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Bright Ideas / Research on January 26, 2022.

Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

Jamie Pitman

25 min read

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Reputation Management

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Key Statistics

- 🐦 [More consumers are reading online reviews than ever before. In 2021, 77% 'always' or 'regularly' read them when browsing for local businesses \(up from 60% in 2020\).](#)
- 🐦 [67% will consider leaving a review for a positive experience, while 40% will consider leaving a review for a negative experience.](#)
- 🐦 [89% of consumers are 'highly' or 'fairly' likely to use a business that responds to all of its online reviews.](#)
- 🐦 [57% say they would be 'not very' or 'not at all' likely to use a business that doesn't respond to reviews at all.](#)
- 🐦 [More consumers use Google to evaluate local businesses than ever before. In 2021, 81% did, but the year before that, just 63% did.](#)
- 🐦 [The amount of people who only pay attention to reviews left in the previous two weeks has dropped from 50% to 22%.](#)
- 🐦 [In 2021, just 3% said they would consider using a business with an average star rating of two or fewer stars. That's down from 14% in 2020.](#)
- 🐦 [62% believe they've seen a fake review for a local business in the past year.](#)
- 🐦 [The top sources of fake reviews, according to consumers: 1\) Amazon; 2\) Google; 3\) Facebook.](#)
- 🐦 [Only 7% of consumers say they're 'not at all' suspicious of reviews on Facebook.](#)

Every year, the Local Consumer Review Survey explores the ways in which consumers use [online reviews](#) to choose, trust, and understand businesses offering services in their local area.

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is to see if the reputation of the main review sites is as clean as they'd like to think it is.

Throughout the survey, we'll be hearing from local SEO professional and Google Business Profile Diamond Product Expert, [Steady Demand's Ben Fisher](#), to get his learned take on the results of the survey. Just look out for **Ben's Takes** to get his expert opinion!

Customer Review Trends 2022

Business reviews can be an incredibly useful tool for attracting new customers, not only through the psychological effect they have on the reader, but by [boosting local rankings](#) so that businesses are more likely to show up for searching consumers.

Throughout the twenty questions explored in this survey, we'll cover everything you'll need to make a strong case for [online review management](#), be it for the purpose of building a loyal customer base, improving your online visibility, or both!

You'll also come away understanding which direction the wind is blowing in terms of consumers' preferences for star rating, review responses, and how recent reviews need to be in order to impact decision-making.

Without further ado, let's get stuck into the results of BrightLocal's Local Consumer Review Survey 2022.

How Consumers Read and Write Online Reviews for Local Businesses

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about how consumers look for reviews, read reviews, and leave reviews for local businesses.

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80% would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if their initial negative experience was turned into a very positive one

78% use the internet to find out information about local businesses more than once a week

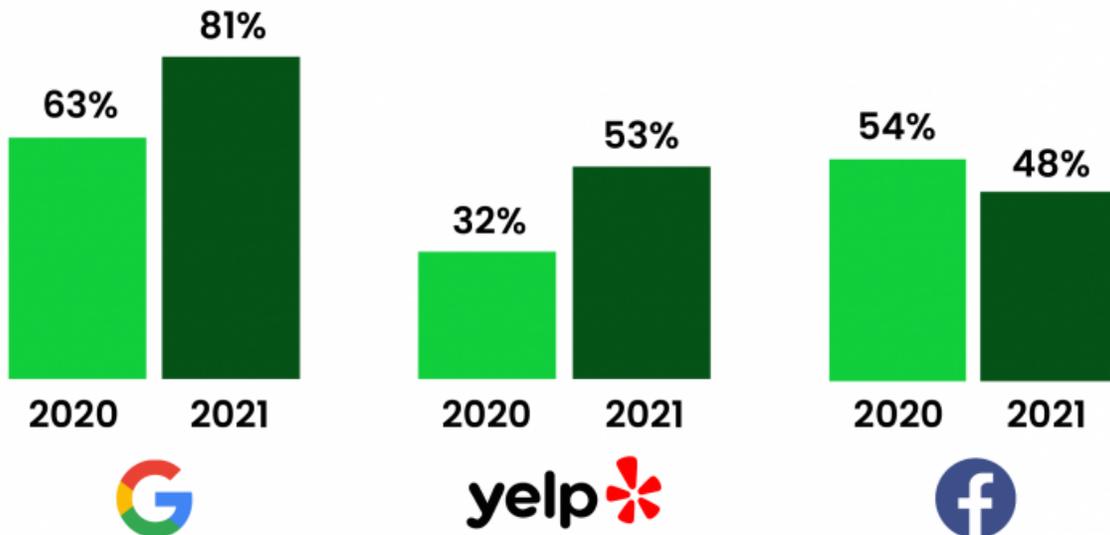


34% of consumers only leave positive reviews



7% of consumers only leave negative reviews

Which review sites are consumers using more and less?



Which business types do consumers pay the most attention to reviews for?

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Service-area businesses
and tradespersons

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Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

How often do consumers search for local businesses online?

To help us understand why and how consumers read and write reviews, it's important to first take a look at how often they're using the internet to find local businesses. We can then consider these trends when looking at levels of engagement with review platforms.

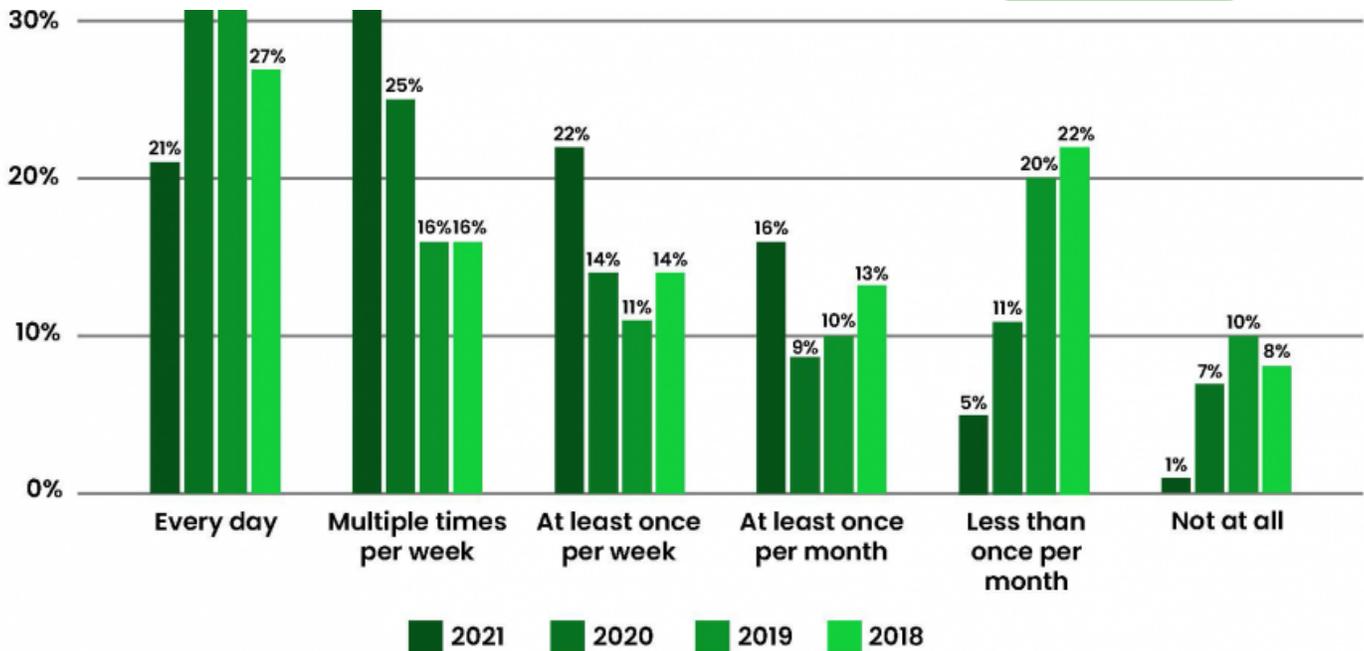
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Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

- 99% of consumers have used the internet to find information about a local business in the last year.
- 78% of consumers use the internet to find information about local businesses more than once a week (up from 69% in 2020).
- 21% of consumers use the internet to find information about local businesses every day (down from 34% every day).

