★★★★★ Rating: 4.5 - Review by Ulysses Grant - Jan 6, 2009

L'Amourita Pizza Reviewed by Ulysses Grant on Jan 6 . Delicious, tasty pizza in Eastlake! L'Amourita serves up traditional wood-fired Neapolitan-style pizza, ...

Here is an example of rich snippets on a search result page or you can [Google Search "L'Amourita Pizza"](#)

You can read more about Rich Snippets

here: <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/146645?hl=en#individual>

Will all products reviews show?

Google states that **not all** products with reviews will result in product ratings showing on a product-listing ad, only ratings that have been determined that the information is accurate and relevant to the user. These will most likely show up for purchasing search terms or "product + review" related searches.

Product Ratings vs. Seller Ratings

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Product ratings are different than seller ratings, the differences are that product ratings show up with products and images of the products, and can range anywhere between 1 and 5 star rating. Where seller ratings show up on text ads and require at least 3.5 stars.

To get seller reviews, if you don't already have them, you can sign up for Google Trusted Stores, a certification program which collects seller ratings for free here: <http://www.google.com/trustedstores/merchants/>

How do I receive these benefits?

If you want your site to benefit from product ratings by been shown on search results, **you must share** your product reviews with Google and may do so either directly or through an approved third party (see list below). Instructions on how to upload your data can be found here: <http://www.google.com/merchants>

If sending your product feed directly, it might be best to have a **Google specialist** perform the initial setup. If help is needed you can request from a form found here: <https://services.google.com/fb/forms/productreviews/>

If you would like to opt-out of product ratings you must request this from Google by filling out the form here. <https://services.google.com/fb/forms/productratingsoptout/>

Third Party Services include:

- [BazaarVoice](#)
- [Ekomi](#)
- [Feefo](#)
- [PowerReviews](#)
- [Reevo](#)
- [ResellerRatings](#)
- [ShopperApproved](#)
- [Viewpoints](#)
- [Yotpo](#)

You can view the web version of this blog post here: [The Benefits of Reviews, How to Use Them and More.](#)

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