In 2021, far fewer people were searching for online businesses every single day than in 2020, which initially suggests a lessening need for their use. However, looking across the board, the frequency of use has risen greatly. We've observed a 9% year-on-year increase of people using the internet more than once a week to find information about local businesses.

We've seen a large drop of those less engaged with finding businesses online, too. 1% of consumers say they don't use the internet to find local businesses *at all*; that's a 9% year-on-year increase from 2020. 99% of consumers using the internet to find local businesses. I think it's safe

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times a week has increased by 10%, whereas those checking every day has decreased by just a little more comparably. This may be because, as an industry, we have been trying to change the frame of mind our customers are in when it comes to success. Conversions over rankings."

Which sites do consumers evaluate businesses on?

While there are a great many business review and discovery sites out there—some focused on particular territories, others on industries and products—it's safe to say that a handful truly have a monopoly on consumer opinion and local businesses.

Let's take a look at which were 2021's winners and losers in the race to capture the attention, and opinions, of consumers.

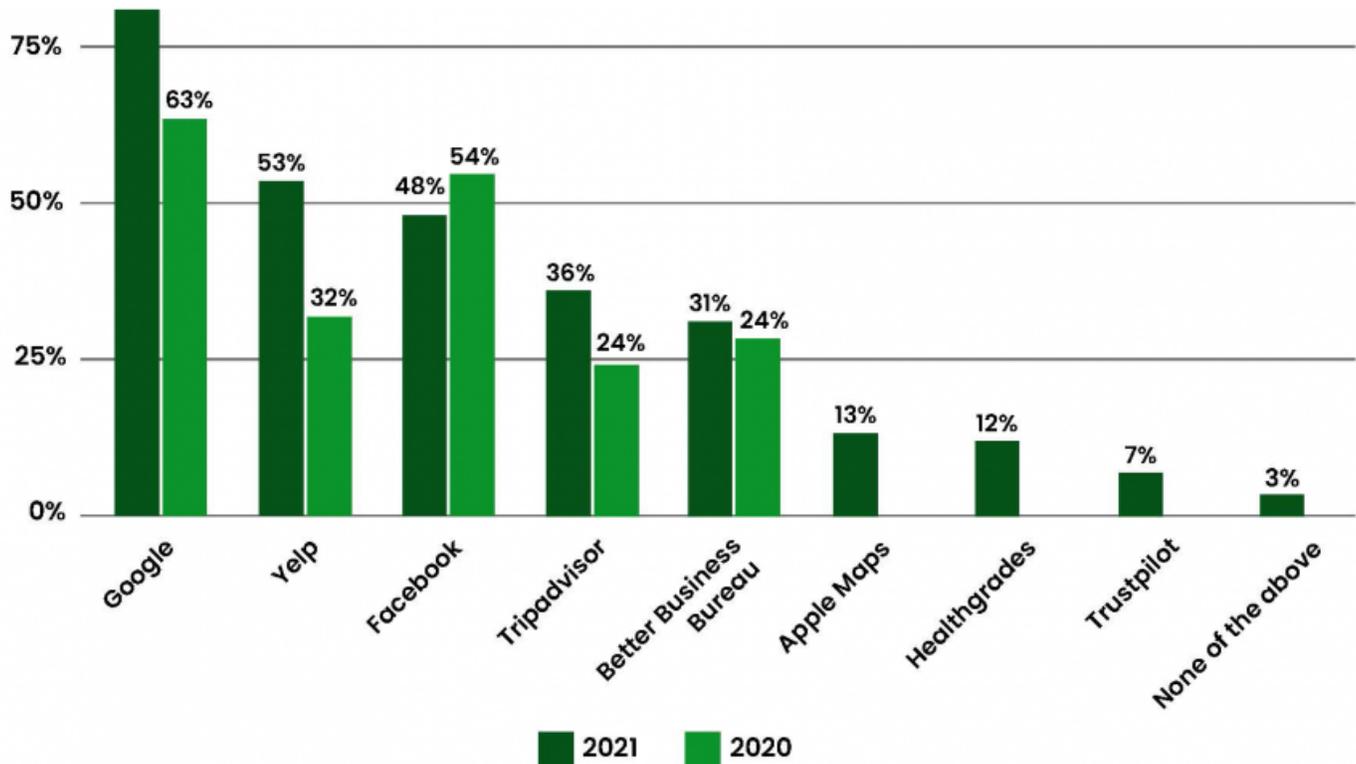
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Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

- Consumer use of Google to evaluate local businesses has leapt from 63% in 2020 to 81% in 2021.
- Consumer use of Yelp to evaluate local businesses has climbed from 32% in 2020 to 53% in 2021.
- Consumer use of Facebook to evaluate local businesses has dropped from 54% in 2020 to 48% in 2021.
- Only 13% of consumers used Apple Maps to evaluate local businesses in 2021.

Google's star continues to rise, with an 18% year-on-year jump in consumers using it to evaluate local businesses. This is to be expected, as it's by far the search engine with the largest market share (87% of the market when this survey was carried out, [according to Statista](#)). However, it's still a notable leap, and reiterates the importance of c

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and is always weathering, controversies on multiple fronts.

The strategic takeaway here is that your efforts shouldn't revolve around Google alone. A large and growing proportion of consumers are looking to Yelp to help them with their business decisions; your business or clients would be foolish to ignore it.

How often do consumers read online reviews for local businesses?

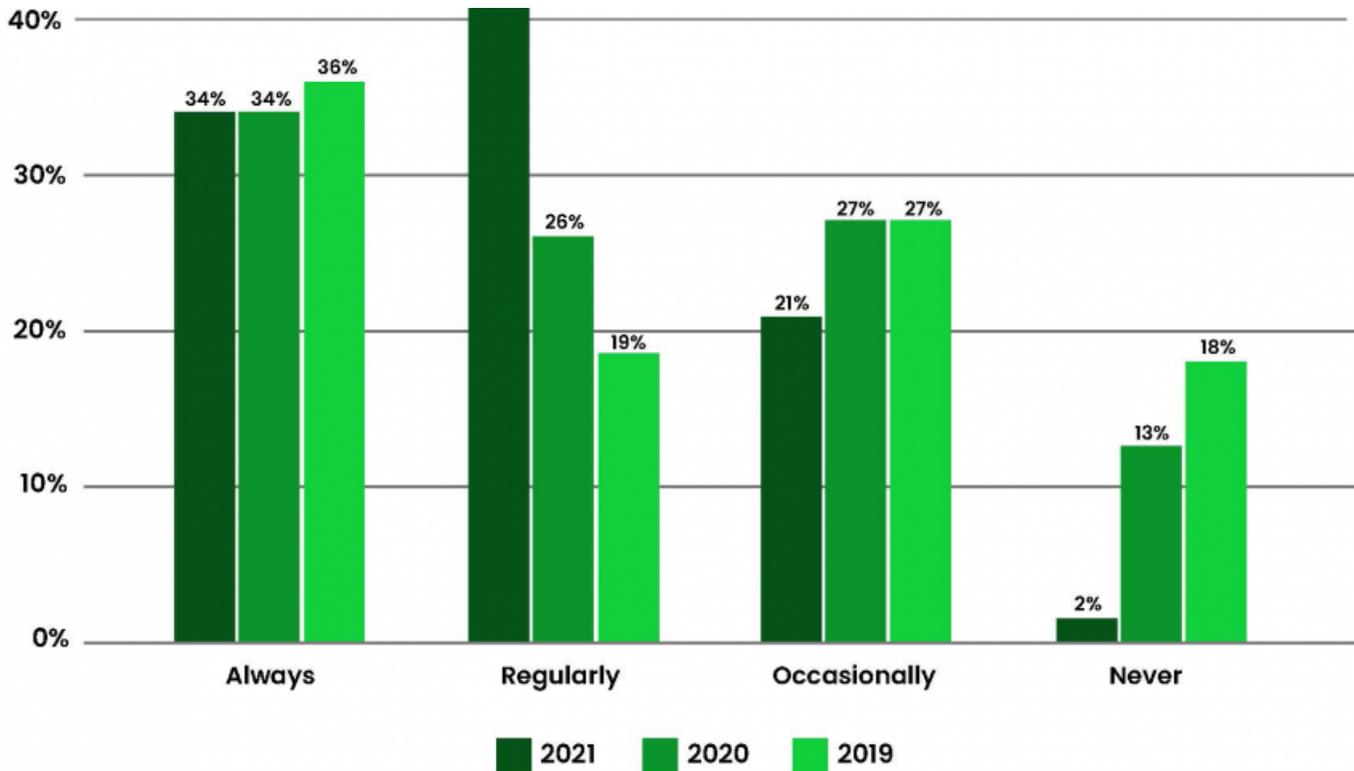
Now, onto the reviews themselves. We've established that 99% of consumers looked online to find a business last year, but how often did these people look to the opinions of other customers before making their decisions?

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Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

- 98% of people at least 'occasionally' read online reviews for local businesses.
- 77% of consumers 'always' or 'regularly' read online reviews when browsing for local businesses (up from 60% in 2020).
- The percentage of people 'never' reading reviews when browsing local businesses has fallen from 13% in 2020 to just 2% in 2021.

Over the last two years, we've seen a massive drop in the holdouts saying they 'never' read reviews. This has fallen 16%, from 18% in 2019 to just 2% last year. Looking at the rest of the data, we can be fairly confident that many of these have moved on to 'occasionally' or 'regularly' reading them.

For 43% of consumers, reading online reviews is now a regular occurrence. When looking at this data—in light of earlier results showing an increase in consumers using [Support](#)

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... interesting. I would have expected to see an increase in those answering 'always'. I feel this is a very natural result. It is very normal behavior: when looking at a business, we are thinking of engaging to read about others' experiences."

Which business types do consumers pay the most attention to reviews of?

Not all business experiences are created equal: the risk in poor service from a plumber and a bartender just don't match up. So it's expected that people care more about, and will likely read more reviews of, certain business types than others.

To explore this, we looked at eight key sectors that we know reviews play an important part in, and asked how important a part reviews played in consumers' decisions to use them.

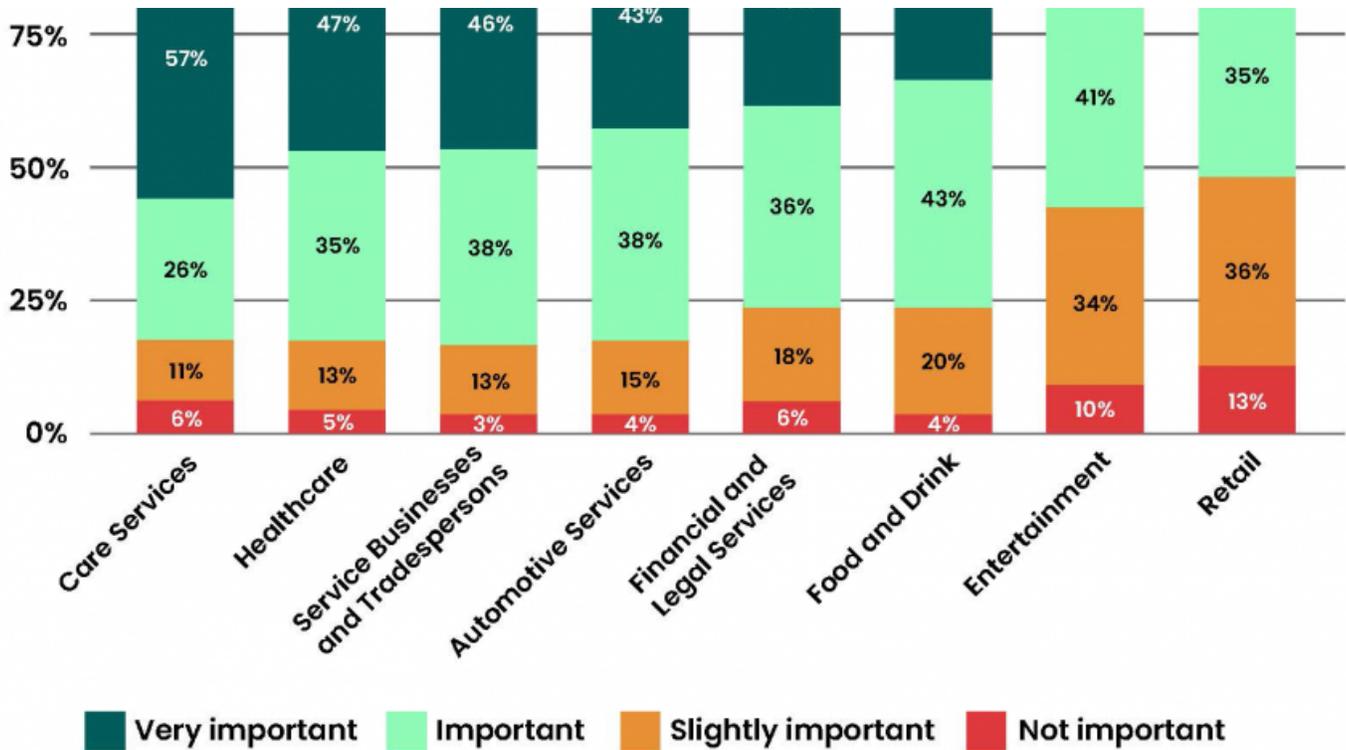
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- The top business types for which reviews play an 'important' or 'very important' part in consumers' decisions are:
 - Service businesses and tradespersons (84% said reviews are 'important' or 'very important' in their decision)
 - Care services (83%)
 - Healthcare (82%)

As expected, businesses that are infrequently required, and come with a high level of risk, face public scrutiny far more than things like restaurants and bars, where a friend's recommendation is sometimes all that's needed. It's heartening to see that c

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It's also interesting to see that 6% of consumers consider reviews for financial and legal services to be 'not important'. Could it be that years of Google Business Profile spam and fake reviews in the legal sector has taken its toll on the public perception of this industry?

How many consumers write reviews, and for what types of experiences?

We've explored where people read reviews, and for what types of businesses, but those reviews have to come from somewhere. That's why we asked questions around the writing of reviews, trying to uncover the holy grail of reputation management: what makes someone more or less likely to leave a review?

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Yes, but might
in the future

23%

Yes, for a positive experience

34%

Yes, for both positive and
negative experiences

33%

Yes, for a negative experience

7%



Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

- 74% of consumers left reviews for local businesses in the last 12 months.
- 67% of consumers will consider leaving a review for a positive experience, while 40% will consider leaving a review for a negative experience. A crossover of 33% will consider both.
- 7% of consumers only leave reviews for negative experiences, while 34% of consumers only leave reviews for positive experiences.

Ultimately, review sites are fairly dumb tools, and show all reviews on an equal footing (though admittedly not necessarily in the order they were left). They don't take into consideration [the different types of reviewers](#) there are, the customer's history of reviews, or what sort of people leave reviews in certain conditions. Therefore, these points aren't taken into account when presenting the all-important average star rating.

That's why it's particularly interesting to look at the percentages of consumers that only leave negative reviews (7%) and those that only write positive reviews (34%). The c

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negative reviews can actually help your reputation!

Ben's Take: *"This stat is interesting. Only roughly one in three surveyed stated they have left a review for a positive or negative experience. This could be based on many factors, but the leading reason, I would think, is that they were not asked to leave a review."*

What factors influence a consumers decision to leave a review?

Providing a positive customer service experience is obviously the first step to getting a great review, but not everything that influences it is in the business' hands. We wanted to explore what other factors could play a part in turning a positive experience into a positive review:

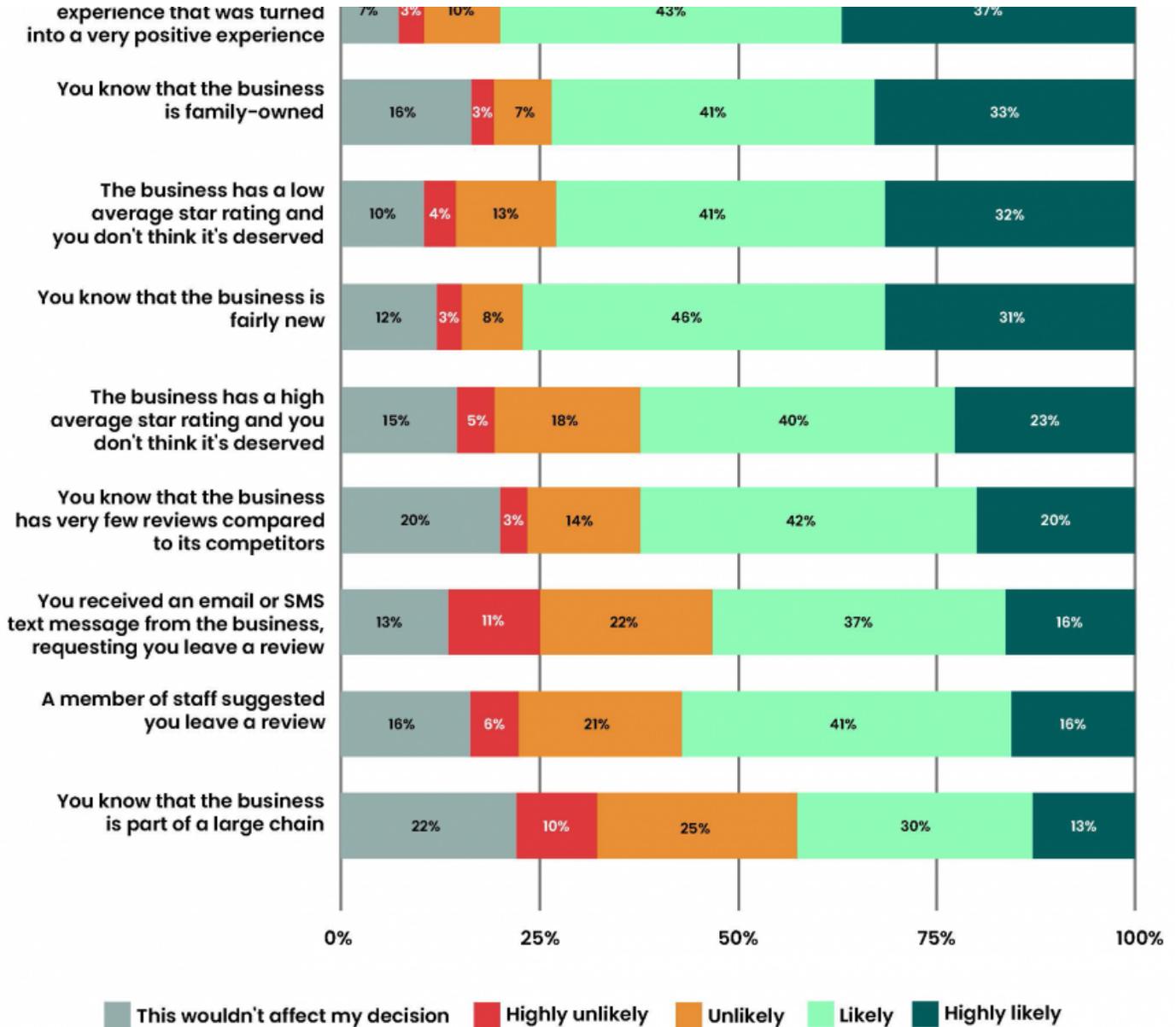
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- 88% of consumers say they would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if the business went above and beyond to ensure they had an exceptional experience.
- 80% of consumers say they would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if they initially had a negative experience that was turned into a very positive €

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- 77% of consumers say they would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if they knew that the business was fairly new.

With the obvious out of the way (going 'above and beyond' is most likely to result in a positive review), there's a few interesting things to note here.

Firstly, compare the proportion that would be 'likely' or 'highly likely' to leave a review if they knew the business was family-owned (74%) with the proportion that would feel the same about a large chain (43%). This shows the massive amount of potential of highlighting that your business is family-owned when it comes to marketing, and developing the customer experience with this in mind.

Conversely, large chains really face an uphill struggle to generate reviews, even after positive experiences. It's cold comfort, but comfort nonetheless, that 22% of consumers say that the business being part of a chain wouldn't impact their decision.

Another surprise is that feeling like a low average star rating is undeserved is what might push customers to leave you a review, with 73% saying that they'd leave a review after a positive experience in this situation. So, providing you deliver a genuinely excellent experience, there's no need to feel down about a low average star rating. Your future customers will be willing to help you out if you deliver your best!

Ben's Take: "61% of users state that after having a positive experience, they would leave a review if a business went above and beyond, and 43% said they would be highly likely to leave a review if a negative experience was turned into a positive one. Also, it appears that an equal percentage would review a business if there were not a lot of reviews and if they were asked to by an employee. Overall, it is a good idea to provide the best service possible and also ask for a review, if you are looking to get more positive reviews."

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Despite being deceptively simple on the surface, there are lots of elements of reviews and business review profiles that can have an impact on how consumers perceive them, such as recency, length, responses, and so on.

With this in mind, we looked at the various elements of reviews to find out what really matters to the consumers reading them.

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75%

"The written review describes a positive experience"



58%

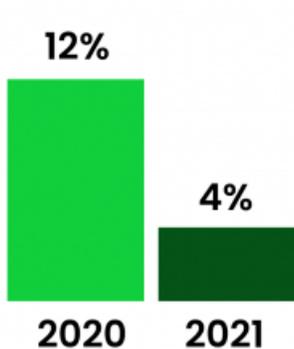
"The review has a high star rating"



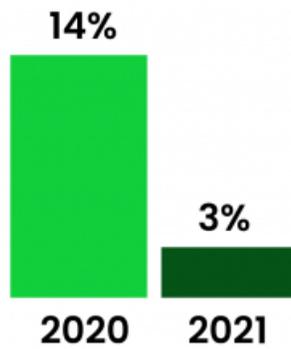
55%

"The business owner has responded to the review"

How are consumer attitudes to average star ratings changing?

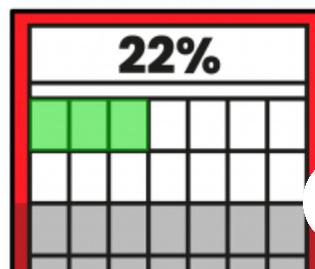
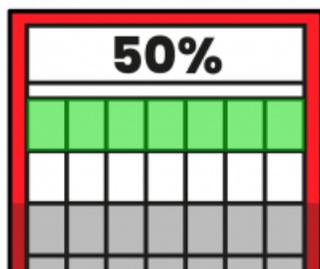


Consumers who would only use a 5-star business



Consumers who would not use a business with 2 or fewer stars

The percentage of consumers who only pay attention to reviews left in the last two weeks:



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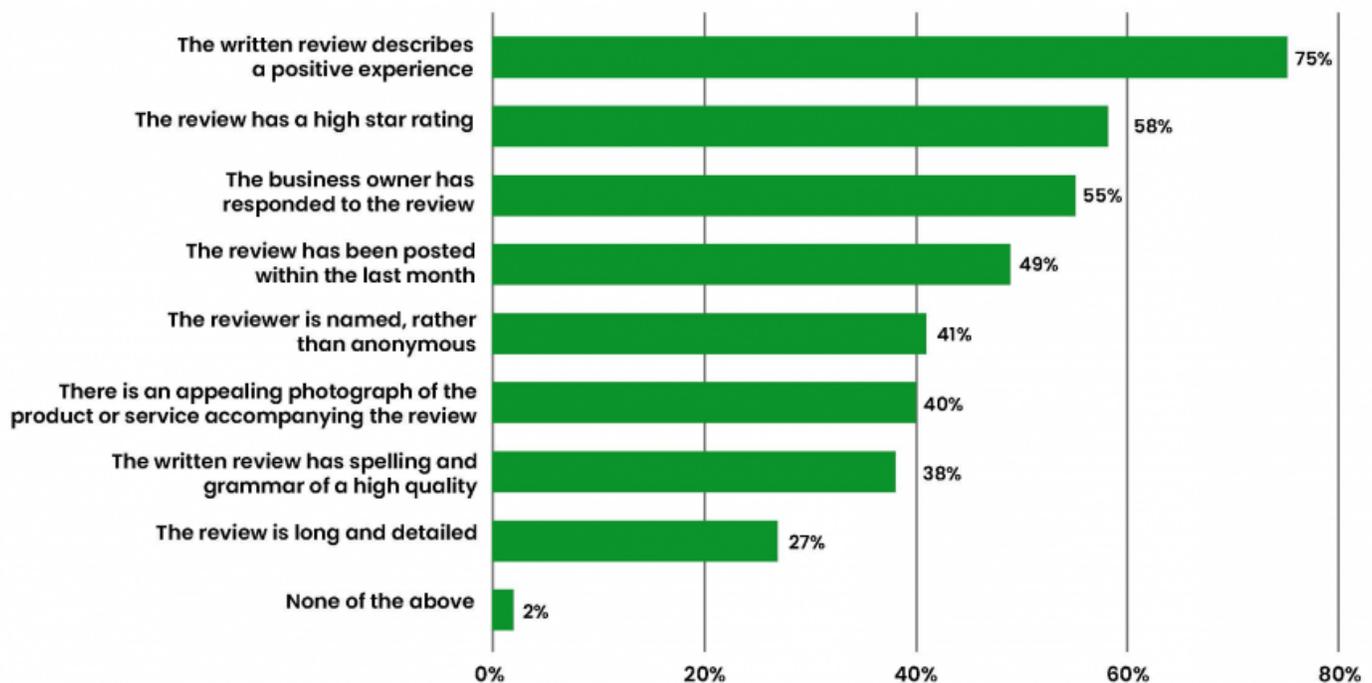
Which factors of reviews matter most to consumers?

Depending on your personal preference, perhaps based on experience with businesses, review sites, and even just other people, you might have a strong aversion to one type of review but implicitly trust another.

Does the review have a named author? Was it left recently? Has the business owner responded? Are there lots of capital letters in the review? Are photos attached?

We wanted to find out how much, if at all, things like these matter to consumers.

Which factors of online reviews would make you feel positively about using a business?



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- The business owner has responded to the review (55% chose this)
- At least 25% of consumers don't care about the review describing a positive experience, and at least 42% don't care about a high star rating.

It goes without saying that to get a good review, you need to deliver a positive experience, so it's natural that it's these types of experiences people want to hear about most.

However, while you might think the star rating is the best barometer of this experience, in fact, people want to read written descriptions of experiences, and value these above star rating.

Anyone trying to decide whether to start responding to reviews should pay attention to the fact that 55% of consumers said that a response from the business owner makes them feel positive about that business. If that doesn't sound like much, consider that only 3% more said that a high star rating would do the same, leaving us with the conclusion that consumers care about star rating and responses roughly the same.

So if you're looking at a low star average and are worried about starting to respond to reviews, these results suggest that it could be a winning strategy.

Ben's Take: *"Overall, I think what we are seeing here is that the core tenets of reviews are about the same. It is important to have reviews that are recent, responded to, and highly-rated and positive in nature. This is good advice for any business, and a goal most merchants should strive for."*

What are the minimum star ratings consumers will accept?

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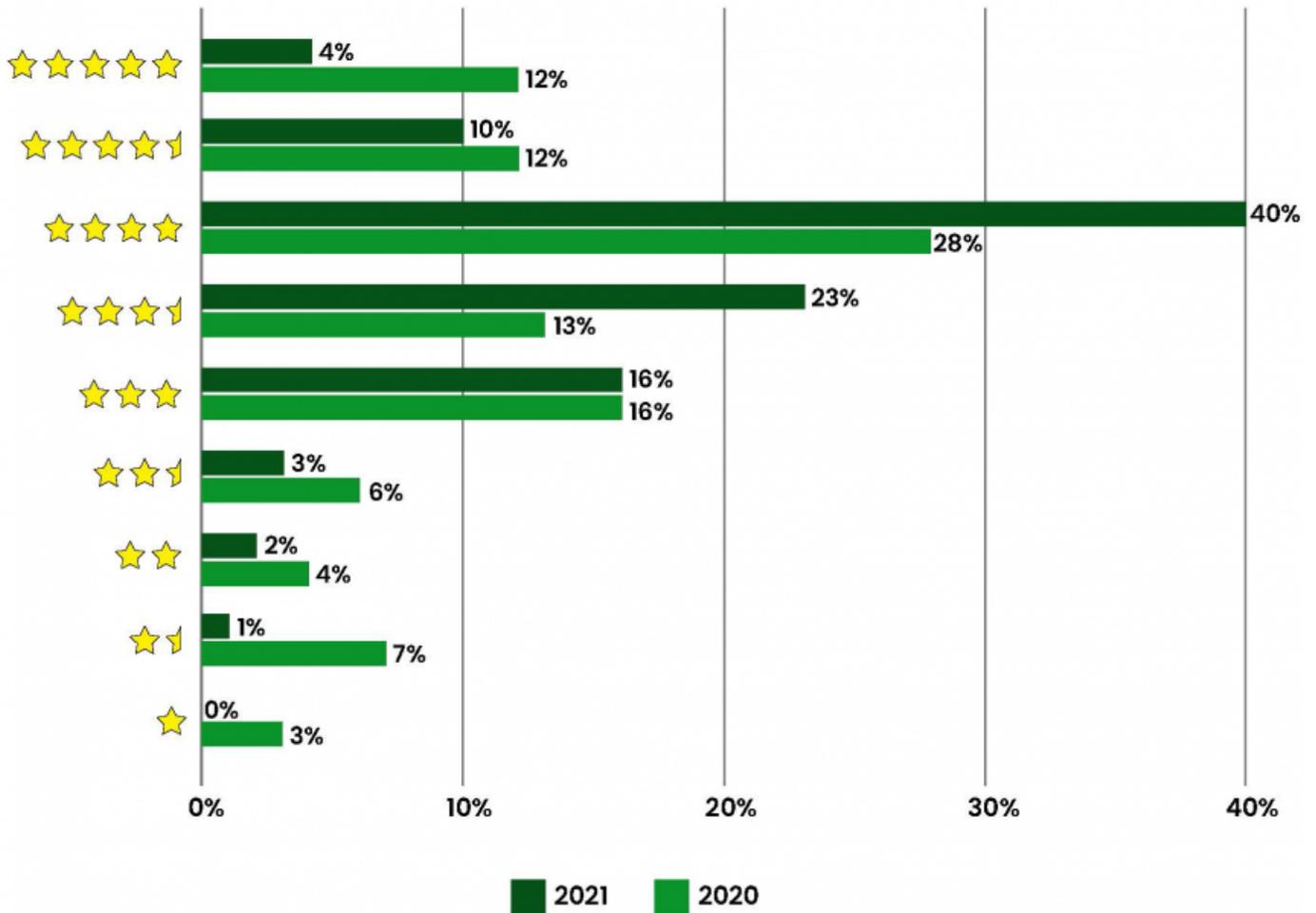
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must have for you to consider using them?



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- The percentage of consumers who would only use a 5-star business has fallen from 12% in 2020 to just 4% in 2021.
- In 2021, just 3% of consumers said they would consider using a business with an average star rating of two or fewer stars. That's down from 14% in 2020.

Perhaps in line with consumer trust in reviews somewhat dwindling (as we'll see later), it makes sense that there's been a drop in those only expecting to see five stars

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With more and more businesses learning the importance of review generation, and more consumers searching for and evaluating businesses, it makes sense that consumers expect more. But they also understand that nobody's perfect. The much-publicized difficulties local businesses have faced during the coronavirus pandemic could explain this understanding, too.

Ben's Take: *"This makes tons of sense as users are looking for at least a 4.0 average rating. No business is perfect, and users understand this. They expect to see some negative experiences."*

How important is recency of reviews to consumers?

A review tells the story of a single customer interaction at a single point in time, but what if that point in time is long ago? Services can change frequently, so for the best representation of the current experience, it would make sense that the most recent are the most trusted, right?

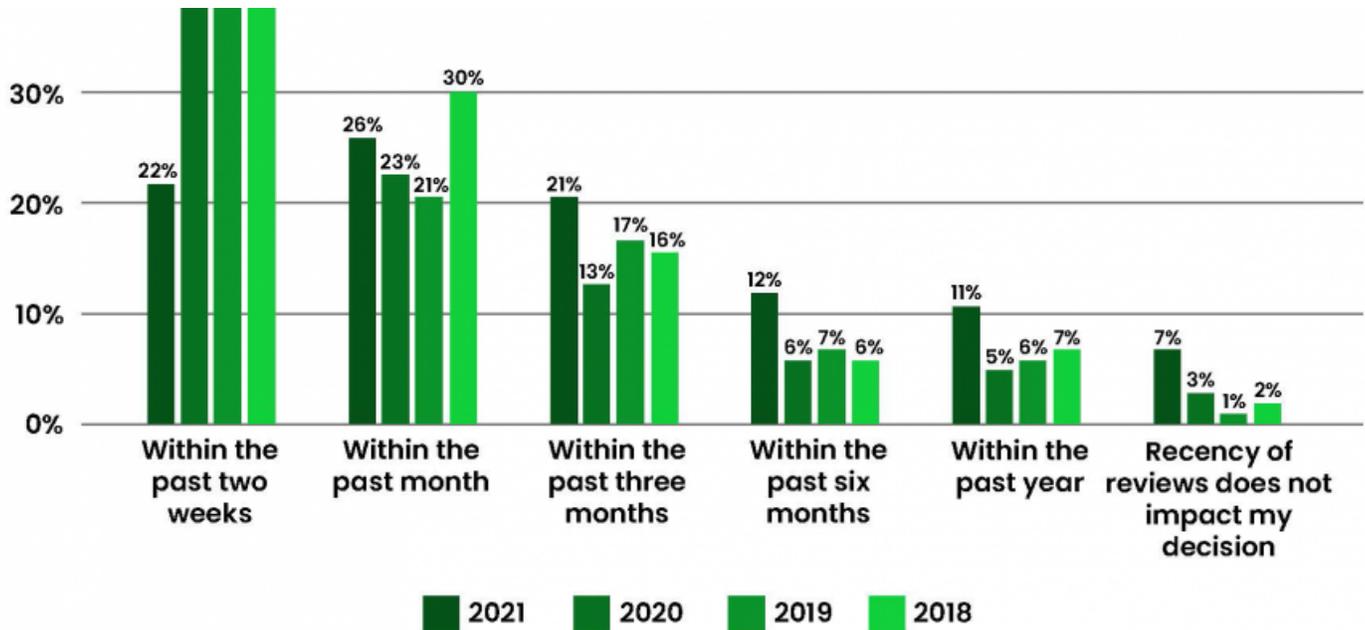
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- In 2020, 50% of consumers felt that only reviews left within the last two weeks impacted their decisions. In 2021, that figure dropped to 22%, with many more taking into consideration reviews left between the last three months to a year.

Interestingly, there's been a big drop in the expectation for very recent reviews left in the last two weeks prior to evaluating the business. Accordingly, the amount of consumers willing to trust reviews left as long as a year ago are on the rise. As Ben suggests below, this could be because consumers are being more lenient about what businesses can achieve due to the pandemic, and therefore more realistic about how recently reviews should have been left.

It's worth noting that 7% of our survey respondents said that review recency didn't mean anything to them. Depending on your situation, this could be a good or bad thing. For example, if you had a slew of bad reviews a year or so ago, but have turned the ship around and now boast a 4-star profile, there are those who will look into your history and consider those old low-scoring reviews as relevant and representative of your business now.

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Which elements of a business's review profile matter the most to consumers?

Just as with a single review, there are plenty of elements of a business's overall review profile that can have an impact on consumer decisions, such as the number of reviews or, as mentioned above, how recently they were left.

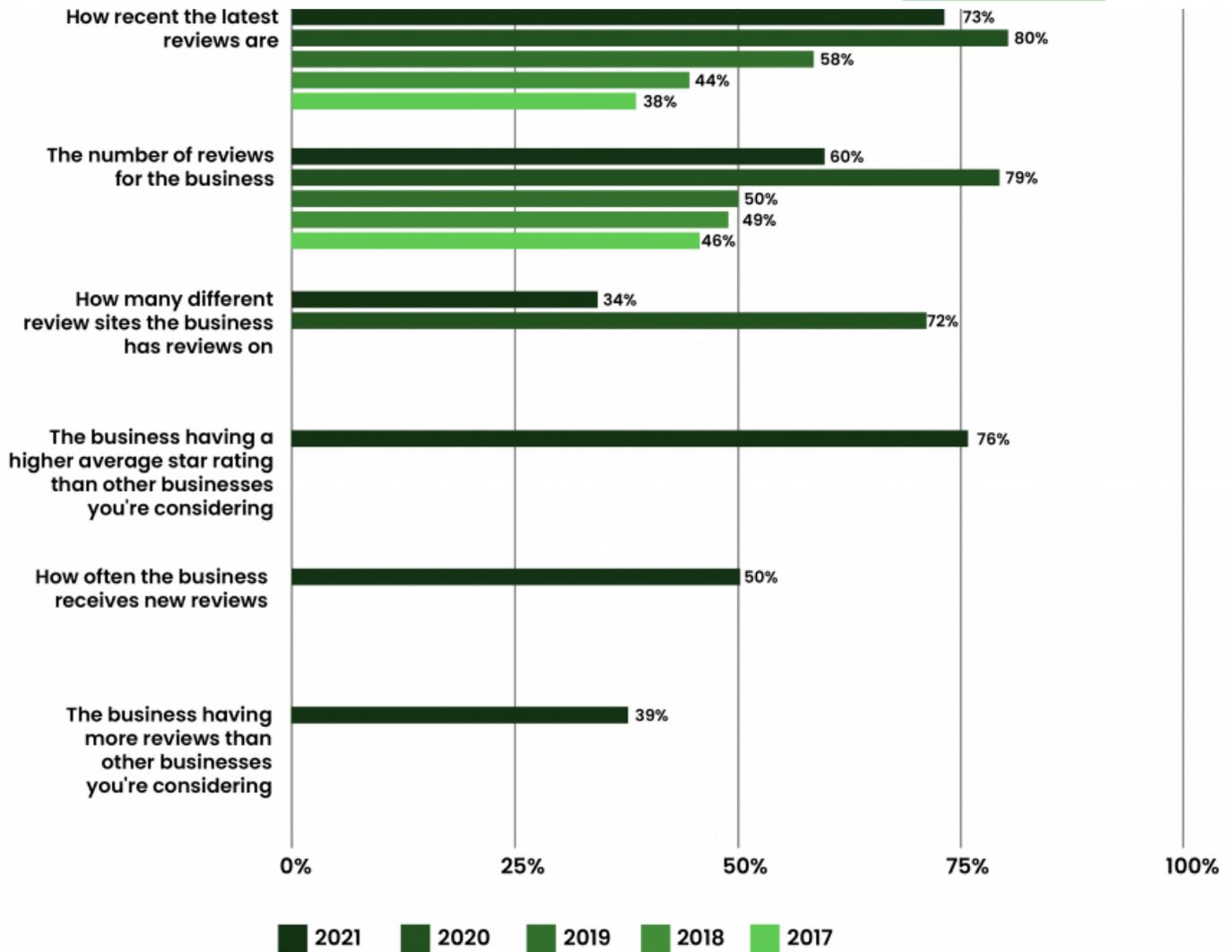
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Local Consumer Review Survey 2022

- How important consumers consider the range of review sites that businesses have reviews on has fallen from 79% in 2020 to 69% in 2021.
- How important consumers consider the total number of reviews for a business has fallen from 79% in 2020 to 69% in 2021.
- The top three factors of a business' review profile that would influence a consumer's decision are:

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- How recent the latest reviews are (73%)

We've been asking this question since 2017, but we included a number of new responses in this year's survey in order to understand how certain elements compared. As we did last year, we found that the star rating, recency, and number of total reviews on a review site were considered important.

However, it's worth pointing out that while 76% of respondents said that the business having a higher star rating than competitors was important, far fewer (39%) feel the same about the number of reviews. This means that it's not just about getting as many reviews as possible, but ensuring that your service is genuinely deserving of a high star rating.

One final thing to note here is that how important consumers perceive the number of review sites you have reviews on has more than halved, from 72% in 2020 to just 34% in 2021. It's clear that the number of sites people pay attention to is dwindling, so it's best to focus your efforts on the handful of sites that are most relevant to your audience.

What Consumers Think About Businesses Asking for, and Responding to, Reviews

When it comes to your online reputation, it's not just a case of 'deliver a great service and hope for the best'. As we've seen above, consumers care about the quality and recency of reviews. This is why reputation management software exists to enable business owners to grow and monitor their reviews.

However, that's only one part of the equation. We've already seen that 55% of consumers said that the business owner responding to the review would make them feel positively about a business, so this could be the key differentiator between you and your competitors.

Responding to reviews is also a great way of showing your brand personality, an example of your customer service, and highlighting fake reviews, so it's a recommended

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Some businesses like to respond to positive reviews every time and shy away from the potential conflict arising from replying to negative reviews. Plenty others leave their fans alone and just seek to counteract the negative impact of bad reviews by exclusively replying to those.

- 89% of consumers say they would be 'fairly' or 'highly' likely to use a business that responds to all reviews, positive and negative.

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power of [responding to negative reviews](#) as well as positive ones.

Meanwhile, it's interesting to see that, broadly, consumers feel more favorably about review profiles including responses to negative reviews, rather than those with replies to positive reviews only. This suggests that consumers respect a business owner trying to turn around a bad situation more than one basking in praise and ignoring the naysayers.

Ben's Take: *"I encourage all of our clients to respond to all reviews. The data backs this up as well. 59% of users said they are fairly likely to use a business that responds to all reviews. I feel it is important to respond to all reviews: respond to negative reviews so that prospective customers see how you deal with a negative experience, and respond to positive reviews as a way of thanking a user for leaving a review. What also makes sense here is that 52% said they would use a business if a merchant responded to only negative reviews, meaning that it is very important that, at a minimum, negative reviews are responded to."*

How often are consumers prompted to leave reviews?

We now know that consumers want to see responses to their reviews and the reviews of others, so it's clear they're happy for business owners to get involved in the consumer feedback process. But how many are influenced when businesses ask them to leave reviews, either directly or indirectly? And how many business owners are even asking for reviews in the first place?

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- 17% of consumers say they haven't been prompted to leave a review by a business in the last 12 months.
- 12% of consumers say they left a review every time a business prompted them to do so in the last 12 months.
- 35% of consumers say they left a review at least half of the times they were prompted to do so by a business in the last 12 months.

It's clear that businesses are getting the message about the importance of asking for reviews, because just 17% of consumers said they hadn't been prompted for a review in the previous 12 months. What should really buoy anyone investing time into this, though, is that a not-insignificant 12% of consumers say they'll always leave a review when prompted to do so by the business.

That means you could potentially get 12% of all of your future customers to leave you a review, just by asking them. Take into consideration that 23% leave a review more than half of the time and that figure grows even further. Now, the number of reviews ›

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online reviews?

There are countless imaginative ways to ask for reviews or raise awareness of the importance of them to your business, from including a link in an email footer to displaying a request at the point of sale. To find out which of these types of request is growing in popularity (with businesses, at least), we asked consumers to tell us the ways in which they recall being prompted for a review.

- The methods of asking for reviews that have increased year-on-year are:
 - In an SMS text message (7% increase)
 - On a receipt or invoice (5% increase)

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businesses have to go to [get consent to use SMS](#).

Elsewhere, previously lesser-used methods are on the decline. Social media, over the phone, and via business card have all seen large drops, year-on-year. However, this doesn't necessarily speak to their efficacy. It's worth remembering that just because a lot of businesses don't use a particular tactic, it doesn't mean it doesn't work. It could just be that one of these lesser-used methods is the thing that makes your review requests stand out from your competitors, so be creative!

What incentives are businesses using to encourage reviews?

Each platform has its own set of [review guidelines](#), from Yelp specifically stating that businesses can't request reviews to Google being against the practice of [review-gating](#). However, there are some practices that are considered 'less than legit' across the board, with 'offering cash' being illegal in some parts of the world.

We wanted to find out how many businesses are offering direct incentives in their efforts to generate reviews, and so asked consumers how often they remembered instances of this.

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- In 2021, 17% of consumers recall being offered a discount in exchange for a review. That's up from 12% in 2020.
- In 2021, 15% of consumers recall being offered a gift or free services in exchange for a review. That's up from 8% in 2020.
- The percentage of consumers who recall being offered a cash incentive for a review dropped from 9% in 2020 to just 6% in 2021.

Thankfully, it looks like the practice of offering cash as a review incentive is on the decline, having fallen from a surprising 10% in 2019 to just 6% this year.

Elsewhere, though, the tides are turning in the other direction, with both discounts and free gifts/services bouncing back in 2021 from a drop in 2020. It could be that, following a particularly hard year at the start of the pandemic, those businesses either opening back up or needing to stay above water in 2021, have resorted to these measures to

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While your business might not undergo significant change year after year, large tech companies certainly do. Public opinion of giants like Amazon and Google is always in flux or, in some cases, constantly in decline, depending on the latest privacy issues or anti-competition lawsuit.

This has a trickle-down effect to reviews on these platforms, too. But how much of consumer trust in reviews is down to the corporations themselves, and how much is down to the people who use (and abuse) them?

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Compared to other sources of opinion.

For the first time, this year we sought to compare consumer trust in reviews to a wider variety of sources of opinion than just 'personal recommendations'. This widening of the question and context has led to a large decrease in these figures, as respondents have more sources to consider and compare to.

- 49% trust consumer reviews as much as personal recommendations from friends and family.
- 28% trust consumer reviews as much as professionally-written articles by topic experts.

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expert reviews, social media personality recommendations, or the recommendations of their family and friends.

Considering that in 2020, [79% said they trusted online reviews as much as the recommendations of family and friends](#), this feels like a significant drop in trust. Throughout the following questions, we explore why that might be.

What elements of reviews make consumers most suspicious?

As you probably already know, review sites have a big problem with fake reviews. These might take the form of a negative review bomb (in which a group of like-minded individuals who haven't actually used a business take to review sites to batter it with fake, negative reviews), they might be a competitor simply trying to artificially reduce your average star rating, or they might just be an excitable new member of staff hoping to make an impression by leaving a glowing review of the place they work.

None of this speaks to what consumers view as fake, though. The level of education on the part of the average consumer isn't at a point at which they'd be able to reel off the list above. That's why, without going into too much detail about what we meant by 'fake', we asked survey respondents to let us know which things might hint to them that a review they're reading is suspect.

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- The top three reasons consumers might think a review is fake are:
 - The review is over-the-top in its praise (45% chose this)
 - The review is one of lots of reviews with similar content (40% chose this)
 - The reviewer is anonymous or uses an obvious pseudonym (38% chose this)
- Only 26% of consumers say that the business owner responding to the review and saying it's fake would make them suspicious of the review.

There's a lot to unpack there, but it's particularly interesting to see that 45% say that a review that's 'over-the-top in its praise' would make them suspicious, while a lower 36% would say the same about a review that's 'over-the-top in its negativity'.

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it's fake would encourage the reader to believe them. This is worth bearing in mind when responding to reviews: responding is important but it's not enough. You need to go through all proper available channels to [get fake reviews reported and removed](#).

How many consumers have seen fake reviews?

We now know what makes consumers suspicious, but how big is the problem of fake reviews in the first place? How many people can confidently say they've seen one or more fake reviews?

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As you can see, fake reviews are still a big problem for review sites and for businesses, with 62% confident in their belief that they've seen a fake review. And as we'll see later on, these have a really damning effect on trust in review sites and reviews in general.

Strikingly, fewer than 10% can confidently say they've seen no fake reviews at all. This leaves 90% of consumers at least wary of fake reviews.

Ben's Take: "Over 60% of those surveyed feel they have seen a fake review in the last year. This does not really come as a surprise. Given how bad most platforms are at detecting fake reviews, and also how bad Google is at removing reviews, the frequency of fake reviews just keeps growing."

Where have consumers seen fake reviews?

While fake reviews can, theoretically, be left anywhere you don't need a verifiable login to access (and even plenty you do), some sites are bigger culprits for this kind of thing than others. This makes sense, as why would you pay for fake reviews on the sites people aren't looking at?

Here we start to dig into which sites are the most likely to host fake reviews, and find out how much consumers trust these sites. We've included Amazon as, although it's not a business review site, it's highly relevant to the topic of fake reviews in general. Also, we can learn a lot by comparing trust in Amazon with trust of other sites more directly related to local businesses.

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- The top three sources of online reviews that consumers are confident that they've seen a fake review on in the past year are:
 - Amazon (52%)
 - Google (50%)
 - Facebook (37%)

Due to the sheer volume of reviews on Amazon and Google, and the rise in consumers using these services to find reviews, it comes as no surprise that these are the leaders, but the sheer percentages involved here might surprise some, with over half of consumers saying they've seen fake reviews on these two sites.

Meanwhile, despite it being reported last year that [Tripadvisor had to delete nearly one million fake reviews over the course of the previous 12 months](#), only 11% of respondents to our survey felt that they'd seen a fake review there over a similar period. Per gaming the system on Tripadvisor are just better at it?

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How suspicious are consumers of reviews on the top review sites?

Now that we've touched on consumer experiences around fake reviews on the top sites, let's look at how generally suspicious people are of their reviews.

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- Better Business Bureau is, by far, the most trusted review site. Only 29% of its users are 'fairly' or 'very' suspicious of reviews on that site.

Surprisingly, the picture painted here is very different. Here we see that it's Facebook, Amazon, and Yelp that take gold, silver, and bronze, respectively, for suspicion around reviews. Even though 50% said they'd seen a fake review on Google, a smaller proportion (45%) say that they're 'fairly' or 'very' suspicious of Google reviews.

The results for Facebook, on the other hand, flip the script. While the data from the previous question suggests that fewer consumers have seen fake reviews here than on Amazon or Google, an incredible 70% of consumers are already 'fairly' or 'very' suspicious of fake reviews on Facebook.

What this tells us is that perception doesn't have to match experience: plenty of consumers might have seen fake reviews on Facebook in the last year, but many more are generally suspicious of the platform and its content, and of what they might see in the future. Conversely, while 50% of users admit they've seen fake reviews on Google, fewer feel that they need to be suspicious of Google reviews.

Do fake reviews make consumers generally suspicious of reviews?

Finally, we wanted to ask a big question that could speak to the potential impact of fake reviews, to learn whether the rot is corroding the machine and dismantling trust in online reviews as it goes.

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- 67% of consumers agree that the existence of fake reviews and fake reviewers makes them distrustful of online reviews in general.

This is a result that should send a shiver down the spine of anyone working in online reviews. Nearly 70% of consumers are distrustful of online reviews because of fake reviews. This, if nothing else, shows that the industry needs to do more to stamp it out, and even more to win back the trust of consumers.

In Summary

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yesterday. More people are 'regularly' reading reviews than ever before, and we now know for certain what a pivotal part the business responding to reviews plays in the decision-making process.

The fight to get visibility of your business online is more competitive than ever, but we hope that by sharing these insights you can adopt, or tweak, a review management strategy to make your business more visible, more noteworthy, and more appealing to potential customers.

We'd love to hear your predictions for what could change in the world of online reviews over the next year—let us know your thoughts [in the comments section below](#).

Methodology

The 2022 Local Consumer Review Survey explores trends in online reviews for local businesses over the past year. It's based on the key SEO and local business reviews seen throughout the year to provide local marketers the information needed to maximize the impact of their online reputation management.

The statistics and findings are focused on local business reviews on sites such as Google, Facebook, Tripadvisor, Yelp, etc.

Based on the views of a representative sample of 1,124 US-based consumers, the Local Consumer Review Survey was conducted in November 2021 with an independent consumer panel. Age group breakdowns are representative of those in the US population.

In order to provide a better understanding of those that use reviews during a purchasing decision, consumers that said they don't read online reviews weren't asked questions around their review behavior.

Publishers are welcome to use the charts and data, crediting BrightLocal and [this report](#).
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Jamie Pitman

Jamie heads up BrightLocal's content team, ensuring we produce insightful articles, research and resources that enable businesses and SEOs to get even better results in local search.

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Hi Cynthia, thank you, and yes please do feel free to share the research and information with clients.

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